

# CONNECTION

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

Jillian Latham, 12, of Fairfax Station, and Kendall Anderson, 15, of Fairfax, work on the gooey pinecone birdfeeders that will help support birds through the winter at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, organized by Volunteer Fairfax.



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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX

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700 Volunteers 'Give Together'  
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# Vigil Held for Huntsman Hit and Run Victim

**Driver still at large as victim remains critical.**

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**T**ragedy struck the Wong family of Springfield when Mary Wong was hit by a car while walking to her Springfield home. She was walking from the bus stop after work when she was hit just steps from her Orange Hunt doorstep on the rainy night of Dec. 27 at about 6 p.m. Mary Wong, 63, sustained multiple injuries, including brain trauma and spine fractures, and was lying near where she was hit for an unknown amount of time. The driver did not stop. Mary was discovered by others who called for emergency service. She was taken to the hospital where she remained in a coma.

Neighbors and other well-wishers gathered in her Huntsman neighborhood for a candlelight vigil of support for the Wong family on Saturday evening, January 13th. There is little that anyone can do for Mary,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY WONG FAMILY

Mary Wong at the Tidal Basin

except hope for a miracle. Her son David explains her injuries are inoperable. Well-wishers also are providing support for her children, David and Jeanie, through a Go Fund Me (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/supporting-the-wong-family>).

Fairfax County police detectives are searching for the hit-and-run driver. The car, thought to be a sedan of unknown make,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MAUREEN REED

Huntsman neighborhood holds a candlelight vigil in support of the Wong family

has front-end damage to the headlight and turn signal. In an appeal to the driver, David Wong asks, "If you have any sort of self conscience, I hope you will step up and just admit to it."

Mary Wong is described by her friends

and family as "a loving mother, kind hearted, caring, and a very loyal Christian who has been a big part of her church community." She has been caring for her two children alone since the death of her husband in December 2021.

## The English Enemy Is Here

**Delegate warns of ivy invasion, proposes remedy.**

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**A**merican colonist Paul Revere famously warned, "the British are coming," as British forces advanced before the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775. Our local modern day patriot, Del. Paul Krizek, is warning "the English Ivy is here."

In this year's session of the Virginia General Assembly which convened last week, he warns of the insidious attacker of native trees and other plants, arguably as worthy of warnings than the very visible red-coated British troops. Krizek's bill, House Bill 1167, would allow localities to establish ordinances to prohibit the sale of English Ivy and its hybrids or cultivars, from sale within its jurisdiction and to establish penalties, with limits, for violations.

Krizek, in his ninth year in the General Assembly, says a constituent alerted him to how pervasive the invasive woody vine, *Hedera helix*, has become in the area. Originally from England, it is believed to have been introduced to Northern America about 1727 by European colonists. It was appreciated for its evergreen foliage and ground cover habit. Its Latin name, meaning 'coiling vine' describes part of its ability to overcome other plants. Its dense growth habit and ability to climb for sun allows it to out compete other vegetation on the ground, and can kill even a mature



Del. Paul Krizek is warning that English Ivy planting should be discontinued to protect our native environment and is providing the means for localities to establish local sales ban ordinances for the plant and its cultivars

tree by climbing into the canopy denying nutrients to the tree.

The ivy is invasive, easily escaping the confines of individual gardens and spreading with the help of birds and other seed carriers of its small toxic black berries. Dense areas of ivy are known to attract and harbor rats,



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME / THE CONNECTION

English Ivy's rapid growth and quickly blanket understory areas, out competing native plants.

which use the plants for cover; and for mosquitos and spider mites which are drawn to the water held by the leaves and vines.

Homeowners might be drawn to use ivy in landscaping given the respected look of the hal-  
lowed walls of 'Ivy League' colleges. Colleges in the league were named for Boston Ivy, which is not a true ivy. Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*), a deciduous, not evergreen, vine, which attaches to surfaces with tendrils tipped with sticky disks. The plant is able to glue itself to the structure

without damaging the building surface.

In contrast, English Ivy uses aerial roots to attach itself and can penetrate cracks and joints in building brick or wood walls, and bark, causing structural damage. A steep price to pay for a year-round green ground cover.

As a result many local gardeners have put English Ivy first on their list to remove and replace in their gardens.

For information about attractive native plant alternatives for English Ivy and other non-native plants, see [www.plantnatives.org](http://www.plantnatives.org)

# NEWS

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS



Celebrating after the ribbon cutting are (front row, from left) Economic Development's Beth Young, Sharon Buttram, Catherine Read and Tess Rollins; and (back row, from left) City Treasurer Tom Scibilia, Tara Borwey and Revenue Commissioner Page Johnson.



Jon and Sharon Buttram



Vendor Lillian Calo with her CaloLilly Pottery display.

## Warm Welcome for Lucy Loves in Fairfax City

A fun place for handmade items, vintage clothes, original art.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Featuring 15 local vendors, Lucy Loves is a welcome retail addition to Old Town Fairfax City. It's behind East Winds, at 10414 Main St., and offers a wide array of vintage clothing, modern jewelry and accessories, plus handmade pottery, wooden and woven items and original artwork.

It's owned by longtime City resident Sharon Buttram, and she named the store after her grandmother. "She was a thrifty soul," said Buttram. "She grew up on a farm in Tennessee, moved to Baltimore to work during WWII to support the war effort, and never threw anything away. Everything was kept, repaired and loved forever – and Lucy loved everything."

It's not surprising then that the store has a large inventory of items for sale, as well as a charming, warm and cozy atmosphere. "We have repeat customers and we're always adding new merchandise," said Buttram. "So every time people come in, they'll see something new. We restock weekly and update for the different seasons."

Currently, she said, the most popular items are vintage clothes and accessories from the 1940s to 2000. And because male customers have also discovered Lucy Loves, she's adding vintage clothing and accessories for them, as well. She even has some male vendors, such as one who makes functional items from wood.

"Adam Erbrecht, a former principal of Daniels Run Elementary, started doing woodworking during the pandemic, using trees from his yard," said Buttram. "He creates charcuterie and cheese boards out of walnut and maple, with ash accents, and they're really beautiful."

Lucy Loves is open every day, except Tues-  
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day, from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Buttram also holds special events and has three planned for next month. On Feb. 10, Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates will sell cocoa bombs outside in the afternoon. Feb. 15, from 4-7 p.m., will be Galentine Night, a sip-and-shop event with refreshments.

"We'll have guest vendors selling different items than what we normally have, such as fair-trade goods from all around the world," said Buttram. "Women can come shop with their girlfriends and have a glass of bubbly."

Then on Feb. 19, from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., she's holding an event at nearby Commonwealth Brewery. Attendees will learn how to decoratively embroider their clothing and get a free beer from Commonwealth and a gift certificate from Lucy Loves.

During the store's recent ribbon cutting, Tara Borwey, the City's Economic Development programs manager, called it "a special day for Sharon to open her new store. We're so excited about it and, apparently, so are your millions of fans. I'm overwhelmed by how many people have shown up today."

"This kind of business is exactly what Old Town Fairfax has been missing," said Mayor Catherine Read. "It's the kind that collects treasures – where you can spend an hour in here, look and try on things, and discover jewelry, hats, pottery and vintage items. And I think Lucy Loves is the beginning of seeing more of this type of retail want to come to our downtown. We want to attract visitors, but we also want our residents to stay, dine and shop here, attend our events and support businesses just like this one."

"Kathy Hackshaw and Sharon started the [outdoor] Funky Flea [Market], and it's been a phenomenal success and really set the stage for this business establishing itself here as the curator of fine articles. And like the Funky Flea, it aggregates wonderful vendors, but in a permanent storefront. So I

congratulate Sharon and say, 'Best of luck.'"

Tess Rollins, executive director of the Old Town Fairfax Business Association, said she likes walking around the neighborhood and getting the businesses to collaborate together and connect with the community. "And Sharon is very much connected," said Rollins. "We want businesses that start off small to grow. That's the way our residents can stay, work and play in Fairfax. Welcome to the neighborhood."

Buttram then thanked the City for providing such a friendly environment for a small business. "I've lived here over 30 years, and I couldn't imagine doing this anywhere other than the City of Fairfax," she said. "So thank all of you who've made it a great place to live and to send our kids to school."

She praised her vendors and friends, including Hackshaw, for supporting both the Funky Flea and Lucy Loves. And she thanked her husband Jon, who served many years on the City's School Board. "He's been my number-one fan in every venture I undertake," said Buttram. "I couldn't do anything without his loving support."

Afterward, customer Zinta Rodgers-Rickert said, "I'm truly ecstatic about having Lucy Loves here. I've been here nearly 30 years and remember when our antiques stores made Fairfax City a destination. And I really like this store's incredibly eclectic mix of jewelry, clothing and crafts."

Another customer, Sharon Hooper, described Lucy Loves as "a unique place with fantastic finds. And it's a nice addition to Old Town Fairfax."

Fairfax resident Lillian Calo, a pottery vendor there, makes brightly colored dishes and other objects. "I try to make fun things that make people smile," she explained. "I have a studio in my basement at home. I love being part of this store, and I hope people will come here and enjoy it and my pottery."



Just some of the many earrings available at Lucy Loves

Meanwhile, customer Marbea Tammaro said the City has a real need for small businesses with interesting and one-of-a-kind goods, such as this one. "I'm hopeful that this shop will do well," she said.

"When we started the Funky Flea, we never imagined this opportunity for Sharon to open Lucy Loves was coming down the pike," said Hackshaw. "So this is a wonderful, full-circle achievement for her. The creativity, vintage items and fun in this shop should be enjoyed by everyone."

And indeed, Buttram said that since opening, "The community has welcomed us and seen that we're something they've wanted and needed. We've brought in some new artists who do watercolor and acrylic paintings, plus the popular Blind Date with a Book, where books are wrapped up and have clues about their stories on the packaging. We also added another vintage dealer of custom bags and pouches, handmade in beautiful fabrics."

"At Lucy Loves, you'll find unique gifts and sustainable fashion – curated items you won't find anywhere else," she continued. "It's a different experience every time you visit, and you're also helping support local, small vendors."

For more information, call 571-567-1608 or see the Instagram page @lucyloves.store.

# Three Fairfax City Nonprofits Receive Grants

They each help others and stimulate the local economy.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Call it karma or simply good business, but Fairfax City Economic Development (FCED) recently awarded three local nonprofits with grants of \$12,000 each. These entities were selected because of the impact they make in the community, as well as the positive effect they have on the City's economy.

The Neighborhood Connected Grant Program (NCGP) is a brand-new venture of FCED, and this pilot project's inaugural awards were given to Britepaths, Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates, and The Heart Leaf Center. The program focuses on community nonprofits whose initiatives stimulate economic growth, promote job creation, advance Fairfax City as a destination for business, and foster partnerships across the City.

"The Neighborhood Connected Grant Program is another example of how Fairfax City defines investment – in people, programs and opportunities," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "Supporting our local nonprofits in developing the workforce our community needs, has both immediate and long-term benefits. A thriving economy is one that includes more people with good jobs. Exciting things are happening here."

The three grant recipients were chosen after a competitive application process. They were selected based on their potential, community impact and their ability to support the goals established by the Mayor and City Council for a thriving economy.

❖ **Britepaths** provides help and a way forward for struggling individuals and families in need in Fairfax County and Northern Virginia. It stabilizes families with supplemental food and financial assistance. It also helps them build resilience through financial



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMERON'S COFFEE & CHOCOLATES

**Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates' first cocoa bomb pop up was held last Saturday, Jan. 13, at Games & Comics Pair O'Dice on Fairfax City's Main Street. Cameron's gave away nearly 100 cocoa bombs, including to local residents and some members of the City Police Department. Cameron Graham is in the back row (second from left) and her mom, Ellen Graham, is at far right.**

education, workforce-development coaching and IT training. Furthermore, Britepaths offers support for children via its Back-to-School drive, Food4Thought weekend food packs, and holiday assistance.

With this grant, Britepaths will establish a new program to advance culinary skills, in coordination with the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources (OAR Nova). This project aims to serve participants in a non-violent, low-level diversion program by providing them with the essential skills to work in professional kitchens. And this spring, it'll partner with Fairfax City restaurant, Mackenzie's Tunes & Tonics, for its in-person educational component.

"Britepaths is excited to launch Pathfinder Kitchen with our partners and with support from the Fairfax City Economic Development Neighborhood Connected Grant Program," said Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel. "This partnership recognizes how generosity can transform lives and celebrates the collaborative power of helping individuals pursue a new career path that's needed in the community. It's a big step toward a brighter future and a win for everyone."

❖ **Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates** provides employment to special-needs adults within a supported group environment.

Knowing firsthand the serious challenges those with intellectual disabilities face when seeking jobs, owners Ellen and Jim Graham began the nonprofit, Every 1 Can Work.

And for more than 10 years now, they've operated it as Cameron's, named after their daughter, who's worked there since it opened its doors on Oct. 1, 2013. Offering candies made from Callebaut Belgian chocolate, plus beverages and homemade baked goods made daily, it's become a popular City destination and has a loyal customer following.

With its grant money, Cameron's is partnering with various City businesses and offering a free, pop-up, hot cocoa bomb cart. Partnering businesses will offer a discount to anyone who enjoys a cocoa bomb. Cameron's is also using its social-media following of more than 7,000 to help market City businesses while promoting its cocoa-bomb project. In addition, doing this pop up will enable Cameron's to provide more working hours to its 23 employees.

"Cameron's is thrilled to be the recipients of the Neighborhood Connected Grant," said Lydia Pulliman, program manager at Cameron's. "We are looking forward to adding value to our wonderful community and supporting local, economic development by partnering with City shops to bring awareness to all the special places that make Fair-

fax a destination to visit and settle in."

❖ **The Heart Leaf Center** is a community-based, mental-health center. It provides mental-health services to help its clients reach their fullest potential. It does so by improving access to high-quality play therapy, mental-health services for children and families via low-cost services and professional education.

Its goal is to give parents the tools they need to help raise strong, socially and emotionally healthy children, while strengthening relationships so they may continue to support, learn and grow together. The Heart Leaf Center also aims to give children opportunities to learn about themselves and develop resiliency and problem-solving skills to navigate whatever obstacles life throws at them.

It has also partnered with surrounding universities and community colleges to create a workforce pipeline of graduate students eligible for training. The Heart Leaf Center will use its grant funds from this program to lease space in Fairfax City and support the specialized training of graduate students. This money will also enable it to increase the number of licensed providers, plus providers with competency in offering evidenced-based care to economically disadvantaged populations in the region.

"Through this grant from Fairfax City Economic Development, The Heart Leaf Center will place the training and supervision of graduate, mental-health students as a primary focus of this project," said Sheri Mitschelen, president of The Heart Leaf Center. "This will have the biggest impact on increasing the mental-healthcare workforce in being able to provide quality, mental health and play therapy to underserved children in our community."

Overall, said Fairfax Economic Development Director Chris Bruno, "The Neighborhood Connected Grant Program allows Fairfax City Economic Development to recognize valued community partners advancing our economic-development mission. Our nonprofit partners aid us every day in our mission to create good jobs, strong businesses and a robust City economy. I applaud the winning grant recipients and thank the evaluation committee for its work on this project."

## NEWS BRIEFS

### The Lamb Center Needs Supplies

A daytime, drop-in shelter in Fairfax City, The Lamb Center serves the poor and homeless with a variety of services, including clothing. But it needs the community's support to do it. Here is a list of items needed this month:

Men's sneakers (sizes 8-13); men's sweatpants in heavy-weight material (all sizes from S-2XL); winter boots and shoes (men's and women's, all sizes); disposable, surgical face masks; and nitrile gloves (sizes S-L). All supplies may be delivered to 3160 Campbell Drive, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9-11 a.m.

### Mode on Main by Mara Holds Contest

Mode on Main by Mara in Fairfax City is currently holding a contest to celebrate and honor a remarkable woman in the

community. And the prize is a special makeover experience valued at more than \$1,000.

It includes a complete hair makeover by Mara Hair and Mode Studio stylists; a professional makeup session by Mara's makeup artist, Kiley; an outfit styling session at Mode on Main by Mara Boutique, and a photoshoot to capture the radiant transformation.

To enter, go to <https://forms.gle/UNBpNuQfnFDWs1tw5> and share the story of an amazing woman in your life who deserves this experience. Provide contact information for yourself and the nominee. The nomination deadline is Jan. 30.

### Bulova to Chair 2024 Chesapeake Bay Commission

Del. David Bulova (D-37th), who represents both Fairfax City and part of Fairfax County, was elected last week to

chair the tri-state Chesapeake Bay Commission for 2024. In this role, he will oversee the policy-making efforts of the 21-member panel.

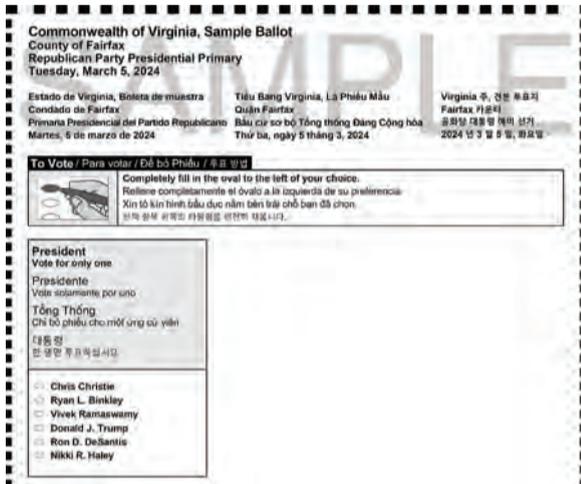
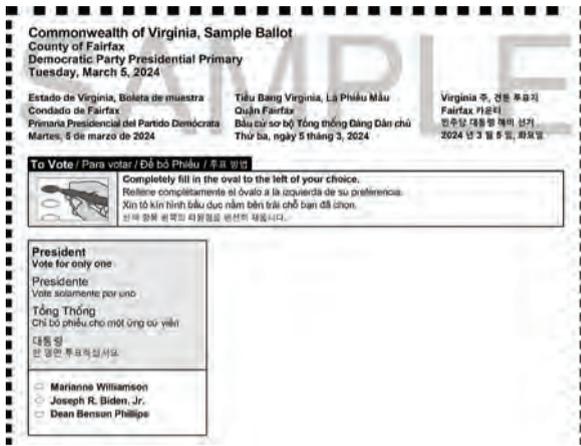
As he took the gavel, Bulova said he intends to have the Commission sharpen its focus on strengthening the Bay Partnership and paving the path forward for beyond 2025. He also stressed the need for Commissioners to serve as champions for the Chesapeake Bay in their respective chambers.

"The Commission plays a unique role by fostering relationships among our three states," said Bulova. "Our relationships are crucial as we come together to shape the future of Bay restoration. None of us can do this alone. I am honored to work with my fellow Commissioners, who are all dedicated to ensuring that future generations can enjoy the national treasure that is the Chesapeake Bay."

In addition, Bulova is chairman of the House of Delegates General Laws Committee.

In addition, Bulova was also honored with the prestigious Distinguished Friend of Agribusiness Award, last Thursday, Jan. 11. He received it for his exceptional support of Virginia's agribusiness industry for a period of years.

# NEWS



## Are You Ready for This?

### Early voting for U.S. Presidential primary begins Friday, Jan. 19 in Fairfax County.

and Saturday, March 2

An additional 13 early voting locations will be available beginning Saturday, Feb. 24. Weekday voting hours at these locations will be from 1 to 7 p.m.

Early voting begins Friday, Jan. 19, for the March 5 presidential primary election.

There are separate primaries for the Republican and Democratic candidates for president. In Virginia, voters do not register by political party, but a voter may only cast a ballot in one of the presidential primary elections.

Three locations will be open for early voting on weekdays:

- ❖ Fairfax County Government Center: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- ❖ Mount Vernon Governmental Center: 1 to 7 p.m.
- ❖ North County Governmental Center: 1 to 7 p.m.

These voting locations will be closed for the George Washington Day holiday on Monday, Feb. 19.

Before going to vote, double check the hours early voting sites are open because times vary by location.

Any registered voter can cast their ballot at any early voting site. The last day to vote early is Saturday, March 2, at 5 p.m. Weekend voting will be offered at every early voting sites on two Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Saturday, Feb. 24

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- ❖ Burke Centre Library
- ❖ Centreville Regional Library
- ❖ Franconia Governmental Center
- ❖ Great Falls Library
- ❖ Herndon-Fortnightly Library
- ❖ Jim Scott Community Center
- ❖ Lorton Community Center
- ❖ Mason Governmental Center
- ❖ McLean Governmental Center
- ❖ Sully Governmental Center
- ❖ Thomas Jefferson Library
- ❖ Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library
- ❖ West Springfield Governmental Center

Primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 5. If you want to vote on that day, you will need to vote at your regularly assigned polling place.

Voters must show identification wherever they vote. You may use as ID a copy of your: current utility bill; bank statement; government check; paycheck; other government document with the voter's name and address. Photo IDs remain an acceptable form of identification — and you can even use an expired Virginia driver's license no matter how long ago it expired.



## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc. Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
FRANKLIN	7964	757	SKILLET RD /RTE 757	STORY CREEK	12/29/2023
FRANKLIN	7858	635	EDWARDSVILLE RD /RTE 635	LYNVILLE CREEK	12/19/2023
ALBEMARLE	712	641	BURNLEY STATION RD	BURNLEY BRANCH	12/6/2023

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](mailto: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.*

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PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

Front, Raba Letteri of Reston, Fairfax County Board Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D- Hunter Mill), Gloria Median and Isabel Median from Springfield, and Michelle Shea of Vienna prepare bag lunches for the Embry Rucker Community Shelter. “We made close to 300 sandwiches and 134 snacks,” said Letteri. “Volunteering in the community is a transformative act, fostering deep connections and driving positive change. It’s more than helping others; it’s a journey of personal growth, skill-building, and empathy. This selfless endeavor strengthens the community and offers immense personal satisfaction, knowing each effort contributes to a greater good.”



From left, James Haynes of Rockville, MD, Wanda Daney of Frederick, MD, Tamara Omerof of Sterling, Simon Thomas of Herndon, Arletrice Green of Centerville, Candise Davis of Reston, Vaiyon Caphart of Sterling and Betty Arey of Herndon price toys for The Closet of Greater Herndon, Inc., which impacts lives through its non-profit thrift shop, providing grants to local nonprofits.

# Reston Community Center’s Annual MLK Celebration

Rev. William J. Barber II calls on us to recommit to the fight for justice and remember the real King.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Reston Community Center organized its annual Reston MLK Birthday Celebration from Jan. 13-15. Program offerings focused on “service, education, music, and conviviality under the banner of Dr. King’s message.”

RCC held its Community Service Projects on Saturday, Jan. 13, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate. RCC collaborated with the Reston Association, Cornerstones and The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc.

Later that afternoon at 4 p.m., RCC held its Musical Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Reston Community Center. The program featured Mark Irchai, music director finalist, guest artists Alia Waheed, Beverly Cosham, Gilbert Pryor and the New World Order Horns Ensemble.

On Monday, Jan. 15, RCC held the MLK Birthday Celebration, Especially for Youth, at Hunter Woods from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. According to Jeff Morgan, youth/teen program assistant, they based the art-themed activities on Dr. King’s life and the Civil Rights Movement.

SEE RESTON, PAGE 8

## Read Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

“I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action’; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a ‘more convenient season.’ Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”

[https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)

It will be sixty-one years since Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood on the National Mall in front of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marching for freedom, justice, and equality and delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech on August 28, 1963. It will be 56 years this year since King was assassinated on April 1, 1968. King’s legacy continues in Fairfax County. The Connection compiled photographs of events in recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

“In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”



PHOTO BY MIKE OLSON

The New World Order Horns perform “March of Freedom,” by Dr. Gilbert E. Pryor Jr. Originally planned to premier at the 2022 Jan. 15 concert tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. but the event was canceled because of COVID spikes in the area at the time.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX

Twenty-seven college-aged volunteers assisted with Volunteer Fairfax’s Give Together event and represented ten countries.



Eva Coleman, 2, of Arlington, and Elijah Coleman, 8, of Arlington, create treat bags to go home with adopted animals at Fairfax County Animal Shelters. Other children helped with the treat bags, small blankets and snuffle mats for pets at Fairfax County Animal Shelters.



Teen helper Nico Torres-Padilla, 17, of Fort Belvoir, makes power packs for Food for Others. Volunteers put together 500 power packs of food to distribute.

# Volunteer Fairfax Mobilizes Hundreds

Weekend of Service 2024 benefits those in need and bolsters volunteerism.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Since 1974, Volunteer Fairfax has been amplifying community impact by connecting and mobilizing people and resources to build capacity for stronger communities.

During the first of its two annual 2024 region-wide days of service, the MLK Weekend of Service, the nonprofit sought to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision of a “beloved community.” Through volunteerism, projects aimed to

empower individuals, build bridges of understanding, and address social problems. Working with the Fairfax County government and other stakeholders, Volunteer Fairfax intentionally considers inclusion, equity, and diversity in delivering community programs and services.

Volunteer Fairfax began with a Community Conversation on Racial Equity via Zoom on Wednesday, Jan. 10. Natasha A. Harrison moderated the discussion, titled SEE VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX, PAGE 10

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Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.



Jillian Latham, 12, of Fairfax Station, and Kendall Anderson, 15, of Fairfax, work on the gooey pinecone birdfeeders that will help support birds through the winter at Hidden Oaks Nature Center.



From left, Will Russell, 6, of Burke; Raylan Weeks, 7, of Springfield; and Harper Reid, 10, of Alexandria, have mastered the art of no-sew blankets for veterans. Volunteers made 60 blankets for Capital Caring Health to distribute to veterans in hospice care.

# Volunteer Fairfax Mobilizes Hundreds

FROM PAGE 7

“So You Think You Know Racial Equity: Practices and Competencies to Build Stamina and Strength.” Volunteer Fairfax spokesperson Tammy Deem said they will post the recorded webinar online after editing it.

On Jan. 15, Volunteer Fairfax convened a “Give Together.” The mas-

sive program brought together children, teenagers and college-aged students from across the county to participate in service projects.

“We had over 700 volunteers registered for the day’s event who [each] contributed approximately seven hours of service that supported 13 agencies,” Deem said.

The activities aided the organi-

zation’s mission and promoted the National Day of Service as a “day on, not a day off.” Families, even those with very young children, took part, and some teen and college-aged volunteers helped the younger children finish the projects. They addressed food insecurity, elder care, emergency response, environmental stewardship and

animal welfare concerns.

Volunteer Fairfax collaborated with the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Response, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Capital Caring Health, Kids Give Back, Computer Core, the Pozez Jewish Community Center, and the Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

Deem said, “Today’s Give To-

gether event helps our teens and youth learn the importance of volunteerism and civic engagement, contributing to their ability to become engaged members of their community.”

To volunteer or donate with Volunteer Fairfax, go to <https://www.cfp-dc.org/nonprofits/1442/Volunteer-Fairfax/>.

# Reston Community Center’s Annual MLK Celebration

FROM PAGE 6

Peter McCarty, ‘The One Man Band’ performed, and later, the youth watched the animated adventure video, ‘Our Friend Martin.’ It told the life and times of Martin Luther King through the voices of Whoopi Goldberg, John Travolta, James Earl Jones, and others. RCC provided lunch.

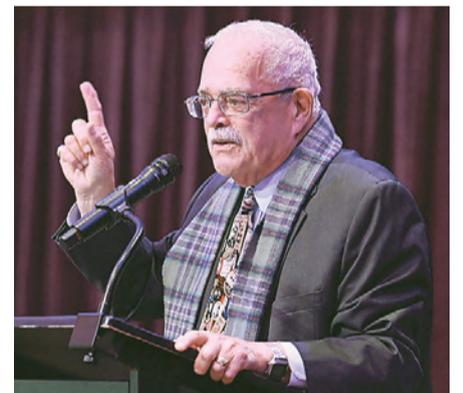
RCC sold out at 11 a.m. MLK Keynote Speaker Address featuring Rev. William J. Barber held at Reston Community Center Hunter Woods in the 260-seat CentreStage theater. A community luncheon followed.



PHOTOS/MIKE LESNICK, RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER  
From left, Fairfax County Executive Bryan J. Hill; Leila Gordon, executive director of Reston Community Center; Rev. William J. Barber II, keynote speaker; and William G. Boulie, vice chair of the Reston Community Center board.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION  
Mariama Jawara, 9, and Eiliyah Lardas, 8, begin coloring their booklets.



U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly.



Community luncheon.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION  
Aaron Letteri: “I came to help my mom and help the community by giving back. People in the community are hungry, so we’ve been packing food. I’ll continue to volunteer, even when my mom is older.”



Keynote speaker civil rights activist Rev. William J. Barber II, president of Repairers of the Breach and co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign. Barber called on Reston to recommit to the fight for justice and remember the real King.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## 13TH ANNUAL 'STUFF THE BUS' FOOD DRIVE BEGINS

The buses are fueled and ready to roll as Stuff the Bus - the county's post-holiday food drive, now in its 13th year - hits the road in the fight against hunger in Fairfax County. Beginning Jan. 13, 2024, and continuing every Saturday through Feb. 17, 2024, a Fairfax County Fastran bus will visit local grocery stores to collect donated food and household items. Since launching in 2011, the campaign has collected more than 281,500 pounds of food to benefit local non-profit food pantries, resulting in 200,000 meals for those in need. Visit the following Stuff the Bus locations to drop off your food or cash donations during the specified donation hours:

**Saturday, January 20**  
Falls Church Giant  
7235 Arlington Blvd  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Donation hours: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
To benefit Falls Church Community Service Council (FCCSC).

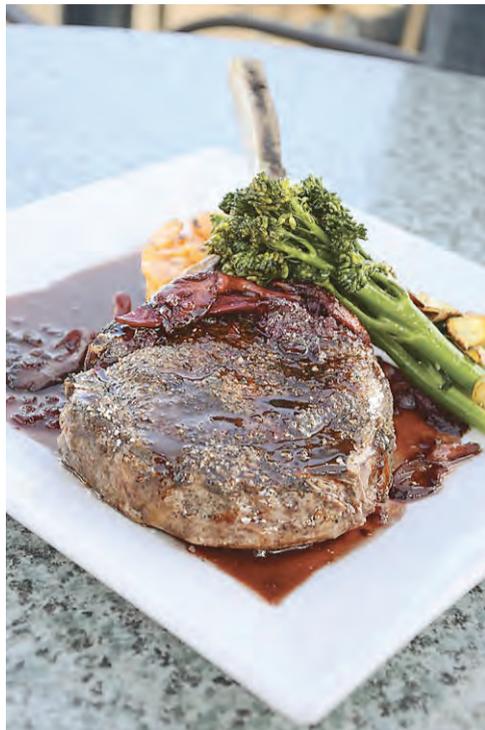
**Saturday, January 27**  
Vienna Giant  
359 Maple Avenue East  
Vienna, VA 22180  
Donation hours: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
To benefit CHO (Committee for Helping Others).

**Herndon Giant**  
2425 Centreville Rd  
Village Center at Dulles  
Herndon, VA 20171  
Donation hours 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
To benefit Cornerstones.

## THE MCLEAN TREES FOUNDATION, NEIGHBORHOOD TREES PROGRAM, WANTS TO HELP YOU PLANT A NATIVE TREE IN YOUR YARD!

**Don't know how to plant a tree but want to support the environmental health of your community?** Want your family to have the experience of planting a tree? If you live in McLean, the McLean Trees Foundation (MTF) (a local nonprofit) will help you select an appropriate native tree for your property, deliver the tree to your yard, help you plant it, provide information on maintenance, and even check back with you a few months after planting to see how your tree is doing. If you are interested in participating in this program to boost our native tree canopy in McLean, visit the website at <https://www.mcleantreesfoundation.org/neighborhood-tree-program> and submit your application! A fee of \$100 is assessed to cover the costs of the program (limit one 6-7 foot tree in 15 gallon container per household). There is a separate program for those who are interested in spearheading a community tree planting campaign in their neighborhood. MTF's Tree Champion program makes it easy to help your neighbors plant more trees!

**HOT WHEELS CHAMPION EXPERIENCE**  
Hot Wheels Champion Experience, a new interactive event with immersive digital and physical play, has opened at Tysons Corner Center for a limited time. The Hot Wheels Champion Experience is a 16,000-square-foot experience for the whole family based on Hot Wheels brand that has been influencing car culture for



## Falls Church Restaurant Week takes place Jan. 19-28, 2024 in the City of Falls Church.

55 years. Combining cutting-edge technology and innovative design, SEE Touring Exhibitions Inc. has tapped the XSpace platform developed by Smart Entertainment Ltd to power this new attraction. XSpace combines immersive video projection and "phygital" systems that control sound, light, video, and personalized interaction into one experience that can react and change in the blink of an eye. Visit [hotwheelschampion.com](http://hotwheelschampion.com)

## NOW THRU FEB. 11

**"The Who's Tommy."** At Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-3 Theater, Lorton. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. If you already know The Who's remarkable rock opera, then you'll be singing along. If you don't, then you're in for a real treat! This spirited stage production offers some startling, fascinating variations from the movie, so if you think you know Tommy...come see what's new!

## STARTING NOW

**Sip & Stroll.** At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Shopping with a Twist will be in effect 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.



## Shen Yun is coming to GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax on Jan. 20-21, 2024.

The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallship-providence.org/>

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

## SCHEDULE

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 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.

**DEC. 7 TO FEB. 17**  
**McLean Project for the Arts' Winter Exhibitions.** At McLean Commu-

nity Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Project for the Arts will open its winter exhibitions—Moving Beyond Beauty: Reverence and Reclamation (Emerson Gallery) and To March is to Love: Weavings by Janel Leppin (Atrium Gallery)—on December 7, 2023. Both shows will run through February 17, 2024, with an Opening Exhibition Reception on Thursday, December 7, 2023 from 7-9 p.m. Bringing together five artists—Adjoa Jackson Burrows, Jacqui Crocetta, Maggie Gourlay, June Linowitz, and Elzbieta Sikorska—Moving Beyond Beauty features work that is at once aesthetically pleasing and philosophically compelling.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 18

**"Stop Making Sense" Movie.** 1 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A film by Jonathan Demme and Talking Heads. Considered by critics as the greatest concert film of all time, the live performance was shot over the course of three nights at Hollywood's Pantages Theater in December of 1983 and features Talking Heads' most memorable songs. Rated PG.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 19

**The Old Firehouse, 5th & 6th Grader Snowball Dance.** 7 p.m. At 1440 Chain Bridge Rd., McLean. The Old Firehouse 5th & 6th Grader Parties are themed and decorated accordingly. Partygoers can enjoy free catered food and beverages, a DJ spinning the latest tunes, an open dance floor and a variety of other attractions and activities.

## JAN. 19-28

**Falls Church Restaurant Week.** At 40 participating restaurants in Falls Church. Falls Church Restaurant Week entices diners to sample or return to local eateries by offering special menus or other exclusive money saving offers. Participating restaurants include widely acclaimed restaurants like Ellie Bird (3-course menu for \$55) and Thompson Italian (3-course menu for \$50) as well as some exciting up-and-comers and local favorites like:

Borek-G: the mother and son owned Turkish restaurant, which The Post's Tim Carman called "sub-

lime", is offering a 3 course menu for \$25 during Restaurant Week. La Tingeria from Chef David Peña, which evolved from a Mexican food truck to a brick & mortar and is now opening additional locations. Named to the Washingtonian's 2023 list of Very Best Restaurants, La Tingeria is offering 2 menu items plus sides and a drink for \$10 during lunch. Harvey's by Chef Thomas Harvey, was named to Washington Post and Eater's best of 2023 lists, and is offering a 3-course menu for \$45 per person. Newly opened restaurants participating in restaurant week include Nue, Chasin' Tails, Roll Play, and The Falls.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 20

**"The Never Too Late Show" starring Don Reed.** 7 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A multimedia one-man show written, performed and directed by Don Reed. Produced by Don Reed and Pat Hazell. Don Reed presents an inspirational, multi-character comic tale about never giving up. Both hilarious and heartbreaking, it chronicles his travails and perseverance through the Hollywood gauntlet to late night TV. A journey full of laughter, deceit and ultimately vindication featuring classic footage from "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson," "The National Comedy Center, HBO and other programs.

## JAN. 20 TO FEB. 4

**"Shakespeare in Hollywood."** Presented by the Vienna Theatre Company and Vienna Department of Recreation. Performances Jan. 20-Feb. 3 at 8 p.m.; Sundays Jan. 28 and Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. Venue Address: 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Visit [www.viennatheatrecompany.org](http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org).

## JAN. 20-21

**Shen Yun.** At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Saturday at 2 and 7 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Shen Yun invites you to travel back to the magical world of ancient China. Experience a lost culture through the incredible art of classical Chinese dance, and see legends come to life. Shen Yun makes

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

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Award Winning Newspaper

FROM PAGE 9

this possible by pushing the boundaries of the performing arts, with a unique blend of stunning costuming, high-tech backdrops, and an orchestra like no other. Be prepared for a theatrical experience that will take your breath away!

## SUNDAY/JAN. 21

**January Sound Bath - Clarity.** 4-5:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Art of Movement Building 11, Lorton. If you haven't tried one of the monthly Sound Baths, you owe it to yourself to check out this super cool way to relax and rejuvenate! Each Sound Bath is uniquely created with a selection of instruments that could include steel drums, Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, bells, harps and other out-of-the-ordinary instruments. January's Sound Bath is about liberating clarity by alleviating the mind of interfering "noise."

## SUNDAY/JAN. 21

**WVMGRS G-Scale Trains.** 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, Virginia & Maryland Garden Railway Society (WVMGRS) members will have a G-Scale train display running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The sheer size of these trains is a wonder to behold as is their ability to run through the garden all year around. If you've ever thought about running trains in the garden, this is the event to see these trains and speak with experienced people about this facet of the model railroading hobby. Admission: museum members, free; 13 through adult, \$5; children 5-12, \$3; children 4 and under, free; seniors 65 and older, \$4; active/retired Military, \$4. Information on the museum and it's events is at: [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR) or phone 703-425-9225.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 21

**Yvonne Chen, Piano "Music + Literature: Murakami Music".** 2 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A devoted chamber musician and imaginative soloist, Pianist Yvonne Chen has been pushing the limits for pianists of the 21st century.

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 24

**Open Houses at All Park Authority Rec Centers.** Check out your neighborhood Fairfax County Park Authority Rec Center for free on Wednesday, Jan. 24. If you are a current Rec Center member, bring family and friends along to check out these community wellness hubs. Visitors will receive a free, 7-day trial membership or be able to purchase a 30-day for \$30 pass to the Park Authority's Rec Centers. Everyone is invited to explore the Rec Centers, use gym equipment, take a lap in the pool and try out drop-in fitness classes (space permitting) all day long. Each Rec Center will offer special programs and activities from 4:30-7:30 p.m. on Jan. 24. Come by in the evening to visit the membership table, grab some giveaways, take part in arts and crafts, and enjoy other special offerings.

Additional information for the Open House programming at each individual Rec Center is available online for the following locations: Audrey Moore, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale; Cub Run, 4630 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly; Franconia, 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria; George Washington, 8426 Old Mt. Vernon Road, Alexandria; Oakmont, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton; Providence, 7525 Marc Drive, Falls Church; South Run, 7550 Reservation Drive, Springfield; Spring Hill, 1239 Spring Hill Road, McLean

## JAN. 26-28

**Jurassic Quest. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly.** Capital-area families can walk among the nation's biggest herd of photorealistic dinosaurs when Jurassic Quest opens at the Dulles Expo Center for one weekend only, Jan. 26-28. Walk through 165 million years of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods to learn about



Jurassic Quest is coming to the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly on Jan. 26-28, 2024.

the creatures that ruled the Earth! In addition to life-like dinosaurs, Jurassic Quest's classic experiences for the whole family include some of the largest rideable dinosaurs in North America, live dinosaur shows, interactive science and art activities including a fossil dig and real fossils like T-Rex teeth, a triceratops horn and life-size dino skull, a "Triceratots" soft play area for our littlest explorers, bounce houses and inflatable attractions, photo opportunities, and more. Advance purchase online recommended to ensure desired date and availability at [www.jurassicquest.com](http://www.jurassicquest.com), or tickets are available on-site.

## ARTSCREEN: A FREE FILM SERIES

### CELEBRATING THE ARTS

**Join in a free film series on Friday evenings in the City of Fairfax at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax.** Doors open at 7 p.m.; Films begin at 7:30 p.m. Free popcorn, candy, refreshments and door prizes, too!

Jan. 26: 20 Feet from Stardom. (2013) PG-13 - Backup singers live in a world that lies just beyond the spotlight. Their voices bring harmony to the biggest bands in popular music, but we've had no idea who these singers are or what lives they lead, until now.

Feb. 23: A Great Day in Harlem. (1994) Not Rated - The documentary compiles interviews of all the top jazz musicians in NYC in the year 1958, for a piece in Esquire magazine.

April 12: Midnight in Paris. (2011) PG-13 - While on a trip to Paris with his fiancée's family, a nostalgic screenwriter finds himself mysteriously going back to the 1920s every day at midnight.

## JAN. 26-27

**Mason Cabaret Presents Over the Rainbow: The Music of Judy, Ella, and Barbra.** January 26\*, 27 at 8 p.m.; January 27 at 2 p.m. At GMU's Harris Theatre, Fairfax.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 26

**Artist Ann Barbieri.** 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society is honored to present a demonstration by local artist Ann Barbieri on how she begins a new painting. Ms. Barbieri has been recognized as "Artist of the Year" by the Friends of the Torpedo Factory (where her studio is based), has been invited to numerous solo exhibitions, and was twice selected by the U.S. State Department to exhibit her works for its Art in Embassies program.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 27

**Reston Museum Bricks by the Lake.** Reston Museum to host its 3rd Bricks by the Lake Event. The event consists of a brick (i.e. LEGO) building competition (registration required), an exhibit of Master Builds by the

Charm City LUG, light refreshments, free play and crafts. Main event activities are at Reston Museum and Reston Community Center though many other Lake Anne Plaza merchants are participating as well. Before, during, and after the event those interested can purchase this year's Limited Edition brick kit, designed by Nathan Hagan. This year's kit is Reston's Van Gogh Bridge at Lake Anne. Designed by William Roehl, which was inspired by the famous paintings by its namesake of a drawbridge in Arles, France. The kit is sponsored by FGM Architects and Reston Art Gallery and Studios. Kits can be purchased at the Reston Museum or online at [restonmuseum.org/shop](http://restonmuseum.org/shop).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 27

### Hamid Rahmanian's Song of the North.

4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Experience "breathtaking fireworks of creativity" (La Monde) with Hamid Rahmanian's newest large-scale cinematic shadow play Song of the North. With more than 500 handmade puppets and an original score by renowned Iranian composer Loga Ramin Torkian, you'll be transported to a magical and ancient landscape, rich in history and lore in this epic love story adapted from the Shahnameh (Book of Kings). The Center for the Arts is offering a free school time performance of Hamid Rahmanian's Song of the North on Friday, January 26 at 11 a.m. The performance is free but registration is required. Additional information can be found on the Center for the Arts Field Trip webpage.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 28

**12th Annual Chocolate Festival.** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Attendees can indulge their sweet tooth by sampling offerings from more than 12 regional chocolate vendors. Mars Corporation will deliver a presentation on the History of Chocolate, adding an educational touch to the event. Entertainment by the Sunshine Gang Band. Admission is only \$3 for individuals aged four and up, which includes a tote bag. The proceeds generated from this festival will contribute to various community projects championed by the Rotary Club of McLean. The projects supported by the festival include scholarships for graduating high school seniors, books for Timber Lane Elementary School, McLean Project for the Arts, playground equipment at the Fairfax Children's Center, hygiene products for school-age girls, medical equipment and clean water initiatives in several African countries. The funds will also support global initiatives such as eradicating Polio abroad, medical needs in Central America, food insecurity across the globe, and many other community projects. Visit [www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org](http://www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org)

## Nothing Much to Say



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Given that it's Mon., Jan. 1st and the Connection is in the middle of a two-week hiatus from publishing, I am nonetheless attempting to write a relatively time-sensitive column ahead of its Jan. 17th publication date, as a column for Jan. 10 has previously been submitted. Which as you regular readers know is part of what I try to do weekly, so you all are current, to the degree my "currency" matters that is. And writing something current on Jan. 1st for publication on Jan. 17th is hardly likely to be current.

Moreover, considering the 24/7 news cycle, especially as it relates to cancer patients, two-plus weeks is an eternity and is the very definition of stale. Yet here I sit, pen in hand, trying to write something that will still be fresh - and interesting, in 16 days or so. Here goes:

For the moment (more like two weeks going on three; not sure if the end is in sight), I am off my cancer medicine. Unfortunately, for the wrong reasons: side effects negatively impacting a major organ. I have always feared that my cancer treatment might have to be adjusted/stopped because the side effects were causing other problems. (I saw this happen to my mother-in-law as she finally succumbed to the cancer in her liver.) My other problems have mostly involved my kidneys. Problems caused by the introduction of chemotherapy (an extremely harsh chemical at its worst) into my body. A treatment which while effective at killing cancer cells, is also killing other cells, and as it happens, is filtered through the kidneys as it exits the body. Chemotherapy (not all), but the ones selected for my lung cancer, are hard on the kidneys. Aside from many of the side effects with which most people are familiar: hair loss, fatigue, loss of appetite, to name a few, the less obvious - to the naked eye/casual observer, is what the chemotherapy is doing internally to the patient's major organs. And for the doctor to keep tabs on these effects, regular lab work is required. And it's this lab work which tells the tale initially about your internal affairs. Affairs which might not manifest in any tangible way. The way you find out is the doctor tells you. My tale has been mostly about my creatinine level, a measure of kidney function. Recently my potassium level likewise rang the bell, so its measure has now become as important as my creatinine, and 'important' meaning, how it adversely affects other organs.

So much so that a nephrologist is now on the team (and part of my lab work includes orders from her). I'm grateful for the attention but fearful of the consequences. Consequences which don't likely bode well. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Nevertheless, I am now entering uncharted territory: a cancer patient who, due to complications/side effects of the medicine used to treat the cancer tumors, is no longer on that or any other anti-cancer medication - for the first time in 14-plus years (and not because I'm in remission; conversely, I may be in trouble though). But since my next lab work is not for another week (Jan. 8), what I know now (actually don't know) is as current as the subject matter is going to be. Therefore, in my mind, this waiting period/period of relative inactivity means that all the medical news - about me, that's fit to print, is mostly what I've written about today. There will be nothing new until Jan. 9-ish (too late for the Jan. 10 edition), so the update will have to wait until Jan. 17th. And therein lies my writing dilemma: what can I write about now that won't be old news when it ultimately appears in print? Not that I'm going to be penalized for submitting material that on the day it's made public might be mostly irrelevant, it's more that it might be a waste of your time to read it. But given the timing/timetable, I can only try to write an inevitable wrong by advising you all of the facts when I knew them - weeks ahead of when this column is printed, and let the chips fall where they may.

Chips which very well may change the course of my history. A history which semi baffles the medical professionals entrusted with my care. In short, I've lived longer that originally "prognosed," and my body (including those pesky 'major' organs) have endured the rigors of chemotherapy well. Until now, that might be. And now I may have crossed the Rubicon. The party, such as it's been, may be over. Granted this is all preliminary and simply the musings of a cancer patient dealing with the little information being in the wrong hands: mine, but with nothing to know/learn for two weeks, all I can do is "muse" - and try not to make myself miserable in the interim. Perhaps there's a plan "B" and only time, as they say, will determine whether the content of this column is simply a moment in time, or whether it's a turning point that will change my future/present when all the medical data is reviewed. If you're interested, as Rachel Maddow says: "Watch this space."

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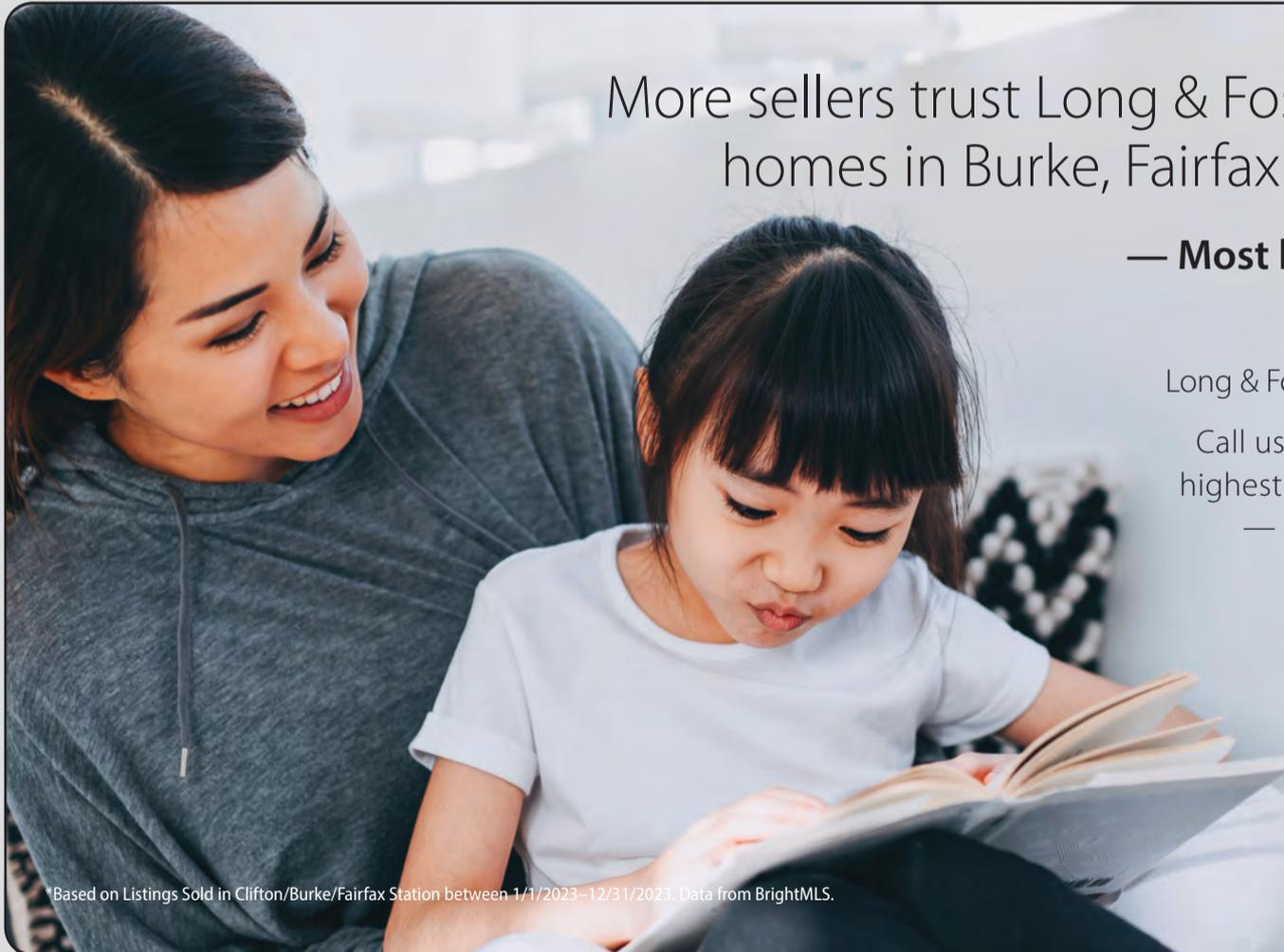
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