

CONNECTION

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Brothers Declan and Davin Taylor helped to create a brush shelter, a habitat feature, on the way to seeking Audubon At Home wildlife sanctuary certification for their HOA common property in Springfield.

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ PIZZA, PAGE 14

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Food for Neighbors Turns 7

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Honoring Veterans

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What Happened
On Election Day?

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Money for
Trees for You?

PAGE 8

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Herney was a misfit, so was Rudolph. They were two of a kind, so these new friends set off to see what they could find.

BULLETIN

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

AEROMEXICO TO LAUNCH NONSTOP SERVICE FROM DULLES INTERNATIONAL TO MEXICO CITY

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority announced that Aeromexico will begin new nonstop service between Mexico City (MEX) and Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) on July 1, 2024. Flights will operate daily year-round. With the start of this and other routes, Aeromexico will serve 36 U.S. markets by July 2024.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

NVTC Cyber Summit. 7 p.m. At Valo Park, 7950 Jones Branch Drive, Tysons. The 8th annual NVTC Cyber Summit and Cyber50 Awards will gather the best and brightest minds in cyber and national security to discuss the latest trends, technologies including AI-based systems, and federal policies within the private and public sectors.

VIENNA TOWN ANNOUNCES FIRST-EVER HOLIDAY DISPLAY LOTTERY

This year's holiday season is going to be one for the record books as the festivities will include a traditional, decorated evergreen tree on the

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

CONNECTION

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NEWS

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Front row, from left, Stacey Kincaid, Catherine Read, Dan Helmer and Gerry Connolly enjoy the armed forces song medley, as veterans stand for their service branch's anthem.



Women's barbershop quartet, The Unmuted, is singing patriotic songs. From left are Lori Greenlief, Bonnie Ashley, Martie Gilliam and Beth Kimlick.

Veterans Day Is Celebrated in Fairfax City

Sharing patriotic pride and serious messages.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

At the outset of Fairfax City's Veterans Day ceremony last Friday, Nov. 10, VFW Post 8469 Chaplain Marcus Kuiper prayed to God "for all who answered the call to duty – those who selflessly served and were courageously prepared to lay down their lives for the cause of freedom.

"Hear our prayer for those who put the welfare of others ahead of their own, those who served and returned safe and whole, and those who did not. May the example of their sacrifice inspire us in our daily lives."

American Legion Post 177 hosted the cer-

emony, along with VFW Post 8469 and 5412. Besides local residents and veterans, attendees included U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11th), Del. Dan Helmer (D-40th), Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read and City Councilmember Tom Ross.

VFW Post 8469 Commander Mac McCarl said he'd spoken at a Veterans Day event, the previous day, at his granddaughters' elementary school. He told the children about his 30 years in the Army, including seven years as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. It's important to teach them about the nation's veterans, he explained, because one day, they'll be the ones called upon to serve their country.

Calling veterans part of the nation's fabric, McCarl said, "They have both great pride in their service, and darkness, and it comes from being under stress and in combat. And as we look today at a very dangerous world

– with Ukraine, the Gaza Strip and the expanding combat in the region, and a simmering problem in the Pacific with Taiwan – it's a reminder that we have to be vigilant and prepared."

He said Americans have always stepped up in a crisis and have a right to expect a few things from their government, in return. "The first is being sure they know the causes of the fight they're being asked to enter," said McCarl. "Second, they must understand the character of that war – large or small scale, and with what kind of tactics, including IEDs, drones and things we haven't even thought about yet – so they'll be organized, trained and equipped for the fight.

"And third, when it's over, there's an obligation for care and recovery – because when veterans return from conflict, many are damaged physically and mentally. The VFW is currently tracking 110 veteran-focused pieces of legislation in Congress, and I

ask our legislators to support them because they're important. God bless the USA and guide its leaders."

Connolly noted that, earlier this year, he visited WWII Gen. George Patton's grave in an American cemetery in Luxembourg and was struck by how pristine the grounds were. "It was so peaceful and tranquil, and yet those buried there didn't die [that way]," he said. "We can have no illusions about war; war is hell and must be the last alternative. And when we ask a young man or woman to go to war, we'd better have a compelling rationale to do it, because they're putting their lives on the line."

And when they return, said Connolly, they have wounds seen and unseen. "Some 6,000 American veterans commit suicide every year because of untreated trauma and unresolved feelings and experiences that cre-

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Sharing a lighthearted moment are (from left) Mac McCarl, Dan Helmer, Eric Parkhurst, VFW Post 5412 Commander Chuck Sleeper, and Ken Wiseman with the VFW National Council of Administration.



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly: "We must do more for veterans."

Britepaths Seeks Donations for Families in Need

Help put food on their tables during the holidays.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The holidays are supposed to be joyful times spent with family and friends. And when people gather to share a special meal together, no one pictures an empty table and hungry children.

But sadly, that's the reality for many local families who – despite having jobs and working hard – struggle to make ends meet in Fairfax County's high-end economy. So that's where nonprofits such as Fairfax-based Britepaths, along with the generosity of area residents, come in.

With both Thanksgiving and Christmas on the horizon, Britepaths is currently seeking financial donations from the community to help provide grocery-store gift cards to 265 Fairfax County-area families who are experiencing food insecurity. Having these gift cards will enable them to keep food on their tables during the upcoming holidays and long school breaks when their children won't be receiving free and reduced-price meals at school.

Referring to the Capital Area Food Bank's 2022 Hunger Report, Britepaths' Executive Director Lisa Whetzel said, "In our prosperous area, it is startling to think that 41 percent of Fairfax County households with children experience food insecurity."

"For many of us, November and December are a time for celebrations and holiday traditions," she continued. "For the families Britepaths serves – whose budgets are al-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABRA KURT

American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax City is sponsoring Britepaths' Holiday Program for a third year. And on Oct. 18, Mike Kimlick, Post 177's Finance Officer, presented Britepaths' staff with a check for \$2,500. From left are Britepaths Programs Manager Brenda Hernandez, Kimlick, and Britepaths Community Development Manager Harper Garcia.

ready stretched far too thin – it means making heartbreaking choices."

Britepaths is partnering with seven Fairfax County Public Schools to receive referrals for families with demonstrated needs for assistance. In the Fairfax High School Pyramid, these schools are Daniels Run, Eagle View and Providence elementaries; Katherine Johnson Middle School and Fairfax High. So the families who need help live in both the City of Fairfax and central Fairfax County and could be anyone's neighbors.

With help from the community, Britepaths will be able to purchase grocery-store gift

cards that staff at the partner schools will provide to the parents of students in need. Donations are welcome through Dec. 31.

For more information and to donate online, go to <http://britepaths.org/holiday>. Checks may also be mailed to Britepaths at 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please write "Holiday 23" on the check's memo line. Program sponsorships are also available. Those interested should contact Britepaths at 703-273-8829 or events@britepaths.org.

Britepaths is grateful to its Holiday Program sponsors: SAIC, American Legion Post

177 in Fairfax City, Walmart Fairfax Supercenter No. 2015, and the Richard W. Averill Foundation. However, with the local need for help so great, an assist from area residents is critical.

And besides providing food, the gift cards will also help families buy Christmas gifts for their children. But Britepaths can't brighten the holidays for them alone, so Whetzel and her staff are hoping as many community members as possible will open their hearts and wallets to help those less fortunate than themselves.

After all, said Whetzel, "Parents will be challenged to feed their families at a time of year when so many of us are enjoying great bounty. So supporting Britepaths' Holiday Program is a wonderful way to make a real difference for neighbors who live very near us, at this special time of year."

In 2024, Britepaths will celebrate 40 years of providing help, hope and a path forward for Fairfax County and Northern Virginia residents experiencing a financial crisis. In FY 2023, the organization served 7,999 households, impacting the lives of 11,555 people. Throughout the year, the organization relies on funding and volunteer support from businesses, individuals, community groups and faith communities to help Britepaths provide a multitude of services to those in need.

Its programs stabilize families via supplemental food and financial assistance. And Britepaths also offers personal empowerment through financial education and workforce-development coaching, workshops and training. Furthermore, it supports children with its Back-to-School partnerships, Food4Thought weekend food kits, plus holiday meal assistance for families – helping thousands of children year 'round. More information is at: britepaths.org.

Hunger Is Closer Than You Think

Food For Neighbors celebrates its seventh anniversary and over 425,000 pounds of donations.

November 2023 marks the seventh anniversary – and tremendous growth – for Food For Neighbors, a grassroots nonprofit tackling teen food insecurity in partnership with local middle and high schools.

Founded in 2016 to address the weekend food gap for hungry students attending Herndon Middle School and Herndon High School, Food For Neighbors responded to other schools that learned about the reliable and nutritious supplemental food and requested services for their students. The nonprofit is now partnering with 42 schools in Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun counties, and, with its Nov. 11 collection, has provided over 425,000 pounds of food and toiletries to schools. Food For Neighbors credits this success to the generous community spirit found throughout the many neighborhoods surrounding schools.

"Our ability to help so many students is directly tied to the interest and support of our wonderful community members," explained Karen Joseph, Founder

and Executive Director of Food For Neighbors. "Our innovative Red Bag Program focuses on mobilizing community members of all ages and backgrounds to support their local schools, which means that the food and toiletries they donate are helping students living and learning in their neighborhood or one just down the street."

The Red Bag Program provides shelving/storage units for schools to establish in-house pantries and then mobilizes community members to fill the pantries. Five times a year, Red Bag donors use a specific grocery list to shop for toiletries and shelf-stable, single-serve foods that provide nutrition and variety, so all students may enjoy the food regardless of their access to special ingredients or large appliances. The donors then fill their bags with their purchases and set the bags on their doorsteps. Volunteers, organized by neighborhoods, collect the donations and bring them



In the Springfield area, a young volunteer enthusiastically helps unload car after car delivering food and toiletries for Key Middle School, Washington Irving Middle School, John R. Lewis High School, Thomas A. Edison High School, and West Springfield High School. Overall, volunteers in Springfield collected and sorted 2,656 pounds of food and toiletries donated by 219 local families. www.FoodForNeighbors.org

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BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 2

Freeman Store lawn, and a chance for residents to create their own festive holiday display alongside the grand holiday tree. Up to three displays will be selected through a lottery process, and the deadline to submit proposals is 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 17, 2023.

To be entered in the lottery, applicants must submit a photo or drawing that depicts the colors and size and indicates any items requiring power. Displays should celebrate the season or a winter holiday and are limited to six feet tall, four feet wide, and three feet deep in size, drawing no more than 30 watts, unless applicants supply their own battery or solar power. Other entry criteria and applications are available for interested applicants on the Town website at www.viennava.gov/holidaydisplay. Selected applicants also have the choice of planning a one-time celebratory gathering to commemorate their display. They will work with the Town's Department of Parks & Recreation to determine a day, time, and other details. Selected applicants will be notified by Nov. 22 and will be required to submit a signed agreement and \$250 deposit by Monday, Nov. 27. Displays must be installed between Nov. 28 and Dec. 3 and may remain on the Town Green lawn until Jan. 10, 2024. Questions should be directed to the Department of Parks & Recreation by calling 703-255-6360 or emailing parksrec@viennava.gov.

VIENNA TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTS REVISED ZONING CODE

After an extensive, three-year process to update the Town of Vienna's zoning code, the Vienna Town Council adopted the revised plan at its regular meeting last week at Town Hall. The newly adopted ordinance will take effect on Jan. 1, 2024. The purpose of the project referred to as Code Create Vienna was to clarify, simplify, reorganize, and update key chapters

of the Town code. Among other things, the update provides opportunities for residents to enhance outdoor living space to accommodate modern lifestyles, requires more green space in commercial areas and gives businesses greater flexibility to explore more commercial opportunities. To learn more about the recently adopted zoning and subdivision code, visit www.viennava.gov/codeupdates.

HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Town of Vienna residents and businesses are encouraged to compete in this year's "Shine Bright, Vienna" holiday decorating contest sponsored by the Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) and the Vienna Parks and Recreation Department and the Vienna Economic Development Department. Applications for the 2024 contest are now available online at www.viennava.gov/holiday or at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE. To be considered for the contest, participants must submit a completed application and a photo of their display by Nov. 21, 2023. All decorations must be visible from the street.

MCLEAN NEWCOMERS AND NEIGHBORS

The club was founded in 1969 to create new friendships, provide opportunities for socializing and acquaint residents with the community. It sponsors many group activities including: Anything with food, Armchair Traveler, Book Club, Bunco, Canasta, Crafty Ladies, Genealogy, Golf, Let Us Lunch, Mah Jongg, Mah Jongg NY Style, Movie Lovers, Museums/House and Garden Tours, Nature Walks, Restaurant Critics, Sing for Fun and Tech Forums. Application forms may be mailed to: Membership McLean Newcomers and Neighbors, P.O. Box 6166, McLean, VA 22106. Visit the website: www.mcleannewcomers.org.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

County	Federal Route	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
GRAYSON	8797	803	FAIRWOOD RD	BIG FOX CREEK	10/26/2023
BUCHANAN	29763	2175	DOOLEY RD.	STREAM	10/26/2023
SCOTT	16776	654	CLIFF MTN. WAY	DRY CREEK	10/25/2023
WASHINGTON	18838	11	LEE HIGHWAY	HALL CREEK	10/24/2023
BEDFORD	2730	639	HURRICANE DR/RT 639	BRANCH OF OSLIN CREEK	10/23/2023
ROANOKE	14809	0F880	BRETHERN RD/RT F880	BRANCH OF BACK CREEK	10/23/2023
FAUQUIER	7359	881	HOLTZCLAW RD.	STREAM	10/17/2023
HIGHLAND	10327	640	BLUGRASS VALLEY RD (RT 640)	S BR POTOMAC RIVER	10/16/2023
ROCKBRIDGE	15547	646	BIG HILL RD (RT 646)	COLLIERS CREEK	10/12/2023
BEDFORD	2823	695	GOOSE CK VLY RT 695	N. FORK GOOSE CREEK	10/5/2023
LOUDOUN	11147	600	NEW RD.	BULL RUN	10/2/2023

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

Name Change for W. T. Woodson High School



Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid.



Megan McLaughlin.



Ricardy Anderson.

Intentionally uplifting people who were held down.

Starting in the school year 2024–25, W. T. Woodson High School will be officially known as the Carter G. Woodson High School, named in honor of the distinguished Black author, educator and journalist known as the “Father of Black History,” Carter Godwin Woodson (1875-1950).

On Thursday evening, Nov. 9, the Fairfax County School Board unanimously voted to rename W. T. Woodson High School to Carter G. Woodson High School following a matter introduced by school board member Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District. Students and community members raised concerns about W. T. Woodson’s legacy. Woodson opposed desegregation even after the May 17, 1954, unanimous decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case declared the “separate but equal” doctrine unconstitutional.

In December of 1960, two years before W.T. Woodson High School opened in 1962, the Fairfax County School Board designated the name of the new high school under construction W. T. Woodson High School. “W. T.” is the first and middle name initials of Wilbert Tucker Woodson, the school division’s superintendent from 1929 to 1961. Born in 1893, Woodson died in 1983.

Currently, the Fairfax County School Board may only reconsider the names of its public schools on a case-by-case basis in response to requests raised as forum topics. Negative aspects of Virginia’s past, such as racial prejudice, infringements on human rights, the enduring impact of slavery, opposition to desegregation, and other related issues, might motivate such requests.

McLaughlin said during the Nov. 9 school board meeting that

massive resistance to the Supreme Court ruling ran in the Commonwealth from January 1956 to January 1959. That is when the federal courts finally came in, she said, “and told Virginia, enough is enough.”

According to McLaughlin, in regards to a possible name change for W.T. Woodson, she spoke with staff, committee advocates, and her fellow board members. “We all believe this was the right thing to do and the right time to do it,” McLaughlin said.

Superintendent W. T. Woodson led the school system during the Great Depression, World War II, the post-World War II enrollment growth, and for seven years after the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. It was a defining moment in U.S. history when the Supreme Court ruled state laws separating children in public schools on the basis of race were unconstitutional. All nine justices voted to overturn the “separate but equal” doctrine that their predecessors had endorsed in the Court’s infamous 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision.

However, the Fairfax County School Board followed Virginia’s massive resistance to school desegregation. W.T. Woodson and many Fairfax County School Board members at that time openly opposed segregation, according to a YouTube video by FCPS. Integration did not gather traction until 1960.

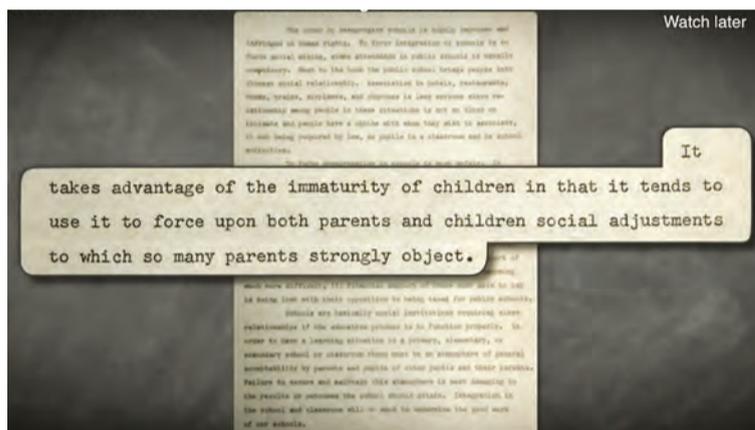
“The order to desegregate schools is highly improper and infringes on human rights,” Woodson wrote in 1959. That was five years after the May 17, 1954, landmark civil rights decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

“To force desegregation in schools is most unfair. It takes advantage of the immaturity of children in that it tends to use it to force upon both parents and children social adjustments, to which so many parents strongly object. What part should parents play in choosing their children’s associates?” added Woodson.

The Fairfax County School Board on Nov. 11 voted to change



W. T. Woodson High School circa 1962



A section of the text authored by Superintendent W. T. Woodson (written in 1959).



Superintendent Wilbert Tucker Woodson openly opposes desegregation.

the name of W.T. Woodson, after two months of robust public engagement. According to Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid, who spoke during the Nov. 9 meeting and provided up-to-date and current data to officially rename W.T. Woodson High School, the renaming of schools connects to policy 8170.8. “The School Board may consider a change in the name of an existing school or facility to ensure an inclusive, respectful learning environment as outlined in our adopted One Fairfax Policy or when the Board deems it appropriate,” she said.

McLaughlin thanked the Woodson community for its robust and heartfelt participation throughout the renaming process. “Through multiple community meetings, public hearings, and online feed-

back forms, we have engaged in rich discussion and gained a deeper understanding about our shared history,” she said.

According to McLaughlin, staff discovered in their research writing by W.T. Woodson against desegregation after the Supreme Court ruling. According to McLaughlin, the integration movement in Fairfax County Public Schools did not gain traction; instead, massive resistance to desegregation ran from 1956 to January 1959. Integration did not occur until the federal courts enforced it, McLaughlin said.

Ricardy J. Anderson, Mason District representative to the Fairfax County School Board, said: “I’m hoping moving forward, we can continue the path that we are on starting today where we’re being

very intentional, that the very people who were held down are being lifted up in these renames.”

An online search of W.T. Woodson reveals his views on desegregation and infringing on human rights. It is recorded in his 408-word statement dated July 6, 1959, and signed “WTW” in pencil at the bottom. Staff found it in the W.T. Woodson papers held in the Virginia Room at the Fairfax County Public Library.

W.T. Woodson wrote in 1959 that desegregation, at least for some time, would “prove hurtful to both Negroes and whites because (1) widespread public support of the public school is being lost, (2) political support is becoming more difficult, [and] (3) financial support of those most able to pay is being lost with their opposition to being taxed for public schools.”

Although W.T. Woodson eventually allowed a plan for the gradual integration of the division’s public schools, the federal courts struck down that plan in 1960. Woodson announced his retirement effective June 1961. That is when the school board named the new high school in Fairfax the W.T. Woodson High School.

“But the bottom line is that in seeing the private papers to understand that the Woodson High School namesake, Wilbert Tucker Woodson, personally held the views and beliefs in segregation,” said McLaughlin immediately before the unanimous vote for the name change. “Just calling it Woodson High School really wasn’t going to take away the hurt and bring healing ... It’s so important that every single child, every single staff member, every single family who visits that school who is a part of the community and the campus, can now collectively together; everyone be inspired and uplifted by Dr. Carter G. Woodson.”

<https://sites.google.com/view/fcps-desegregation/resources/woodson-on-desegregation>

COMMUNITY

Food For Neighbors

FROM PAGE 4

holds in the areas of Arlington, Annandale, Falls Church, Alexandria, Fort Hunt, Mount Vernon, Springfield, Lorton, Centreville, Chantilly, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Sterling, Potomac Falls, and Ashburn.

Supporting the event with food drives and/or hands-on help were families with children, teens, adults of all ages, and representatives from 26 different businesses, service organizations, and school groups. All contributed with enthusiasm to make a direct, positive impact on students in their local schools.

For Centreville High School, Nov. 11 marked the eighth time it served as a major donation collection and sorting site. Heather Ellison, the Centreville Area Manager for Food For Neighbors, found the school buzzing with activity and her heart full of appreciation for other volunteers on the Centreville

leadership team as well as for the many donors and additional volunteers working together to make a difference.

"Bags were overflowing with generosity from our donors and food drives," shared Ellison. "There were the familiar faces of our amazing repeat volunteers, who were smiling ear to ear as well as new volunteers and organizations eagerly learning the ropes. Even the teenagers were beaming with pride as they stacked filled bins in our pantry."

Food For Neighbors invites additional community members to join in the fight against teen food insecurity. The next Red Bag Event will be held on January 13, 2024, and new Red Bag donors, volunteers, community partners, and financial contributors are always welcome. To learn more visit,

<https://www.foodforneighbors.org/get-involved/>.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmaf.org. The Center's website is www.scmaf.org.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.



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Community Grants Could Help You Protect the Environment

And save money too.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

A community in Springfield is removing invasive trees and vines, and planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers in their common area. Not only does it create a pleasant natural space, it also helps repress the growth of non-native plant species. The neighborhood's Fairfax County location in the watershed of the Chesapeake Bay means that in a small way, they also are contributing to improved water quality and the health of the bay. And, by adding to the tree canopy, they are aiding the response to climate change by adding cooling shade and increasing carbon capture.

Ridge Road Estates, a small community of 37 single family homes, is able to tackle this project with the financial assistance of two community grants. One is a mini-grant which paid for large non-native tree removal. The grant is from Audubon At Home, a program under the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, and by Plant NOVA Natives, a partnership of non-profit, governmental and private groups working to reverse the decline of native plants and wildlife in Northern Virginia. The second grant, which covers the cost of buying, installing and some initial care for new native trees is from Virginia's Department of Forestry under their Trees for Clean Water Program.

Mini-grants Help Remove Invasive Trees and Vines

Audubon at Home's mini-grants were funded by Fairfax County's Tree Preservation and Planting Fund (see <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/publicworks/trees/tree-preservation-and-planting-fund>). "The program was created to make a difference by supporting the efforts of property owners and managers to become better stewards of nature in your own outdoor spaces. It embraces the principles of the National Audubon Society's Bird-Friendly Communities and promotes citizen participation in conserving

and restoring local natural habitat and biodiversity." Recognizing that wooded common areas "are both an amenity for humans, and home to our non-human neighbors; and an important part of our infrastructure, cooling the environment and soaking up stormwater, that otherwise cause downstream flooding... Those trees are under numerous threats, but the invasive non-native tree-killing plants constitute one of the worst of them."

This year the Audubon/Plant Nova Natives partnership awarded mini-grants of \$3000 each to ten communities in Fairfax County who were willing to rescue trees on their properties being threatened by certain invasive plants. The mini-grants carry a \$1500 matching requirement, which may be met with volunteer labor as one option. Audubon adds, "We encourage the use of volunteers, so that residents can gain first-hand experience of the difficulties posed by invasive plants and a sense of the value of paying people to do the work in the future. We also encouraged communities to engage their current landscaping companies in the work so as to increase the number of companies in our region that can offer invasive control services." A number of local companies now offer such services. Plant Nova Natives maintains a list at <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/invasive-plant-management>.

In this first year of the mini-grant offerings, 22 applications were received, with the ten available awards going to Antioch Baptist Church (Fairfax Station), Chesterfield Mews Community Association (Fairfax), Crest of Alexandria Homeowners' Association (Fairfax), Fox Lake Property Owners Association (Oakton), Lakeford Community Association (Falls Church), Little River United Church of Christ (Annandale), McLean Greens HOA (Falls Church), Poplar Heights Recreation Association (Falls Church), Ridge Road Estates HOA (Springfield), The Timbers HOA (Springfield).

The program is expected to continue next year, if the Tree Preservation and Planting Fund is funded again.

State Forestry Grant Increases the Tree Canopy

The State's Department of Forestry explains their "Virginia Trees for Clean Water" program encourages the creation of long-term,

sustained canopy cover to improve water quality across the Commonwealth. This grant is used to fund tree planting efforts that raise public awareness of the benefits of trees and their impacts on water quality. With several project categories, and funding from \$1,000 to \$50,000, the program creates the possibility of funding a variety of projects, including community or street tree plantings, creating riparian buffers, moving from turf to trees, and tree giveaways. Department of Forestry's Lara Johnson, who manages the program, says the program is well funded, with nearly one million dollars for 2023, and is funded again for 2024 as well. (For information on the grant program, see <https://dof.virginia.gov/urban-community-forestry/urban-forestry-community-assistance/virginia-trees-for-clean-water-grant-program>).

Local HOA Saves and Educates

Like many HOAs, the Ridge Road Estates community in Springfield, experienced rising landscape service costs over the years for maintaining the small grassy portion of its two-and-a-half acre common area. The small field of about 9,000 square feet along the roadside, which includes VDOT right of way and no amenities, was originally ceded to the neighborhood as common area by the developer since it could not support a house. The area provides no benefit to the community, while being a major driver of HOA fees for landscape service. Largely overlooked, over time invasive trees and vines began to gain a stronger foothold along the ridge border of the wooded area, especially in the meadow's rear area in the tree line.

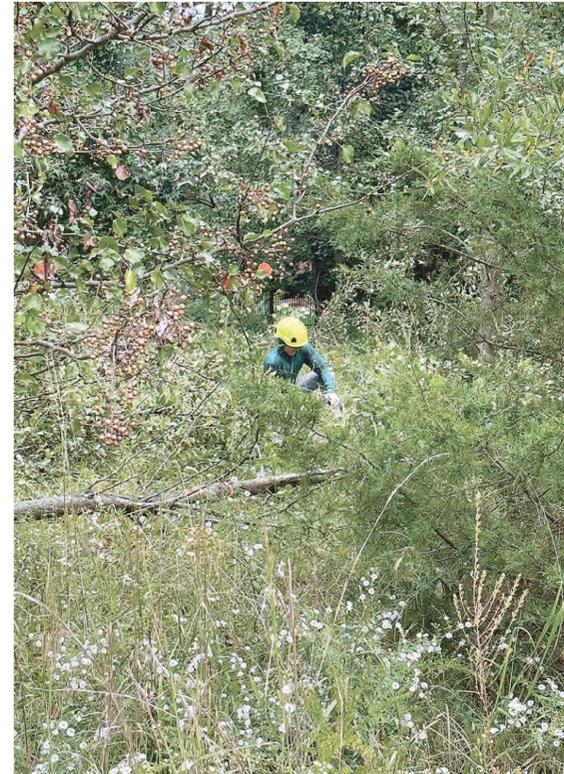
At their annual meeting in October 2021, the community voted to stop mowing and try letting the area revert to natural habitat, although some opposed not having a manicured, mowed look. The community obtained 37 native tree seedlings, courtesy of Fairfax Releaf (<https://www.fairfaxreleaf.com/free-trees/>), and planted them in a community volunteer work session; the 37 seedling representing one for each home in the development. The density of the plantings was intended to eventually discourage grass growth and minimize maintenance mowing requirements. Although planted in

poor soil and with little attention, the seedlings showed a 77 percent survival rate, and native tree and wildflowers "volunteers" began to appear once mowing ceased.

Unfortunately, toward the rear of the area, a double row of larger non-native Callery Pear trees were growing and multiplying, harboring invasive vines, including Porcelainberry, Oriental Bittersweet, and Japanese Honeysuckle, while Multiflora rose and other non-native plants took hold around the seedlings.

Using the grant offerings in combination, the mini-grant to remove the large Callery Pears, and the Department of Forestry grant to plant native trees of a larger size than seedlings, provided the HOA an opportunity to tackle the common area's problems in a single project. The small community does not maintain a significant HOA fund, so the ability to meet the 50 percent matching requirement with volunteer hours was a good fit. Community members worked together to remove the vines and prepare the area to receive native plantings. Though only a few households showed enthusiasm to volunteer for the project, the community was able to meet the matching obligation with volunteer hours alone, while having some fun and generating camaraderie at the same time.

A particular benefit of the program is providing the community's children with an opportunity to volunteer at ages when other programs with age limits might not be open to them. As a result the neighborhood's children have the opportunity for early learning



Invasive trees, like Callery Pear, can produce hundreds of seeds, quickly creating small groves which force out native trees beneficial to local wildlife and insects.

about natural environments and ecosystems by immersion. For example, children collected sticks in the meadow to create a mounded brush habitat, planted wildflower seeds, and searched for species needed to apply for Audubon's

wildlife sanctuary certification. The grants brought money back to the community, saved HOA funds, and brought attention to a neglected area, giving it the prospect of becoming a space the community may visit and enjoy.



Community members Diane Elbe, Rae Park and Brian McCawley remove vines as part of the mini-grant's 50 percent matching requirement.



Grant funding provided opportunity to purchase, and use professional assistance, to plant large trees and shrubs, up to 2 caliber.



Department of Forestry grant funding made it possible to purchase several large trees to quickly add plant mass to the HOA common area.



Even as work on the area progresses, nature visits, like this Variegated Fritillary (*Euptoieta claudia*).



Site receives pre-application visit from State Forester Jim McGlone, now retired, for review and advice.



Young HOA member Alyssa Worsham helps remove invasive trees by collecting Callery Pear seeds.



Not all teachers are adults, as one child who has learned about collecting invasive plant seeds, teaches another.



Brothers Declan and Davin Taylor helped to create a brush shelter, a habitat feature, on the way to seeking Audubon At Home wildlife sanctuary certification.



Neighbors Declan Taylor and Avalyn Worsham share a close-up look at a small spider find.



Jaime Taylor, with sons Declan and Davin, worked on planting native wildflower seeds.



Some of the veterans attending Fairfax City's ceremony.



Presentation of the Colors at the start of the ceremony.

Veterans Day Is Celebrated in Fairfax City

FROM PAGE 3

ated another casualty of war," he said. "We can and must do more for veterans, and the U.S. must continue to lead to try to help other countries resolve their differences in ways that don't create more casualties and wounded warriors."

As the son of an immigrant and grandson of Holocaust survivors, Helmer said the U.S. gave his family tremendous opportunities, so he wanted to give back. He attended West Point, and in August 2001, he and his classmates retook their oath to defend the country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Two weeks later, 9/11 happened.

"Our nation was under unprecedented attack," said Helmer. "And for the 4,000 people at West Point, the sentiment was, 'We need to stand up, defend democracy and serve and protect America.' That feeling binds all of us as veterans – the recognition of what this country has meant to all of us and our families – some for generations, some who became American citizens through their service."

And while children here don't understand why distant, foreign conflicts matter to Americans, said Helmer, "Those of us in this room know it takes brave men and women to step forward and say, 'No matter the consequence, I want to keep this country free and safe.' We continue to inspire generations of future leaders, so I hope all of you will not only remember who you served with, but will also talk to a young person about what it means to serve, why patriotism is important and what having served in the military means to you."

Next, Mayor Read acknowledged women veterans, including her aunt, Maggie Josephine Catasca, who was among the first women to join the WAVES (Women's Naval Reserves) during WWII. She also noted that Catasca's two brothers served in the South Pacific. "So when we think about how being a veteran has changed since the American Revolution, we now see a military that reflects the diversity of our country," said



Mac McCarl

Read.

She further shared that, two weeks ago, she learned about the Golden Thirteen – 13 Black men recruited in 1944 to the Navy's Officer Candidate School. "They never knew why they were chosen," she said. "They completed their 10 weeks of training, passed their test – and because they all passed, it was thought they'd cheated. So they had to take parts of it over – and they all passed again and went on to have successful careers in the Navy."

One of them was Frank Sublett. "I'm Catherine Sublett Read, and the only Subletts in this country are descended from six Huguenot brothers who came here [from France] in the 17th century to Virginia," said Read. "I had no idea who Frank Sublett was but, somehow, he's related to me. And I'm astonished that there's so much history out there that we don't know about the people who've served this country – and the circumstances under which they did so."

"So on this Veterans Day, I ask us all to think about those we honor and the legions of people whose stories we'll never know, who also served and who are not necessarily



Dan Helmer

recognized. Everybody gave their full measure to the democracy we all enjoy today – and for that, I'm grateful to every veteran who ever served."

While Sheriff Kincaid isn't a veteran, she said she and her husband (with the Virginia State Police) both serve the community as public servants. "We salute our veterans and truly thank you for what you've done for our country and the sacrifices you've made," said Kincaid. "We know freedom isn't free and, frankly, Veterans Day should be celebrated every day."

Noting that 25 percent of her staff are veterans, she said, "I'm proud of the work they've been able to do in Fairfax with our Veterans Treatment Docket [serving veterans in legal trouble due to addiction and/or mental-health issues]. We recognize folks are still suffering from what they've seen [in battle] and we owe them."

American Legion Post 177 Commander Eric Parkhurst said although he served five years active duty in the Army and another five in the National Guard, he had a desk job in Virginia, the whole time. So when he heard veterans talk about all they'd done, he



Stacey Kincaid

didn't believe he was qualified to have that title, himself.

"But a veteran later told me, 'It doesn't matter where you served because, if you weren't doing what you did at a desk in the U.S., those guys flying those missions wouldn't have been able to do their jobs,'" said Parkhurst. "That hit home and made me realize I really am a vet and made a difference. So to all of you today, regardless of where you served and what you did, thank you. And if it wasn't for their families, our veterans couldn't have done the jobs they did."

He also related how, when he recently thanked a veteran for his service, that person thanked him for being someone worth fighting for. "Not everyone here is a veteran," said Parkhurst. "But everyone can be someone worth fighting for."

In Kuiper's closing prayer, he asked God to bless veterans and their families and fill their homes with His strength and love. "Help us to remember always and respect their sacrifices," he said. "Bring healing to those who still hurt and help them know You to find peace and happiness in their hearts."

Blue Wall in Both Houses

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Virginia Democrats emerged victorious in the Nov. 7 elections, marking a significant shift in the state political landscape just two years after the Commonwealth took a right turn in the 2021 general election. In 2021, Republican Glenn Youngkin secured the governorship and the House of Delegates, propelling his conservative vision for Virginia. Because Democrats still controlled the Senate, much of Youngkin's agenda hit a roadblock.

Now Democrats maintain control of the Senate and took a majority of seats in the House of Delegates. They will have even greater power over Youngkin's policy agenda, but will have to work with him to advance their own.

Mark J. Rozell, dean of the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, said the issue of abortion rights was key to the most competitive races that the Democrats won, and delivered partisan majorities in both houses.

"The Republicans were hoping that issues such as crime and safety and the economy, where the GOP has advantages, would be foremost in the minds of voters. But ultimately, abortion rights drove the Democratic turnout and helped swing voters to elect Democrats," Rozell said. "The issue was paramount for many voters in this election cycle."

While the governor tried to stake a middle ground on the issue with his 15-week ban proposal, according to Rozell, the problem was that voters likely believed that Republican majorities in both houses would pass either an outright ban or a more severe restriction than the governor's proposal. "And, given that Virginia is the only southern state in the post-Dobbs environment not to have enacted an abortion restriction or banned abortion, this is the issue for this election. It powered Democratic turnout and benefited the Democrats with swing voters," Rozell said.

"Governor Youngkin and Virginia Republicans did everything they could to take total control of state government, but the people of the Commonwealth rejected them," said Susan Swecker, chair of the Democratic Party of Virginia. "Even with tens of millions spent and after every attempt to suppress the vote ... the blue brick wall in Virginia stands."

In the Senate, Democrats won by a narrow margin, 22 Democrats to 18 Republicans. The double setback denied Youngkin the critical advantage he sought to attain.

Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-Alexandria) said on Election night that despite breaking spending records, "Governor Youngkin was just served the biggest political rejection by voters of any Virginia governor in over three decades. Virginians sent Youngkin a message loud and clear: Virginians don't want the government banning books and interfering with their personal freedoms - whether it's their reproductive rights, the right to breathe clean air, the safety of our communities from gun violence, or the sanctity of our democracy."

Youngkin's stand on those issues mattered to many, as Ebbin said, as did respect for trans students in public schools, and Virginia remaining in the Regional Greenhouse Initiative (RGGI).

In December 2022, with Youngkin's nod, the State Air Pollution Control Board voted to begin withdrawing Virginia from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative "despite overwhelm-

SEE ELECTION, PAGE 14

Unofficial Local Election Results for Fairfax County

* Incumbent

Unofficial Results Reported by Virginia Public Access Project
<https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/20231107/local/fairfax-county-va/>

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Chairman-Board of Supervisors		
Jeffrey C. McKay	195,903	67.05%
Arthur G. Purves	94,703	32.42%
Write-In	1,550	0.53%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Clerk of Court <i>Fairfax County and Fairfax</i>		
Christopher J. Falcon	185,341	62.37%
Gerarda Marie Culipher	110,330	37.13%
Write-In	1,478	0.50%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Commonwealth's Attorney <i>Fairfax County and Fairfax</i>		
Steve T. Descano	217,927	77.05%
Write-In	64,922	22.95%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Sheriff <i>Fairfax County and Fairfax</i>		
Stacey Ann Kincaid	217,596	76.66%
Jerry L. McMillian	31,343	11.04%
Christopher F. DeCarlo	29,222	10.29%
Write-In	5,690	2.00%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board At Large <i>Top 3 Finishers</i>		
Ryan L. McElveen	160,516	19.72%
Ilryong Moon	158,211	19.43%
Robert K. "Kyle" McDaniel	155,690	19.12%
Saundra T. Davis	94,909	11.66%
Maureen T. Brody	87,522	10.75%
Cassandra R. Aucoin	85,935	10.56%
Linda A. Pellegrino	25,986	3.19%
Ahmed Mahdi Hussein	22,442	2.76%
Peter C. Gabor	20,027	2.46%
Write-In	2,889	0.35%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Braddock)		
James R. Walkinshaw	24,441	76.94%
Carey Chet Campbell	6,339	19.96%
Write-In	986	3.10%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Dranesville)		
James N. "Jimmy" Bierman, Jr.	22,231	60.62%
Puneet Ahluwalia	14,275	38.92%
Write-In	169	0.46%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Franconia)		
Rodney L. Lusk	17,264	62.65%
Paul F. Beran	6,902	25.05%
Mark T. Welch	3,214	11.66%
Write-In	176	0.64%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Hunter Mill)		
Walter L. Alcorn	28,181	70.04%
Indira S. Massey	11,910	29.60%
Write-In	142	0.35%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Mason)		
Andres F. Jimenez	16,457	72.02%
Terry W. Modglin	5,902	25.83%
Write-In	492	2.15%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Mount Vernon)		
Daniel G. "Dan" Storck	18,905	61.58%
Richard T. Hayden	8,174	26.62%
Christopher T. Morgan	3,443	11.21%
Write-In	180	0.59%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Providence)		
Dalia A. Palchik	19,488	68.27%
Brian R. Murphy	8,891	31.15%
Write-In	166	0.58%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Springfield)		
Patrick S. "Pat" Herrity	21,787	54.43%
Albert Vega	16,934	42.31%
Corazon Sandoval Foley	1,194	2.98%
Write-In	111	0.28%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Sully)		
Kathy L. Smith	20,238	59.47%
Keith S. Elliott	13,643	40.09%
Write-In	152	0.45%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Braddock)		
Rachna Sizemore Heizer	20,580	59.97%
Priscilla M. DeStefano	13,562	39.52%
Write-In	173	0.50%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Dranesville)		
Robyn A. Lady	22,554	61.65%
Paul M. Bartkowski	13,899	38.00%
Write-In	128	0.35%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Franconia)		
Marcia C. St. John-Cunning	16,938	61.33%
Kevin R. Pinkney	9,220	33.38%
Write-In	1,460	5.29%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Hunter Mill)		
Melanie K. Meren	28,809	72.03%
Harry R. Jackson	10,963	27.41%
Write-In	223	0.56%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Mason)		
Ricardy J. Anderson	15,184	63.36%
Kristin F. Ball	8,624	35.99%
Write-In	156	0.65%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Mount Vernon)		
Mateo Dunne	18,150	59.99%
Stori M. Zimmerman	11,890	39.30%
Write-In	215	0.71%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Providence)		
Karl V. Frisch	18,905	66.42%
Anthony A. "Tony" Sabio	9,387	32.98%
Write-In	172	0.60%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Springfield)		
Sandy B. Anderson	20,477	52.51%
Debra A. Tisler	16,226	41.61%
Peter J. Bixby-Eberhardt	2,129	5.46%
Write-In	161	0.41%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Sully)		
Seema Dixit	18,451	54.54%
Cynthia L. Walsh	15,230	45.02%
Write-In	150	0.44%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Soil and Water Conservation Director <i>Northern Virginia District</i>		
Top 3 Finishers		
Chris E. Koerner	160,209	21.09%
Rhonda J. Bitterli	155,507	20.47%
Dana H. Barakat	153,175	20.16%
Debra O. Maddrell	93,499	12.31%
Mary Ellen "Mell" Flynn	88,442	11.64%
Mary E. Strayhorne	82,439	10.85%
Edward W. Monroe, Jr.	23,704	3.12%
Write-In	2,801	0.37%

ENTERTAINMENT

THREE FARMERS MARKETS REMAIN OPEN INTO DECEMBER

Enjoy the extended season at the Reston, Burke and McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon farmers markets. Starting Nov. 25, each market will welcome a handful of new vendors in addition to the ones you know and love. Expect new products, such as bagels, hot biscuits, pho, fresh cheese and more! The Extended Season will continue each week until market closing dates, which can be found below.

Burke Farmers Market. April 22 – Dec. 16, 8 a.m. to noon. VRE Parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke

Reston Farmers Market. April 29 – Dec. 2, 8 a.m. to noon. Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston

McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers Market. April 19 – Dec. 20, 8 a.m. to noon. Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria

NOV. 9 TO DEC. 24

Photo with Santa. At Tysons Corner Center. Lower Level – Fashion Court/Nordstrom Wing. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. / Sun. 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Tysons Corner Center's Santa Claus will arrive on November 9th, and be available for photos and personal time daily through December 24th.

STARTING NOW

Sip & Stroll. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Shopping with a Twist will be in effect daily during center hours (10 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Sat. /11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sun.), although individual restaurant hours may vary. Adult beverages must be in a logo'd disposable cup provided by the restaurant where the drink was purchased. Only alcoholic beverages purchased from participating restaurants may be taken outside the restaurant and into the shopping center. No outside alcohol is permitted.

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/>

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 Fairfax 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

Nov. 20 -- My Gym



"Peter and the Starcatcher" can be seen at Mount Vernon High School on Nov. 16-18, 2023.

Nov. 27 -- Drew Blue Shoes Magic
Dec. 4 -- Music Together Sing and Groove
Dec. 11 -- My Gym
Dec. 18 -- TBD

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-restons-founding-2023-09-09-10-00>

BONITA LESTINA FAIRFAX

OLD TOWN HALL

PERFORMANCE SERIES

Enjoy an evening of music showcasing a variety of genres in the elegant interior of historic Old Town Hall (3999 University Drive) in the heart of Fairfax City. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and performances begin at 8 p.m. and run from October to April. Admission is free. Visit: www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts.

SCHEDULE

November 17: Graham Breedlove – Blues
December 8: Marcolivia – Classical String Duo
January 5: Baltimore Composers Forum – Modern
January 19: Navy Band Wind Quintet – Classical
February 2: Kadencia – Puerto Rican Orchestra (part of the Chocolate Lovers Festival!)
February 16: Matt Trkula – Classical Guitar
March 8: Mandoleers – Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra
March 22: James & Victor – Jazz Duo/Steel Pan
April 5: Francesca Hurst – Solo Piano
April 19: Sylvan Waters Duo – Harp/Brass

NOV. 3 TO FEB. 4

Eleanor Mahin Thorp: Metopic Ridge. At Tephra ICA at Signature. Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) presents Metopic Ridge, a solo exhibition by artist Eleanor Mahin Thorp. Thorp's paintings take us on an immersive site visit to examine the Blue Ridge Mountains exploring stability and change, the seen and the hidden within rocks. Through



"Much Ado About Nothing" can be seen at South County High School in Lorton from Nov. 16-18, 2023. Actors rehearsing from left to right: Caprice Aspland (Beatrice), Parker Bryant (Benedick), Aeryn Dahm (Hero), and Javier Quiroz (Claudio).

her discerning gaze rocks are more than geological entities; Instead, they metamorphose into vessels of history and human connection. Drawing inspiration from the fascinating transformations depicted in Persian miniatures, Thorp traces the hidden figures and forms in the rocks. Her paintings reveal the duality of rocks' existence as both a firm witness to time and a medium for that which is intangible.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 15

Visiting Filmmakers Series. 4:30 p.m. At GMU's Johnson Center Cinema, Fairfax. A free screening of the new documentary, "Bad Press," followed by a post-screening Q&A with the filmmakers, Rebecca Landsberry-Baker and Joe Peeler, and the film's subject, Angel Ellis. An enthralling tale that unfurls with the energy and suspense of a political thriller, "Bad Press" is a timely and unprecedented story about the battle for freedom of the press and against state-censored media. This event is free and open to the public. Register on Mason360.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

Performing Arts Documentary. 1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through these

one-hour (or so) documentaries. Join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

NOV. 16-18

"Much Ado About Nothing." 7 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday. At South County High School, Lorton. This year, the SCHS Theatre is set to "embrace the classics" by presenting both a Shakespearean play and a 1950s musical. For the fall play, they will transport William Shakespeare's comedy, "Much Ado About Nothing," to a 1970s discotheque! Visit: <https://www.schstheatre.com/> or <https://event.etix.com/ticket/v/15597/>

NOV. 16-18

"Peter and the Starcatcher." Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. Presented by Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria. The show tells the story of Peter Pan's origin story; appropriate for all ages. Tickets are \$10 General Admission, \$8 senior/military, \$7 students, and \$5 for children 5 and under. Tickets are available online, mvhstheatrearts.com.

NOV. 16-18

"The Descendants." Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. At Hayfield Middle School,



The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants" Nov. 16-18, 2023.

7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants." The show is appropriate for all ages. Tickets are available online, www.hayfelddrama.com, and at the door and cost \$10 each.

NOV. 16-18

"Almost, Maine." 7 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Nov. 18. At Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. One deeply cold and magical Midwinter Night, the citizens of Almost -- not organized enough for a town, too populated for a wilderness -- experience the life-altering power of the human heart. Relationships end, begin, or change beyond recognition, as strangers become friends, friends become lovers, and lovers turn into strangers. Tickets are \$12 for guests and \$10 for students, staff and military on lbtheatre.com.

FRIDAY/NOV. 17

Watercolorist Deborah Conn. 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society will present Deborah Conn, demonstrating her technique in creating portraits using a painting surface of crinkled tissue paper. Ms. Conn has distinguished herself among watercolorists as a Signature member of the Potomac Valley Watercolorists, the Baltimore Watercolor Society, the Virginia Watercolor Society and has just recently been selected as a Signature member of both the Northwest Watercolor Society and

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Watercolorist Deborah Conn will demonstrate her technique on Friday, Nov. 17, 2023 at the McLean Community Center.

the National Watercolor Society. She has won many awards for her work, both regionally and nationally and has been teaching beginner through advanced classes in her home studio in Falls Church for nine years. She has taught watercolor classes on cruise ships since 2016.

FRIDAY/NOV. 17

Holiday Kick-Off Event / Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. 6 – 8 p.m. Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza. To kick off the 2023 Holiday Season on the Plaza, Tysons Corner Center will honor Best Buddies during an onstage ceremony. “Local Hero”, Mark Thompson, a Special Education Department Chair and Advisor at McLean High School, will receive a gift of \$500 for his charitable efforts. Following the event, celebrates the sights and sounds of the season with a showcase by Santa lighting the Plaza Christmas Tree, along with community performances, and live music.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Workhouse Gala: Coloring Our World. 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The annual gala is the largest and most significant fundraiser of the year, providing critical support to sustain the accessible and high-quality multidisciplinary arts experiences it brings to Fairfax County every year. Coloring Our World will be an evening of elegance, artistry, and creativity hosted under the Rizer pavilion. Sponsorship opportunities are available now. To secure your sponsorship, contact:

Elena Forbes, Director of Advancement elenaforbes@workhousearts.org or call 703-5874-2986.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra with Renée Fleming. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Renée Fleming, one of the most celebrated singers of our time and a 2023 Kennedy Center Honoree, joins the Fairfax Symphony for an exclusive



The FSO with Renee Fleming can be seen on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023 at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

evening featuring the exquisite Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss. This special co-presentation with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra also includes Strauss’s Don Juan, Wagner’s Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan and Isolde, and Fleming’s performance of beloved arias and show tunes.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Speaker Alexandra Havard. 7 p.m. At Oakcrest School, 1619 Crowell Road, Vienna. Oakcrest School is pleased to welcome Alexandre Havard, author and founder of the Virtuous Leadership Institute, to speak on “Pursuing a Free Heart: From Temperament to Character.” Born in Paris, Mr. Havard graduated from the René Descartes University, one of France’s leading law schools, and has practiced law in several European countries. He offers seminars in virtuous leadership worldwide to business leaders and students alike.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

St. Timothy Craft Fair. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 13809 Poplar Tree Road, Chantilly. Featuring 50-plus vendors: jewelry, fine art, religious, pottery, fashion, home decor, Christmas, raffles and more. Admission: bring a canned good item to help support our St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. <https://sttimothy-parish.org/craft-fair/>

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

FSO with Renee Fleming. 8-10 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Renée Fleming, one of the most celebrated singers of our time, joins the Fairfax Symphony for an exclusive evening featuring the exquisite Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss. Cost: \$100, \$75, \$50; half-price for youth through Grade 12. Call 703-993-2787.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

FallFest. 12:30 to 5 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Come for the day

and join FSRM as they host the original Bavarian Dance Group of Washington ‘Alt Washingtonia’ for dancing, yodeling, cowbell ringing, Alphorns, and traditional German Food and Crafts. ‘Alt Washingtonia’ will provide entertainment in the true Bavarian style, come and watch, but come to learn and participate. Performances are at 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m., and 4 p.m.. You can join in the dancing, try your hand at blowing an Alphon, ringing a cowbell, and more. Enjoy German food and snacks (extra fee) and create and learn about traditional German Holiday Crafts. One craft per person (a ticket will be provided at admission). If you wish to make additional crafts purchase, tickets for \$1 each (all while supplies last). www.Fairfax-station.org, www.Facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

Negin Farsad – Comedian. 7 p.m. At CenterStage at Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Negin is a regular panelist for NPR. Her book, “How to Make White People Laugh,” was called “frank and hilarious,” and The Austin Chronicle calls her a “master humorist.” Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

B – The Underwater Bubble Show. 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Embark on an underwater adventure and discover a realm inhabited by seahorses, dragonfish, starfish, mermaids, and other whimsical and watery creatures! This lavish production—perfect for children and their grownups—combines spectacular acrobatics, enchanting dance, original music, astonishing visual effects, and lots and lots of bubbles to create a fanciful aquatic world that must be seen to be believed.

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

NTRAK Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road,



The Church Street Stroll takes place on Monday, Nov. 27, 2023 in the Town of Vienna.

Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold a N-Gauge Train Display at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: museum members, free; adults 13 and over, \$5; children 5-12, \$3; under 4, free. Seniors 65+ and military (active & retired), \$4. For more information on the museum and show events phone 703-425-9225. Visit www.fairfax-station.org www.facebook.com/FFXSRR

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

Musical Magic Balalaika Concert. 3 p.m. At Kenmore Auditorium, 200 S. Carlin Springs Rd., Arlington. The Washington Balalaika Society will celebrate its 35th year with a wonderful concert, Musical Magic!, featuring new repertoire and old favorites. This new program was created by Conductor and Artistic Director, Svetlana Nikonova. This special anniversary concert will include soloists from the orchestra, as well as featuring an original composition by one of the youngest members. The program also includes compositions of classical composers, such as Mussorgsky, Elgar and Kreisler, as well as folk tunes, film themes and the spectacular Great Gate of Kiev! Tickets: Adults \$30; Seniors/Military \$25; Students \$15; Children 12 & under \$5. For tickets, visit www.balalaika.org.

TUESDAY/NOV. 21

Five Hills Garden Club Program-Reciprocating with the Soil. 11 a.m. At Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park Street, N.E. Vienna. Dan Schwartz with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District will speak at the Five Hills Garden Club meeting. Schwartz will speak about why and how we can encourage healthy soil in our gardens and communities. His presentation will include tips on improving the biology of your soil, how this can allow us to garden without the need for supplemental chemicals, and how healthy soil benefits both the gardener and the entire community.

FRIDAY/NOV. 24

Reston Holiday Parade. 11 a.m. At Reston Town Center, Reston. Celebrating its 32nd year, the one-of-a-kind, one-hour, half-mile parade along Market Street also welcomes the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a horse-drawn carriage. Since

1992, rain or shine, the parade has been an annual tradition on the day after Thanksgiving. After the parade, the Clauses will return for the Tree Lighting at 6:00 p.m. on Market Street. Bring your parade bells and join us for a day full of holiday cheer!

NOV. 25-26

“The Nutcracker.” At Fairfax High School, Fairfax. The Fairfax Ballet Company presents a full-length production of “The Nutcracker.” Two show times include: Nov. 25 at 4 p.m. and Nov. 26 at 4 p.m. Fairfax Ballet Company members, along with guest professional artists and students from the Russell School of Ballet, join Clara and her Nutcracker Prince in this journey through a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, twirling candy canes, and an epic battle between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice. Chloe Shulsinger, a senior at Westfield High School in Chantilly and member of the Fairfax Ballet Company, dances the role of Clara, and professional guest artist Philip Smith-Cobbs, previously with the Atlanta Ballet, portrays the Nutcracker Prince. For tickets, visit www.fairfaxballetnutcracker2023.bpt.me. Tickets are also available at the door one hour before each show. For group discounts, email events@rsbdance.com

MONDAY/NOV. 27

Church Street Stroll. 6 p.m. At the Town of Vienna in front of Freeman Store and Museum. Includes musical entertainment from local school groups and holiday greetings from Mayor Linda Colbert, the Vienna Town Council, and other elected leaders. New this year is a tree lighting ceremony with a traditional, decorated evergreen tree on the Freeman Store lawn! Santa will make his grand entrance down Church Street aboard the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department’s antique fire truck. After the official ceremony, participants can visit with Santa, stroll down historic Church Street, enjoy the festive lights, enjoy hot chocolate, warm up by a bonfire and explore the holiday shopping specials inside local Church Street businesses. Revelers can also enjoy tours of the nearby Caboose, the Vienna Train Station, and the Little Library for a trip down memory lane. For more information: call Historic Vienna at 703-938-5187 or visit www.viennava.gov/stroll.

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ELECTION

FROM PAGE 11
ing support for the program from Virginian voters. The public comment period leading up to the vote resulted in over 90 percent of comments vehemently opposing a repeal of RGGI," according to the Virginia Conservation Network.

Board of Supervisors and School Board

The Board of Supervisors will get two new members. Voters in the Dranesville District elected Jimmy Bierman to replace retiring John Foust. Mason District voters elected Andres F. Jimenez to replace retiring Penny Gross.
The party makeup remains the same, with Pat Herrity (Springfield) the sole Republican on the Board.
"To all those who came together and supported our campaign, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, thank you for making this election about results, not politics," Herrity said. "The Springfield District was only 38 percent Republican in 2021 when Glenn Youngkin took the governorship, but we ran on our long list of accomplishments and service to our residents, and we ran on bringing balance and common sense to the Board, which is what the residents wanted."
As for the 12-member Fairfax County School Board, it will remain entirely Democratic following last night's election.

"These results show people are fed up with the political attacks targeting our world-class public schools and teachers," said Vice Chair Karl Frisch at the Fairfax County Democrats election night party in Tysons. Frisch won by more than 30 points. With his re-election secured, Frisch will become School Board Chair on Jan. 1, 2024.

"Fairfax County residents have made it clear: they want safe and inclusive schools with exceptional educators and equitable access to the opportunities every student needs to succeed. I am grateful to have earned voters' trust for another term and eager to advance these priorities with my new colleagues," Frisch said.

Voters re-elected four members: Frisch in Providence, Rachna Sizemore Heizer in Braddock, Melanie Meren in Hunter Mill, and Ricardy Anderson in Mason. Two former school board members return as at-large members, Ryan McElveen and Ilyong Moon. Six others, Robyn Lady in Dranesville, Marcia St. John-Cunning in Franconia, Mateo Dunne in Mount Vernon, Sandy Anderson in Springfield, Seema Dixit in Sully, and Kyle McDaniel at-large, are new to the School Board.

The new board remains diverse, like the community it serves, with one Black member, one Hispanic member, two Indian American members, one Korean American member, three LGBTQ+ members, and three immigrant members. Additionally, women are the board's majority, with seven members.

In 2019, Frisch became the first openly LGBTQ+ person elected to local office in Fairfax County. He is currently one of only three such school board members in Virginia. With their victories today, Lady will be Fairfax County's first openly lesbian elected official, and McDaniel will be the first LGBTQ+ person elected countywide.

Workhouse Arts Center Gala and Auction

The Workhouse Arts Center annual gala is this Saturday, Nov. 18. This black-tie event celebrating 15 years of artistry at the Workhouse will include art activations, dinner, live band, dancing, and silent and live auctions.

If you still want to support the Workhouse, anyone can participate by bidding in our silent auction online. From sporting events and winery experiences, to commissioned artwork and luxury beauty items. A Lekko Skincare gift box can be yours with a starting bid of \$75. Are you a Commanders or 49ers fan? Bids start at \$200 for a pair of tickets - a \$500 value. How about an Open Water SCUBA Diver Certification? Bids start at \$800 for this package valued at \$2000.

The Workhouse Arts Center annual gala is the largest and most significant fundraiser of the year, providing critical support to sustain the accessible and high-quality multidisciplinary arts experiences we bring to Fairfax County every year. Help support and celebrate the art and artists that have shaped our organization by bidding today.

<https://www.workhousearts.org/annual-gala>

More Holiday Happenings at the Workhouse Arts Center

Theater Performances, Comedy Shows, Winter Celebration and More

The Workhouse Arts Center will present several holiday events and activities in November and December for visitors to give back to the community, shop for holiday gifts, attend performances, take a class, and more. For more information visit workhousearts.org.

Toy Drive – Now through Dec. 11

The Workhouse Arts Center is partnering with OAR NOVA, a local non-profit restorative justice organization, to give back to our community. Join us in helping families impacted by the criminal justice system by donating a new, unused toy in its original packaging. Toys can be dropped off in the Workhouse Visitors Center.

Small Business Saturday - 20% Off All Items – Saturday, Nov. 25, 11 am-6 pm

Celebrate Small Business Saturday by supporting artists at the Workhouse Arts Center and get a 20% discount on all items in gift shops, galleries, and artist studios! Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts and save big!

Thanksgiving Weekend Comedy Showcase – Saturday, Nov. 25, 8 pm

The Workhouse Arts Center presents, in collaboration with Rahmein Mostafavi, some of the funniest comedians in the DC area including Dewayne White, Jared Stern, Olivia Vida, Benny Nwokeabia, and Jason Weems for this special holiday weekend of comedy! Tickets are \$20. McGuireWoods Gallery in building W-16.

Creating Beautiful Ornaments with Lightbulbs - Saturday, Dec 2, 10:30 am

In this workshop participants will transform used lightbulb into festive holiday ornaments. Participants will be shown how to paint, collage and add glitter for a beautiful transformation. Cost, \$70. Building W-3, room 305.

form used lightbulb into festive holiday ornaments. Participants will be shown how to paint, collage and add glitter for a beautiful transformation. Cost, \$70. Building W-3, room 305.

Theater Performance – A Christmas Carol - Saturday, Dec. 2, 7 pm and Sunday Dec 3, 1 pm

Get into the holiday spirit with this season favorite presented in a whole new light. Through the magic of theatre, John Hardy single-handedly performs over 40 roles to bring Charles Dickens' classic holiday perennial tale to life at the Workhouse Arts Center. Tickets, \$25. Building W-3 Theater.

WinterWorks - Season Celebration - Saturday, Dec. 9, 6-9 pm

Our festive WinterWorks event will feature holiday merriment, fun photo opportunities, carol singers, a Raku ceramics activity, dance demonstrations, hot chocolate bar, smores by a fire pit, and more! Admission is free. Art activities, food, and beverages available for purchase. Workhouse Arts Center Campus.

Holidays...Hallowdays Movie Screening - Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 pm

While incarcerated at the Lorton Correctional Complex in the 1960s and 1970s, Rhozier "Roach" Brown led the prison theatrical troupe THE INNER VOICES. They performed original plays, skits, and social dramas at a variety of venues including the Apollo Theater and the Smithsonian Institution. Cost: In place of an admission fee, guests are asked to bring a new unused toy to donate to the Workhouse Toy Drive. Building W-3 Theater.

New Year's Eve Musical Theater Performance – The Who's Tommy Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm

Based on the iconic 1969 rock concept album, The Who's Tommy is an exhilarating story of hope, healing, and the human spirit. The story of the pinball-playing boy who triumphs over his adversities has inspired and amazed audiences for more than 40 years. The New Year's Eve show includes a post-performance reception with midnight champagne. Tickets \$50. Building W-3 Theater. See the website for ticket prices for additional dates and times. Show runs through Feb 11. Fridays and Saturdays 8 pm and Sundays, 2 pm.

New Year's Eve Comedy Show with Antoine Scott – Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm

The Workhouse Arts Center presents, in collaboration with Rahmein Mostafavi, a special New Year's Eve comedy celebration. Time to laugh off 2023 and bring in 2024 with an abundance of joy! Join headliner Antoine Scott and a host of other hilarious comics for a one-show-only New Year's Eve comedy event. Tickets are \$50; \$60 front row reserved seats. McGuireWoods Gallery in building W16.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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Cause and Effect



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What a pleasure the last few months have been for you Kenny-column readers who aren't particularly interested in cancer. Rarely, if at all, has there been a cancer-centric, dare I admit, self-indulgent column for your tepid perusal. Oh sure, there's been the odd reference here or there, but nothing too intense or the least bit intentional to focus you on the ups and downs of life in the cancer lane. A bumpy road if there ever was one.

In fact, it's been over three months since I've droned on about cancer. An amount of time which coincides with the longest interval between scans that I've ever experienced: over four months. And as much as I would like (Oh, how I would like) to say that this reflects a cancer remission, it does not. Instead, it reflects how slowly my thyroid cancer is progressing, and a modest attempt as well by my oncologist to reduce/manage the amount of radiation I've been exposed to, and likely will continue to be exposed to, so long as I shall live, that is. Granted, from what I've been told, the amount of radiation I'm exposed to during one of my C.T. or P.E.T. scans are modest, in the scheme of things. Nevertheless, in my scheme, considering the number of scans I've had over nearly 15 years, there might be a cumulative – and side, effect: cancer. I guess having one cancer doesn't preclude you from getting another. (I think that's sort of unfair, don't you?)

When my oncologist explained his thinking for extending my scan interval to four months from three months, I was 100% for it. Initially he said that obviously my cancer is slow moving, given the almost 15 years we've been involved, so an additional month between diagnostic scans is reasonable/not likely problematic; especially because, he added, after all these years/scans, it is prudent that we try to minimize my exposure to radiation. One doesn't exactly build up an immunity to radiation. Upon hearing that concern, which I don't recall ever hearing or considering before, I perked up and asked "Really? Why now? What's the risk?" His answer was somewhere between ironic and predictable: "Cancer."

Incredulous, I blurted out: "Cancer? Do you mean to tell me that a side effect of my cancer treatment/diagnostic scanning is more cancer and not simply more of the same cancer?" "Yes, he replied." After all these treatment years of chemotherapy and changing my diagnosis from non-small cell lung cancer to papillary thyroid cancer, and beating all the odds, the (I don't want to say end) result might be that I've possibly caused another set of cancer tumors to take hold and threaten my life? "Cheese and crackers," as my late father said many times when surprised and disappointed by something somebody said to him. Or as I might have uttered, when I heard the oncologist's explanation: "Holy s***!" Seems like a dirty trick. But I imagine the choice at the beginning of my treatment was the here and now, not the maybe later. When you're diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer, and given a terminal prognosis as I was, there's often not much talk of a later, so the focus better be on the present. And so, it was. And now, nearly 15 years later, the success of my own unexpected survival has a side effect of its own? As my former co-worker, Monique, would say: "Crazy kookie." Meaning, you can't make this stuff up. How I wish I was.

Well, I'm not going to overreact yet. I'll wait, as my oncologist said, for my late Nov. scan and my mid-November lab work to see if there have been any unfortunate changes. I often joke that the longer I live, the closer I get to the end rather than further away from the beginning. Not that I'm the least bit negative, as you regular readers know, but occasionally when you're aware of your health, as most cancer patients are, you do pay attention to what's happening to your body. And as much as you might want to chalk up any changes to older age, that's probably not the best approach. As my oncologist told me years ago, if I were to experience any new symptoms, particularly ones that persist for a few weeks, please contact him. And over the years, I have gotten better about honestly assessing my situation and making real-time decisions to get medical help, or at least get a medical opinion/evaluation about whatever is happening to me. As much as I'd love to ignore my situation and pretend that it's not as serious as it is, turning a blind eye or a deaf ear to my reality is not likely to solve the problem. Although the cancer I have is "incurable," it doesn't mean that I can't live a relatively normal life. It just means that I'll be undergoing treatment of some kind for the rest of my life. But I can live with that, hopefully. It just requires patience and understanding, and a whole lot of luck.

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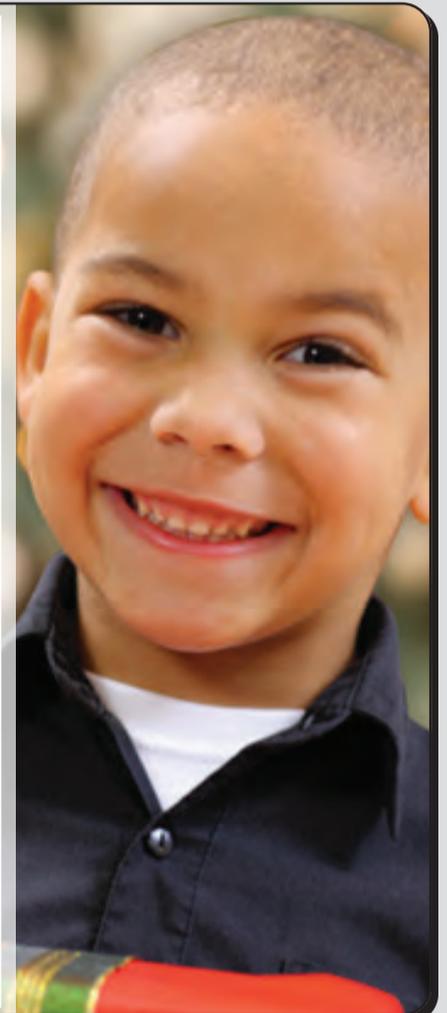


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