

CONNECTION

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Fly Like an Owl

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Attack at Connolly's Fairfax City Office

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Return of the Asian Festival

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Barred Owl Scarlet shows off her impressive wing span to the delight of those learning about owls from Secret Garden Birds and Bees handlers at the annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, May 13.

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MAY 17-23, 2023

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Candidates Answer Tough Questions from NAACP

Endorsements matter for non-partisan candidates.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

SCREENSHOTS VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY NAACP ZOOM

The Fairfax County NAACP invited the county's nine candidates running for non-partisan contested offices as Fairfax County School Board at-large representatives, Mt. Vernon district representative, and Hunter Mill district representative to its virtual candidate forum.

Members of the organization's communications, education, and political action committees collaborated to bring the forum to the public to learn more about the candidates. Additionally, the organization would decide which candidates it would endorse.

Michelle Leete, the president of the Fairfax County NAACP, and Sujatha Hampton, the education chair, moderated the forum. Hampton opened the sessions by saying Fairfax County had not been spared from the threats against school boards as seen across the United States.

In Fairfax County, school board members faced death and violence threats, hostile messaging, acts of intimidation, protests, and litigation because of their voting records. Much anger focused on pandemic-related school closures, the purported teaching of critical race theory, and the rights of LGBTQIA+ students and their parents.

Fairfax County Public Schools strengthened its security presence at school board meetings. Guards and police were present



Michelle Leete, Fairfax County NAACP president



Dr. Sujatha Hampton, education, Fairfax County NAACP

to maintain order and prevent disruptive behavior from meeting attendees. The current school board heard outrage expressed by speakers during the board's public hearings and heckling from bystanders. They witnessed the diminishing civility levels among their colleagues.

Nonetheless, the nine candidates for school board who participated in the forum appeared eager to be elected and serve. When running in the nonpartisan school board races, getting the word out about candidate platforms and gaining endorsements could make a difference to some voters.

The forum moderators asked similarly stated questions at each of the three sessions, although not all questions were asked in each session. Candidates responded in an alternating sequence. At the end, there were

question(s) from the chat box and a candidate one-minute wrap-up.

"Our mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of black people and all persons of color," Karen Campbell, the political action chair, said. "So the focus of our questioning today is what the candidate will be able to do if they are elected ... How will they be able to govern in accordance with the NAACP?"

The following candidates are not contested and are the Fairfax County NAACP's endorsed school board candidates for this year: Braddock District: Rachna Sizemore Heizer; Dranesville District: Robyn Lady; Franconia

District: Marcia St. John-Cunning; Mason District: Ricardy Anderson; Providence District: Karl Frisch, Springfield District: Sandy Anderson; and Sully District: Seema Dixit.

These candidates are endorsed by Fairfax County GOP: Cassandra Aucoin (At-Large); Saundra Davis (At-Large); Priscilla DeStefano (Braddock District); Paul Bartkowski (Dranesville District); Harry Jackson (Hunter Mill District); Kristin Ball (Mason District); Stori Zimmerman (Mount Vernon District); Tony Sabio (Providence District); Debra Tisler (Springfield District); Cindy Walsh (Sully District)

Virginia does not allow party labels in school board races. Candidates for these seats must run as independents and cannot be identified with party affiliation on the Commonwealth of Virginia election ballots. However, non-partisan candidates can be endorsed by party affiliation Members of the FairfaxGOP endorsed its ten FCSB candidates on April 19. The Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) is holding its 2023 Democratic Endorsement caucus for School Board. Online voting started May 13 and ends May 20, 2023, with in-person voting on May 20, 2023, at locations listed on the committee's website. To vote in the caucus, voters are required to register with the FCDC.

SCREENSHOTS VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY NAACP ZOOM



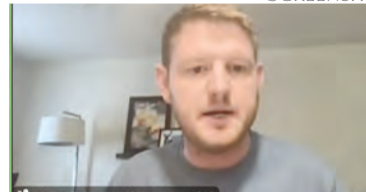
Ryan McElveen, Fairfax County School Board candidate at-large



Lawrence Webb, Fairfax County School Board at-large



Ilryong Moon, Fairfax County School Board at-large



Kyle McDaniel, Fairfax County School Board at-large



Hamid Munir, Fairfax County School Board At-Large Candidate

Fairfax NAACP Virtual School Board Candidate Forum

At-large school board candidates answer tough questions.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Hussein, Chris Lewis.

REDISTRICTING:

Will you support districting to allow students to attend schools in their communities?

The Connection lightly edited questions and answers for clarity and space. To view the Zoom sessions, visit <https://www.fairfaxnaacp.org/upcoming-events/> and search the candidate forum.

The following are highlights of Session 1 of the Fairfax County NAACP Virtual School Board Candidate Forum held Saturday, May 13, featuring Fairfax County School Board at-large candidates Lawrence Webb, Ilryong Moon, Kyle McDaniel, Hamid Munir, and Ryan McElveen.

Candidates at large who did not participate: Linda Ann Pellegrino, Abrar Omeish, Cassandra Aucoin, Saundra Davis, Ahmed

Kyle McDaniel: I'm a big fan of community schools. We have opportunities to bring in wraparound services that feed into a host of other policy sectors as well. We are going to have to look at countywide global boundary adjustment because we're starting to run out of building capacity.

Ilryong Moon: Boundary decision processes bring a lot of people into auditoriums and gymnasiums, thousands of parents, community members, and students who are concerned about their future. Perhaps not

on a countywide basis because that is more difficult to make, but I'd rather go on a regional basis first and decide what to use as criteria for boundary adjustment proximity.

Ryan McElveen: I've watched as development decisions have been made throughout the county, which has frustrated me. These decisions have led to stark divides between haves and have-nots in our communities ... leading to what we call socio-economic tipping points in which some of our schools and communities have a greater strain on services than they can provide. I support redistricting so that communities can be together in the school ... and not be bussed for hours.

Lawrence Webb: Schools, particularly

in the Mount Vernon and Franconia area, need to be addressed. We need to look at it location-wise, that students should not be bussed to school when they have a school literally around the corner from them... many times, it's those marginalized students and communities that are most impacted.

Hamid Munir: I will support boundary changes because I've seen the inequity. It's not just by region but also throughout the county. Why? Because I think when it comes to that, it is also a question of affordable housing. I firmly believe that strategically there are some people who are placed into a certain side of the county, and that's not fair. We need to have affordable housing throughout the county, and we need to make sure that the boundaries are addressed to our county as well.

NEWS

Devastating Attack

Chantilly man charged with four felonies.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Armed with a baseball bat and fueled by anger, a man seeking Congressman Gerry Connolly in his Fairfax City office, Monday morning, violently assaulted two members of Connolly's staff before being subdued and arrested by local police.

Later that evening, authorities revealed it wasn't the man's first attack of the day – and that, about 15 minutes before arriving at the U.S. representative's 11th District office – he allegedly committed a hate crime in Chantilly's Greenbriar community.

Ultimately charged with four felonies for the two events, the alleged perpetrator, Xuan Kha Tran Pham, 49, of Greenbriar, is now being held without bond in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. At press time, no motive had been determined for the attack on Connolly's staffers. But according to Pham's parents – with whom he lives – their son has mental-health issues.

Meanwhile, after the incident in Connolly's office, Special Agents with the U.S. Capitol Police Threat Assessment Section were dispatched to Fairfax. They're now coordinating with City of Fairfax police and the FBI's Washington Field Office on this case.

Fairfax City Police spokeswoman Lisa Gardner said police responded at 10:49 a.m. to a call about an active assault at 10680 Main St., Suite 140. When police arrived, she said, the staffers were "scared and hiding" in the office.

"Investigation revealed that the suspect, Xuan-Kha Tran Pham, entered Connolly's District Office and [reportedly] assaulted two Congressional staffers with a metal baseball bat," said Gardner. "The staffers received non-life-threatening injuries and were transported to a local hospital. One police officer also sustained a minor injury and is receiving medical treatment."

At the time of the attack, U.S. Rep. Connolly (D-11th) was at a ribbon cutting for a food bank in another section of Fairfax County. After asking for him by name and learning he wasn't in the office, said Connolly, the assailant allegedly took out his frustration on the two staffers.

He said his female outreach director was struck on the head with the bat, and a female intern in her first day on the job was hit on her side. They then fled to another office while the man broke glass windows and damaged office furnishings and computers.

Fairfax City police said Pham was taken into custody at the scene within 5 minutes of them receiving the call. The Criminal Investigations Division charged him with two



Xuan Kha Tran Pham

felonies – aggravated malicious wounding and malicious wounding.

Distressed to learn about the attack that injured the two staff members, Connolly released a statement saying, "Right now, our focus is on ensuring they are receiving the care they need. We are incredibly thankful to the City of Fairfax Police Department and emergency medical professionals for their quick response."

Connolly served 14 years on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors – including five years as chairman – before being elected to Congress in 2008. Ironically, he recently introduced a resolution in Congress honoring America's public servants.

"I have the best team in Congress," he said on Monday. "My District Office staff make themselves available to constituents and members of the public every day. The thought that someone would take advantage

"One of the biggest challenges we face today is dealing with the sheer increase in the number of threats against members of Congress – approximately 400 percent over the past six years."

— U.S. Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger

of my staff's accessibility to commit an act of violence is unconscionable and devastating."

Pham was a constituent of Connolly's and, according to the Washington Post, "Connolly said his office was working on a constituent issue for Pham" at the time of the incident, but he didn't know its specific details. Connolly said the man gave no previous indication that his actions on Monday could have been politically motivated. He also told the Post that responding City police officers subdued the assailant with a taser.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly

As for the earlier incident in Chantilly, Fairfax County police said that Monday, around 10:37 a.m., Pham allegedly approached a woman in the driveway of her Greenbriar home on Point Pleasant Drive, asked her, "Are you white?" and chased her with a bat as she screamed and fled from him. He then reportedly smashed her car windshield.

The incident was caught on a neighbor's security camera, and – still holding his bat – Pham could be heard muttering Connolly's name as he walked away. After being arrested in Fairfax City, county police charged him with committing a hate crime and felony destruction of property. Meanwhile, a female Greenbriar resident said that, after Pham's parents moved into the community, they went door to door telling the neighbors their son had mental-health issues but wouldn't hurt anyone. And according to CNN, Pham's father said his son is "schizophrenic and hadn't taken his medication for three months."

The attack in Fairfax City also hit home for many residents, who were upset to hear about such brutality happening in their city. "Today the City of Fairfax witnessed a heinous attack on people working at the offices of Congressman Connolly," said Sen. Chap Petersen (D-37th). "My own family lives one block away – which underscores the immediacy of this event. As always, we are thankful to Fairfax City police for their prompt reaction."

Local residents responding to Fairfax City's initial Facebook post about the incident, Monday afternoon, also commented. Calling it "horrible," Elizabeth Yingling

U.S. Capitol Police said that last year they investigated some 7,500 cases of potential threats against members of Congress.

hoped the staff members would be all right. And Diana Rhodes wanted the assailant "punished severely."

"So glad city police got there quickly, but so disgusted with the physical violence in our communities," said Maryann Clary. "It's unconscionable that someone thinks it's OK to enter an office and start hitting employees with a bat. We need solutions to all this daily violence. Thanks, City Police, for helping to keep us safe."

"Thank God the guy didn't have an automatic weapon," wrote Cathy Schroeder. "They would have been slaughtered."

In addition, Marcy Cochran responded to an individual's Facebook post about the attack on Connolly's staff. "After all he's done for this district, for government workers and for the country, how mislead would a person have to be to do that?" she wrote. "Gerry has always prided himself on being approachable by anyone with an issue to discuss. And for his staff, the best of public servants, to be attacked is something that should be unthinkable in society."

Calling it another "deeply upsetting episode" happening in the U.S., Cochran wondered, "How do we reach a person before they become a terrorist? How can we work to prevent the harm they do when they become so delusional (that) they think it's okay to act out this way?"

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner also issued a statement, saying, "Intimidation and violence – especially against public servants – has no place in our society. This is an extraordinarily disturbing development, and my thoughts are with the staff members who were injured."

"Violence does not belong in our political system, and my prayers are with Rep. Gerry Connolly's staff for a speedy recovery," added Gov. Glenn Youngkin. "We've seen this against our judiciary and our legislative branch, and it has no place in our commonwealth."

However, in America's increasingly toxic atmosphere of pervasive hate speech, U.S. Capitol Police said that last year, they investigated some 7,500 cases of potential threats against members of Congress. In a press release after Monday's attack, they referred to U.S. Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger's recent comments about the "heightened threat climate" across the country.

"One of the biggest challenges we face today is dealing with the sheer increase in the number of threats against members of Congress – approximately 400 percent over the past six years," he said. "Over the course of the last year, the world has continuously changed, becoming more violent and uncertain." Manger was police chief in Fairfax County from 1998 to 2004.

Fairfax NAACP Virtual School Board Candidate Forum

FROM PAGE 2

ADDRESSING LACK OF EQUITY:

Focusing on equity and academic access, how might you address the enormous differences within districts and pyramids related to disparities and offerings for after-school enrichment, access to AP advanced mathematics, and IB?

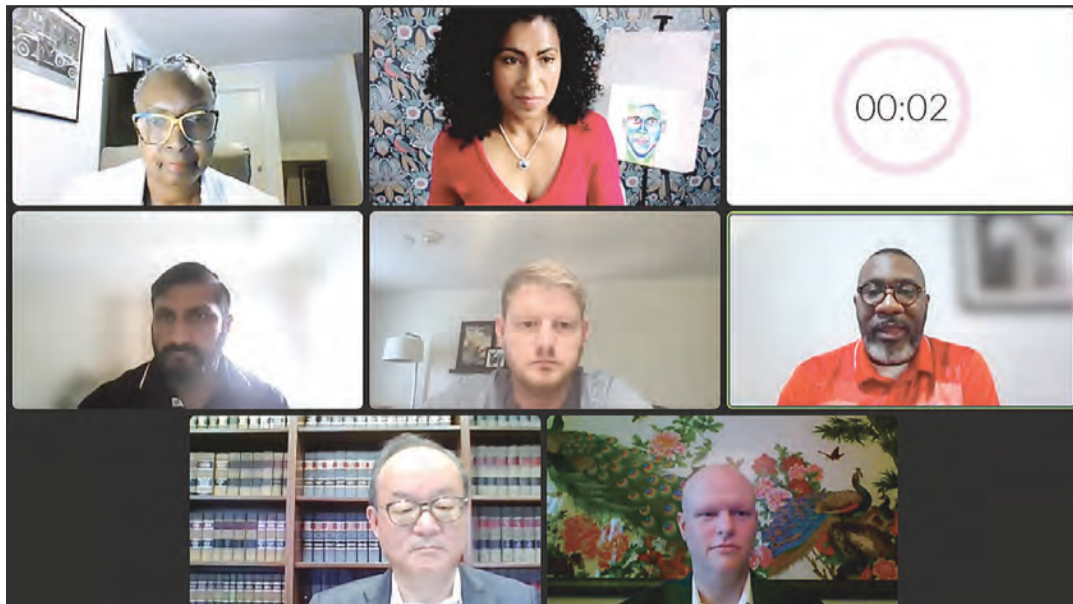
Ilryong Moon: The opportunity gap starts from home and starts from the early years, so we need to expand our pre-K program beyond the current approved budget. That's 180 students out of close to 2,500 students who had indicated that they had not received any pre-K service. That pace has to be accelerated.

Ryan McElveen: FCPS Advanced Academic Program's strengths are rooted in its recognition as an international model for gifted education with a robust curriculum and strong pedagogical practices. But it's also weak in that the robust curriculum and practices have not been extended to all the classrooms in the school system. It's left some students behind. I've been a strong voice for expanding the AP curriculum and practices to all of our schools.

Lawrence Webb: I will work hard to make sure these programs are spread across the county. We see disparities in opportunities in certain areas of the county. We also need to expand working with the Board of Supervisors to get the funding that we need to make sure that pre-K is available to as many county residents as possible.

Hamid Munir: Every child needs to feel valued, nurtured, and seen in our schools, no matter if you are new to our country... from historically underrepresented communities, struggling with learning a new language, a member of the LGBTQ community, or a student with disabilities. All students must feel welcome and included in our classrooms and extracurricular programs and have the opportunity to participate in advanced academics and specialty programs, regardless of where they live.

Kyle McDaniel: First thing is identifying the problem, identifying the gaps, identifying what has to be fixed, and that's not as easy as it sounds. It's got to be data-driven. It's got to be fact-based, and it's got to be in conjunction with the communities and stakeholders like this group. After that, it boils down to resource allocation issues. This requires stakeholder input. This type of policy development is never going to be a silver bullet. Following is a long-term initiative process. Simply- we've got to find the problem and fix the problem; go back and make sure that what we put in place is addressing the problems that we've identified, and that takes making sure this is part of the strategic plan.



Group image for the Fairfax County NAACP virtual School Board Candidate Forum for at-large representative candidates held May 13.

INTERSECTIONALITY:

Speak to the challenges of supporting students' intersectionality; for example, through the challenges to the book and library collections and access to materials, how it threatens the LGBTQ-plus community. But there is an intersectional threat to the BIPOC population (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) as well, whose literature so often includes themes of sexual violence or abuse due to the history of this country and so many things like that.

Lawrence Webb: As someone who grew up within the LGBT community ... many times living in the closet, I will be the first to say that I appreciate seeing what our LGBTQ students today are able to do, living their lives, and being who they are at such a young age. I will always be an advocate for the students making sure that they continue to do that, making sure books and other things are out there for them to be able to learn how to express themselves. I will always protect them and make sure I will be the first person protecting them in the buildings and making sure they have the facilities that they need to identify with going to the bathroom as well as locker rooms.

Hamid Munir: I come from a community that's often marginalized. I know how important it is to support marginalized communities such as LGBTQ. I will fight to protect the rights of every student and staff to be part of our community, allowing them to be their authentic self and see themselves in our curriculum and our library, and ensure that every child is treated with dignity.

I believe that if bigotry against one group is allowed, it will spread to the others. As Democrats, we need to stand up to bullies.

I will work with the superintendent to ensure students' pronouns are respected, private spaces are available in restrooms and locker rooms, and correspond to gender identity.

Kyle McDaniel: I think one of the problems we have is that people don't feel com-

fortable coming forward. We have to create this environment because we're such a massive system. It's very difficult sometimes to find some of the bigotry that exists if we don't know that it exists. We must encourage intersectionality to be talked about; encourage it to be discussed with the LGBTQ community. Specifically, we don't recognize the LGBTQ community; we celebrate the community.

Ilryong Moon: I was the one in 2014 (serving on the school board) who motioned to include sexual orientation as part of our nondiscrimination policy. In 2015, I seconded Mr. McCabe's motion to include gender identity as part of the nondiscrimination policy, standing strong against any hostile cry in meeting after meeting... (We) need to do a little better job in educating our grown-ups.

Ryan McElveen: I have a long history of making sure that gender identity and sexual orientation are respected and welcomed in our school, from policy to regulation. When we talk about LGBTQ students of color, it's right to say they're at particular risk. I would also add that there's intersectionality there with students from those backgrounds that are also disabled ... We need to look at studies that have been done, for example, the Trevor Project. I know that this can be addressed with mental health support. We need, in Fairfax County, a higher number of mental health professionals who have a focus on the needs of the LGBTQ community in particular.

COLLEGIALITY:

How will you balance the need for good governance and collegiality; they need to do good work that supports the needs of our most educationally and economically vulnerable children, as well as those of our most privileged and active stable children. It seems there are two needs here, often at odds with the current board.

Ryan McElveen: The current political environment has fostered instability... It's critical we have a board that works

together. My experience has shown that I am a strong team player, with my colleagues working to make sure that we're battling civility for the entire district. And frankly, we are not doing enough to work in the curriculum to teach those values. You've seen after the pandemic backsliding. We need to work on teaching students how to behave in public which they haven't been exposed to during the pandemic.

Lawrence Webb: We need a board that works together, and one of the first things for whoever walks away with these endorsements is we all need to come together to begin the process of getting to know one another and working together. It's going to be a team effort to move forward into November. As chair of the school board of the City of Falls Church, I came into that role because of some of the very challenges you're talking about. I have a reputation for being a person who listens and works well with others. I took that role very importantly and led the board to better regain the public trust.

Hamid Munir: It comes from experience. I have experienced the same thing on multiple boards. If you see my résumé, I've done it several times. Get to know people, work with people. If you don't agree with something, there's a simple way of bringing information and voting on it properly. "Robert's Rules" (and) civility go hand-in-hand. We need to make sure that all of our board members are aware that diversity is not just by culture or color. You need to have a diversity of professions as well.

Kyle McDaniel: Teamwork. I've said in the hundreds of opening statements I've given it boils down to teamwork. It boils down to collaboration and congeniality not just amongst each other, which is critical, but with the public, staff, teachers, and parents. Because this cuts across a host of different relationship channels. If we're not professional, and we're not collaborative, and we're not congenial, that's going to lead to credibility issues that are going to lead to some of the issues that this past board has been challenged with. We are all grumpy after Covid ... Let's give each other a little bit of grace, a little bit of dignity, and some breathing room. By treating others with a little more respect, we're going to get a lot farther. That's the goal.

Ilryong Moon: I don't want to speak ill of the current board; I'm focusing on the next board. My three years of experience as chairman of the Fairfax County school board, 20 years of experience on the board, (and) for a number of years I was on the minority side ... As long as you respect everyone on the board and what they are doing is for the best interest of the students and do not take anything personally, we can bring back civility. I am a listener; I am a uniter.



Fairfax County Planning will hold a virtual meeting on Monday, May 22 at 7 p.m. to discuss adding residential to the Pan Am Shopping Center.

Pan Am Shopping Center Rezoning Could Add Residential

If you visit or live by the Pan Am Shopping Center, you'll want to join a virtual community meeting on Monday, May 22 at 7 p.m. to learn about changes that are being considered for the site. There is potential to create a mixed-use community and add residential uses to the Pan Am Shopping Center. The proposed change would keep some of the existing retail uses and add a residential component to the existing shopping center, as well as new park spaces for new residents and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Learn more: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/.../pan-am-shopping-center>

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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
LEE	10897	662	RTE 662	SIMS CREEK	4/12/2023
BOTETOURT	3421	636	BEAVER DAM RD/RTE 636	BEAVER DAM CREEK	4/6/2023
LOUDOUN	11384	850	PICNIC WOODS RD	MILLTOWN CREEK	4/4/2023
ALBEMARLE	875	810	DYKE RD	LYNCH RIVER	4/3/2023

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.

OPINION

Thoughts on Civil Discourse in the Wake of Violence

BY KAREN CORBETT SANDERS



I am saddened today as we hear about the violence against two staff members and the destruction of Congressman Gerry Connolly's field office in Fairfax City by a man with a metal bat. When I announced my decision not to run for office again, I cited the increased vitriol, hateful rhetoric, and lack of civility in our public discourse. It is hard to look at a situation such as today, or reflect on the events of Jan. 6, 2021, and not see some correlation between the divisive politics of hate which depersonalize our political foes into caricatures of villains and the acts of violence.

According to her Congressional Testimony on March 31, 2022, Rachel Kleinfeld, a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment, there was an acceleration of political violence between 2016 and 2020 and the level of acceptance and support for political violence has also increased by members of both political parties. Justifications are steeped in the importance

of protecting the traditional American way of life, validity of elections, and other false or misleading narratives. Threats against members of Congress have almost doubled, and hate crimes are increasing, with rates higher in 2021 than in the year following 9/11.

More disturbing than even historic numbers is the broader base of individuals who are involved in these acts of aggression. Acts of aggression like what happened today at Connolly's office are no longer contained to extremist groups, but have spread to lone actors reacting to the rhetoric they are hearing or seeing online, in public meetings and feeling compelled to take aggressive action.

We do not know the motivation of the intruder in Connolly's office. There have been moments and periods of time, as an elected school board member, where I worried about my colleagues, our staff, and my own safety during official proceedings when emotionally charged issues came before the board.

We do know that each of us can do our part to mitigate these acts. Collectively, we must tone down the divisive rhetoric, vilifying name calling, and character assassination. The issues before our Federal, State legislatures, and local governments are too important to trivialize with destructive and non-productive behavior. We must focus on the issues before our policy making bodies that affect the everyday lives of our community members.

We can realize that there are policy areas where groups or individuals may align on individual issues and others where the makeup of a group supporting an issue may be different. However, this is only possible if the discourse focuses on the content of the policy issues and does not cast aspersions on the character of individuals in a group.

Together we can achieve the American dream of a more perfect union by reinforcing our foundations of civil discourse.

Karen Corbett Sanders is the Mount Vernon District representative on the Fairfax County School Board. Sanders is not seeking reelection.

Not Yet Enough

Gun violence is now the leading killer of children.

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

For nearly a decade I have been participating in vigils at the National Rifle Association headquarters in Fairfax on the 14th of the month — the anniversary of the mass murder of mostly children at Sandy Hook Elementary School. While I was out of town this past weekend, the several dozen faithful were there to remind us that gun violence is a problem that needs immediate public attention. Our concern grew at least in part from the fact that there is so much gun violence that we could become immune to outrage about it. Our vigil at the NRA is to bring attention to the facts that gun violence continues to increase, the number of guns purchased continues to increase as well, and gun violence has become the leading killer of children.

It takes at least four persons to be killed to be considered a "mass shooting." The ones that make the front page of newspapers and the evening news have many more than that number. After several days the stories of these mass shootings fade into the background. For every one of these big mass shooting events, there are dozens of stories on the inside pages of newspapers of the ones and twos of murder and suicide



Several dozen faithful demonstrators were at NRA headquarters in Fairfax to remind us that gun violence is a problem that needs immediate public attention. Gun violence has become the leading killer of children.

that take place with limited note and seem at some places to have become the norm!

Complete statistics on gun violence are hard to come by for the NRA has convinced legislators to limit the record keeping and reporting on the misuse of guns. As best as can be determined, there were about 21,000 gun homicides and 26,000 gun suicides in 2021. Those numbers will soar in 2023 as there have already been more than 200 mass shootings.

With each slaughtering that happens there is usually a call for "thoughts and prayers" for the victims and their families. When inquiry has been made to election of-

ficials as to what will be done, the response too many times has been that we should not jump into the issue because everyone is grieving and that an investigation should be conducted. Too many times there is silence on the issue after some time has gone by.

Virginia has not been an exception to this issue. Virginia Tech and more recently Virginia Beach have made the list of record-setting gun violence. Thoughts and prayers were offered up, but it was not until 2021 that some progress was made on common sense legislation to end gun violence with Democrats controlling the executive branch and the legislature. As

soon as the Republicans took over the House of Delegates there were bills introduced to repeal or soften the progress we had made.

The Youngkin administration has shown no leadership on the issue. There continues to be talk about arming teachers, more trauma training, and metal detectors at school doors.

Let your elected officials know that we have had enough. Meaningful legislation is critical at the federal level considering that there are 350 to 400 million guns in our country. Tell candidates that enough is enough and ask them specifically what they are going to do to stop it.

CONNECTION

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Riding in Memory of a Longtime Police Officer

Last Wednesday-Friday, May 10-12, law-enforcement officers participating in the annual Police Unity Tour rode their bikes from Richmond to Charlottesville, Warrenton, Centreville and Fairfax City en route to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The ride raises money and awareness for the Memorial fund and National Law Enforcement Museum honoring and remembering all federal, state and local law enforcement officers who've died in the line of duty. On Friday, around noon, the cyclists rode past Fairfax City's police station on Blenheim Boulevard, where friends, family members and fellow police officers enthusiastically cheered them on.

This year, Fairfax City Police PFC Luke Altman rode in honor and memory of Fairfax City Police Sgt. George Moskowicz, who was 57 when he died, Dec. 31, 2019, after suffering a medical emergency while on duty. He'd served with the Fairfax County Police Department for a quarter century, retiring as a second lieutenant before joining Fairfax City's Police Department in 2011.

After his death, City Police Chief Erin Schaible said, "Sgt. George Moskowicz was



COURTESY OF FAIRFAX CITY POLICE DEPT.
Sgt. George Moskowicz

a dedicated law-enforcement officer. He was a leader, mentor and a friend who'll be deeply missed."

But not forgotten.

— BONNIE HOBBS



Bicyclists chugging past the Fairfax City Police Station to their left.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Motorcycle officers escorted the bicyclists during their ride.

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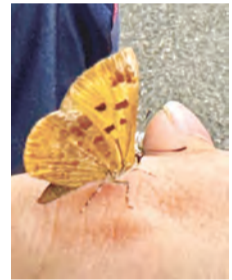
Eagle Festival Brings All Closer to Nature

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Friends of Mason Neck State Park held their annual Eagle Festival on Saturday, May 13. The well-known festival again offered an abundant tribute to nature in a day filled with environmental organization displays, interactive exhibits, bird and critter shows, time paddling on the water, and live music. County, state and federal wildlife agencies, environmental and conservation organizations were well represented providing information on many parts of the natural world from seeds to trees, and birds to small mammals.

Approaching the main presentation tent, one could hear a loud voice saying “he’s coiling around my neck.” A quickened pace revealed that puppeteer, Caroline Seitz, of Kids Nature Shows LLC, was in the middle of introducing her young audience to snakes and some of their behavior. Although northern Virginia snakes include some climbers, human neck hugging is a problem only for Seitz, who also often experiences Grey Squirrels hiding on her head. Several young audience members revealed the squirrel’s location and agreed that she had “messed up” Seitz hair. Not a problem since Seitz shared, “I like it that way.” It was all in good fun and much appreciated by the young audience.



A small butterfly, Harvester (*Feniseca tarquinius*) typically enjoys creeks and stream sides

Inside the visitor’s center, a few spectacular birds of prey could be seen closer than it’s possible to get to them in the wild. Hodor, a Great Horned owl, and Scarlet, a Barred owl, along with four other rehabilitated raptors from Liz Denison’s Secret Garden Birds and Bees, were calm though surrounded by admirers. Smokey, a Screech owl with Matt Felperin of NOVA Parks, held up the small owl end of the size spectrum. The three owls are well known in the area, often visiting park events. Injuries sustained as adult birds, which would decrease their chance of survival in the wild, have lead to their extended lives as ambassadors of the bird world.



Eagle Festival goer Erin Carter, of Lorton, took getting close to nature to heart as she walked around the event hosting a Harvester butterfly attracted to her salty hand



Harrison West, 11 yrs, of Fairfax Station, gets a distance view of ducks while watching for the area’s often spotted Bald Eagles



Darlene Pick of Woodbridge compares her reach to the wingspan of common raptors



Barred Owl Scarlet shows off her impressive wing span to the delight of those learning about owls from Secret Garden Birds and Bees handlers



Great Horned Owl Hodor, a frequent ambassador for raptors, seems as interested in seeing his admirers as they are in seeing him at the annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, May 13.

ice cream truck, welcomed on a warm day. A new exhibitor this year was Covina Fairfax, contracted to turn Fairfax County residents’ waste to energy. Processing approximately 3,000 tons per day of solid waste at their Lorton facility allows them to sell renewable energy enough to meet the needs of about 80,000 homes. Their process combusts solid waste, producing high heat, turning water to steam, which is sent to a turbine generator to produce electricity. The solid waste material is reduced to an inert ash that is only ten percent of its original volume, saving landfill space, as well as producing renewable energy in the process.

Friends president and long-time resident of Mason Neck, Hillary Clawson, explained that the Eagle Festival is celebrating its 25th year.



Cat Young, 4 yrs old, and her sister Eve, 3 yrs old, check the claws of a larger than life Red Fox at the Friends of Mason Neck State Park annual Eagle Festival on Saturday, May 13.



An uncertain Flash, 4 yrs, who often walks at Mason Neck State Park with owner Mina Guevara, of Alexandria, does not usually encounter a Red Fox quite this large



Truman Farabaugh (left), 9 yrs, of Lorton, finds a shard and an arrowhead while practicing his digging skills under the tutelage of Cynthia Donahue at the Archeology Society of Virginia tent at the annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, May 13.



Truman Farabaugh (left), 9 yrs, of Lorton, finds a shard and an arrowhead while practicing his digging skills under the tutelage of Cynthia Donahue at the Archeology Society of Virginia tent at the annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, May 13.

Neck State Park, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was created in 1969. It was the first refuge created specifically to

protect the Bald Eagle. It was renamed the Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck Wildlife Refuge through an act of Congress in 2006.

For more on the Friends group and their events, see <https://friendsofmasonneck-stateparkinc.wildapricot.org/>

EAGLE FESTIVAL

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Friends of Mason Neck State Park President Hillary Clawson and board secretary Gail Mlinarchik answer questions and monitor activities at the Friends tent



Caroline Seitz with a snake coiled around her neck and other animal problems delights her young audience during her puppet show



Representatives of Virginia's Department of Forestry, Lindsey Long and veteran forester Jim McGlone, retiring later this year, staff a popular exhibitor table



Virginia Master Naturalist's Fairfax Chapter staff an information table, taking time to install native plants in a nearby pollinator garden, Monica Hoffman with chapter president, Sarah Mathew



Music provided by Difficult Run String Band at the annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, May 13.



Young future fisherman practice their casting skills over grass to prepare for fishing in one of Virginia's many area stocked water bodies



Mason Neck State Park's grounds were perfect for a relaxing lunch provided by vendors just before rain

ASIAN FESTIVAL

'A Favorite City Event'

Fairfax City's 3rd annual Asian Festival on Main is this Sunday.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A celebration of Asian culture and heritage through food, arts and crafts, music and dance – that's Fairfax City's Asian Festival on Main. Created to bring people together and highlight cultural diversity in a delicious and entertaining way, this third annual extravaganza is set for this Sunday, May 21, from 11:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Rain date, June 4.

A true street festival, it's held on Main Street in the City's Old Town area, between University Drive and Blenheim Boulevard/East Street. And this year, it'll also include Old Town Square and part of University Drive. Admission is free, and this fun, family-friendly celebration will offer something for people of all ages.

More than 50 Asian food vendors, including nine food trucks, will sell a wide variety of tasty and colorful culinary delights. And a beer garden will offer alcoholic beverages from High Side, Drunk Fruit, Blue Sky Distillery and Capital Sake.

Two of the entertainment highlights will be the event headliner, Jay R – a Filipino American also known as the acclaimed "Philippines King of R&B" – and the Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe, which recently performed at the White House during its Lunar New Year celebration.

Another crowd-pleaser will be DMV Itasha, a popular car club featuring Anime-themed, wrapped cars. And some 50 vendors and exhibitors will have arts and crafts items available to purchase.

"There is so much excitement in our community for the annual Asian Festival on Main," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "It celebrates the many Asian cultures, traditions and cuisines that make our City and region so vibrant. It has quickly become a favorite City event."

Indeed, last Tuesday, May 9, she and the City Council presented a proclamation to the Old Town Fairfax Business Association (OTFBA), festival committee members and local Asian business owners. This proclamation officially recognized May as Asian American Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Fairfax.

With the support of these City entities and various contributors within the Asian community, the festival attracted 18,000 attendees in May 2022 – more than doubling the attendance from its initial year in July 2021. And because of its huge popularity, this event has rapidly become one of the City's annual marquee celebrations.

Seeing its success, Festival Chair Jinson Chan, co-owner of High Side Craft Brews & Asian Street Food in Fairfax City, couldn't be happier. "We're excited to expand the festival's footprint this year to provide even more opportunities to highlight Asian businesses and culture," he said. "We appreciate all the hard work of the volunteers and the support of our sponsors that make this event possible."

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BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left, Kevin Jung and Kevin Tsai, of Rice Culture, prepare fish-shaped Japanese waffles to fill with ube custard.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe will open this year's festival.

The festival showcases Asian contributions to the community; and together, Fairfax City and the OTFBA have worked hard to make it a reality. Hollywood Casinos at Charles Town Races is also one of the main sponsors.

In addition, OTFBA is partnering with Asian

American Youth Leadership Empowerment and Development (AALEAD), a nonprofit that supports low-income, underserved Asian American and Pacific Islander youth. It offers them educational empowerment, identity development and leadership opportunities via af-



The Asian Festival on Main is this Sunday, May 21.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Audrey Liu, of the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe, performs a Ribbon Dance at last year's festival.

ter-school, summer and mentoring programs.

As for this year's festival, here's a sampling of just some of its upcoming highlights:

Food Vendors

Treats for the tastebuds will be everywhere, thanks to a wide range of vendors. For example, Bun'd Up is offering its Taiwanese Steamed Bao Buns with an assortment of fillings, including fried chicken. And Gwenie's Pastries will serve fluffy doughnuts with fillings including Nutella, pandan (grassy vanilla-coconut), mango and ube (sweet potato).

Gong cha is offering flavorful and refreshing bubble teas. Capital Musubi will sell supersized Musubis (rice, nori and meat or vegetable sandwiches), plus other foods reflecting the flavors of the Hawaiian Islands.

CHIBOO Bakery will bring macarons with Asian-inspired flavors, while Buddin' Bakery features its guava-and-brie rolls with guava-cream cheese frosting and chopped pistachios.

The Phowheels Vietnamese food truck will be serving hot pho in a cup and banh mi sandwiches infused with garlic truffle aioli. Sarin Grill will bring Thai food, and Sister House will sell takoyaki – bite-sized, Japanese snacks made with seafood.

Cocois Sweets and Pastries will offer treats including ube halaya doughnuts, and Toimoi bakery will feature Asian-inspired croissants. In addition, Homade Sweets will bring cookies in Asian flavors such as ube sugar, pandan coconut, milk tea, taro, matcha strawberry and Viet coffee.

Rice Culture will bring Taiyakis, street-food desserts with Filipino and Taiwanese flavors. They're Japanese waffles shaped like fish and made fresh to order, while customers watch. Each is then topped with Asian-inspired fill-

SEE ASIAN FESTIVAL, PAGE 14

CALENDAR



McLean Day 2023 will take place on Saturday, May 20, 2023 at Lewinsville Park in McLean.



BrewWorks will take place on Saturday, May 20, 2023 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

NOW THRU JUNE 25

Falls Church Arts All Member

Show. More than 155 artists will be featured in the All Member Show at the Falls Church Arts gallery from April 22 to June 25. To handle the expansive show, the exhibit will be held in two parts this year: submissions from members with last names from A-K will be on view from April 22 to May 21. Submissions from artists with last names from L-Z will be on view from May 27 to June 25. The show features the work of emerging and established member artists from Falls Church Arts and encompasses an extensive range of media from the more traditional watercolor, acrylic, mixed media, pastel, fused glass, oil, photography, and sculpture to a wide variety of mixed media and printing techniques. The Falls Church Arts gallery is at 700-B West Broad St. (Route 7), Falls Church. Admission is free and the gallery is open Tuesdays-Fridays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Artworks can be viewed online at www.fallschurcharts.org. All pieces can be purchased at the gallery or on the website.

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.

THROUGH 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

NOW THRU JUNE 3

"Urinetown." 7:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. In a Gotham-like city, a terrible water shortage, caused by a 20-year drought, has led to a government-enforced ban on private toilets. The citizens must use public amenities, regulated by a single malevolent company that profits by charging admission for one of humanity's most basic needs. Amid the people, a hero decides that he's had enough and plans a revolution to lead them all to freedom! Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/urinetown>

NOW THRU OCT. 28, 2023

Vienna Optimists' Farmers Market. 8 a.m. to noon. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Premiere local vendors feature fresh, seasonal

produce, beautiful flowers, hardy plants, sweet and savory treats, free garden advice and free live music. Admission is free.

Each week at the Farmers Market, different talented local musicians perform. Here is May's schedule.

On May 20, Accotink Rising performs; On May 27, Carter Farm Band performs;

For more information about the Farmers Market or the Optimists, visit <https://www.optimistclubofgreatervienna.org/>

NOW THRU AUG. 23

Art Wednesdays. 5 p.m. At The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center, McLean. The first four Wednesdays starting May 3 watch live graffiti art come to life. The Lorton Workhouse and Live Art International introduces alternating art concepts for participants to take a drawing class, take home personalized airbrushed swag and more. All materials will be provided.

NOW THRU AUG. 31

Game Night Thursdays. 6 p.m. At The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Starting May 11th, DC Fray will host a free game night every other Thursday. Game concepts will rotate between Cornhole, Roller Skating, Ping Pong, Bingo, RC Racing and Pickleball. Prizes will be awarded!

NOW THRU MAY 25

Open Life Drawing. 6-9 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Life drawing and painting group, on the first four Thursdays of every month. Bring your own drawing and/or painting supplies- easel, stools, and tables are provided. *Note: This is not a class. A monitor will be present to take the model through different poses but no instruction will be provided. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/visual-arts-classes>

NOW THRU AUG. 11

Music & Dance Fridays. Classes: 6 p.m. or 6:45 p.m. At The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Join Silvia and La Musica the first two Fridays of each month starting May 5 through August 11 for salsa lessons and a musical workshop. For beginners, Salsa lessons start at 6 p.m. and bachata lessons begin at 6:45 p.m. The La Musica: World of Encanto music workshop for kids will feature musical genres from successful Disney films: Coco, Saludos Amigos, The Three Caballeros and Encanto for karaoke session with live percussion instruments.

MAY 18 AND 25

Business Startup Essentials. 7:30-9:30 a.m. At Mason Enterprise Center, Office Evolution, 205 Van Buren Street, Suite 120, Herndon. Mason Enterprise Center in Herndon will be hosting a three-week start-up cohort in May for small business owners and aspirants in the Town of Herndon to learn about the essentials required to launch your business. This program is ideal for early-stage businesses looking to grow. Experts and mentors from the Mason SBDC who will lead you through the key steps and practices to successfully start and run your business. Call 703-261-4105.

THURSDAY/MAY 18

McLean Project for the Arts Spring Benefit. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Wildersmoor House in Great Falls. McLean Project for the Arts, a leading contemporary visual arts non-profit supporting the work of artists for more than 60 years, will host its signature spring fête, Spring Benefit, on Thursday, May 18. Several stunning pieces by the renowned McLean sculptor Emilie Benes Brzezinski will be featured onsite during the event. Additionally, Spring Benefit 2023 will feature the music of The Bitter

Dose Combo, DC's premier gypsy jazz and swing band, and Abbie Palmer, a multi-genre harpist. The event will also include fare from Windows Catering Company. Visit mpaart.org for more information.

FRIDAY/MAY 19

Abstract Watercolor Demo. 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Mclean Art Society is honored to present Chica Brunsvold giving a demonstration of her innovative style of abstract painting with watercolors. As a Signature Member of both the National and American Watercolor Societies, Ms. Brunsvold trademarked the term Zooillogicals to describe her unique technique in which she paints on a slick surface called Yupo, then discerns "an intense, compact composition of animals (mostly birds) arising directly from the texture of the work."

FRIDAY/MAY 19

Bike to Work Day 2023. Across the Metropolitan D.C. Region. Join thousands of area commuters for the free 22nd annual event celebrating bicycling as a fun, low-cost, healthy, and environmentally friendly way to get around! Riders can find Bike to Work Day pit stops around the metropolitan region in DC, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. The first 15,000 to register and attend one of the pit stops will receive a free Bike to Work Day T-shirt. Pit Stop information is available at bit.ly/BTWD-2023

SATURDAY/MAY 20

Civil War Books, Relics and Memorabilia Show. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Boulevard, Fairfax. Vendors are welcome. Admission is \$5.00 per person. Additional information may be obtained from Don Hakenson at dhakenson@verizon.net or Bud Mayo at mayo5304@cox.net.



MCC Holds Opening Ceremony and Ribbon Cutting for McLean Day 2023 Festival

WHAT: MCC will hold an Opening Ceremony and Ribbon Cutting for McLean Day 2023 with local dignitaries at Lewinsville Park
WHO: State and local government officials, community leaders, MCC Executive Director Betsy May Salazar, MCC Governing Board Chair Barbara Zamora-Appel, MCC special events staff and festival patrons will be in attendance.
WHEN: Friday, May 19, 2023, at 1:45 p.m.
WHERE: Lewinsville Park
 1659 Chain Bridge Road
 McLean, Virginia 22101

McLean's largest annual festival begins at 2 p.m. on Friday, May 19, at Lewinsville Park, with T.G.I.F. Carnival Rides. The festivities continue on McLean Day, Saturday, May 20, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. This event draws approximately 10,000 patrons throughout the day who come to enjoy carnival rides, music, games, amusements, exhibits, gourmet food and much more. This yearly, free community celebration dates back to 1915.
 For more information, call MCC at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711 or visit mcleancenter.org.

Town Center, Reston. The annual Festival is a signature fundraiser for Tephra ICA that attracts tens of thousands of people to the unique, outdoor environment of Reston Town Center. This year more than 200 artists will travel from 33 states across the U.S. and Canada to exhibit and sell their work in Reston. Tephra ICA will also launch the Anniversary Celebration of its 50-year history in the community. Visit <https://www.tephraica.org/festival-information/get-involved-with-the-festival>

SATURDAY/MAY 20
Tours of Woodbury. 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sunrise at Silas Burke House, Burke. The Burke Historical Society will conduct tours of "Woodbury," the historic house at Sunrise at Silas Burke House, on Saturday May 20. Tours will begin at 11:00. The last tour group will be at 1:30 p.m.

SATURDAY/MAY 20
Engineering: Then and Now. Noon to 3 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill Park, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. See the mill in action, explore historic and modern-day engineering tools yourself, and talk with professionals in a variety of engineering fields.

SATURDAY/MAY 20
McLean Day 2023. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The free, outdoor festival is produced by the McLean Community Center (MCC) and offers a wide variety of attractions, including carnival rides, games and performances. Music and Dance Performances

Free performances will be offered throughout the festival on the Community Stage.
Schedule
 11 a.m. Art in Motion – MCC's Youth Dance Class Participants
 12:50 p.m. Noah Asher – Low-key Covers and Originals
 1:10 p.m. Hull – Alternative Rock Band
 1:40 p.m. Unruly Theatre Project – The Alden's professional teen improv group
 2:20 p.m. Minahil Ishaq – Singer-Songwriter
 2:50 p.m. Kiril French – Broadway and Pop Solos
 3:00 p.m. Teen Character Awards – Presented by the McLean Citizens Association
 3:20 p.m. Kiril French – Broadway Tunes and Pop Solos
 3:45 p.m. Hull – Alternative Rock Band

SUNDAY/MAY 21
Braddock Bark. 1-4 p.m. At McLaren Pavilion, Lake Accotink Park, 5650 Heming Ave., Springfield. Don't miss the paw-tay! Get information from adoption agencies to learn how you can provide a forever home for a dog in need while you enjoy pet activities, local exhibitors, and more! Hosted by Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw in partnership with Celebrate Fairfax. This free event will be held rain or shine, and all dogs must be leashed. Visit the website: <https://celebratefairfax.org/event/braddock-bark/>

SUNDAY/MAY 21
Sound Bath. 4-5:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Work-

house Way, Lorton. The May Sound Bath will be conducted by Mark Torgeson. Mark will perform on angel harps and didgeridoo tuned to sacred geometries – harmonics for deep visceral transformation and a musical delight. Mark will further share original compositions on the piano! Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/sound-bath>

SUNDAY/MAY 21
NTRAK Model Trains Running. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. N Gauge (NTRAK) model trains will be running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5, \$6 for special events. Seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/MAY 21
Grind Day and Woodcarver. 12-3 p.m. at Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Rd, Great Falls. Cost is \$10. Online Registration Required.

SUNDAY/MAY 21
Messy Church at Lewinsville. 9:30-11 a.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Through storytelling, games, and crafts they will explore the person of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The activities time will be followed by interactive worship and brunch in Fellowship Hall. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

An Abstract Watercolor Demo with Chica Brunsvold will be held Friday, May 19, 2023 in McLean.

SATURDAY/MAY 20
BrewWorks. 12-6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Drink with the Workhouse Arts Center sampling beers, wine, and spirits! Delicious food and lawn games, listen to local bands. Browse galleries, artist studios, gift shop and Lucy Burns Museum. Cost: \$5-\$75. Visit the website: workhousearts.org/brewworks

side of Dicks Sporting Goods), and on Sunday, May 21st, 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., at the BASIS Independent School, 8000 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. More than 2,500 runners are anticipated to participate at each event. The GOTR NOVA 5K celebrates the completion of the 10-week season by 3rd to 8th graders (ages 8 to 14), who learn critical life skills through social-emotional based lessons and physical endurance training.

MAY 20-21
Girls on the Run 5K Weekend. On Saturday, May 20th from 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Fair Oaks Mall (out-

MAY 20-21
Tephra ICA Arts Festival. At Reston

Alexandria Old Town Springtime Art Festival Returns

JOHN CARLYLE SQUARE

MAY 20 – 21

This weekend, May 20 -21, marks the return of the Alexandria Old Town Springtime Art Festival. The outdoor fine art affair takes place in John Carlyle Square on May 20 - 21 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

Featuring a juried selection of artwork from local and national fine artists, visitors to the free, outdoor event will see thousands of handmade, exquisite pieces of art across every medium, including life-sized sculpture, paintings, jewelry, pottery, textiles and more. The popular springtime event mirrors the caliber of works found during the September Alexandria Old Town Art Festival, which has been consistently voted by Sunshine Artists Magazine as one of the top-ranked art festivals in the nation.

WHAT: 3rd Annual Alexandria Old Town Springtime Art Festival
WHEN: Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21 from 10 am to 5 pm
WHERE: Old Town Alexandria in John Carlyle Square, Navigational: 300 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
 Free and open to the public
www.ArtFestival.com



Sculpture by Maduka Uduh



Jennifer Beaudoin Moffitt, Kensington, MD, Glass
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Legals

City of Fairfax Urgent Election Notice

The registration deadline to vote in the June 20, 2023 Democratic Primary is Tuesday, May 30, 2023. Applications must be postmarked by this date or received in-person by 5 p.m. You may also apply online by 11:59 p.m. at <https://elections.virginia.gov>. Office hours: M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. 10455 Armstrong Street, Suite 300 Fairfax, VA 703-385-7890.

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Asian Festival

FROM PAGE 11

ings such as ube, vanilla custard, matcha (green tea) custard, Nutella and black sesame custard.

Yomie's Rice x Yogurt will provide creamy yogurt drinks, Korean Inari sushi and mochi doughnut bites. And there'll even be a vendor - DeepFriedWatermelon - selling its namesake, Filipino deep-fried watermelon.

Entertainment

The fun will begin at 11:30 a.m. with the return of the Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe, as two lions will dance their way through downtown Main Street to join and awaken a third lion "sleeping" at Old Town Square. There, either Chan or OTFBA Chairman Josh Alexander will perform the lion-awakening ritual for the third lion by dotting its eyes with paint so it can see.

Then all three lions will perform briefly, prior to Fairfax City Councilmember So Lim's opening remarks at noon to officially start the festival. Several cultural performances will entertain the crowd at both the Main Stage at Old Town Square and the auxiliary stage on Main Street. Elaine Espinola Keltz, a local actor, podcast host and 2015 Mrs. District of Columbia, will also return as the event host and emcee.

Besides Jay R, entertainers will include Leif and J Matty - winners of an iHeart Radio & Hot 99.5-DC competition with their song, "Lucid." Bharathanatyam, an Indian classical dance group, will take the stage with founder and guru Indrani Davaluri, who holds a Masters in Performing Arts and has more than 700 performances all over the world to her credit.

Returning to the festival this year will be the highly popular cosplay costume contest in which people dress up as characters from popular movies, books, TV shows and video games. Attendees are always excited to see the participants' imagination and creativity and cheer for their favorites.

Debra Wright Studio will create a special art installation called the Unity Tree, at Old Town Square. There, attendees may write their wishes on colorful tags to be placed on the tree. AALEAD will also accept donations there. The Unity Tree will then be on display for one or two weeks afterward for all to enjoy.

"We're excited that the OTFBA is again hosting the Asian Festival on Main this year in the cultural and social heart of Fairfax City," said Economic Development Director Chris Bruno. "As the merchants' association representing all Old Town Fairfax businesses, the OTFBA promotes the neighborhood as a great place to own a business, visit and spend time - and this event accomplishes that many times over."

For more information on becoming a sponsor, volunteer or participant, go to asianfestivalonmain.com.
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Virginia Has Made It Easier To Vote

Early voting, underway through June 17, could increase primary turnout in critical upcoming election.

BY CHLOE WATSON
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

RICHMOND, Va. If it feels like campaign season started earlier than usual this year, it has, with early voting for the primary election already in full swing.

In a primary election, voters will pick their preferred candidate to square off against the other party's candidate in November. All Virginia General Assembly seats, along with other local races, are on the ballot this year.

It is the first time Virginia voters have had the 45-day early voting period before a full legislature election. Voting will continue through June 17 at 5 p.m. for the June 20 primary day.

"That's a big change from the way it used to be in Virginia," said Stephen Farnsworth, political science professor and director of the University of Mary Washington Center for Leadership and Media Studies. "Where most of the votes were cast on election day, that's just no longer the case here."

Primaries typically have the lowest levels of turnout, he said.

"Most people are looking at planning summer vacations, going to graduations and weddings, rather than showing up to participate in primaries," Farnsworth said.

Virginia voters now have 45 extra days to work voting into their schedule.

"Virginia has made it a lot easier to participate, you can vote early right now," Farnsworth said.

Another key change this election is the use of the new redistricting map for legislative districts.

"The lines have been drawn in very different ways than they existed before the 2020 Census," Farnsworth said.

New boundaries have brought new candidates to the field, and also pushed incumbents into new territory — with new constituents. Or, pushed established candidates into a district where they face a colleague.

"What this has done is created a lot of opportunity for challengers to be competitive, because even incumbents are going to be looking at an electorate that is different than the old electorate," Farnsworth said.

Some Virginia legislators have announced their retirements rather than choosing to run for reelection in the new districts.

This will cause a large generational change in 2023, according to Farnsworth.

"The legislature that takes office next January will be much younger than the current legislature," Farnsworth said. "It will also be a legislature that is less experienced; you'll have many first-time candidates because there are a great deal of open contests this year."

The election outcome will likely impact

the rest of Gov. Glenn Youngkin's term. If Republicans keep their House majority and take over the Senate, Youngkin might have a more successful final two years, Farnsworth said.

"That could mean tighter restrictions on abortion, it could mean more tax benefits for businesses," Farnsworth said. "Those two things are probably at the top of the list of how things would change if there were a unified government in Virginia."

Two years ago, the governor's office and the House of Delegates flipped red and wrested away Democratic control of the legislative and executive branches. Since then, many legislative efforts have failed to pass the brick wall of each chamber.

Even if Democrats keep the Senate and win the House majority there will still be some of the gridlock of the past two years, according to Farnsworth.

Suburban districts will likely influence who gains legislative control, such as Chesterfield, Loudoun and Stafford counties, according to Farnsworth.

Not every district will have a primary election. Some candidates are running uncontested, and some Republicans will hold a convention in certain districts.

Early voting is done weekdays at the local registrar's office. Starting on June 10, voter registration offices will be open for early voting as well. Law requires early voting on the two Saturdays before the primary election day, and gives localities the option to open on Sundays also.

The deadline to register to vote, or update a registration is May 30. Voters can register after that date, but will be given a provisional ballot. The deadline for a ballot to be mailed to a voter is June 9.

Anyone may vote in the primary of their choice for their district, regardless of previous party participation.

A list of Democratic candidates can be found here: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/castyourballot/candidate-list/2023-june-primary/Dem-List-of-Candidates.pdf>

A list of Republican candidates can be found here: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/castyourballot/candidate-list/2023-june-primary/Rep-List-of-Candidates.pdf>

More information on the upcoming election, including voter registration and ballot lookup, can be found on the Virginia Department of Elections website: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/candidate-list/upcoming-elections.html>

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.

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A Break in the Action



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

When all is scheduled and done, it will have been four months between my last scan in early March and my next regularly scheduled scan in early July. As of today's date, April 26, 2023, I am approximately seven weeks past that early March scan and 10 weeks or so from the next scan. I am, to invoke a formerly familiar "CB" phrase, "in the rocking chair, good buddy." Meaning that I am enjoying being in the middle. Other than taking my 50-plus daily pills and getting my obligatory every-four-week lab work, I am on easy street: minimal cancer-related activities or responsibilities. For a cancer patient undergoing treatment and being scanned regularly, this kind of stress-free interval is as good as it gets. (Though I certainly realize that being told by your oncologist that you're in remission would be ideal, I live in the real world of managing expectations. Being told you have a "terminal" illness will do that to you. Moreover, having your cancer diagnosis change from lung cancer to thyroid cancer - after surviving nine years of treatment will likewise make you steady-on and cautiously optimistic. Still a cancer diagnosis looms large and is unpredictable. And each scan presents a patient with reminders of how tenuous one's grip on life can be. Minimizing this anxiety and/or rationalizing any cancer demands to allow you to try and live a semi normal life - without being totally preoccupied with your disease/life expectancy is the true prescription for success. No guarantees of course but as the doctor in Miles City advising Augustus McCray said in the third night of "Lonesome Dove" as to whether Gus would allow "sawbones" (as he called him) to cut off his remaining leg: "I assure you, sir, the alternative is grim.")

Aside from the 10 days my wife, Dina and I spent in Ne-gril, Jamaica in 1978, this interval is yet another honeymoon - of sorts: an escape/diversion from the everyday which for a cancer patient undergoing treatment might be more like every minute. Nevertheless, it's not as if I'm totally preoccupied with my health status (as in every second), but one is never far, emotionally, from the underlying, all-encompassing circumstances of your life: having an incurable form of papillary thyroid cancer for which the life-sustaining medication I take every day has a three-year-ish shelf life/effectiveness. And my three years-ish are up in the fall. What happens then? God only knows, literally. (I know from experience not to ask/discuss scenarios with my oncologist and endocrinologist. It's generally wait and see. I imagine, they know the options. Sharing them with me now however seems premature. They don't like to get too far ahead of the patient vis-à-vis options/what's next? I've asked and this is the answer I've received most often.)

Fortunately, that three-year timeline is not hard and fast. It's a median-type measure. Some shorter, some longer. And most importantly, every patient is unique and the miscellaneous interactions between your medicine and your body/tumors is not cast in stone either. Everyone is different, and the doctors don't really know if your differences are enough to win the day and survive past your window which supposedly is closing. This reality permeates my subconscious - and consciousness as well. And even though I've been told and understand all of this, somehow, I've got to ignore it, and somehow delude myself into thinking I'm more than a statistic and the fall of '23 has no more meaning to me than any other than it's around my birthday, wedding anniversary, my brother's birthday, and my parent's birthdays and their respective dates of death and even the time of my Bar Mitzvah all those years ago. Adding my cancer-medicine-affected timeline to this rather impressive list of significant events in the fall seems a bit too much to bear. As such, I will choose not to. (Though I realize that ignoring any of this won't really solve the problem/inevitableness of it, I likewise don't see how focusing on a negative - me dying, can have a positive impact on me living. And I refuse to be a victim of my own circumstances.)

And right now, being/living in the middle of an extended interval between scans when I'm not stressing nor waiting for results, enables me to damn the torpedoes and live (try to anyway) full speed ahead. I will not be dragged down - nor bogged down either. I will enjoy any port in this unexpected storm (no cancer history in my immediate family as well as being a lifelong non-smoker) and let the scan results and the presumptive ineffectiveness of my cancer medication fall where they may. As I've often said, if and when anything bad happens, it will be bad enough when it does happen so that I'd rather not put the cart before the horse and make it bad now. I'd just as soon ride off into the sunset after something bad happens, not before. I don't see any advantage to getting to the front of the line. Until that line becomes obvious to me, I'm happy to bide my time, mind my own business and try (quoting Richard Pryor) to "keep some sunshine on your face."

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

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