

THE CONNECTION

CENTREVIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna

Fighting Hunger, Celebrating MLK

PAGE 8

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.

Hearing, Vote on Data Center?

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PHOTO BY MIKE OLSON

JANUARY 17-23, 2024

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1313 Merrie Ridge Rd
McLean, 22101
\$1,637,500

Curious what your home is worth? Call to chat with JD and Ed today!

Supervisors to Decide on Chantilly Data Center

Public hearing is set for next Tuesday, Jan. 23.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

In September 2023, members of Chantilly's Pleasant Valley community presented facts, charts, data and expert testimony to the Fairfax County Planning Commission. A gigantic data center is proposed for construction just 4/10 of a mile from their homes, and they explained in great detail all the harm it could cause to them and to the environment.

Ultimately, though, the Commissioners recommended approval, and the matter now goes to the Board of Supervisors for a public hearing and decision, next Tuesday, Jan. 23, at 4 p.m. (although it could start later).

Knowing that the Supervisors are eyeing the potential \$6 million in revenue this data center could bring the county, the residents opposed to it realize they're facing an uphill battle, but they're still determined to fight. And they hope others will join them by either emailing the supervisors or signing up to testify at next week's hearing at the county Government Center in Fair Oaks. (See information at end of story).

"The threat to our environment and drinking water is real," said Kate Maisal. She and many other residents are worried about the continual delivery and storage of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel to this data center that would occur in a stream valley upstream from the Occoquan Reservoir – the drinking-water source for much of Fairfax County.

The Sierra Club's Ann Bennett said the data center hasn't incorporated adequate sustainability and clean-energy measures. Acoustics engineer Braxton Boren said its relentless 24/7 hum would harm residents' quality of life. And the joint Sully District Council/West Fairfax County Citizens Association Land-Use Committee decried the fact that consumers – and not the applicant – will foot the bill for the new electric substation and transmission lines required to support this facility.

Penzance wants to build a 402,000-square-foot data center off Route 50, Stonecroft Boulevard and Auto Park Circle in Chantilly. It would also be adjacent to the Cub Run Stream Valley. It would be constructed on 12.1 acres and could be as high as 110 feet.

Its components include 27 diesel generators in an enclosure on the rear/Pleasant Valley side of the building, plus a rooftop HVAC system that would emit the constant hum Boren noted. And so far, Penzance has refused to answer who the data center user would be, exactly where the electric substation needed to power it would go, and how much water and electricity it would consume.

Many residents in Centreville and Chantilly alike are opposed because of the massive size, noise, truck traffic and air, water and soil pollution this center could bring. But land-use attorney Evan Pritchard, representing the applicant, persuaded the Planning Commissioners otherwise.



Artist's rendition of the proposed data center in Chantilly. See white car on left in comparison to the building's height.

Penzance wants to build a 402,000-square-foot data center off Route 50, Stonecroft Boulevard and Auto Park Circle in Chantilly.

Now, though, it seems as if county staff itself has several serious concerns about data centers, the way they're approved and the dangers they pose.

In May 2023, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to provide a report on data centers – complete with research, findings and recommendations. After completing its extensive investigation, staff released a report dated Jan. 9 containing its findings.

“Increased electricity demand also increases greenhouse gas emissions, which may make it harder to meet the state and county greenhouse-gas emission- reduction goals.”

— Fairfax County DATA CENTERS Report and Recommendations, Jan. 9, 2024

It noted that the large energy demand of data centers warrants several concerns:

- ❖ The availability and reliability of energy for existing and planned development;
- ❖ The potential need for clearing and construction of new major transmission lines and substations and related costs relayed to rate-payers; and
- ❖ Potential water quality and air quality impacts of large numbers of diesel backup generators.

Furthermore, the report stated that “increased electricity demand also increases greenhouse gas emissions, which may make it harder to meet the state and county greenhouse-gas emission- reduction goals.” And once constructed, both data centers and their electric substations “can have visual

and noise impacts and, depending on their location, impacts on natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.”

Among the report's recommendations are that “consideration could be given to amending the [county's] Noise Ordinance for data centers with large numbers of backup generators to remove the exemptions for testing and maintenance of generators, as well as the full emergency use of backup generators.”

It also noted that “a review of noise studies submitted as part of rezoning or SE [special-exception permit] applications for data center projects in Fairfax County indicated that measures were consistently needed to reduce the potential noise to comply with the Noise Ordinance.”

The report stated that the county Zoning Ordinance should “consider revising permissions to require SE approval for data centers, regardless of size, in the C-3, C-4 and I-2 through I-6 Districts. It further suggested that standards for special-exception review should include the consideration of the size of a proposed data center and its distance (buildings and generators) from surrounding existing and planned residential development.”

How to Comment to the Board on this Data Center

❖ To speak at the Jan. 23 Board meeting, fill out and submit the form at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form>. Speakers must sign up before noon on the day of the hearing.

❖ Or submit written testimony, including attachments, to ClerktotheBOS@fairfaxcounty.gov. Case numbers to reference are RZ 2022-SU-00019 and SE 2022-SU-00038.

❖ Letters may be mailed to the Department of Clerk Services at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552, Fairfax, VA 22035. Or email them to Board Chairman Jeff McKay at chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov or to Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) at sully@fairfaxcounty.gov, since the proposed data center is in the Sully District. Emails may be sent, as well, to individual supervisors from other districts.

❖ To submit a video, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/budget-public-hearing-video-testimony>. All videos must be submitted by Monday, Jan. 22, at 9 a.m.

❖ To testify by phone, people must sign up first and may call in during the hearing at 703-324-1020. Land lines work best, though, because the county's audio system often makes cell phones difficult to hear.

The report stated that some of its recommendations – “such as a review of noise studies and building design and encouraging increased open space, tree planting and stormwater treatment – may be more effectively implemented through an SE review.”

And it recommended that the county's Comprehensive Plan could consider “recommendations for enhanced buffering for data centers located near

residential, noise sensitive uses and environmentally sensitive areas.” It also suggested establishing “guidelines for distances from existing or planned substations or transmission lines that can service the data center.”

Read the report at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/data-centers>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/Assets/Documents/PDF/data-centers-report.pdf#page=1>

So now that the supervisors have all these new recommendations in hand – and they haven't yet voted to approve the Chantilly mega data center, local residents are wondering what's the rush – and why this application can't be voted on later, after it can be determined if it meets staff's recommendations?

After all, said resident Donna Jacobson, “A responsible government should want to make sure any data center is built using the highest standards to safeguard residents.”



Dranesville District Supervisor Jimmy Bierman joins Herndon Area Leadership Team members in tackling teen food insecurity. Pictured from left to right are Karen Kucik, Supervisor Bierman, Pabla Ayala, and Fiona Gonsalvez.



Dranesville District Supervisor Jimmy Bierman enthusiastically helps to receive and sort over 3,000 pounds of food and toiletries at Herndon Middle School. Across all of its sorting sites, Food For Neighbors collected over 25,000 pounds of donations.



Kristin Simons (center) and her bartaco team regularly help during Food For Neighbors Red Bag Events.

Food For Neighbors Kicks Off 2024 with New School Partners, Record Food Collection

In Fairfax, Arlington and Loudoun counties, on Saturday, Jan. 13, over 800 Northern Virginia residents braved the cold to collect, sort, and deliver a record-breaking 25,000+ pounds of food and toiletries to 45 schools partnering with Food For Neighbors to tackle teen food insecurity.

Spirits were high as car after car arrived with donations from 1,956 households and food drives from a number of organizations. Such generosity and community spirit has enabled Food For Neighbors to expand its programming every year, with January's Red Bag food and toiletry collection including three new partnering schools — Cedar Lane School in Vienna, Riverside High School in Leesburg, and Washington-Liberty High School in Arlington.

"We're thrilled to add these three new school partners to our Food For Neighbors family," shared Anne O'Flaherty, Food For Neighbors' Director of Operations. "We

thank our Red Bag donors and volunteers for making it possible to provide supplemental nutrition to more students in need."

Among Saturday's volunteers was Dranesville District Supervisor Jimmy Bierman, who rolled up his sleeves to help unload and sort over 3,000 pounds of donations at Herndon Middle School.

"I had such a great time volunteering with Food For Neighbors," Bierman said. "Efficient and organized, but most importantly impactful. Thank you to Food For Neighbors for all the work they do to support our students in Fairfax County and beyond."

Other volunteers sorting donations at Herndon Middle School included teams from the Young Men's Service League, Navy Federal Credit Union, and bartaco. Kristin Simons, General Manager of bartaco reston, noted that bartaco encourages community outreach and empowers restaurants to select nonprofits to support. When she

started talking to her staff about possibly partnering with Food For Neighbors, she grasped the reality that food insecurity has touched most everyone in some way.

"The children that my family fosters have relied on programs like these in the past, and I know how impactful it can be to simply not have to worry about your next meal," shared Simons, who was inspired by how her staff rallied around the cause.

Also rallying to address teen food insecurity are Food For Neighbors' 45 partnering schools. There, school staff identify students in need of help and connect them with supplemental food, toiletries, and/or grocery store gift cards.

Family Liaison Samantha Upton-Smith noted, "Riverside High School's new partnership with Food For Neighbors has been an incredible hit. Students are excited and relieved to be able to take home food for the weekends and have snacks during the school day."

Equally excited is Dr. Cheron-da Farrish, Principal of Cedar Lane School in Vienna. "The new partnership between Food for Neighbors and Cedar Lane School is making a dynamic impact on our school community," said Dr. Farrish. "They are truly a testament to the power of community organizations supporting schools to help students reach their full potential, regardless of their background or circumstances."

Food For Neighbors greatly values its donors, volunteers, and partners. With their help, the nonprofit will be rolling out services to even more schools as the spring approaches. To learn how you can make a difference in the lives of nearby students, visit the Food For Neighbors website or send an email to getinvolved@foodforneighbors.org



Neighbors' popular Red Bag Program. In just one morning, community members throughout the Food For Neighbors operating area collected and sorted over 25,000 pounds of donations generously provided by 1,956 households.

Rotary Clubs Collaborate For Rise Against Hunger

Volunteers and sponsors needed.

FILE PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Volunteers and sponsors are sought for the Rise Against Hunger Food Packaging event at Aldrin Elementary School, 11375 Center Harbor Road, Reston, VA, Saturday, Jan. 20, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; set-up at 8:30 a.m.

The Rotary Clubs of Herndon-Reston, Great Falls, and Dulles International Airport and the Interact Clubs of Herndon High School and South Lakes High School are doing a combined community service project on Saturday, January 20, at Aldrin Elementary School. Children of middle school age



In 2023, Patrecia Anjum, 17, Analiese Jones, 15, Izzy Ahad, 16, and Emily Pham, 18, members of the Herndon High School Interact Club, took part in the meal packaging.

and older are welcome to participate as volunteers. Everyone must register. Sign up via <https://rah.my.salesforce-sites.com/events/homepage?id=-7018c000020063AAA>. Contact Elysa@HerndonTech.com for more information.



At Luther Jackson Middle School, volunteers brave the cold to sort food and toiletries for students attending five nearby schools, including Cedar Lane School, one of three new Food For Neighbors partners.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left are MPO Mike O'Brien and Capt. Dan Spital.

Police Officer Joins Parade for Dying Boy

During the Jan. 10 meeting of the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Capt. Dan Spital, the station commander, took a few minutes to honor one of his officers, MPO Mike O'Brien. And he did so in front of O'Brien's family.

"Mike is just an all-around, phenomenal guy – a wonderful father and husband," said Spital. "And we're fortunate to have him here at the Sully District Station. He's been with the Fairfax County Police Department for 25 years and has spent 11 of them with the Motor Squad."

Spital then shared a brief story illustrating O'Brien's care and compassion for others. He said a 9-year-old boy named Charlie, of Frederick County, had been diagnosed with leukemia. And even before his whole treatment ordeal, he and his family had become close to

the law-enforcement officers there.

"But just before Christmas, his doctors sent him home and told his parents there was nothing more they could do for him," said Spital. "So the Frederick police decided to put together a parade for him. Some 200 cruisers – a sea of flashing blue lights – would drive by Charlie's house to let him know how much he meant to them."

And since O'Brien grew up in that neighborhood, and the parade was for a child, he wanted to be part of it. So, said Spital, "Mike shined up his cruiser, drove there from Fairfax County and participated in that parade."

A fourth-grader, Charlie had hoped to become a police officer when he grew up. But sadly, he didn't get the chance; he died at home, surrounded by his family, on Dec. 30.

— BONNIE HOBBS

ROUNDUPS

Donate Women's Personal Products

The Sully District Police Station is currently holding a drive to collect women's personal-hygiene products for Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) to offer to the local women in need that it serves.

These items cannot be bought with any SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) funds they might receive because this money is only allowed for grocery purchases. So WFCM is hoping that members of the community will help it fill this critical need. Donations may be dropped off, 24/7, at a box inside the front lobby of the police station at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly, from now until Jan. 26.

Women's Personal Safety Presentation

The upcoming Women's Personal Safety presentation will equip women with the knowledge they need to feel confident in any situation. It will be held Tuesday, Jan. 30, from 6:30-8 p.m., in the community room of the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

The instructor will cover a wide range of crucial topics, including Crime Prevention, Situational Awareness, Observing Your Surroundings, Reducing the Risk of an Attack, Developing a Plan of Action, and Knowing When to Use Force.

There will be no physical maneuvers or scenarios. To attend, registration is required at <https://bit.ly/sullywps013024>.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed. Struc. Id.	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
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.

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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Expanded Virginia Gambling to be Considered by General Assembly

BY SENATOR ADAM P. EBBIN

Virginia's legal gaming landscape has shifted rapidly over the past five years. In decades past, legal gambling was limited to the Virginia Lottery, authorized in the early 1990s through a statewide referendum. Prior to five years ago, the only other legal form of wagering in Virginia was charitable bingo and "pull-tab" machines. Charitable gaming provides a sizable portion of funding for many of Virginia's nonprofit organizations, and is regulated by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

However, in 2018, Virginia expanded gaming when the General Assembly legalized wagering on "Historical Horse Racing" (HHR) machines at the Colonial Downs racetrack in New Kent County and six other sites, including the Town of Dumfries in Northern Virginia. The satellite locations required local approval though a local referendum before they could move forward. The HHR machines are overseen by the Virginia Racing Commission.

In 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation that authorized gambling on most professional sporting events, overseen by the Virginia Lottery. Sports betting is available online, on a cell phone, or at a Virginia-based casino and other certain locations.

In addition, the General Assembly - in 2020 - legalized casino gaming (overseen by the Virginia Lottery) at up to five locations

pending approval in a local referendum. They include Portsmouth, Bristol, Norfolk, Danville, and Richmond. Since 2020, four of those cities have passed the required referendum and opened a casino. However, Richmond voters defeated a referendum to approve a casino two times in a span of three years.

Three of the major gaming issues in 2024 are the potential legalization of "gray machines" (or "skill games"), the possible addition of casinos in Northern Virginia and Petersburg, and the legalization of slot machine-like Video Gaming Terminals (VGTs) in restaurants around the state.

As I wrote in the Richmond Times-Dispatch this past fall, I am not a fan of gray machines, primarily because they are often encountered in nontraditional gaming environments, like convenience stores where families might shop for everyday items, or restaurants. This contrasts with destination-oriented gaming sites like a casino, where a consumer has made a conscious decision to seek out gambling. For several years, the machines operated in a "gray area" that was not explicitly legal.

In my opinion, gray machines don't serve the consumer interests of Virginia's gambling public. Unfortunately, as of this writing, the bill to legalize gray machines does not contain a system that the Commonwealth could verify or audit to ensure that the Department of



Sen. Adam Ebbin

Taxation and the small business owners where the machines are located get their fair share of the proceeds. I am also concerned that some proposals to legalize gray machines do not contain protections to dissuade wagering by underage Virginians.

I also expect that bills to establish casinos in the Tysons area of Northern Virginia, along with a conference center, and in the City of Petersburg, will generate much attention. As Chairman of the General Laws and Technology Committee, I have appointed a Gaming Subcommittee so that the numerous, and complex gambling bills can be compared and considered, with the exception of one bill that was considered by the Commerce and Labor Committee.

I also serve on the Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Virginia Gaming Commission to provide a more unified governance of the various forms of gambling in Virginia. As described above, the current landscape for Virginia gaming involves the Virginia Racing Commission, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Virginia Lottery. I believe that one single entity overseeing what is now a regulatory patchwork would better serve the public.

39th Senate District Town Hall - Sunday, Jan. 21

This Sunday, Jan. 21, from 1 pm

to 3 pm, at Alexandria City High School, please join me and Delegates Charniele Herring, Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Alfonso Lopez, and Adele McClure for a 39th Senate District Town Hall. The event will be moderated by Virginia public radio reporter Michael Lee Pope, who will pose questions pre-submitted online or at the event. If you would like to RSVP, or pre-submit a question, visit www.adamebbin.com/townhallrsvp

Stay in the Know

You can stay on top of General Assembly events through the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS) website. On that site, you can find many helpful links, including:

All legislation introduced, including the bills that I am putting forward;

You can find listings of all members of the General Assembly, as well as the committees that hear legislation, and the regularly-updated meetings calendar that lists when committee meetings and other events are taking place;

You can find a live feed of the State Senate, and any meetings of Senate committees here, as well as archived footage of recent State Senate hearings and floor proceedings.

My new legislative email address is SenatorEbbin@senate.virginia.gov. You can also reach us at our new Richmond phone number 804-698-7539.

It is my continued honor to represent the people of the 39th Senate District.

LETTER FROM GAZA

Living Nightmare From Which There is No Escape

Residents of Gaza have spent years unable to move freely.

BY NAJLA DROOBY
THE CONNECTION

Editor's Note: Najla Drooby is a McLean resident who has written for the Connection before. Her former co-worker, Khaled, worked for her as a software engineer in Abu Dhabi when she was an IT project manager.

er, building a cadastre system for the UAE. He has called her several times in the past year asking if she knows a way to get out of Gaza. Khaled is stuck in Gaza with his little children of 4 and 6, and his terrified family. Full names have been omitted to protect him from reprisals. He wrote this letter to Najla to describe the continued bombing, his fear that he will not survive, and his utter disbelief at the lack of international response.

Hi Najla, alive here. I wrote this during the blackout. See if it's any good:
[Internal dialog]

"Open your eyes Khaled, open your eyes, it's just another nightmare."

Khaled: Have I gone mad? My eyes are wide open, I am well awake, this is reality.

Mind: but this is also how it feels when you are having a bad dream, it feels so real, yet the sigh when you open your eyes, and the racing heartbeats, realizing that it was just a bad dream, remember the feeling? Let's try again: "Open your eyes."

Khaled: I am trying.
Mind: This can't be real. Look at your kids, they are running for their lives, the building next to you

will be bombarded. Look at their faces, they were frightened before; this is something else, Khaled, there is no coming back from this moment, for them and for you. It's a turning point. Let's try again "Open your eyes"

Khaled: I am awake.

Mind: You can't be. Look at your mother. She aged 10 years in one day. Look at your wife. She is silent, in complete shock. You have been to wars before, they were frightened before, but this is something else. You know better than this, the sound of bombardments

SEE LIVING NIGHTMARE, PAGE 11

NEWS

Commonwealth of Virginia, Sample Ballot
 County of Fairfax
 Democratic Party Presidential Primary
 Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Estado de Virginia, Boleta de muestra
 Condado de Fairfax
 Primaria Presidencial del Partido Demócrata
 Martes, 5 de marzo de 2024

Tiểu Bang Virginia, Lá Phiếu Mẫu
 Quận Fairfax
 Bầu cử sơ bộ Tổng thống Đảng Dân chủ
 Thứ ba, ngày 5 tháng 3, 2024

Virginia 주, 건본 투표지
 Fairfax 카운티
 민주당 대통령 예비 선거
 2024년 3월 5일, 화요일

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 Completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice.
 Rellene completamente el óvalo a la izquierda de su preferencia.
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 Presidente
 Vote solamente por uno
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 Chỉ bỏ phiếu cho một ứng cử viên
 대통령
 한 명만 투표하십시오

Marianne Williamson
 Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
 Dean Benson Phillips

Commonwealth of Virginia, Sample Ballot
 County of Fairfax
 Republican Party Presidential Primary
 Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Estado de Virginia, Boleta de muestra
 Condado de Fairfax
 Primaria Presidencial del Partido Republicano
 Martes, 5 de marzo de 2024

Tiểu Bang Virginia, Lá Phiếu Mẫu
 Quận Fairfax
 Bầu cử sơ bộ Tổng thống Đảng Cộng hòa
 Thứ ba, ngày 5 tháng 3, 2024

Virginia 주, 건본 투표지
 Fairfax 카운티
 공화당 대통령 예비 선거
 2024년 3월 5일, 화요일

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 Completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice.
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 Presidente
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 Tổng Thống
 Chỉ bỏ phiếu cho một ứng cử viên
 대통령
 한 명만 투표하십시오

Chris Christie
 Ryan L. Binkley
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Are You Ready for This?

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

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. Week-

www.connectionnewspapers.com

end voting will be offered at every early voting sites on two Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Saturday, Feb. 24 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.

- ❖ 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 wait 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.

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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.



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 Sterling, Simon Thomas of Herndon, Arletrice Green of Centerville, Candise Davis Friends of Reston, Vayion 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.

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 Pry-

or 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. Peter McCarty, 'The One Man Band' performed, and later, the youth

SEE RESTON, PAGE 10



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 BY MIKE OLSON

Students from Al Fatih Academy in Reston recite Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech he delivered on Aug. 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The Reston Community Orchestra, an all-volunteer ensemble, accompanied the students.

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 Counciler 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

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."



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

The Cohen family of Reston, Kayel, Marc, Ariela and Amar are ready to enjoy the MLK Birthday Celebration, Especially for Youth.



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 ca-

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



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 9

“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 8

watched the animated adventure video, ‘Our Friend Martin.’ It told the life and times of Martin Luther King through the voices of Whoopie 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.

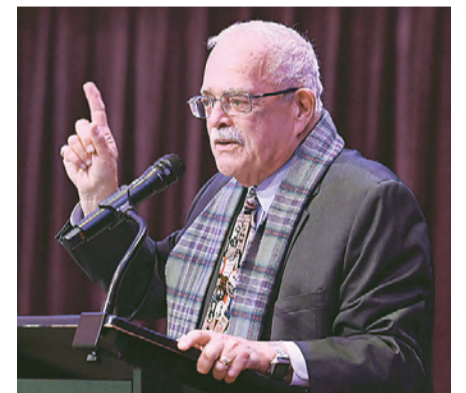


PHOTOS/MIKE LESNICK, RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER

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.



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.



Community luncheon.

LETTER

Living Nightmare

FROM PAGE 6

is like nothing before, the screams on the streets, does this sound real to you? I am telling you it's not one of my tricks. You need to "Open your eyes"

"13 Oct, 0200 hrs, IDF: Everybody has to move from north and Gaza governorates to south Wadi Gaza. The implementation should start with the first sunlight."

Mind: OPEN YOUR EYES, IT'S JUST ANOTHER NIGHTMARE, NOW.

Khaled: What is this? Is this another Nakba? Is this real? Shall we leave? Are we going to come back if we left? My home that my father built - it has his presence still, his portraits on the walls, What should we take with us? Should we go? Look at the walls, hug them, kiss the tiles on the floor, just in case, pack the air, pack the memories, pack your father's soul that's still there in his old possessions. Pack your kids' childhood here, their first steps, their first words, the laughs, the birthdays, the cries, the tantrums, pack your wife's love, the first days, all the days, the fights that only brought you closer, the moments when you entertained your friends, the Ramadans and the Eids, the Christmases and the New Years, the Classics, and the movie nights, pack your successes, and your failures, pack it all.

Mind: I promise you, if you open your eyes, all of this will be gone, and you will go back to your normal life, now "Open your eyes", but to be safe let's move to the south.

Khaled: Water is running out quickly, there are too many people here, we need to cut back on water consumption, food is scarce, let's cut back on that too, here is our ration, let's work on making that last for the longest time, if we have to go out in search for food, the odds are we will not come back, and if the children are hungry. We give them our share, but what if they are thirsty? This is a good moment to open my eyes.

Mind: "Open your eyes Khaled, open your eyes, it's just another nightmare"

News flash: Baptist hospital bombarded, 1300 people, most of which are children, are killed

Mind: See, humanity can't fail you this much already.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES.

Gaza is wiped out.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES.

Children are killed.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

The world is watching.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

A house is destroyed.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

The world is concerned.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

His family is gone.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

A ceasefire is vetoed.

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

Her entire family is under the rubble

OPEN YOUR EYES.. OPEN YOUR EYES

"We regret to announce a complete cessation of all communications and internet services with the #Gaza Strip in light of the ongoing aggression."

Khaled: how much battery do I have? Let's go through the photos folder and clean them, look at the girls on the beach, and those dresses on Eid, and here they are on their first day at school. L is really into this horseback riding, H and her beads, the accessories she makes with them are pieces of art. I remember this day, brother was telling the funniest joke, those boring Shisha Thursdays, that day at work was long, still we found time to eat a lot, Mom was over the moon

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SCREENSHOT FROM VIDEO RESIDENT OF GAZA

The author of this "Letter from Gaza" walked around his bombed neighborhood and took video on Nov. 10, 2023.

holding the little one, and R looks stunning here... oh, I totally forgot about this day, my sister-in-law's wedding was the talk of the town - for all the wrong reasons. That boring conference, this crazy new year's eve party, and this... I don't need to see this, delete... delete... delete... I didn't realize how happy we were, and how beautiful this city was...

Mind: "See - maybe this is where you are now, open your eyes Khaled, open your eyes."

Khaled: My eyes are wide open, and I am well awake, the nightmare is the reality for us to face, but let the world close their eyes, and let the humanity fail us over and over again, and remember that as humanity failed here, it failed everywhere."

* Note by Drooby about Khaled: "When he worked for me, Khaled never missed a beat at work despite the fact that his family was in Gaza under continuous Israeli bombardment, one of many previous attacks on Gaza. He could not go home over the holidays because it took too long to get through the bureaucracy and Israeli checkpoints. When the contract ended, he chose to forego a successful IT career in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to go back to his family and his ancestral home. He married a few years ago and spent quality time with his father before his father passed away. The last time Gaza was bombed heavily, he begged me to help him get out but the State department would not consider taking in any Palestinians as refugees because Israel's operation was not a war. This time, Israel declared it a war, yet he can't get on an evacuation list even though he works for UNICEF which managed to get its own international staff to safety."

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SPOTLIGHT

Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate

The Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services facility empowers individuals and families.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate in Reston is a vital, active neighborhood hub. Located at 12125 Pinecrest Road, Dogwood Elementary School, a Fairfax County Title 1 grant program school, anchors the community. According to the Virginia Department of Education, schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low-income families receive funding.

The 7,737-square-foot multi-service site opened on July 10, 2006. It is a Fairfax County Neighbor-

hood and Community Services facility. It continues to provide a variety of diverse and supportive programming for all ages, from tots to seniors, including health and wellness, leisure and recreation, technology programs, and English as a Second Language.

The center is one of the locations for the Mobile Market Program by the Capital Area Food Bank, as seen on Saturday, Jan. 13. The food bank delivers fresh produce monthly to high-needs neighborhoods throughout the D.C. metropolitan area.

A look back at 2023 shows that one of the year's final events at the Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate was the highly antic-

ipated Elf Store. The center and Reston Community Church solicited contributions. Caron Anton is the chair of the Cathy Hudgins Community Center Advisory Council. She said that the Reston Community Church collected donations for the Elf Store that were new or gently used. Social media solicitations for Reston Association and Facebook pages had also asked for donations.

Volunteers and staff prepared the gymnasium the night before the Elf Store opened to attract young shoppers looking for free gifts for their parents and grandparents. Volunteers then wrapped the gifts for the children. Andy Sigle, an advisory council member, said that the Elf Store has been offered in the center for a decade and that "it's been cool."

The center recently released its calendar for the first quarter of 2024. Check The Connection's Cal-



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

The Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate in Reston.

endar for more information.

Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services, Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate at <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/neighborhood-com->

munity-services/sites/neighborhood-community-services/files/assets/documents/calendars/cathy%20hudgins%20community%20center%20calendar.pdf to learn more.

Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate *Examples of Activities, January & February 2024*

Tot Time

Friday, 10:15 a.m.- 11:45 a.m.
Please join us for our new tot time.

This drop-in playgroup encourages caretakers, guardians, and preschool-aged children to socialize with one another. The center's indoor gym will be open for free play. Toys, games, books, and music will be provided. Children must be always supervised by caretaker/guardians.

Youth Zone After-school Program

Monday-Friday, 3:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Homework help is available, as well as cooperative games, indoor/outdoor sports, board games, community service projects, cooking, arts & crafts, and more. Participants must be registered in the program.

Computer Clubhouse After-school Program

Monday-Friday, 3:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Make your ideas come alive at the Clubhouse Network. Hang out with friends, work on projects together and use exciting new technology. The Clubhouse Network provides a creative and safe after-school learning environment where young people work with adult mentors to explore their own ideas, develop skills, and build confidence in themselves, through the use of technology. Participants must be registered in the After-school Program.

Teen Zone and Clubhouse Homework Time

Monday-Friday, 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Homework support, as well as cooperative games, indoor/outdoor sports, board games, community service projects, cooking, arts & crafts, and more. Participants must be registered in the program.

Teen Computer Clubhouse, Project, and Additional Homework Time

Monday - Friday, 6:15 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.
Engage and make friends while shar-

ing creative ideas and working on projects in the computer Clubhouse. Access to fun activities such as VR and XBOX games. If you have any ideas for new or updated programs, stop by the front desk.

Adults and Seniors Open Lab

Monday-Friday, Noon - 2 p.m.
7:45 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.
Ages 19+, participants can use the computers to access the internet, email and print. One-on-one assistance is available.

Teen Open Gym

Monday-Friday
Monday-Friday 2:30 p.m.- 3:45p.m.
Wednesday- 7:45-8:45 p.m.
Open gym schedule is subject to change. Please call the facility at 703-860-0676 for the most updated information.

Family Open Gym

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
6:15 p.m. –8:45 p.m.
Open gym schedule is subject to change. Please call the facility at 703-860-0676 for the most updated information.

Adult & Senior Open Gym

Monday-Friday 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Open gym schedule is subject to change. Please call the facility at 703-860-0676 for the most updated information.

Adult Pickleball

Tuesday and Thursday, 1pm -3pm
Pickle ball net, balls and paddles are provided. If you're a beginner or a rising star, come out and meet new friends or hang out with your friends at our free court.
All LEVELS WELCOME!!

ESOL

Tuesday & Thursday, 10 a.m. – Noon, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate will be offering beginner level English classes. Dates and times will be announced at the be-

ginning of September. Registration will be required, and space will be limited.

S.P.A.R.C

Tuesday & Thursday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Special Adapted Rescue Club is an accessible club for adults with physical & or development disabilities in support of their continued development of life skills.

Ping Pong Table Tennis

Wednesday, Fridays, Noon – 1 p.m.
Open play for adults ages 18+ who are out of HS

ADULT AND TEEN CLASSES

Teen STEAM Club
Thursday, 6:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.
Building relationships and mutual love of learning about STEAM. You can discover your creativity through STEAM and explore new ideas.

Adult Basic Computer Skills Class

Monday, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Come learn and practice basic computer skills. Registration required and space limited. Call the center for more information and to register.

Yoga for All

Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.
All levels welcome to our gentle yoga. (Wednesday Bilingual- Spanish)

Chair Exercise (Video) NCS

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Chair exercises for seniors, senior exercises at home, chair workout, seated workout, workout for seniors, chair leg exercises, senior shape, workout for weight loss, fat burning workout, workout at home, low impact workout, joint friendly exercises, silver sneakers, 10 minute workout, chair lower body workout, chair exercises, seated exercises for seniors, exercises for seniors over 60, chair yoga for seniors, no equipment workout, beginner workout, strength workout for seniors

S.A.I.L (Senior Class)

Tuesdays, 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Stay Active for Independent Living (SAIL) is a strength, balance and fitness program for adults 65 and older. Performing exercises that improve strength, balance and fitness are the single most important activity that adults can do to stay active and reduce their chance of falling. The entire curriculum of activities in the SAIL program can help improve strength and balance, if done regularly. This meets for 12 weeks. This program is free. You must register and attend all sessions. Class has limited space.

Arthritis Class (Senior Class)

Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
Safe exercises to do here at the community center to reduce arthritis pain in your joints by reducing stiffness in back, shoulders and hips. These movements are designed to improve your strength and mobility. You can use a chair, for safety, and other equipment such as a towel or ball, and bands for your warm-up and workout. Learn to breathe through the movements to ease anxiety.

Music Lovers

Tuesdays, 1 p.m. -2 p.m.
Oldies But Goodies Sing-along

Family Zumba

Wednesday, 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Achieve your health goals and reconnect with your community with some Zumba dancing! Zumba combines Latin and International music with a fun and effective workout system. Perfect for everyone!

Adult & Senior Social Time

Monday, 10 a.m. -2 p.m.
Please join us for our new adult social time. This drop-in group will include board games, bingo, arts and crafts and an opportunity to socialize. Light refreshments will be available.

ESOL

Tuesday & Thursday, 10 a.m. – Noon, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate will be offering beginner level English classes. Dates and times will be announced at the beginning of September. Registration will be required and space will be limited.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Advisory Council Meeting
Tuesdays: February 6, 2024, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate Advisory Council Meeting will be held in person or virtually. Please contact the center for more information and for the meeting link.

Capital Mobile Food Bank

Saturdays: January 13, 2024, February 10, 2024, 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate is one of the locations for the Mobile Market Program; this food bank can deliver fresh produce monthly to high-needs neighborhoods throughout the DC metropolitan area. 88 Mobile Market locations are currently operating in partnership with community organizations. Cathy Hudgins Community Center is proud to have this resource here in your community. These Mobile Market places are operated monthly in a farmer's market style that distributes produce. They target high-density areas with high rates of food insecurity, spotlight community service providers and feature cooking demonstrations.

Family Dinner

January 19, 2024, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Family meals eaten at home have been proven to benefit the health and wellness of children and make families stronger creating a positive impact on our communities. Come join us for a good meal and family fun.

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

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.

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.

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 15

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Legals **Legals**

**NOTICE
 ABANDONED WATERCRAFT**

Notice is hereby given that the following watercraft has been abandoned for more than 60 DAYS on the property of Mr. Mien S. Niu at 1008 DEAD RUN DR. McLean VA 22101, 202-656-4668.

1983 RENKEN boat (white), 19'7", Hull ID #: RBMG1171M83A, Reg #: MD1296AJ

Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with Section 29.1-733.25 of the Code of Virginia if this watercraft is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of this notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with questions.

Legals **Employment**

ABC LICENSE

Kook Dogg L.L.C trading as Kook Dogg Cafe, 12100 Sunset Hills Rd. R6, Reston, Fairfax County, VA 20190 + 5894.. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Retail Restaurant or Caterer Application - Restaurant, Wine, Beer, Mixed Beverages, Consumed On and Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Paul Kuchler, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Domain Portfolio Manager; Reston, VA - Assist the overall coordination of delivering IT initiatives/value for the Service Operations Business Unit; lead and participate in efforts to evaluate, select, and implement new technologies to enhance application in partnership with the Development Team Managers, Enterprise Architect, and Domain Architect; among other duties. BS + 12 yrs experience; int'l travel up to 25%. Send resume to D. Taube, Sr Manager Global Mobility, VW Credit, 1950 Opportunity Way, Suite 1500, Reston, VA 20190. Ref. DPM-VA. No phone calls please.

ABC LICENSE

Alpahahara Foods LLC RECORDED WITH THE SCC trading as Mirch Dhamaka, 2443 Centreville Rd, Ste G1, Herndon, Fairfax County, VA 20171-3020. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a MIXED BEVERAGE RESTAURANT LICENSE license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Padmaja Yadagiri, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Winter Weather Precautions for People with Dementia

Winter weather conditions — colder temperatures, snow, ice and early darkness — can be dangerous and even life-threatening for 150,000 people living with Alzheimer's and other dementia in Virginia. For their 354,000 caregivers, the stress and challenges to keep their loved ones safe during this time can be overwhelming. By preparing in advance, caregivers can make a big difference in keeping their loved one with safe.

"People living with Alzheimer's and other dementia can be vulnerable during winter weather because their judgment may be impaired and they may be unable to communicate discomfort," said Cindy Schelhorn, senior communications director with the Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter. "It's really important to take extra precautions with these individuals when there is severe winter weather or other excessive weather conditions like snow or ice."

- ❖ Be prepared. Check weather conditions regularly and have emergency plans in place.

- ❖ Bundle up. Help the person living with Alzheimer's dress warmly for winter weather conditions by wearing dry, loose-fitting layers and covering exposed skin.

- ❖ Prevent slips. Balance and mobility can be a challenge for a person living with Alzheimer's or dementia. Assume all surfaces are slick; assist the person by taking smaller steps and slowing down.

- ❖ Take advantage of the daylight. Winter months bring decreased sunlight and shorter days. Visual perception can be a challenge for those living with Alzheimer's or other dementias, and can cause increased confusion or disorientation in dark or shadowy environments both inside and out.

- ❖ Prevent wandering. Wandering is one of the most frequent and challenging problems that caregivers face and can be extremely dangerous in colder conditions. Shorter days during winter months can also increase the risk of "sundowning." Monitor closely for agitation or restlessness as day transitions into night. Tips to combat sundowning: <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/sleep-issues-sundowning>

- ❖ Buddy up. An Alzheimer's Association survey says a whopping 84 percent of caregivers said they would like more support in providing care for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, especially from their family. It can be hard for caregivers to find time to complete simple tasks outside of the home. Don't hesitate to ask others for help with errands, grocery shopping or with snow/ice removal.

More safety tips can be found by visiting the Alzheimer's Association website at alz.org/safety. The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline also provides free reliable information and support to all those who need assistance. Call the Helpline toll-free anytime at 800-272-3900.

FROM PAGE 13

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 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, 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.

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

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:

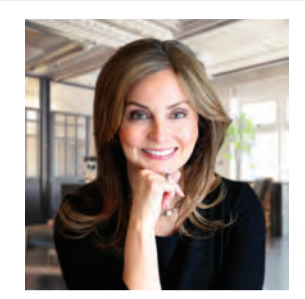
For the moment (more like two weeks going on three; not sure if the end is in sight), I am off my cancer medicine. Unfortunately, for the wrong reasons: side effects negatively impacting a major organ. I have always feared that my cancer treatment might have to be adjusted/stopped because the side effects 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."

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



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18328 Fairway Oaks Sq, Leesburg \$1,510,000



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10445 New Ascot Dr, Great Falls \$3,550,000



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