

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Lorton ♦ Clifton



Native plants, such as these Black-eyed Susans and Common Milkweed, attract Monarch butterflies and other beneficial insects to area gardens, and can help weather the impact of climate change.

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Professionals Learn More About Using Native Plants

Native plants may be climate change survivors.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Imagine a world without forests. Lands unable to control soil erosion, filter and clean water, control temperatures, store carbon, provide building materials, produce food and medicines, or soothe the soul with the sound of rustling leaves. While we often think that efforts to save forests are needed at far away locations, like the Brazilian rainforest, Africa and other parts of South America, Northern Virginia has a little recognized crisis of its own. Native trees and forests are disappearing here too. Our trees are uprooted by highway and building construction, displaced by aggressive non-native trees, and attacked and killed by alien vines.

Those foreign plants block out the opportunity for native trees and plants to grow where space remains. Plant NOVA Trees, an organization made up of a partnership of non-profit groups, for-profit companies, and government agencies, is calling attention to Northern Virginia's disappearing native tree canopy, and campaigning not only to plant more trees, but to save the mature trees we have. (For more on their effort to save trees from alien killers, see "To the Rescue!" The Connection, July 13-19, pg 6-7)

In their five year focus on saving trees, running through Fall of 2026, Plant NOVA recognizes "the campaign's success rests on the action of the millions of individuals who make up our Northern Virginia community." Suburban housing developments have eliminated contiguous woods and left only many separated wood edges - creating the space most ripe for invasive vines and aggressive foreign trees to take hold. With most such land in private hands, Plant NOVA suggests that homeowners could make better use of their existing lawn care services to remove alien plants on their properties and rescue mature trees during their on-going contracted yard maintenance. The group hopes residents will request more native plants for use in home landscapes from designers and in stock available at plant nurseries.

Receiving more requests for native plants and services, many property design, nursery, and lawn and landscaping businesses admit a need for more training for their staff. Employees need knowledge to iden-



Barbara Ryan, owner, Chain Bridge Native Landscapes, urges homeowners to look to climate change-resistant native plants.



Margaret Fisher, a principle coordinator for the Plant NOVA Trees effort and organizer of the professional training conference, received recognition from Virginia's General Assembly for her many years of work to enhance the landscape and culture of Northern Virginia.

PHOTOS BY
SUSAN LAUME/
THE CONNECTION



Native plants, such as these Black-eyed Susans and Common Milkweed, attract monarch butterflies and other beneficial insects to area gardens.

tify native versus non-native plants, know the preferred growing conditions of various species, and how best to eliminate non-natives. As a means to help better prepare businesses to respond to requests for these services, the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia held a conference in conjunction

with Plant NOVA on Aug. 22 for professionals on landscaping for conservation. Hosted by Merrifield Garden Center, the information presented by ecological landscape design firm, Chain Bridge Native Landscapes' owner, Barbara Ryan, and representatives of local government urban forestry and watershed management, focused on the use of native plants and their role in erosion control and providing riparian buffers. Said Ryan, "I'm happy to do whatever I can to get the word out about the benefits of conserving land and use of natives, to improve the ecology system and address climate change." Twenty-seven area companies sent staff, including designers, installers, and maintenance staff, to gain more native plant knowledge and share soil erosion and conservation ideas, ultimately to support their customers.

Ryan suggested that as homeowners increasing look for plants resistant to climate change, they will look more and more toward native plants. She advises that such plants, when densely planted as is their preference, provide shade, use less water, absorb carbon, and do better in the heat. Promoting plants and green space in this way is part of Fairfax County's Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/>

climate-planning-action).

The good news is that horticulture improvements can be less expensive than making the structural changes for soil conservation that would be needed if native plants die en masse. Ryan says that clients typically now ask to replace turf grass for more environmentally friendly options. Starting small and gradually replacing grass and non-native plants over time can make a positive environmental change with less cost and require less weeding effort in the first years. She also advises that "most invasives can be removed successfully without herbicides on home properties." The practice also keeps costs lower.

Other speakers included Maria Harwood, of Fairfax County's Urban Forest Management; Clay Morris of Prince William County's Watershed Management; and Margaret Fisher of Plant NOVA Natives.

What is considered a native plant? A native evolved within the local food web and has sustaining relationships with insects, animals and other plants in its ecosystem. Because many living things evolve to deal with specific circumstances and because that evolution takes a very, very long time, many native plants cannot survive the onslaught of invasive plants introduced into their environment. Sources of information on the Commonwealth's natives include: "Flora of Virginia," by Alan Weasley, J. Christopher Ludwig, and John F. Townsend; and Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation's plant brochures by region, found at

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/document/cp-nat-plants.pdf>.

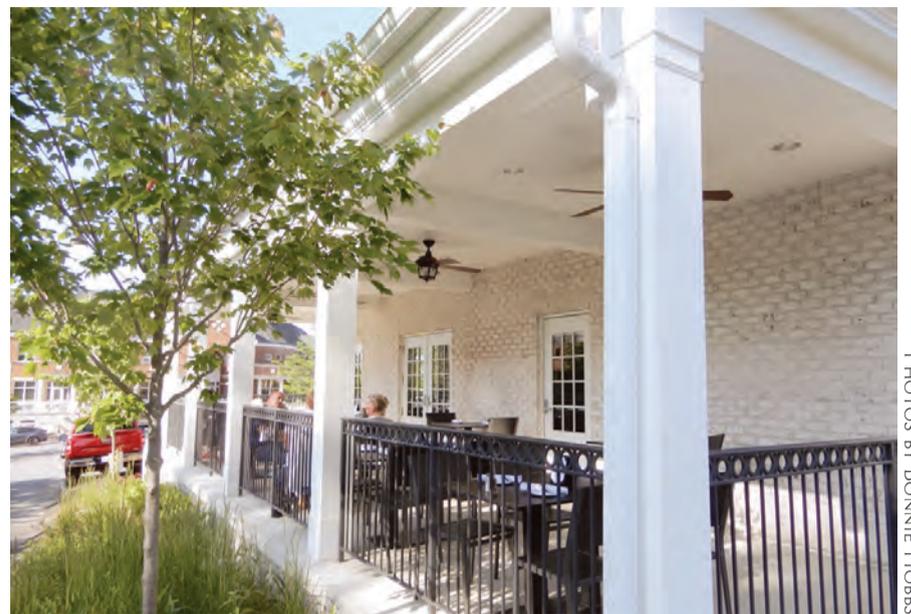
The Plant NOVA Natives website lists design and care professionals who are willing and able to concentrate on native plants, provides lists of recommended native plants for Northern Virginia, and a vast amount of other information.

<https://www.plantnovanatives.org/>

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Cutting the ribbon are (from left) Josh Alexander, Tara Borwey, Aaron McDade, Tess Rollins, Dawn McGruder, Chef Stephen McRae and sous chef Chuck Taylor.



The shaded, side patio overlooks the Kitty Pozer Garden.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS

Neighborhood Restaurant with Upscale, Modern Feel

After a year in Fairfax City, Draper's holds ribbon cutting.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Draper's Steak & Seafood, at 3936 Blenheim Blvd. in Fairfax, is in a location steeped in history. Next to Fairfax City's Old Town Square, it was built on the former site of the super-popular Fairfax Surf Shop, which – after 43 years – moved to nearby Courthouse Plaza to make way for this restaurant.

Adorned with a colorful and eye-catching mural extending greetings from the City, it also stands in front of the Draper House. Constructed in 1821, this local landmark is the second-oldest home in the Fairfax Historic District. So it was with great excitement that the restaurant recently held its official ribbon cutting on its one-year anniversary.

"This day has been a long time coming," said Economic Development Authority (EDA) Commissioner Dawn McGruder. "Years ago, when I came here to get soccer cleats for my son, never could I have imagined such a beautiful place. The EDA helped develop a new, elevated concept in the heart of Old Town Fairfax. The Draper name is rich in City history, and the mural on the back of the building's exterior is a fitting welcome to Fairfax as drivers round the bend from Main Street West onto Blenheim Boulevard."

Also congratulating Draper's on its anniversary was Old Town Fairfax Business Association (OTFBA)

Executive Director Tess Rollins. "They let us use their parking lot during our Asian Festival and will participate in Rock the Block, so they're already an active member of our community," she said.

"We started working on this project in 2017, and we're excited and proud to have been here a year now," said owner Aaron McDade. "And we look forward to being here many more years to come." He said Fairfax City was involved in the name, and that was fine with him: "They sent me 12 names to consider, and Draper's was the name that most resonated with me because the Draper House is behind us."

When it came to the vision for his restaurant, however, McDade knew exactly what he wanted to do. "As a City resident for 15 years, I wanted to create a neighborhood restaurant for people to come to and not have to travel far to enjoy a great meal," he said.

Serving lunch and dinner, Draper's is open Tuesday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. It's closed Mondays, but offers brunch, Saturday-Sunday, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. And happy hour, Tuesday-Friday, 3-6 p.m., has its own menu, separate from the restaurant's regular offerings.

Draper's focuses on steaks, such as filets, ribeyes and New York strip, a variety of signature seafood dishes, plus pasta entrees and chicken dishes, as well as salads and vegetarian offerings. "There's something for everyone," said McDade. "And we change our seafood dishes every couple of months. Some of our most popular are our shrimp and scallop risotto, our salmon entrees, branzino and an Asian ahi tuna dish."

It also features a Deluxe Angus Burger with caramelized on-



Danielle Moore serves appetizers of steak-and-cheese spring rolls.



Eric Willard offers cheeseburger sliders after the ceremony.



This colorful mural on the building's rear is visible from Main Street and Blenheim Boulevard.

ions, crispy bacon, white cheddar cheese, lettuce, tomato, Draper's sauce and French fries. And the crabcake sandwich made from jumbo lump crabmeat comes with lemon aioli and fries. Sides include

salad, grilled asparagus, roasted Brussels sprouts and crisp fingerling potatoes.

Among the decadent desserts are a chocolate torte, blueberry sour cream pie, white chocolate

bread pudding, Key Lime pie, and Banana Cream Dream – an inventive concoction of deep-fried banana cheesecake, cinnamon-sugar, a tortilla wrap and vanilla ice cream.

McDade said business has been good, especially on the weekends. Reservations are available via Open Table or at the restaurant's Website, drapersrestaurant.com. The sleek, black-and-white interior boasts large windows and high ceilings which give it a spacious feel. And an already-popular highlight is the inviting, outdoor seating on Draper's roomy, covered patio overlooking the Kitty Pozer Garden next to Old Town Square.

"We're excited to be here," said McDade. "We love how the building turned out and the neighbor-friendly ambience we've created. We have delicious food and a great bar in a cozy place that also has an upscale, modern feel. It's like a slice of D.C. in Fairfax City."

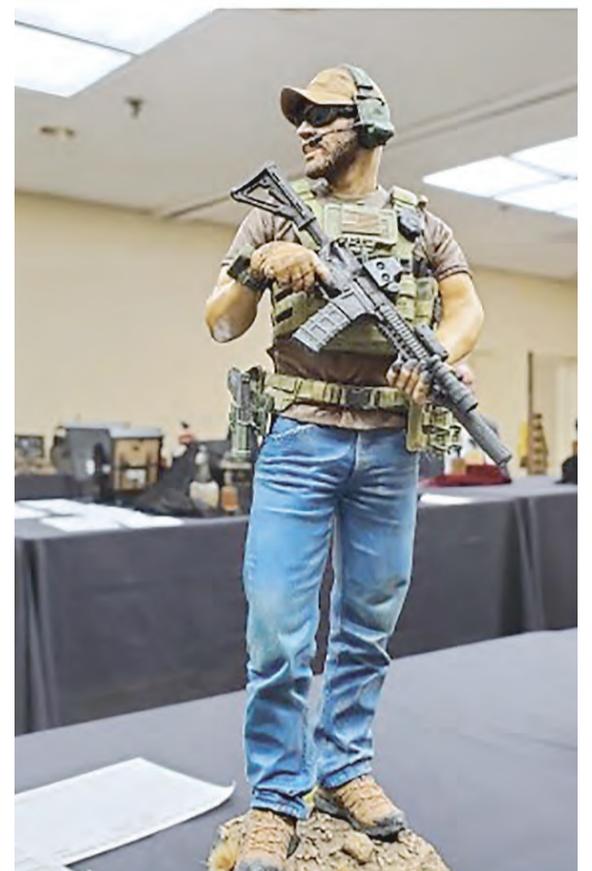
HOBBY



This Union soldier by club member Greg Paspatis is a U.S. Marine Corps figure that would have fought in the First Battle of Bull Run in Manassas.



These soldiers were created by club member Jose Martinez depicting life at Valley Forge during the Revolutionary War.



A special ops soldier in Afghanistan.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Historical Lessons Via Toy Soldier Hobbyist

Upcoming show in Springfield includes intricate painting and military themes.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

NCMSS 62nd Annual Washington Show

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30, 9 A.M.-5 P.M.
Springfield Hilton
6550 Loisdale Road
Springfield, VA 22150

In late September the ballrooms of Springfield Hilton will be full of Army artists and enthusiasts putting on the 62nd annual National Capital Model Soldier Society show consisting of exhibitions, modeling demonstrations, military displays and hobby vendors gathering in honor of 240 years of Army history.

"It's an event to honor history through art," said Burt K. Thompson, a Mount Vernon resident, Club President and Show Chairman. Thompson has been at the helm of this event for the past few years and appreciates the enthusiasm that oozes out of the event.

"They're very passionate for what they do," he said, referring to the participants who focus on the particular activities of the U.S. Army, a certain time period, uniforms, vehicles or the art techniques used to create the dioramas and models. Some of the exhibits are non-military too.

"It's really fun," Thompson said.

During the year the Nation Capital Model Soldier Society meets every month at Edison High School in Franconia.

It's not something a person just goes out and does though. Thompson was born right

after the Nation Capital Model Soldier Society was formed in the early 1960s and he started in the army in 1984, retiring as a Brigadier General 21 years later. Somewhere in his life he came across the work of Shepherd Paine, the father of box dioramas. This is where Thompson learned the craft. Thompson worked on painting and modeling Army life and has a model of a helicopter crash he said was amongst his best.

Museum Efforts

Thompson splits his time between the club and his fundraising efforts at the U.S. Army Museum in Fort Belvoir where he is the President of the Army Historical Foundation, which is a 5013C fundraising arm for the museum. He runs the gift store and café too, which raise funds for the museum too.

In early summer they celebrated a success at the museum when \$5 million was raised for the opening of the Warrior's Field and

National Capital Model Soldier Society
62nd ANNUAL SHOW
Honoring The Revolutionary War's End 1783
240 Years
SEPT. 30, 2023
Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM
at the
SPRINGFIELD HILTON
6550 Loisdale Rd
Springfield, VA

HIGHLIGHTS!

- Trophies and Sponsored Awards
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- Professional Photographer
- GUNDAM Build Tables & Giveaways!
- Modeling Demonstrations
- Hobby Vendors

For Details and Program Updates Visit us @ **NCMSSClub.org**

Event flyer.

Plaza out in front of the museum. On June 10, the U.S. Army birthday festival was celebrated in the plaza.

The combination of U.S. Army history and

building on that history was on Thompson's wish list all along. Now it has come true.

"My dream job was to be an Army historian," he said.

Barricade Ends Peacefully

A man was safely taken into custody following a 6-hour barricade that ended around 10 p.m. Aug. 29, in a neighborhood near Monument Drive and Government Center Parkway.

On Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023, around 4 p.m., officers were called to the 4000 block of Park Chase Drive in Fair Oaks for the report of a man armed with firearms threatening to harm himself. The man barricaded himself inside of a townhome with an elderly woman. Officers responded and tried to make contact with the man.



Monument Drive was closed between Government Center Parkway and Monument Hills Way. Officers from FCPD Special Operations Division, Crisis Negotiations Team and Crisis Response Team, responded in efforts to peacefully resolve the situation.

The man was safely taken into custody around 10 p.m. The man is receiving services and the woman who was inside is safe. Both occupants of the home were uninjured during the barricade.

Springfield Man Dies in Motorcycle Crash

A 22-year-old man died in a motorcycle crash on the afternoon of Aug. 31, 2023 in Fairfax Station.

On Aug. 31 at 1:22 p.m. officers responded to Henderson Road near Thistledown Trail for a single-vehicle crash involving a motorcycle. Preliminarily, detectives determined Merle Webster Beach Jr., 22, of Springfield was driving a stolen 2004 Suzuki motorcycle at a high rate of speed westbound on Henderson

Road. Beach crested a small hill, lost control and was separated from the motorcycle. Beach was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

This is the 11th non-pedestrian-related fatal crash in the County to date in 2023.

Climate Action Conference at Lake Braddock

Supervisor James Walkinshaw will hold his first Climate Action Conference at Lake Braddock Secondary School on Saturday, Sept. 30.

In Fairfax County, extreme heat, dangerous storms and neighborhood flooding are all projected to increase in coming years. The good news is that new local, state, and federal initiatives give all of us the opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint and save money.

The Climate Action Conference will provide an opportunity to learn about local incentives like our property tax deduction for solar, energy rebate programs through your electric utility, and the new federal tax credits available thanks to passage of the Inflation

Reduction Act. Fairfax County residents, businesses, non-profits, and faith communities can save thousands while doing their part to reduce emissions and fight climate change.

Walkinshaw, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, Chairman Jeff McKay, and Michael Forrester, Assistant Director of Partnerships with the Office of State and Community Energy Programs at the U.S. Department of Energy at the conference on Sept. 30 at Lake Braddock Secondary School (9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke) from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for this free, information-packed event. Reserve your spot <http://tinyurl.com/mryf62km>

Something Country

Rockin' country that gets you dancin'

Sept 22nd at the Electric Palm Restaurant 12745 Sea Ray Ln Woodbridge, VA 22192

8 pm to 12 am.

I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study
City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, and Prince George's County, MD

Virtual Public Information Meeting
Tuesday, September 12, 2023 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (presentation starts at 6:30 p.m.)
<https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside>

In-Person Public Information Meetings
All meeting times are 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. (presentation starts at 7 p.m.)

Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Oxon Hill High School (Auditorium), 6701 Leyte Dr, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center (Multi-purpose Room), 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

Wednesday, September 20, 2023
John R. Lewis High School (Cafeteria), 6540 Franconia Rd., Springfield, VA 22150

Learn about and provide input on the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study (495 Southside Study), an environmental study evaluating the potential extension of the Express Lanes system on the southern section of the Capital Beltway (I-495) by 11 miles from the Springfield interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Since introducing the 495 Southside Study at the Public Information Meetings in May 2022, VDOT has developed proposed preliminary alternative concepts to address identified transportation needs within the study area, which are to extend and provide continuity of the Express Lanes system on I-495, provide additional travel choices, reduce congestion and improve travel reliability, improve safety, and provide consistency with local and regional plans. VDOT will share preliminary alternative concepts for review and input at upcoming public meetings to inform the range of alternatives that will be carried forward in the study.

The virtual public information meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 12, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. with a presentation at 6:30 p.m. Visit <https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside> or call 703-691-6715 for information about how to access and participate in the virtual meeting.

The in-person public information meetings will be held on Wednesday, September 13, at Oxon Hill High School, Tuesday, September 19, at Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center, and Wednesday, September 20, at John R. Lewis High School. All meetings will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m., with a formal presentation beginning at 7 p.m. Meeting display boards will be available to review, and VDOT representatives will be present to answer questions.

VDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, is conducting an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771.

Review and provide input on VDOT's preliminary alternative concepts that will inform the range of alternatives to be carried forward in the Environmental Assessment on the webpage (<https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside>), or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-691-6715 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions. Meeting materials will be posted on the study webpage prior to the public information meetings.

Provide your input by completing a public opinion survey at <https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside>, and by providing your written comments at one of the meetings or submitting them by October 2, 2023 to Nick Nies, AICP, VDOT 495 Southside Express Lanes Study NEPA Project Manager, 9030 Stony Point Parkway, Suite 220, Richmond, VA 23235, or email 495southsideexpresslanes@VDOT.Virginia.gov.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.

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Village Square at Crosspointe

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JK Taekwon School703-646-5596	Wasinger & Co Properties703-828-5660
Family Gentle Dental703-493-9000	

Village Square at Crosspointe

9009 Silverbrook Road
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

CAR SHOW

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Brian Hendricks with his 2004 Sportster motorcycle.



Kevon Lazare and sons (from left) Declan, 4, and Kieran, 1, pose by a 1985 Toyota Celica GTS convertible.



Some of the many attendees of the Labor Day Car Show make their way down University Drive.

Cool Cars Brighten Sweltering Summer Day

More than 6,500 people attended the 24th annual Labor Day Car Show in Fairfax City.



Emma Jenkins, 5, and mom Anne Uyeda like this 1930 Model A Ford.



From left, Saffron Tonko and Christina Kim, with Teddy the Goldendoodle, in front of a 1967 blue, Ford Bronco.



Posing beside a 1954 Ford Skyliner are (adults, from left) Madeline Zecman, Kelly Smith and daughter Maggie Smith, and Jack Snyder, Madeline's husband, with (from left) Maggie's son, Gabriel Sones, 3, and Luke Snyder, 2-1/2.



Miguel Oyola, 7, checks out a 1983 Mazda RX7 GSL.



Brent Golden inside his brand-new, 2023 C8Z06 Corvette.



Yaya Hsu checking out a 1959, pink-and-white Ford Sunliner convertible.



Henry Sergent with his 1969 Chevy Camaro RS55.



William Peil with his 1949 Ford F1 truck



One of the most eye-catching cars was this 1973 Volkswagen Sandrail.

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ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAYS THRU OCT. 19

Weekly Farmers Markets. Thursdays 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. At The PARC at Tysons, 8508 Leesburg Pike, Tysons. Celebrate Fairfax, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building community in Fairfax County, is excited to announce the launch of a weekly farmers market at The PARC at Tyson. The market is run by Potomac Farm Market, which has over 20 years of experience connecting communities to local farmers and artisanal food producers. Each week, residents can expect to find seasonal fruits and vegetables, fresh cut flowers, and other locally sourced specialties.

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

SEPT 4-10

Fairfax City Restaurant Week. At restaurants in Fairfax City. Some 30 participating restaurants will offer prix fixe menu experiences at set prices of \$25 for brunch/lunch and \$40 for dinners. Additionally, specialty restaurants offer a Two for \$10 Deal, providing food lovers the opportunity to further explore the rich variety and eclectic flavors of Fairfax food and drink purveyors. Fairfax City Restaurant Week allows diners to experience flavors from Azerbaijan to Vietnam. The ever-popular program will feature more than 30 participants, including Audacious Ale Works, Baku Delicious, Bellissimo, Bollywood Bistro, Cameron's Chocolates, Capital Ale House, Coyote Grill and Cantina, Curry Mantra, Draper's Steak and Seafood, Dolce Vita, El Pollo Rico, Hamrock's, Jas & Fam Caribbean Flavor, Kims Pho Kitchen + Bar, Marco's Pizza, Marumen, Meokja Meokja, Merkado Mexican Grill and Bar, Ned's New England Deck, Old Dominion Pizza Company, ONE Bar and Grill, Ornerly Beer Company, Patriots Pub and Grill, PJ Skidoos, Red Hot and Blue, Roots Natural Kitchen, The Auld Shebeen, The Wine House, and Vivi Bubble Tea. Visit fairfaxcityrestaurantweek.com.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 6

"How to Sort Fact From Fiction Online" Talk by AARP's Larry Lipman, 10 a.m. 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Free, refreshments. Sponsored by NARFE 1159. Also available by ZOOM; contact doujones500verizon.net by Sept. 4

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 6

Interfaith Forum for Survivor Support. Reston Community Center, Hunter Woods Room, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. A safe space for sharing how child sexual abuse can affect survivors and learning how you can support



The Burke Centre Festival will take place Sept. 9-10 in at 6060 Burke Centre Parkway in Burke.

them. Questions? Email Angie at 2020victimssurvivors@gmail.com. Join if you... Are a survivor. Are a supporter of a survivor. Want to learn how to support survivors.

SEPT. 7-10

Tysons Library Quarterly Book & Media Sale. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

Thursday, 7 September, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, 8 September, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday, 9 September, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, 10 September, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less

Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Email: tysonslibraryfriends@gmail.com. Call 703-338-3307 for additional information

THURSDAY/SEPT. 7

American Red Cross Blood Drive. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. It is urgent for donors of all ethnicities to support patients in need! Join us and support the community with your lifesaving blood donation. All donors will receive t-shirts and e certificates to Sports Cuts. For an appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor word: HEARTOF-GOLD or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

FRIDAY/SEPT. 8

Snack & Paint Night. 7-9 p.m. At the Old Firehouse Center, McLean. \$15/\$10 MCC district residents. Preregistration is recommended. Whether you are a beginner or an expert, love snacks or just want to get your hands dirty with some paint, come on down to the Old Firehouse Center for Snack & Paint Night. Led by a professional art teacher, families will create their own masterpieces while having tons of fun. All materials and snacks are included in the fee.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

Robinson Secondary Tag Day. Tag Day is the biggest fundraiser of the



The 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony takes place on Monday, Sept. 11, 2023 at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial in Great Falls.

year where all high school band and orchestra students canvass the entire attendance area to knock on doors and ask for donations. Residents should consider removing their "no soliciting" signs for the morning -- students are instructed to not knock on the door if there is a "no soliciting" sign -- and keep an eye out for members of the orchestra in their Robinson Orchestra polo shirts and all members of the Robinson Marching Rams in their full uniforms.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

Dog Daze Returns. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At The Water Mine, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Join Fairfax County Park Authority for a howling good time at the annual Dog Daze event at The Water Mine. Experience the joy of watching dogs swim and have an all-around good time. The popular event once again features a canine resource fair, so you can visit pet-related vendors and learn more about fun opportunities for dogs around the county.

For the safety of the dogs and owners, please observe the following rules: All dogs must be current on vaccinations.

All dog handlers must be 18 years or older and supervise dogs at all times.

No female dogs in heat or puppies younger than 3 months old.

Aggressive or unruly dogs are not permitted.

Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their dogs.

Dogs swim at owners' risk.

Humans are not permitted in the pool. Entry costs \$10 per dog. All proceeds go to benefit parks through the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

Community Dental Day. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Virginia Smiles, 2553 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Vienna Smiles, a leading dental care provider in Vienna, is proud to announce its upcoming event - "Community Dental Day" an initiative aimed at promoting oral health and providing much-needed dental care to the local community. Community Dental Day event will provide an array of complimentary dental services, including cleanings, examinations, X-rays, and consultations. The experienced team of dental professionals will be on hand to address various oral health concerns and offer person-

alized guidance on maintaining a healthy smile. This event is open adults, and no appointments are necessary. Visit <https://www.viennasmilesva.com> or call 703-938-0212.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

Memorial Benefit Concert. 2 p.m. At Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Benefitting United Community and in memory of Phil Bolin, come to a Memorial Benefit Concert/Recital. Join in this enchanting performance honoring the memory of Phil Bolin featuring mezzo-soprano, Caroline Nielson, and pianist, Eddie Rothmel. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. All ticket purchases are non-refundable and will be donated to support United Community. Visit unitedcommunity.org/concerts.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 10

Grand Piano Celebration 2023. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Join in the spectacular opening of the 2023 Fall Concert season with A Grand Piano Celebration. This concert honors Mason's All-Steinway School. Outstanding student and faculty artists of the Reva and Sid Dewberry Family School of Music at George Mason University will be on stage to display their marvelous talents.

FUNDAY MONDAY

"Funday Monday is open to children of all ages, however is best suited for the preschool set! Funday Monday runs from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and — unless otherwise noted — is held at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There are plenty of free parking lots/garages in Old Town Fairfax. Stroller access is available at the side entrance Old Town Hall facing Route 236/Main Street. For more information visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts."

SCHEDULE

Sept. 11 -- Music Together Sing and Groove

Sept. 18 -- My Gym

Sept. 25 -- Music w/Marsha (Of the Positrons)

Oct. 2 -- Irish Dance w/McGrath Morgan

Oct. 9 -- No Program

Oct. 16 -- Music together Sing and Groove

Oct. 23 -- My Gym

Oct. 30 -- Kids Nature Puppet Show "Creepy Creatures"

Nov 6 -- Miss Mollie's Musical Fun

Nov. 13 -- No Program

Nov. 20 -- My Gym

Nov. 27 -- Drew Blue Shoes Magic

Dec. 4 -- Music Together Sing and Groove

Dec. 11 -- My Gym

Dec. 18 -- TBD

9-11 REMEMBRANCE

CEREMONY

Great Falls Freedom Memorial. On Monday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m., the annual 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial to honor the six residents of Great Falls and all others who lost their lives and suffered in the attacks and their aftermath. The event will feature patriotic songs, a Boy Scout color guard, a keynote speech by Great

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 9

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

Falls native Vitale Christy, and a candlelight vigil. The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. Updates to the schedule will be posted at www.gffreedom.org.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 16

1st Annual Celebrate Virginia. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza, McLean. Enjoy Virginia Beer and Wine Tastings; Live Music; Artisan Market; Participate in Painting a Community Mural; VIP Tent Activities. Bring the family and have some fun outdoors celebrating the talent of Virginia as you enjoy live music and entertainment, shop local artisans' wares, indulge in Virginia Beer Tasting, VIP Wine Tasting, mural painting, giveaways, and more!

BULLETIN BOARD

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

GIRLS ON THE RUN REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration for the fall 2023 season of Girls on the Run is open! Registration will close on Friday, Sept. 15 at 11:59 p.m. Girls on the Run (GOTR) is an out-of-school program designed to help young girls build key life skills through dynamic lessons. Teams are led by trained volunteer coaches who lead by positive example and have a passion for helping others be the

SATURDAY/SEPT. 16

Virginia Native American Festival. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. The Native American Festival brings together tribal members from throughout the Commonwealth. Discover the history and long-standing tradition with the Rappahannock Native American Dancers and Drum group. Engage in hands-on demonstrations, including bow and arrow use. Hear captivating stories passed down through generations. Discover traditional crafts with Virginia Tribal Vendors, and savor culinary delights with on-site concessions. The cost is \$12 per person. For more information, visit the Riverbend Park website. Call 703-759-9018 or email FCPARiverbend@fairfaxcounty.gov.

best version of themselves. Teams typically meet twice a week for 75-90 minutes and are led by volunteer coaches. The 10-week season will begin the week of September 11th and conclude at the celebratory 5K events the weekend of November 18-19. Each practice has a corresponding lesson from the Girls on the Run research-based curriculum, which focuses on building social, emotional, and physical skills while

Burke Centre Festival

Sept. 9 & 10, 2023. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. & Sun: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wine & Beer Garden Hours: 12-5 p.m. Both Days. At 6060 Burke Centre Parkway in Burke.

Extended Wine & Beer Garden Saturday only, 5-10 p.m. Last call @9 p.m.*Must be ages 21 & up to purchase and/or consume alcohol. Photo ID required.*

Saturday, 9/9/23 Opening Ceremony at 9:30 AM:

Features a brief Flag-Raising led by the Burke VFW Post 5412 & Scout Troop 1345 with Special Guest Dignitaries and a Quilts of Valor Awards Ceremony

Bloodmobile on site both days
<https://burkecentre.com/>

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 - ❖ Scout's Monkey Bridge
 - ❖ Live Performances
 - ❖ Roving Characters
 - ❖ Clown, Puppets & Magic Shows
 - ❖ Festival Foods
 - ❖ Bloodmobile on site
 - ❖ Amusement Rides: Inflatables, Mechanical & Pony Rides
 - ❖ Nursing Mom's Private Tent
 - ❖ Basketball Toss
 - ❖ Midway-style Games
 - ❖ Community Outreach Booths featuring giveaways & drawings
 - ❖ After-hours Wine & Beer Garden* with live music
 - ❖ and much more!
- Free Shuttle Bus Service along Burke Centre Pkwy
Parking also available at all 5 Burke Center Conservancy com-

munity centers.

Saturday, Sept. 9 - Shuttle Bus Hours: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 10 - Shuttle Bus Hours: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Shuttle Bus Stops

A) Fairview Elementary School (5815 Ox Rd) - Bus stop @ Rt. 123 & Burke Centre Pkwy)

B) Oaks Community Center (5708 Oak Leather Dr) - Bus stop @ Oak Leather Dr & Burke Centre Pkwy

C) Landings Community Center (6001 Cove Landing Rd) - Bus stop @ Cove Landing Rd & Burke Centre Pkwy

D) Burke Centre Conservancy Festival Grounds (6060 Burke Centre Pkwy)

E) Ponds Community Center (9837 Burke Pond Lane) - Bus stop @ Burke Pond Ln & Burke Centre Parkway

F) Burke School (9645 Burke Lake Rd) - Bus stop @ Burke Lake Rd & Burke Centre Pkwy

encouraging healthy habits for life. While many teams meet at schools, GOTR NOVA also offers community teams based out of neighborhoods, community centers, and parks. If a team is not offered at your school, make sure to check out GOTR NOVA's interactive map to find a team near you!

Girls on the Run programming is specifically designed for elementary school girls starting in grade 3

while Heart & Sole programming is created for middle school girls. Visit www.gotrnova.org.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR CAR FREE DAY 2023

World Car Free Day 2023 will be held Friday, Sept. 22 in the metropolitan Washington region, and registration is now open. This annual event organized by COG's

Commuter Connections program encourages residents, commuters, and students to choose a greener way to travel by going car free or car lite on Friday, Sept. 22. By taking the free online pledge at carfreemetrodc.org, participants contribute to reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, improve their health,

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

HUNGER IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK!

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September is Hunger Action Month

Join AARP Virginia in supporting local food banks this September to help feed hungry families during Hunger Action Month. Take action and do your part to help fight food insecurity across the Commonwealth by volunteering, giving, or donating food.

Dial 2-1-1 or visit 211Virginia.org to find a food bank near you.

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ROUNDUPS

Help Stock Britepaths' Pantry

Britepaths' emergency pantry is low on several items to help local families in crisis. The greatest needs currently are laundry detergent, toilet paper, dish soap, household cleaning spray, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant and toothbrushes (one per pack).

Donations may be brought to Britepaths' office at 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, in Fairfax, Monday-Friday, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Please call 703-273-8829 or email info@britepaths.org in advance to let them know when to expect the drop-off. Items may also be ordered via the nonprofit's Amazon Wish List at <https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/30LSP2LL-WHRPV>.

National Dance Day is Sept. 16 in Fairfax City

The City of Fairfax will celebrate National Dance Day on Saturday, Sept. 16, with a wide variety of dance performances, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The free event will be held at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. Attendees will see multiple styles of dance, ranging from ballet to Korean pop, country line dancing, Irish step, jazz, hip hop, contemporary and Scottish Highland.

Woman's Club of Fairfax Food Drive

To help food-insecure residents in Fairfax City, the Woman's Club of Fairfax is holding a food drive, from now through Sept. 30. Canned and non-perishable food items may be dropped off at Fairfax United Methodist Church, 10300 Stratford Ave., and at the City's Parks and Rec Department office in Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St., Room 123. All donations will go to the food pantries of the church and of Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

and qualify for great prizes. Interested residents can simply take the pledge to reduce their single occupancy trips on Sept. 22 by choosing an alternative travel option such as public transit, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling, scootering, walking, or simply teleworking. Each registrant will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win great prizes from this year's sponsors.

NoVa Sr. Olympics Hits Record Registration

Registration for the 2023 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics has hit a record number of 924, up 11% over last year. Herb Levitan, NVSO Chair, said the largest increases were in the 70-74, 75-79 and 80-84 age groups. "City of Falls Church, a jurisdictional sponsor, doubled their registration and almost all of the sponsors had increases," Levitan said. "Table tennis and Wii bowling had over 50% increases."

NVSO begins Saturday, Sept. 9 with opening ceremonies at 9:30 a.m., followed by nine track events at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 S. Jefferson St., Arlington. Events will continue through Sunday, Sept. 24 at over 20+ venues throughout Northern Virginia. All events are open to the public to observe. The daily schedule of events is posted on

the website at www.nvso.us. Event results will also be posted throughout the two weeks of competition.

NVSO is sponsored by the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church. NVSO is also supported by Gold Patrons who contribute \$1000 enabling NVSO to purchase and replace equipment and services, promote participation and provide awards of recognition. All money donated is used for NVSO activities. It is a non-profit 501-C-3 organization. 2023 Gold Patrons are Retirement Unlimited Inc., Facial Plastic Surgery Center, The Jefferson, Advanced Hearing Services, Greenspring Village, Hunters Woods at Trails Edge, Elance Luxury Living, Goodwin Living, Sentara Health, Aetna and Falcons Landing.

FCPS Library Renamed For Student and Family Advocate

Sought success for all students.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

Few people can match Dr. Lawrence "Larry" Bussey's thirty-year activism in Fairfax County Public Schools, putting minority student achievement and parent and family engagement first. According to school board member-at-large Karen Keyes-Gamara, Dr. Bussey personified the biblical phrase, "I am my brother's keeper."

"He was willing to carry the weight of others to improve the next generation, and for that, we are so very grateful," Keyes-Gamara said. On Thursday evening, Aug. 31, Keyes-Gamara read a naming proclamation at the board's first regular meeting for the 2023-2024 school year. The date was a little more than a month after the first anniversary of Larry Bussey's death on July 22, 2022.

The proclamation directed Superintendent Michelle Reid to "rename the Family Resource Center library the 'Dr. Larry Bussey Family & Community Library.'" The renaming would be a lasting tribute to Dr. Bussey's dedication to educating and equipping families to advocate for their children's educational rights and needs.

Dr. Bussey was a "strong voice" in developing the One Fairfax policy, Keyes-Gamara said. He was the "data man," not the type "to simply shake things up."

"He would take you to the numbers he had meticulously analyzed to help us understand where improvements could be made. His MSAOC reports always helped us know that we could do better. It was in the numbers," Keyes-Gamara said.

Bussey was a founding member of the first FCPS Minority Student Achievement Joint Committee. The ad hoc committee, formed in 1992, developed an action plan and made recommendations that included re-examining the curriculum, changing administrative structures, and improving parent outreach. Bussey was a committee member for thirty years, first as co-chair during the 1995-1996 school year and then as a community repre-



Dr. Lawrence "Larry" Bussey

sentative or staff liaison under six superintendents until he died.

In her remarks at the proclamation, Keyes-Gamara recalled that when she was considering running for school board six years ago, people she trusted told her, "If you want to understand FCPS and you want to make a difference, talk to Dr. Bussey."

"He has been and was a guiding light. ... He was always concerned about every student having an opportunity to achieve excellence," Keyes-Gamara said. Before coming to FCPS, Bussey worked on policy decisions for the Department of Education to effect real change. Bussey's advocacy stemmed from "an incredibly kind heart."

School board member Karen Corbett Sanders, who seconded the motion, wanted to be part of the proclamation, she said, because of the location the board was about to rename. "It is appropriate because Dr. Bussey was the most family-centered person" she knew. "And he knew that the key to a student's success was centering the families around that student and ensuring the parents and families add the resources necessary to ensure their family's success and their student's success."

School Board member Megan McLaughlin, a data enthusiast herself, said that while Bussey was incredibly kind and joyful, he was also "a very serious and substantive advocate."

"I couldn't be more happy and more honored to get to vote tonight, where we can honor him and his tremendous legacy," McLaughlin said.

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Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

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

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

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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July 16th Has Come and Gone



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

Through no acknowledgement by me. The acknowledgement came from my sister-in-law, Vanessa. (The date not exactly unbeknownst to me, more like lost in the ether.) July 16th, 2023 was the one-year anniversary of the first day my brother Richard was admitted ("ambulanced" is more like it) to the hospital. The date which is firmly stuck in my brain is Dec. 3rd, the date of his death, which some of you regular readers are no doubt familiar. And likely the subject of a future column – or two, as we get closer to the actual date of his semi-unexpected, though not totally surprising, death. This column is not about dates or acknowledgements, however. It's about a phone call and a story that I was not ready to tell, which became increasingly obvious as I stammered and stuttered my way through the call.

The call to which I'm now going to refer was a call I made to one of my brother's nearly 2,000 clients. As it so happens, I had spoken to this client about a year or so ago concerning a Social Security issue I was having. Per my brother's referral, I contacted these clients for advice - as both husband and wife previously worked as lawyers for the Social Security Administration. I had needed some insight on the best way to reconcile a financial discrepancy between me and Social Security. These clients were helpful, but it was hardly "Casablanca," in that it was not "the beginning of a beautiful friendship." It was simply a one-time request for advice/assessment of a situation I was experiencing with Social Security about my retirement benefits. The point being: these clients and I did not have any kind of relationship.

Recently I had cause – and need, to contact these clients about this same Social Security issue as before. Still, my call was out of the blue as it had been previously when I had initially reached out. Their phone rang and the wife picked up the receiver and naturally said "Hello." I said "Hello" as well and introduced myself. She knew immediately who I was and excitedly asked "How's your brother? I haven't heard from him in months" (ordinarily he's in very regular contact with his clients). To which I responded with a brief exhale, then began muttering to myself that she/they don't know about Richard's death – and now, quite unexpectedly, I had to tell this extremely sad tale. I was not prepared for the gruesome task at hand: the recounting of my brother's final few months of life.

The greatest difficulty I have discussing my brother's death is when I get a totally out-of-the-blue question about his status/death from someone from whom I might not be anticipating such a query. (Cheryl, my brother's Dir. Of Operations had sent out a mass email to his clients alerting one and all to Richard's passing – and of course, there was an obituary in the Washington Post.) This was that exact situation. I tried to compose myself as I slowly began the story of Richard's month's long hospitalization, his cancer, his surgery, his two weeks in a rehab hospital, and finally his return home and ultimate death on Dec. 3rd. And as I continued to detail his last few months; my voice cracked, my eyes watered, and I began to cry – controllably, all the while sharing some of the facts and feelings with these clients.

Clients of Richard's who I knew he had known going back 25 years. I tried to be as open and honest as possible about what had happened to Richard. I knew he would expect nothing less from me when talking with his clients. It wasn't easy – for either of us. They were shocked and saddened to hear of Richard's death. Apparently, they never received – or overlooked, the mass email that Cheryl had sent.

Here I thought I was a big shot; having handled/assimilated my brother's death as responsibly and maturely as one would hope. But the first time that I had to – unexpectedly, answer questions concerning his death, the three and half months preceding it and the story of how Vanessa found Richard on the floor that final morning and then called 911, I crumbled. Maybe that's why I whiffed acknowledging July 16th, his initial hospitalization in ICU, and all the surrounding circumstances. It's still too hard for me. (As the old joke says: "When God made him, they broke the mold: You should see what they did to the mold maker.") There will never be another like him.

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

Nature's Late Summer Bounty

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Nature's fresh produce market is open with its bounty of late season offerings of nectar, fruits, and nuts for insects, birds, and mammals. The fall bounty is important to wildlife providing for their young, preparing for migration or stopping along the way, or building fat stores to carry them through less bountiful periods of colder weather. Trees and plants gain by propagation through pollination and scattering seeds. This beauty also draws attention to the interconnection of the elements of our ecosystem and the importance of insects and wildlife to our living world.



Black Walnut (*Jugulars nigra*) one of America's most valuable trees, prized for its wood which is resistant to decay, and nuts so loved by squirrels that they will chew through anything possible to reach a stash; also enjoyed by birds and people.



Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) a native of China, Japan and Vietnam, the fruit is eaten by birds after freezing softens the hard fruit that resembles apples. Bradford Pear trees are an aggressive invasive that forms large colonies and are no longer recommended for planting. South Carolina recently became the second state to ban nursery sale of the tree, effective in October 2024.



American Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) has hanging clusters of berries on reddish stems; the juice can be used as ink and dye, though all parts are poisonous. Food source for song birds and smaller mammals such as white-footed mice, even opossums and raccoons, which are not affected by its toxins. Its name comes from the Algonquin word meaning plant. Likely used in the novel "Hunger Games" as the berries Katness offered to Peeta. Katness's name, also likely comes from another plant, Sagittaria, whose common names include Arrowwood and Katniss, the latter used for the heroine in the story who is an archer.



Goldenrod (*Solidago*), with over 100 species world-wide, is considered a keystone species, meaning it has a disproportionately large effect on the natural environment. It has been called the single most important plant for North American pollinator biodiversity. Eleven native bee species feed specifically on its flowers, and is used as a food source for many butterfly larva; songbirds eat the seed-heads; traditionally used in herbal medicines. It provides a very important late-season nectar source.



Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellate*) a deciduous shrub introduced in the U.S. in 1830 from east Asia, with small edible berries, when fully ripe; principally provides food & habitat for wildlife but an aggressive propagator and shades out native plants, degrading the native plant community



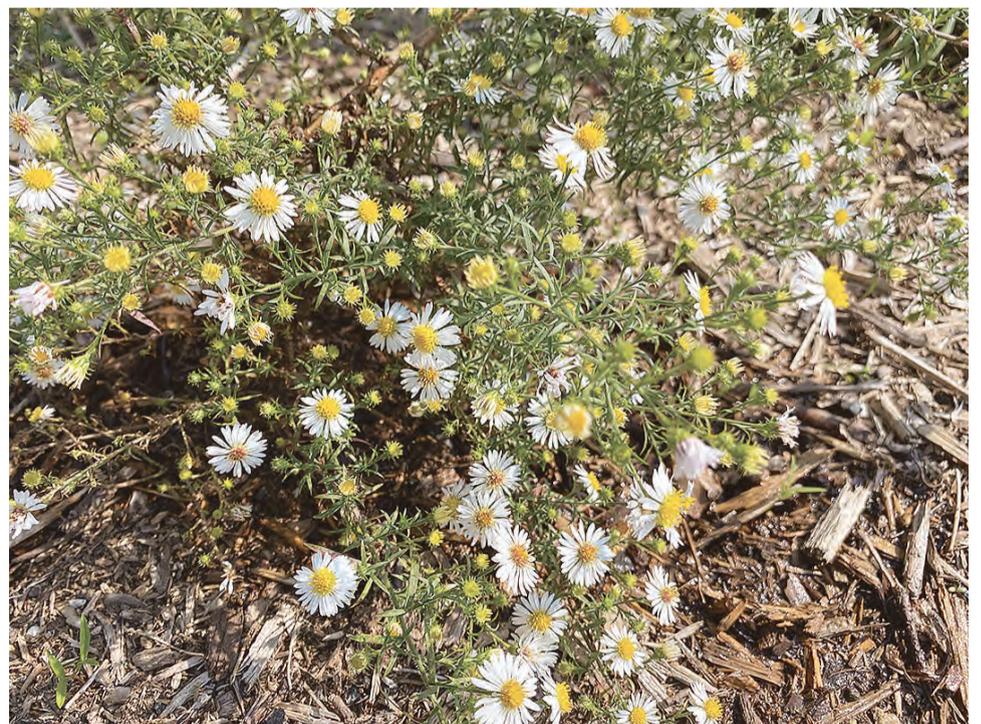
Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) produces plum-like 3/4 to 2 inch fruit that is edible when ripe. A favorite of raccoons, opossums, foxes, skunks, and songbirds; also eaten by humans. Native Americans used them to make fruit bread.



Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) is not closely related to cultivated sweet cherries but it's one-third-inch fruit is sometimes used in making jellies and wine; an important food source for many birds and wildlife.



Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) produces many egg-shaped seed cones. Small songbirds eat the seed, woodpeckers nest in older trees. The 1-1/2 to 2-3/4 inch cones remain on the tree for several years.



Asters, (*Asteraceae*) from the Greek word for "star", with five families and over 170 composite species; 25 found in Virginia. It's daunting to try to identify the specific species along our trails, like these Hairy White Oldfield Asters (*Symphotrichum pilosum*). But insects find their way in great numbers to the small daisy-like flowers, visited by a large variety of bees, bumblebees, butterflies, moths, wasps, beetles and flies.