

CONNECTION

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

Dancing in Fairfax City

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N2 Dance Studio performing a K-pop number.

Who's Running for Springfield Supervisor?

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Picture Perfect Bakery Opens

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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TO PREVENT SUICIDE

Fairfax Walk

Oct 1, 2023

Fairfax City Hall

afsp.org/Fairfax



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**



Another **THE CONNECTION** Community Partnership

Race for District Supervisor, Springfield

Get to know the candidates.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Every year is an election year in Virginia, and this year's general election includes races for local, State senate and delegate offices. As part of the Connection's continuing campaign and election coverage, we asked the three candidates running for Springfield District Supervisor questions related to their campaigns and summarized their responses:

Questions for the Candidates

1. What avenues are you using to engage today's voters?
2. How are you getting your positions on issues across?
3. What do you see as your top two issues to work on in your first year in office?
4. Is it an advantage or disadvantage to be a challenger/incumbent?
5. How do you see your role on the Board?
6. About your campaign finances?

Albert Vega

Democrat

Albert Vega, Democratic challenger, says the best opportunity to tell voters about his values is at their doors. "I want them to know what I feel, represent; my values. And I want to hear from people and hear what they want." He shares that door knocking also is his chief method of engaging with voters; his preference, since it is "face to face and more personal; ... the best way to connect."

Vega has written out his positions on a wide range of issues, but says his main aim is "to amplify people's voices." He uses social media as well, having a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (now X), and has a campaign web page, AlbertVega.com.

He attends a host of events, including meet and greets, and community and school open houses. His official campaign kick-off was held in an open grassy area of the unpretentious housing develop-



Albert Vega
Democrat Nominee
Age: 46

Current Position: Chief Technology Officer & Co-founder, Building Momentum

Education: B.S., Electrical Engineering - University of Texas at El Paso; Masters/PhD - Electrical Engineering, Purdue University

Political Experience: First time political candidate

ment where he lives. He spoke at the candidate forum held on Sept. 20 at Lorton Community Action Center and plans to participate in upcoming candidate debates.

Top Issues. Property Taxes - The biggest issue Vega sees is how expensive it is to live here in Springfield. He labels the District "dead last" in affordability and housing options. He says it is not only property tax and the size and price of homes, but also the rarity of housing options. He says he wants to work to have people have the option to stay here, "to pay less but have great service." He looks at the rise of property taxes, knowing only a fraction of people who work here can afford to live here. He intends to pursue looking for other types of tax that would keep more dollars here in Northern Virginia and use taxes in a smarter way to provide great service. He is looking for more efficient housing options, not just an option of buying or renting, but smart development in already developed areas, rather than denser housing options in single home and townhouse areas. Transportation Safety - Vega points out that too many young people are losing their lives on county roads. He hopes to convince drivers to slow down, to think of other drivers. He also looks to VDOT for quick responsive actions. He advocates for trying out incremental changes that may help prevent accidents, without waiting for the large expensive final options.

Vega sees an advantage in be-



Corazon Foley
Independent Green
Age: 72

Current Position: Retired, 20 yrs, Intelligence Officer, U.S. Dept. of State

Education: Masters in Business Administration, with Finance specialty, George Washington University

Political Experience: 2015 unsuccessful campaign for Supervisor, Springfield District

ing able to see the District and County's problems from a new and different point of view. He seeks to bring his engineering problem-solving philosophy to bear to create movement forward. He believes "with extra effort, we can try some new things. Trying, instead of waiting for the perfection solution." He points to the old saying "insistence on perfection often prevents implementation of good improvements."

Campaign Money. Financial reporting shows Vega's campaign raised \$104,438, with 99 donations over \$100; 107 donations under \$100; two donations greater than \$20,000. His chief contributors are identified as retail/service, defense, and political. Vega describes his donors as "closer to grass roots, eager for change; they want a change in Springfield District".

Corazon Foley

Independent Green

Engaging Voters - Foley is running a very personal and a very low budget campaign. She relies on making connections with voters by attending community events and sending personal emails to those she has met through her community activism. She attends Back to School nights to meet parents, and engages with voters at informal dinners held by friends. She frequently uses Nextdoor, neighborhood social networking service,



Pat Herrity
Republican Nominee
Age: 63

Current Position: Supervisor, Springfield District; Retired, Chief Financial Officer government training contractor

Education: B.S. Accounting, Virginia Tech

Political Experience: Four terms as District Supervisor, Springfield District

to share area history and her views on social issues. Since Foley's campaign does not engage in fundraising, she relies on her personal donation to the campaign, local news media, and debates sponsored by non-partisan groups to help her engage voters. She leaves campaign material on doors as she walks neighborhoods with her 11 and 13 year old grandchildren, her only 'campaign staff'. She is not mailing campaign literature. She spoke at the candidate forum held on Sept. 20 at Lorton Community Action Center and plans to participate in upcoming candidate debates. Her web site includes campaign information and issues, along with her community center activism, at <https://fcaahp.wordpress.com/independent-green-party/>

Top Issues. Springfield Community Center - Foley's driving issue is to see a community center built in Springfield District; the only District without one, to serve seniors and be a place for neighbors to connect. The center also was the reason she ran for the supervisor seat in 2015, unsuccessfully. She says she ran in 2015 after promises made by the county for such a center were not met. While the county has proposed adding a Springfield center to the bond referendum in 2026, Foley is not confident of the outcome and also seeks assurance that a future center be named for her husband, a Vietnam War era veteran subjected to Agent Orange, who died in 2022. She says the lack of a District community

center "is a void."

Solar Panels - Foley believes in use of renewable energy for homes. State law, since 2006, banned outright solar panel restrictions by HOAs. She rails against what she calls "a loophole" in the State law, which says homeowners' associations can still prohibit solar panels if such prohibitions were enshrined in their declaration documents. Although the language is part of State, not local code, Foley sees an advantage in working from within local government to make change. She reiterates, she is "trying to get something done to improve and strengthen the Springfield community."

Overall Foley sees her role if elected as an Independent to "reaching out to both sides trying to get solutions rather than making it a party issue. More of what would be best for Springfield. What will be best for the county. Not what was best for me as a Republican or what would be best for you as a Democrat."

Campaign Money. Foley has self-funded her campaign with \$2,000.

Pat Herrity

Republican, Incumbent

Engaging Voters - Herrity's says his use of social media checks all the boxes: X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor; and uses the usual means of contacting voters, including going door-to-door, making phone calls, doing meet and greets at the homes of sponsors, and using op-eds, campaign newsletters, postcards, and direct mailings. He says he particularly enjoys responding to emails and phone calls where he feels he can best explain what he's standing for. While he has campaign office help, including the editing advice of his former English teacher, he says he is personally involved in each response. His web site, www.patherriority.org, addresses issues through his view of his accomplishments, including a listing of his votes against Board of Supervisor proposals. As the sole Republican on the Board, he often is the lone dissenter.

Top Issues. Unsustainable taxes - Herrity says our current tax structures are taxing seniors and young graduates out of the area. He cites a "50 percent increase over 10 years, the addition of a plastic bag tax, a five percent increase in the

SEE RACE FOR, PAGE 4

Race for District Supervisor, Springfield

FROM PAGE 3

car tax,” saying “we are taxing people out of here. We need to [re]set our priorities.” He mentioned some of his priorities include park maintenance and police pay. He frequently has put forward an alternate budget to provide a balanced budget without a tax increase, since he believes he “must provide an alternative” if he will vote against the staff developed budget proposal. Increase in major crime and shoplifting** Herrity says “the numbers look better this six months but we still aren’t where we need to be.” He points to comments he reads from residents in social media, and notes that hardware stores have more merchandise behind lock and key, and even grocery stores have fewer high value items out and are limiting entrances to control theft. Those measures increase costs for all and impact the cost of living, he says. In responding to the rise in shoplifting, he points to the on-going shortage of police officers, and the lack of legal penalties, faulting the Commonwealth’s Attorney for not prosecuting cases.

Herrity sees an advantage in being an incumbent and long-term resident, having

Fairfax County Crime Stats - Comparison January - June 2022 vs. 2023

	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated	Assault
Fairfax County	10	13 ↑	71	57 ↓	220
	211 ↓	320	260 ↓	* 2,496	
	3,643 ↑		+		

*SOURCE: MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION, MID-YEAR COMPARISON; +SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPT.

grown up in the county. He also credits his father, a former county board chairman, with teaching him about public service and leadership. After serving since 2007, he’s confident that people “know who I am and what I stand for.” He jokes that those who don’t know him already, have the Herrity Report, his supervisory newsletter, to tell them more.”

Herrity sees his role to “bring balance and commonsense, and open and honest discussion” to the Board. He admits discussion was easier with past board chairman, Sharon Bulova than he finds it with the current chairman, Jeff McKay, who is also running for re-election. He points to his successes as that “frequent lone voice,” including his

board leadership on pension reform, “because that needed to happen,” the machine & tool tax reduction which helped brewers, and his current work on panhandling and several other issues where his position or approach differs with his board colleagues.

Campaign Money. Herrity’s campaign raised \$785,581 with \$164,205 contributed by the Republican Party; with 40 contributions over \$20,000 from donors or PACs. His chief contributors are identified as real estate/construction and political. Herrity explains his campaign funds were accrued over several terms and were not all received during the current race period. He cites his 25 years as an active business, sports, and

community leader as explaining the donor groupings.

**Editorial Note: Major crime and shoplifting: Nationally, statistics show that major crime is decreasing, when comparing 2023 to the same period last year. However, shoplifting is increasing. Capital One research, published April 2023, reports \$86.B in retail theft losses in 2022 nationally; and \$84.9B in fraudulent sales returns. Virginia, with a \$1.79B or \$263.41 per capita loss, ranks 1.65 percent lower than the national average.

Candidate’s statements differ on the amount of crime experienced in Fairfax County. Chairman Jeff McKay, running for re-election, addressed crime in his Sept. 6 office newsletter, stating, “Fairfax County is the safest jurisdiction of our size in the country.” His comments were based on statistics compiled by a law enforcement association for major city police chiefs. That data did not include shoplifting, which is not considered or included as a major crime. Herrity, running for re-election as Springfield District Supervisor, is campaigning on a promise to “protect our suburban neighborhoods and families” from “crime increasing across Fairfax County, and our neighborhoods are less safe.”

September Is Suicide Prevention Month

September is Suicide Prevention month, but it is always time to raise awareness, strengthen the dialogue and remind individuals, friends and families about resources that are available.

Suicide is preventable and can affect anyone regardless of race, age, economic or social status. Fairfax County offers numerous resources and support services to assist those in need.

Call or text 9-8-8, the 24/7 Suicide and Crisis Hotline.

Suicide is a serious public health matter, and prevention efforts are critical. Suicide is preventable, and there are resources and support services available throughout the year to promote mental health and increase resilience.

Statistics:

- ❖ On average, there are 132 suicides per day.
- ❖ Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Virginia.
- ❖ Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14 and the 3rd leading cause of death among people aged 15-24 in the U.S.
- ❖ 59% of all suicides were by firearms.

Education and services are provided throughout Fairfax County and include community-focused workshops, campaigns to raise awareness about mental health and evidence-based suicide prevention and mental health trainings for all residents.

The Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia provides information and opportunities for all residents to raise awareness and share resources to prevent suicide.

Warning Signs - What to Look For

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration indicate the following behaviors as warning signs: Talking about being a burden to others. Giving be-

longings away. Looking for a way to kill oneself such as searching online or buying a gun. Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live. Talking about feeling trapped or unbearable pain. Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs. Acting anxious or agitated, behaving recklessly. Sleeping too little or too much. Withdrawing or feeling isolated. Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself. Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge. Displaying extreme mood swings.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness cites risk factors that could increase an individual’s likelihood to experience suicidal thoughts:

- ❖ A family history of suicide.
- ❖ Substance use: Drugs can create mental highs and lows that worsen suicidal thoughts.
- ❖ Intoxication: Analysis from the CDC indicates around 1 in 5 people who die by suicide had alcohol in their system at the time of death.
- ❖ Access to firearms.
- ❖ A serious or chronic medical illness.
- ❖ Gender: Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are four times more likely to die by suicide. Women and girls are also at risk
- ❖ A history of trauma or abuse.
- ❖ Prolonged stress.
- ❖ A recent tragedy or loss.

How to Respond to Someone in Crisis

- ❖ Use clear language such as, “Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?”
- ❖ Calmly ask supportive questions like, “Can I help you call your psychiatrist?”
- ❖ Express support and concern.
- ❖ Don’t raise your voice, threaten or argue.
- ❖ If you’re nervous, try not to fidget or pace.
- ❖ Assess the surroundings and remove items such as guns, knives, pills or items that could be used as a weapon.
- ❖ Be patient.

Resources

Asking a person if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal ideation. Learn how to identify, talk to, and support someone who may be experiencing these warning signs by becoming a Mental Health First Aider and a Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

Sign up for Mental Health First Aid and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) trainings. Additionally, the Lock and Talk Northern Virginia safety program is a collaborative initiative of SPAN and CSB. This program offers free locking medication boxes and gun safety locks that fit a wide variety of firearms.

If you or someone you care about may be at risk of suicide, don’t hesitate to reach out for help right away. These resources are available 24/7:

Call or text 9-8-8, the 24/7 Suicide and Crisis Hotline

Call the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Emergency Services at 703-

573-5679.

Text “CONNECT” to 855-11 to contact PRS CrisisLink.

Lifeline Chat: SuicidePreventionLifeline.org/chat

Call PRS CrisisLink at 703-527-4077.

In an immediate, life-threatening situation, call 911.

If you are concerned, SPAN offers a Confidential Online Screening.

You can also come directly to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board’s Emergency Services office, which is open 24/7. Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive, Fairfax 703-573-5679, TTY 711

Deciding when to help someone who may be at risk of suicide can be scary, but taking one step to reach out for support could save a life.

Source: Fairfax County www.fairfax-county.gov/news/september-suicide-prevention-month

HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Why Is Food Insecurity Still An Issue?

BY STEPHANIE BERKOWITZ

Nearly a year ago today, the White House announced the first national Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health in 50 years to unite America to end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030. During that time, I addressed how food insecurity disproportionately affects people of color, older adults, and people with disabilities. Rising food and fuel prices undoubtedly accounted for the increased number of families seeking support from food banks.

September is Hunger Action Month and it is a time to raise awareness about food insecurity in our communities. According to

Feeding America, 658,470 Virginia residents are experiencing hunger. A heartbreaking statistic to note: 182,170 are children.

Six months ago today, on March 15, recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) felt the sting of the rising costs of day-to-day living and food inflation when the federal government terminated the SNAP Emergency Allotment program. SNAP recipients would no longer receive the second monthly allotment they relied on to supplement their food income during the public health emergency.

As a result, Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) prepared for this dramatic in-

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HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Why Is Food Insecurity Still An Issue?

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increase in residents seeking food assistance, knowing that the end of SNAP Emergency Allotment benefits would affect approximately 213,000 qualifying Northern Virginia residents.

According to The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia Insight Region Report, "In Northern Virginia, seven percent of families — 20,000 households with one or more children under the age of 18 — live in poverty: their annual income falls below the minimum set by the federal government for what they need to feed, shelter, and clothe their families." These statistics highlight the personal cost of inflation in Northern Virginia and represent families' monthly difficulties in choosing between paying for basic necessities, including food, electricity, clothing for children, or rent.

Northern Virginia Family Service's Hunger Resource Center bridges the gap between decreased food allotment benefits and increased prices. The Hunger Resource Center annually provides healthy and nutritious food to nearly 5,000 residents from more than 1,300 families in the Greater Prince William community.

This year, bridging the gap has become imperative for the people we support. High food prices have become a harsh reality for families with low and middle incomes, as well as older adults on fixed incomes. The staggering 10% year-over-year increase in

food costs has created an unsettling imbalance, further exacerbated by the weight of housing, childcare, and healthcare expenses and the financial strains of adults supporting multi-generational living arrangements. The struggle to meet basic needs has reached a critical point.

Hunger and food insecurity are chronic crises for many, and the depths of this need are growing, especially as food prices continue to increase.

At NVFS, we are grateful to partner with grocery stores, farmers' markets, corporations, and individuals who give wholeheartedly. Without their donations and support, we would be running on empty.

While food banks can help families avoid the difficult choice between putting food on the table or paying their household bills, we must also tackle the broader issues of food insecurity and address the systemic factors that create barriers to financial security: income inequality, housing and childcare costs that are unattainable, health disparities, and more. We need to delve deeper into the broader issues, listen and work together to find sustainable solutions that eliminate the need for food distribution centers in the first place.

Stephanie Berkowitz is the President & CEO at Northern Virginia Family Service, a human services organization recognized locally and nationally as a leader and innovator of social impact.

21st Annual

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Cutting the ribbon on the bakery are (from left) Catherine Read, Alison Friedman and sons Jude, 8, and Oliver, 10, and Kim Schaeffer.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left, Jude and Oliver Tackett concentrate on cutting the ribbon behind a pedestal of cupcakes.

‘We Love Making People Happy with Food’

Liberty Baking opens in Fairfax City.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Cakes, cookies, cupcakes, blondies, cake pops, shortbread and brownies – Liberty Baking Co. in Fairfax City does them all. And the women responsible for these tasty treats are chef and owner Alison Friedman and sous chef Kim Schaeffer.

Both are classically trained pastry chefs who create natural, preservative-free baked goods made from premium ingredients such as high-fat European butter, sour cream, cream cheese and Dutch-processed cocoa. It’s no wonder then that their artisanal bakery opened to rave reviews.

“I love their chocolate chip cookies with the [Maldon] salt on top,” said customer Kelly Sharolli. “And I really like their chocolate pound cake cupcake with cream-cheese/marshmallow frosting and mini chocolate chips. I’d absolutely recommend Liberty to others because everything’s so good. And the shop has really cute décor, too.”

Liberty Baking Co. is at 10782 Fairfax Blvd., in the same shopping center as 99 Ranch market, but close to the road in a green-trimmed storefront that says, “Cake Shop.” And it shares the space with two other small businesses, Bisnonna Bake Shop and Jisoo Cake Design.



Liberty’s colorful, blooming shortbread cookies.

It works well because people mainly order online via <https://libertybaking.com/>. Liberty is open for pickup Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. And on various weekends, it holds pop-ups that are so popular that customers happily line up outside to purchase whatever Liberty and Bisnonna are offering that day.

During the recent ribbon cutting, Schaeffer told attendees, “This is a big deal. Alison has been waiting six years for this day. We started our bakery in her Fairfax City kitchen and opened elsewhere, but now we’re home. The love you’ve brought here today is incredible, and we can’t wait to feed you.”

“I met Alison knocking on her door when I was campaigning for mayor and she was thinking of moving her bakery from Herndon to Fairfax,” said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. “And then, when she actually came here to open her

business, it was a journey. We reconnected over the adventure of opening a business in Fairfax City, and this is really a culmination of resilience, grit, determination and persistence – which every business owner needs.”

“We’re thrilled to have a small business like this in the City,” added Revenue Commissioner Page Johnson. “They’re the backbone of our City economy. This is a niche business that’s exactly what we should focus on – and their chocolate-chip cookies are wonderful.”

Friedman and Schaeffer both went to The Art Institutes of Washington for its culinary arts program – but 10 years apart. “Alison was an instructor there, but wasn’t my teacher,” said Schaeffer. “We met in our neighborhood in Fairfax City.” Both are also local high-school graduates – Friedman from Robinson Secondary School and Schaeffer from Fairfax High – so



Chocolate pound cake cupcakes with cream-cheese/marshmallow frosting and mini chocolate chips.

they have deep roots in the community and are thrilled to have their bakery in the City.

The pair specializes in beautifully designed cakes with a Southern flair. And although they have their own cake menu, they’ll make whatever flavors their customers desire. For example, said Schaeffer, “A bride asked us to make her favorite cake – her grandmother’s blueberry-spice cake – and it turned out delicious and she loved it.”

Liberty will also cater a dessert bar for any celebration, including weddings, graduations, birthdays and anniversaries. “We like about a week’s advance notice for a cake, or six months for a wedding,” said Friedman.

Cakes come in flavors such as hummingbird (made with cinnamon, pineapple, bananas and pecans), red velvet and Funfetti, plus pound-cake flavors such as maple, coconut, strawberry, lemon, ube (purple sweet potato) and al-

mond. The wide variety of fillings includes Swiss buttercreams in flavors of brown sugar cinnamon, salted caramel, raspberry, Key lime and espresso bourbon.

“Alison also does great floral designs on cakes with fresh flowers from her garden,” said Schaeffer. “And we use her edible flowers on our blooming shortbread cookies, too.”

Most satisfying, she said, is “Seeing a bride’s excited reaction to the wedding cake we made for her and hearing her say, ‘OMG, that’s the cake I wanted!’ We get to see her dream come true.”

All in all, said Schaeffer, “We care a lot about the quality of our food. That comes first, and then the design – which just happens to be really good as well. We both love making people happy with food – it’s our love language.”

For more about the bakery and its offerings, or to place an order, go to <https://libertybaking.com/>.

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ROUNDUPS

Celebrate Fiesta Fairfax, this Saturday

Fairfax City's community celebration in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month will be held this Saturday, Sept. 23, from 3:30-8 p.m. It's at Old Town Square, 10415 North St., and the fun will include music and dance performances, salsa lessons, Latin food vendors, and educational exhibits highlighting the contributions and experiences of the Hispanic, Latino and Latinx community. Local nonprofits will also be onsite to share information about services and opportunities to work with the Latino community.

Emergency Preparedness Fair on Sunday

Fairfax City's Emergency Management department is holding a free, family event this Sunday, Sept. 24, from noon-4 p.m., at the Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd. Attendees will learn emergency preparedness, safety tips and how to create emergency kits that could come in handy one day. Fire and police personnel will be there, as well.

Lamb Center Needs Food, Plates, Cups

The Lamb Center, a nonprofit, drop-in, daytime shelter in Fairfax City, needs several items to feed its guests, and donations from the community are greatly appreciated. They may be delivered to the center at 3160 Campbell Drive, Monday-Friday, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

This month's most-needed items are powdered coffee creamer, granola bars, cereal bars, Pop Tarts, trail mix, orange juice, apple juice, large disposable bowls, sturdy paper plates and disposable hot cups (no Styrofoam).

Coffee with a Cop

Fairfax City police will hold Coffee with a Cop on Wednesday, Oct. 4, from 8-11 a.m., at Compass Coffee. It's at 10400 Fairfax Blvd. in the Point 50 Shopping Center, and this casual event lets people ask questions, voice concerns and meet the officers who patrol their neighborhoods.

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.

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, 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.

SEPT. 26 TO DEC. 5

English and Citizenship Classes. At St. Mark Catholic Church, Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Vienna. Registration Dates: -Tuesday, September 19, and Thursday September 21 from 7pm to 8 pm. at St. Mark in Vienna. A placement exam will be given. Link to register online: <https://bit.ly/StMarkRegistration2023>. Classes: - Tuesdays and Thursdays, from : September 26- December 5. - English classes from 8 pm to 9:30 pm; - Citizenship, Writing, Conversation from 7 pm to 7:45 pm, same days. Where: - St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 2nd floor. Cost: - English classes: \$25 (for 9 weeks of lessons). - Citizenship, Writing, Conversation : \$10 (for 9 weeks of lessons). - Book cost is extra where applicable. Cash and Credit/Debit accepted! Questions: - Visit the Web page: www.stmarkesl.org/; or - Email: stmarksesl@gmail.com; - Call: 703-980-9380 or 703-403-4170.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 27

MCC Governing Board Meeting + Public Hearing on FY2025 Budget. 6:30 p.m. MCC Governing Board invites residents of Dranesville Small District 1A, who pay a real estate surcharge to support the center, to the FY2025 Budget Public Hearing. The hearing will be held in person at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 27, at the center. This hearing gives residents an opportunity to review and com-

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Fairfax City Celebrates National Dance Day

Dancers performed a wide variety of genres in Fairfax City's Old Town Square, Saturday, Sept. 16, for National Dance Day.



The Fairfax Ballet performing "Enchanted."



McGrath Morgan Academy of Irish Dance prepares to take the stage.



N2 Dance Studio performing a K-pop number.



The Fairfax Academy of Dance performing "Dance V."



Members of McGrath Morgan Academy of Irish Dance performing.



C4 Performing Arts/Claytor Co. dancing to "Anemone."



The Movement Studios dancers do a hip hop routine to "Funkytown."



NOVA Country Western Line Dancers.



Dancing above crossed swords is Cyrus Cordner of Mercier School of Dance.



Clara Bruner, of Mercier School of Dance, performs "Village Maid."



Children of the Light perform "You're Gonna Be Okay."



C4 Performing Arts/Claytor Co. gracefully portrays a sea anemone.



Performing "The Blessing" for the people of Maui are Children of the Light.



Fairfax Dance Art Theatre dances to "Counterpoint."

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Ice Hockey Gets Another Grip on Fairfax County



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Mike and Hunter Schlipp were looking around.



Pier 1 Imports was here for years.

Skates, sticks and pucks are part of the selection at the new hockey store, Pure Hockey, in Springfield.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Before the first puck drops on the 2023 ice hockey season, Pure Hockey opened their doors in Springfield to make sure every hockey player and parent in the area has the proper skates, sticks and helmet to make it all happen.

Mike and Hunter Schlipp came in on opening weekend, and Mike was sporting a Hershey Bears shirt, a sign he's no stranger to the hockey world.

The Hershey Bears are a minor league team up in Pennsylvania that won the championship last year but most fans around here know the Washington Capitals as their pro team. "I grew up in Michigan playing hockey," he said. "This is good to have a hockey store nearby, the next closest is in Ballston."

Son Hunter, 8, plays street hockey and ice hockey. His favorite player in the NHL is Connor McDavid of the Edmonton Oilers. "I like shooting and playing with my friends," he said. He got a new stick and other equipment to make that happen.

They're part of a larger fan base



Sticks of all varieties are part of the selection.



High tech skate sharpening is available.

that's growing in Fairfax County. The closest rinks to the new store are at the St. James Sports Complex in northern Springfield in the Edsall Road area. At St. James there are ice rinks, soccer fields, weights, swimming pools and more at this private indoor facility. A membership is required to use

the facilities at the St. James. Fairfax County has ice rinks too, and the closest to Pure Hockey is over at the Mount Vernon Rec Center, although this facility is closed until 2025 for major renovations. Ice Skating is available at the Fairfax Ice Arena in the City of Fairfax, and SkateQuest, and in the cold-

er months at the outdoor Reston Town Center Ice Rink.

Pure Hockey began as a small shop in Worcester, Massachusetts by two parents, David Nectow and Sal Tiano who had children involved with sports and it grew from there.

The closest Pure Hockey stores

to Fairfax County before the Springfield store opened were in Sterling and Rockville, Maryland.

The Springfield store is in a space where Pier 1 Imports was located, next to TGI Fridays restaurant across from the Springfield-Franconia Metro Station.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

ment on the center's budget proposal. District residents who wish to speak at the hearing are asked to call 703-790-0123, TTY:711, to have their names placed on a speakers

list. Those who cannot attend the hearing can send written comments by mail (address to: McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101) or email to MCC Executive Director Elizabeth May-Salazar at feedback@

mcleancenter.org. For more information, call MCC at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit www.mcleancenter.org. For Old Firehouse activities, call 703-448-8336. For The Alden Box Office, call 571-296-8385.

THURSDAY/OCT. 12
MCA Local Candidates Debate. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at McLean Community Center Community Hall. The debate will be hybrid, in person and via Zoom. There will be two 45-minute debates in the following

order:
Dranesville Supervisor -- Puneet Ahluwalia and Jimmy Bierman;
Dranesville School Board Rep. -- Robyn Lady and Paul Bartkowski.
Visit www.mcleancitizens.org.

Great Falls Author Unravels an Eight-Generation Truth



The audience listens attentively to author Linda Ambrus Broenniman.

“The Pulitzer Saga” tells the story of a remarkable family whose history was shrouded in secrecy when they came to the U.S.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Pulitzer Saga by Fairfax County author Linda Ambrus Broenniman, a first-generation American Hungarian, became a reality because of how little she knew about her parents and her quest for truth. “An unwritten rule governed discourse at our house: no question asked,” she said in the nonfiction book.

Broenniman is the daughter of research professor Clara M. Ambrus, MD, and Julian L. Ambrus Sr., MD, Ph.D., both practicing Catholics. According to obituary records, her parents emigrated from Hungary to the United States in 1949 after receiving their medical degrees in Europe and working at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. The couple settled in Buffalo, New York, and raised seven children. Clara died in 2011 at age 86 from injuries sustained in a house fire; Julian escaped. He died in 2020 at the age of 95.

Broenniman’s father never revealed a secret to Broenniman and her six siblings. Relatives honored the secret until a slip of the tongue by one disclosed that he was Jewish. “My father continued to deflect until his death,” Broenniman wrote.

Broenniman’s 243-page work is the culmination of dedicated genealogical research overlaid with the poignant narrative life stories of the Hungarian Jewish Pulitzer/Misner/Ambrus/Virány family over eight generations. Broenniman tells of “their struggles, their bravery, and their accomplishments. Of their generosity of spirit and remarkable resilience.”

Broenniman recently returned from Hungary following the dedication of a permanent exhibition on the third floor of the newly ren-

ovated Rumbach Sebestyén Street synagogue in Budapest, Hungary. It is significant because the exhibit is based on the stories in her book, “The Politizer Saga.” They are the stories of her family. The exhibition is composed of ten lyrical and artistically rendered seven-minute films.

The Rumbach Sebestyén Street synagogue plays a vital role in Broenniman’s life. The richly renovated Moorish revival synagogue was a deportation point for 20,000 Jews sent to their deaths during WWII. They were eventually sent to Kamianets-Podilskyi in Ukraine, where they were executed.

During the Siege of Budapest in 1945, a bomb damaged the Rumbach synagogue’s ceiling, breaking glass windows and damaging the staircase. But the real devastation began in the late 1970s when the roof of the ruined building was torn down, opening it to the heavens. Rain, snow, and birds freely accessed the synagogue. But now, it has reopened as a vibrant multipurpose Jewish cultural center.

The synagogue is only a few blocks from the Dohány Street Synagogue, where Broenniman’s great-grandmother Margit worshipped. Broenniman’s grandfather, Sandor Ambrus, died either on a forced death march or as a Dachau prisoner, Broenniman reported. Her grandmother Bozsi wore black for five years. “When I asked my mother about it, she told me that Bozsi was in mourning,” Broenniman wrote.

Seeing the exhibition for the first time proved difficult for Broenniman.

In an interview on Sept. 15 last week, Broenniman said that in September 2022, she was in Budapest and saw the ten films and exhibit that told the story of the Hungarian Jewish Pulitzer/Mis-



SCREENSHOTS VIA YOUTUBE

“I have to pinch myself to believe I’m really here,” says author Linda Ambrus Broenniman on Sept. 2 as she speaks at the Rumbach Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary.

ner/Ambrus/Virány family.

“I was all by myself All this grief was able to come out when I saw it by myself, grieving for this family who had suffered so much hardship,” Broenniman said. She also felt sorrow for her new friends, part of her journey to this point, András Gyekiczki and László Rajk, who had since died.

Gyekiczki was a disciplined researcher who assisted her efforts. He was “an amazing sleuth.” She dedicated her book to him because “without András, this book would not have been possible,” she wrote. Gyekiczki held various positions after the fall of the Iron Curtain, including chief of staff to Hungary’s Minister of Interior and mayor of Budapest.

Broenniman remembered László Rajk, the Hungarian who directed the ten films. Broenniman never got the chance to meet Rajk in person. “He was an amazing person. He was an architect and a very political figure. He previously collaborated with András on the exhibition “Our Forgotten Neighbors.” And then he started to work on this exhibit,” Broenniman said.

In her book, Broenniman describes her childhood as a happy one, “a charmed life.” However, secrets about her parents’ past came to light in the early 1980s. In a Sept. 2, 2023 video, Broenniman says that her sister Madeline discovered their great-grandmother Margit was Jewish. Afraid of diving into the unknown and shaking up her world, Broenniman did nothing.

The secrets persisted, and neither her parents nor grandmother Bozsi would discuss them. They became the willing keepers of her father’s secrets, concealing his Jewish ancestry. Broenniman



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

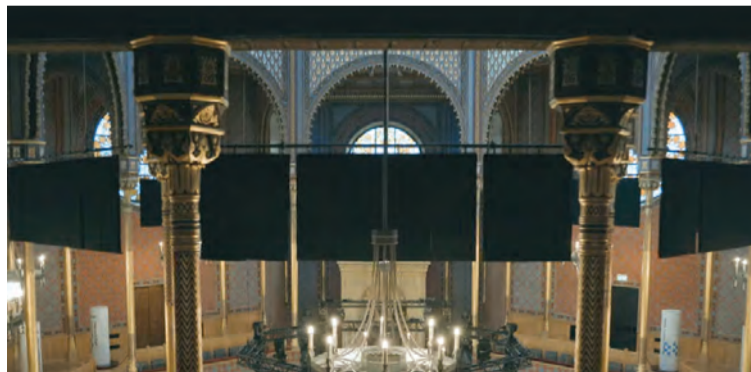
Linda Ambrus Broenniman, a Great Falls resident and author of “The Pulitzer Saga,” released Sept. 12, sits in her great-grandmother Margit’s seat at the Dohány Street Synagogue within blocks from the Rumbach Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary.



Interior of the renovated Rumbach Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary.



Exterior of the renovated Rumbach Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary.



Blue, red, and gold dominate the sanctuary of the Moorish-influenced Rumbach Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary.

wrote in her book that her entire family, including Grandmother Bozsi, attended Catholic church every Sunday.

Broenniman traveled to Budapest with her mother and father in 2006. Clara was named “Righteous Among Nations” by Yad Vash-

em, Israel’s Holocaust memorial, among those non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Her mother, who had advanced Alzheimer’s disease, could not deliver the remarks, so her father did.

SEE GREAT FALLS, PAGE 11

Great Falls Author Unravels an Eight-Generation Truth

FROM PAGE 11

“He omitted a vital fact,” writes Broenniman. Julian survived WWII by escaping from a Nazi slave labor camp and finding refuge from the Nazis with Clara.

Broenniman’s search for the truth gathered momentum about five years after the fire that claimed her mother’s life. In 2018, her sister, Madeline, discovered a cardboard box from the fire and sent it to her. Broenniman says she pulled out a marble composition book titled “Our Family Tree,” written in English. Gabor Virany, her father’s cousin, wrote it, she believes. Other documents were in Hungarian and German. Using a Microsoft translator, she read the birth, death, and marriage certificate names.

Broenniman needed far more than just a translator. She writes in her book, “I needed someone who understood historical context and significance.” She is introduced to Anna Bayer, a local Hungarian Jewish expat, who introduces her to Gyekiczki.

On Sept. 2, 2023, Broenniman returned to Budapest. She climbed the steps to the doors of Rumbach

synagogue and made her way to its second floor to speak during the dedication celebration of the exhibition and the release of her book.

The screening room again displayed the permanent exhibit of ten films depicting the Jewish Politzer family’s fate from the 18th century to the present day, spanning eight generations. Broenniman is not alone, as she was last year.

Broenniman is with her Jewish family and supporters. After years of diligent research, Broenniman established that she and the rest of her family are descendants of the Politizers. Broenniman is Abraham Polizer’s great-great-great-great-granddaughter.

She says to the gathered crowd, “I will never know why my father kept his secrets, and it’s tempting to judge him for hiding his Jewish roots, and I admit that I was angry when I found out. That anger is gone now that I know the truth. My father was a remarkable and complicated man.”

“It’s unbelievable that I’m standing here sharing with you the story of my family, and it’s a family I never even knew existed,” Broenniman says.



SCREENSHOT VIA YOUTUBE

Clara and Julian Ambrus

Broenniman tells how she and Gyekiczki collaborated for over a year before he shared their findings with Shiza Torney, director of the Hungarian Museum and Archives. It corresponded with the timing of the synagogue’s restoration. Gyekiczki asked Broenniman if it was acceptable to have their family stories displayed. “I approved; he wrote the proposal; it was accepted, and here we all are,” she said.

Toward the end of her book, Broenniman presents her beliefs on why her father renounced Judaism. He could not hide his Hungarian accent in America, but he could hide his religious heritage.

“He did not want to face intolerance again. He chose to keep his Jewish roots secret from everyone, including his children. He had created an identity he would not or could not let go. He would protect it at all costs.”

Broenniman, who currently lives in Great Falls, brought the stories of her Jewish family to light and honored their memories. There is a Jewish expression. “May their memories be for a blessing.” Readers can access the short videos of the ceremony, the exhibit, and the Rumbach Synagogue in Budapest on two YouTube videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-mg1_gUCzxE.webloc (three min-

May Their Memory Be For A Blessing

Sándor Ambrus, my grandfather
Zoltán Ambrus, my grand-uncle, Sándor's brother
Irma Glück Engel, my grand-aunt, Sándor's sister
Gizella Mincer Tibold, my great-aunt, sister to Margit Mincer Politzer
Frédéric Tibold, my great-uncle, husband of Gizella Mincer Tibold
István Mincer, my great-uncle, brother of Margit Mincer Politzer
Ignácz Mincer, my great-great-grandfather and husband of Jozsefa Politzer
Sarolta Mincer, Ignácz Mincer's niece
Bertha Goldschmeid Politzer, wife of Mihály Politzer (brother of Jozsefa Politzer Mincer)
Ilona Politzer, daughter of Bertha and Mihály Politzer
Raoul Barber, son of Ilona Politzer (Jozsefa Politzer Mincer's sister) and Lajos Barber
Maxine Müller, daughter of Gizella Barber (Ilona Politzer's daughter) and Leo Müller
Frédéric Heilinger, son of Rosa Politzer (Marian Politzer's daughter) and Sigmund Heilinger
Bertha Politzer, Hermann, daughter of Ilka Politzer
Clara Politzer, daughter of Albert Politzer (son of Bernát Politzer) and Emmy Friedmann
Endre Koröcs, son of Ilonka Politzer (daughter of Bernát Politzer) and Masha Koröcs
Aladár Politzer, son of Farkas Politzer and Karolina Esterreicher
Kornél Török, son of Zsigmond Politzer and Irma Politzer
Arthur Török, son of Zsigmond Politzer and Irma Politzer
Frédéric Török, son of Arthur Török and Frederica Keller
Victor Török, son of Zsigmond Politzer and Irma Politzer
Paul Török, son of Zsigmond Politzer and Irma Politzer
Béla Lederer, son of Margarete Politzer (Zsigmond Politzer's daughter) and Laszlo Lederer
Aranka Politzer Munk, sister-in-law of Zsigmond Politzer, sister of Irma Politzer
Lola Munk, daughter of Aranka Munk, niece of Zsigmond Politzer and Irma Politzer
Leo Politzer, son of Gusztav and Ernestin Politzer
Frank Alberti, son of Gusztav and Ernestin Politzer
George Benes, son of Gizella Politzer (daughter of Gusztav Politzer) and Anthony Benes

Family members named here were confirmed to have been killed in the Holocaust.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The final page of “The Politzer Saga” by Fairfax County author Linda Ambrus Broenniman lists family members who died in the Holocaust.

utes) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyFv8uchqL8.webloc> (twelve minutes).

<https://poltizersaga.com/>

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU NOV. 10

Into the Hothouse Exhibit. At Gillespie Gallery of Art, GMU's Art and Design Building, 4515 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Mason Exhibitions presents Into the Hothouse, an immersive site-specific installation by Chicago-based artist Aimée Beaubien. The exhibit is a category-defying constellation of dozens of gathered, printed, and handmade works that explore botanical and environmental subject matter. Natural forms, technological interventions, and laborious craft techniques abound. The gallery is free and open to the public from Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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://tallship-providence.org/>

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.](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts/)"

SCHEDULE

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

ONGOING

Fall Native Shrub and Tree Sale. At Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. The Fall Native Shrub and Tree Sale has started. Visit <https://bit.ly/WNCPlantSale> to place your order. Orders are due by Friday, September 22 at 5 p.m. (as inventory lasts). Plants must be picked up on Saturday, September 30 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

SATURDAYS THRU NOVEMBER

Reston Museum. See how Reston's founding principles were implemented by joining the upcoming walking tour. Tour will be held 10 a.m. every Saturday through November. Sign up at: <https://www.restonmuseum.org/event-details/guided-walking-tour-reston-founding-2023-09-09-10-00>

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

Spooky Fall Festivities. At Go Ape Zipline & Adventure Park, South Run RECenter, Springfield. This ground-based experience will take guests on a hike through the park, navigating various creatures from your deepest, darkest nightmares. Participants will be immersed in the natural environment, never knowing what might be waiting around the next curve in the path. Is that just the wind through the branches? Definitely not! This guided, anxiety-filled adventure will take 20-30 minutes with a cost of \$14.95 per person. Go Ape is also expanding the Frights at Height experi-



Buckets N Boards will appear Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023 at the McLean Central Park Gazebo in McLean.

Buckets N Boards

5 p.m. At McLean Central Park Gazebo, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Presented by The Alden at the McLean Community Center, the show features two masterful musicians and comedians, Matt Levingston and Gareth Sever, who play an amazing array of instruments and found objects. For more information, contact The Alden at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711 or visit the website, aldentheatre.org.

ence! Launched in 2022, this autumnal aerial activity is now available on select evenings in both September and October. Guests will find zombies, ghosts, and ghouls hiding in creepy corners under the Treetop Journey zipline and ropes course. Only \$39.95 per person for this 1-hour gravity defying, scream-filled adventure after dark...if you dare. Visit www.goape.com.

SEPT. 16-NOV. 7

Cox Farms Fall Festival 2023. At Cox Farms, corner of Braddock Road and Pleasant Valley Road, Centreville. The Fall Festival is filled with family-friendly entertainment and attractions including slides, swings, animals, hayrides and more. From the world-famous hayride to our corny Cornundrum and giant slides, our Fall Festival has something for the whole family. The Fall Festival is open Sept. 16-17, and then Thursday through Monday Sept. 23-Nov. 6, plus Tuesday, Nov. 7. Hours Sept. 16-17; Thursdays through Mondays Sept. 23-Oct. 30: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. | Nov. 2-7: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (last entry one hour before closing). Market is open daily through Nov. 7.

The Fields of Fear Hours: Friday and Saturday nights Sept. 22 - Nov. 4 (plus Sunday, Oct. 8) 7:30-11 p.m. (last entry 10 p.m.) Featuring more than 20 acres of fear and spooky attractions.

SEPT. 20-24

Big Fall Book Sale. At Reston Regional Library, Reston. The Friends of the Reston Regional Library will host their Big Fall Sale. This sale will feature more than 30,000 books in very gently used condition, from over 20 categories. All materials are donated. Proceeds go to fund library and literacy programming and materials in our community. Note: There will be no children's books at this sale. The next Children's and Educators book sale will be March 2024. Visit the website: www.RestonLibraryFriends.com, or email at

restonfriendspr@gmail.com, or call 703-829-5467.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Sept. 20th - Public shopping in the Lobby from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Members Only Preview in the Main Sale Room from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 21st - Saturday, Sept 23 - Open Sale all sections from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 24 - Open Sale all sections from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 21

16th Annual Erin Peterson Fund Golf Tournament. 7 a.m. At Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens Ave., Clifton. In honor of Erin Peterson who was killed in the Virginia Tech tragedy. Tickets are \$200 individual; \$800 foursome. Call 703-830-3795; email info@erinpetersonfund.org.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 22

Free Demo of Painting with Sharpies. 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society is honored to present Hanna Emrich giving a step-by-step demonstration using Sharpies as an alternative to paint brushes to create a floral impression as dramatically aesthetic as one might expect from using a brush. Visit www.hzemrich.com.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Fall Garden Festival. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. This free event celebrates a world of unique plants, captivating garden accessories, live music that sets the perfect ambiance and delectable food options to satisfy your cravings. It's not just any garden gathering -- it's a vibrant celebration of all things green and gorgeous. The Fall Garden Festival is your one-stop destination for gardening inspiration and unique finds. Gather your friends and family and join us for a day filled with nature's beauty and the joy of the

gardening community. Call 703-324-8700.

SEPT. 23-24

PBR Fairfax Invitational (Professional Bull Riders). At Eagle Bank Arena, Fairfax. For two days only, some of the best bull riders in the world will battle the sport's most powerful bovine athletes who are bred to buck in the ultimate David vs. Goliath showdown in a series showcasing one of the most exciting live sporting events to witness. The bull riding action begins at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 23, and 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 24. All 35 competing bull riders will get on one bull each in Round 1 on Saturday evening and Round 2 on Sunday afternoon. The riders' individual two-round scores will be totaled with the Top 10 advancing to the championship round for one more out and a chance at the event title. Tickets for the two-day event are on sale now, and start at \$16, taxes and fees not included. Tickets can be purchased online at Ticketmaster.com and PBR.com, at the EagleBank Arena Box Office or by calling PBR customer service at 1-800-732-1727.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Blood Drive. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At The Springfield Masonic Lodge, 7001 Backlick Road, Springfield. Walk-ins are welcome or you can reserve an appointment online at <https://www.inovabloodsaves.org/>. They will also be hosting The Medical Care for Children Partnership Foundation (MCCP) which will be providing free dental checkups for children and the Lions Club will be conducting free eye exams for folks of all ages.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Multicultural Festival. At Reston Town Center, Reston. The Reston Multicultural Festival is an annual event that brings together the people of Reston to celebrate our rich medley

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 5

of cultures. Come out and share with family, friends, and neighbors the music, entertainment, dress, food, and cultural treasures from all over the world that are all in our community. The free event features live music, dancing, children's activities, and much more! The Festival is expanding this year to fill Market Street and use three stages instead of just one in the Town Square Park. Location: Reston Town Center with performances in the Pavilion and Reston Town Square Park – 1900 Market St, Reston.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Harvest Happenings. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Celebrate autumn with your family! Harvest Happenings is an indoor-outdoor festival with live entertainment, a petting zoo, craft projects and games. Visit our pumpkin patch and purchase a pumpkin to decorate.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Freedom Fund Jazz for Justice. 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. At Fairfax Marriott at Fair Oaks. Live jazz music presented by NAACP Fairfax Branch. As you immerse yourself in the soul-stirring rhythms embodying the spirit of change, the jazz band Common Ground will provide the musical backdrop to the event.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

2023 SOCO Invitational. 2 p.m. At South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. There will be over 24 high school marching bands competing from all over the Commonwealth of Virginia. Concessions will be available. Cost is \$10/person; free 5 years and under.

SEPT. 28 TO OCT. 1

25th Annual Oktoberfest. At Fort Belvoir's Fremont Field (beside Wells Field House), 2104-6028 Goethals Road, Fort Belvoir. Oktoberfest is a four-day festival that highlights authentic German cuisine, beverages, music, and dancing. Enjoy an exciting carnival, Volksmarch 5K/10K Walk and much more. Hours: Thursday 6-10 p.m.; Friday 4-11 p.m.; Saturday 12-11 p.m.; and Sunday 12-8 p.m.

OCT. 28-29

Ghost Town at Burke Lake Park. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Tickets are \$15/person online until Oct. 26. Day of tickets are \$20.

SEPT. 28 TO OCT. 15

"The Chosen." At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. "The Chosen" by Aaron Posner and Chaim Potok, directed by Alex Levy. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$25-\$50 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or 703-854-1856.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 30

Arts by George! 5 p.m. At GMU Harris Theatre; 8 p.m. at Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. The philanthropic event, headlined by Renée Elise Goldsberry, raises vital support for student scholarships in visual arts, dance, music, theater, game design, film, and arts management. At 8 p.m., guests will transition to the Center for the Arts for a live Fund-a-Student Auction, leading up to the performance by Goldsberry. In this concert, Goldsberry will perform a dazzling concert featuring Broadway hits and American songbook classics. Tickets are \$100, \$75, \$50.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 30

Oak Hill Mansion Open House. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Oak Hill Mansion, 4716 Wakefield Chapel Road, Annandale. Travel back in time with a captivating visit to the historic Oak Hill mansion in Annandale. Step into history during an annual open house event at this private residence on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Note that this year's event will exclusively feature indoor and garden



Fall Fest 2023 runs Sept. 23 to Oct. 29 at Reston Farm Garden Market in Reston.

Fall Fest 2023

At Reston Farm Garden Market, 10800 Baron Cameron Avenue, Reston. Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Fall Fest schedule spans weekends from September 23rd to October 29th, with the Columbus Day special on October 9th, operating from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 per child and \$5 per parent, while children aged two and under enter for free. The festival offers a variety of activities, including inflatables such as a corn maze, two 20' slides, two pumpkin bounce houses, and a basketball game. There's also a charming petting zoo, the Reston Farm Garden Market Express Train, and live music for entertainment. The market features seasonal items like chrysanthemums, pansies, fresh produce, natural jams, local organic honey, farm-fresh products, pumpkins, seasonal decor, and our famous Apple Cider Donuts. You can also savor offerings from local food trucks throughout the weekend. Book your tickets on our website: <https://www.restonfarm.com/fall-fest>.

tours, with no satellite parking, shuttles, speaking program or food provided. Guided indoor and garden tours will be offered at 15-minute intervals.

OCT. 6 TO OCT. 31

The Haunted Trail. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night starting at 6:30 p.m. At The Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center celebrates its 10th annual Haunted Trail by bringing scares and laughs to the Halloween season. Haunt: Game Over immerses guests through a highly themed walk-through experience, as creepy characters deliver contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel in small groups via a timed entry for a frightening experience that brings them next to abandoned, historic buildings where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights that are not for the faint of heart. The spirits will get loud with live music on Fridays, Saturdays, and Halloween night, with a rotating schedule of band performances in the Rizer Pavilion, which also serves as the check-in area and 'virtual line' for Haunt entry. Food trucks, soft drinks, snacks, wine, beer, and themed-specialty drinks will be available for purchase on campus. Gates open at 6:30 p.m.; Final groups will be dispatched by 10:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays; and 9:30 p.m. on Sundays.

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POTOMAC ALMANAC CENTRE VIEW

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

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.

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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On The Cusp of ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... my/our 45th wedding anniversary on Oct. 20, 2023, quite by familial coincidence, my wife, Dina and I attended her Godson's wedding in Philadelphia last week. Yes, we risked our lives and limbs while escaped prisoner Danelo Cavalcante was on the loose. Nevertheless, we figured it was an acceptable risk, given the occasion. We're fortunate however, as were the bride and groom and all invited guests, that the wedding wasn't happening at Longwood Gardens, a magnificent and well-known, former Dupont Estate, located in Kennett Square – in Chester County, Pa. Due to the escaped convict, the grounds were closed as a precaution. But other than a few raindrops that landed on the assembled guests, as well as on the bride and groom, the late afternoon/early evening festivities went on without a hitch, although none of us remained dry. And though Danelo was a topic of conversation throughout, since he wasn't an invited guest, we weren't worried too much, as we all ate, drank, and danced to our heart's content.

Seeing so many people so much younger than ourselves dancing the night away with their futures very much in front of them was in stark contrast to us as our futures are our present and have pretty much already been lived. The age difference between Chris, Shannon, and yours truly and most of their friends is almost 40 years, a generation and a half. We are contemporaries – of their parents. Yet, we attended as peers of a sort, who happen to be family. In addition, I think our knowing Chris his entire life gave us a certain curiosity and legitimacy among many of Chris and Shannon's friends. After all, we were there at Chris' birth.

I wouldn't say it was awkward being around so many 20-somethings, but I will admit to it being a teachable moment/learning experience as the generations – as worlds did on a long ago "Seinfeld episode," collided. Though we acted our age, comparatively speaking, we stayed out past midnight, and tried to be as interested in the attendees lives as the occasion allowed. Meaning, the music was loud and hearing any conversation was challenging. Still, we tried to stay in the moment. All of which was made easier at the pre-wedding and afterparties that occurred in the hotel's bar, as well as the groom's mother's house the following day for Sunday brunch. In each instance, the energy and enthusiasm were super positive and amazingly genuine.

All throughout the weekend festivities, I couldn't help looking around at all the younger people and doing the math, and juxtaposing our ages and marital years, and wondering (A) where had all the time – since we got married in Oct., '78, gone and (B) how in the heck did we get this old? Granted, you are young as you feel, or as Grouch Marx so famously said: "You're as young as the woman you feel," so I don't feel old even though my wife is age 68. It matters more to me what's in your heart and head more so than the color of your hair or the lines in your face. I prefer to listen to what one says and does, not focus of what they can't do. Moreover, I want to see if they still have a rye smile on their face and a bounce in the step, regardless of their age or circumstances. I realize age/years married is just a number but holy smokes, 45, compared to witnessing and participating in a married couple's day one of year one, gave us both (Dina and I) pause and cause to reflect. I can't say "What a long, strange trip it's been," because unlike The Grateful Dead, we've generally colored between the lines and stayed on the straight and narrow. Though we've accumulated lots of life's experiences, we tried not to offer too much advice too soon to too many people, many of whom were getting ready to embark on their own post-college adventures. We figured they'd live and learn on their own. They didn't need any unsolicited advice from us.

But the occasion and simultaneous reflection of our life together didn't give us indigestion or constipation or remorse/anxiety in the least. Instead, it gave us/me one of the happiest weekends we've experienced in quite a while. Being around all these young people, full of hopes and dreams and ambitions for the future was infectious, even for us old fogies. It wasn't at all bittersweet. It was more like milk chocolate for me: extremely satisfying.

Best wishes to Chris and Shannon. We look forward to seeing them soon and hearing about their honeymoon abroad, and hanging out with them and their friends, if they'll allow us. It turns out their energy and enthusiasm were just what this older couple needed – and prefers. "Peace and serenity" is for "Festativus," not the rest of us.

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

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