Celebrating Fourth in Lorton

The crowd at the Fourth of July celebration at Lorton Arts Center on Saturday, June 30, 2018.
News

Occoquan Recreated

On Saturday June 23, in Lorton, hundreds of people came to see what is essentially a new Occoquan Regional Park. After a $15+ million rebuild, the new Occoquan Park sets a new standard for parks in Northern Virginia.

The park now features the stunning Jean R. Packard Center, named after the well-known environmentalist. This new green building, featuring solar panels on the roof and locally sourced and recycled materials, has a number of functions. The River View is an event space for more than 300 guests, with beautiful views of the Occoquan River. This event space is already being booked up for weddings and other receptions. A space called “The 1608 Room” commemorates the first contact between Native Americans and Europeans in this area, one year after the Jamestown Colony was established. A new dining spot called Brickmakers Cafe served 500 people on its first day of operations and offers dining areas with views of the river.

A 5k loop trail, new sea wall, plaza and other features round out the new park, along with a new large group shelter, which was added to the four existing shelters.


“If you have not been to Occoquan Regional Park in the last week, you have not experienced the new park,” said Paul Gilbert, NOVA Parks Executive Director. “This park today is one of the very best parks in the entire region.”

“The recreated park is again one of the jewels in the NOVA Parks system just in time for the 60th anniversary of NOVA Parks that we will celebrate in 2019,” said Michael Nardolilli, Chairman of the NOVA Parks Board.

To learn more, visit www.novaparks.com
Lorton Arts Center Celebrates Fourth of July

About 10,000 people enjoy fireworks, music, entertainment, and food trucks.

About 10,000 people came out for the Fourth of July celebration at Lorton Arts Center on Saturday, June 30, 2018, in Lorton. The event offered fireworks, music, entertainment and food trucks.

“It’s about bringing people together in a setting that’s historic, that’s full of art, that brings everybody from our Supervisor to the police force, fire folks and search and rescue and volunteers and artists,” said Ava Spece, President and CEO of Workhouse Arts Center.

Dan Storck, Supervisor of the Mount Vernon District, added: “This Fourth of July is a special celebration because the Workhouse Arts Center has a brand-new quad that people should come out and visit and help us celebrate as well.

“We have a wonderful partnership with the County FMD (Facilities Management Department) as well as we have lots of different vendors and other partners who have helped to make this all happen including major donors to build the quad out. And the fireworks are just going to add a lot of color and life to the evening,” he added.

Spece said the Workhouse Arts Center put together a design for the quad and did the initial permitting. The new features include new sidewalks, sod, hardscape, and brick work, as well as an irrigation system and new drainage making it more usable than it was. The Rizer family (Timothy and Barbara) also donated funds to build the Rizer Pavilion. And Fairfax County came in to finish the project and paid for the balance. The work was completed just last Thursday – in time for the celebration. They still want to add some benches.

— Steve Hibbard
Local Newspapers Under Siege

Need to address restraining orders and gun violence.

One member of Connection Newspapers staff is Kemal Kurspahic, who shares with us his first-hand experience of running a newspaper from a war zone when information was desperately needed by the besieged residents of Sarajevo. Kemal Kurspahic is managing editor for The Connection Newspapers. He was the editor-in-chief of the Bosnian daily Oslobodjenje in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina, 1988-94. Under his leadership the paper published every day from an atomic bomb shelter during the siege of Sarajevo, maintaining high professional standards and Bosnian culture and tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance in the midst of terror. The paper published the names of those killed each day in Sarajevo.

He experienced first hand the horror of having staff members killed while out on assignment. He was critically injured himself when a vehicle taking him to his newsroom crashed as it traveled at high speed down “sniper alley.” The International Press Institute named Kurspahic one of its first 50 World Press Freedom Heroes in 2000.

Journalism is a dangerous occupation in many other countries, usually not here in the U.S.

I tell this story now because of the newly minted fear that many journalists feel after the murders of five in the newsroom of the Capital Gazette in Annapolis. Police and survivors say the shooter had long held a grudge against the newspaper, and had sued for defamation. The targeted attack came very close to home.

About This Week’s Papers

Our papers go to press a day early due to the July 4th holiday. That means that this week’s papers will not contain coverage of July 4th events. Watch for coverage next week.

Submit Your Photos for the Pet Connection Now

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you. Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

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The Welcoming Inclusion Network
Making Fairfax County accessible to all abilities.

One of Fairfax County’s greatest strengths is in being a home to over a million people from all walks of life. While we have made great strides in bridging the community together, adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities can find it very challenging to participate fully in community life. After they leave school or home, many rely on employment or day services to integrate them into society and allow them to contribute by working or through other activities. This population is growing and deserves a seat at the table. Current services are helpful, but there remains a great deal of work if we want a truly inclusive society.

The dead were Gerald Fischman, 61, editorial page editor; Rob Hiaasen, 59, editor and features columnist; John McNamara, 56, sports reporter and editor for the local weekly papers; Wendi Winters, 65, a local news reporter and community columnist; and Rebecca Smith, a sales assistant.

The shooter had restraining orders against him because of violent threats made in a different situation, but restraining orders apparently do not result in restricting gun purchases. He was still able to buy the gun he used in the attack. This is a loophole that desperately needs to be closed. A person subject to a restraining order of any type or duration for making threats should certainly not be able to buy a gun.

Every newspaper editor knows the experience of talking to a subject, source or reader who is irate over something the paper published. If we aren’t making anyone angry, it’s probably because we aren’t writing about anything important. But my conversations with people who object to something we’ve reported have always had a subtext of respect. Many complaints have resulted in greater understanding on all sides that can create more lasting connections. Other times have resulted in agreeing to disagree.

Now, we lock the doors at least for now, knowing that there could likely be copy cat attacks, as school shootings began with one high profile attack. But we are not afraid. We will continue to publish our 15 weekly papers.

The threat to survival for most local papers is the decline in advertising, compounded now by a tariff on newspaper. Don’t forget that if you have an advertising or marketing budget, you should spend some of those dollars with local newspapers.

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

❖

The Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board established the Welcoming Inclusion Network (WIN) collaborative to address these pressing issues and devise long-term solutions to create an environment where everyone is valued. I have the honor of chairing WIN, but the real work is done by our members including Lori Stillman, who is a former CSB official and parent. Joining us on the steering committee are a number of experts who have a great range of experiences with developmental and intellectual disability services. WIN stakeholders include county staff, parents of those with disabilities, special needs services providers, self-advocates, and employers. Together we work to achieve WIN’s four key goals:

❖ NETWORK: Build opportunities for increased information and resource sharing
❖ DESIGN: Ensure service equity and efficiency through community-designed services
❖ EMPLOYMENT: Boost employment opportunities through existing and new service models
❖ INCLUSION: Identify and address other challenges to full community inclusion

WIN stakeholders meet regularly at the Fairfax County Government Center for presentations and working sessions. Each meeting has a new topic of discussion and breakout sessions to delve deeper into the obstacles for inclusivity and to find effective solutions. The next WIN meeting is on July 9 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. and will be in the Fairfax County Government Center. Anyone interested in learning more about day and employment services for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities is welcome to attend.

It is up to all of us in the end to make the world a more accessible place for those of us with different abilities. I hope you will join me in supporting this important cause and the hardworking stakeholders seeking to make our county a better place for all.

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

❖

Condensed from a recent speech by Supervisor John C. Cook, Braddock District Supervisor.

The current services are helpful, but there remains a great deal of work if we want a truly inclusive society.
Finding Balance, in Life and Arts

Local artist Terry Angstrom went from teaching math to painting Italian architecture.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

Becoming an artist doesn’t mean you shed all of your former skills, grab a brush and open a studio. Many times, it takes a variety of things to hone the talent. That’s what Terry Angstrom has experienced.

In her past life, Angstrom was a math teacher at several Fairfax County schools, and even though she closed the books on that career, she finds herself using math in her paintings, making flowers balanced, and in patterns. She creates things “very meticulously,” she said. “In my own way, I have achieved my own balance,” she said. She taught math at Edison, Lee and Mount Vernon High Schools.

She also sees it happen with others, even visitors to the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton where she has a studio and sees visitors frequently. “I encourage them to be balanced,” she said.

When her son was growing up, his math and artistic talents came out as he was deciding on a career, and Angstrom looked for ways to incorporate art in whatever he chose. Now he’s a successful architectural engineer.

“He needed a job that he could make a living,” she said, “you can combine.”

When parents with children come to the Workhouse, Angstrom brings up various topics to find their interests. “At an early age, 

See Artist. Page 6
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Summer Water Safety

Supervision and learning to swim are top ways to prevent drowning.

By Marilyn Campbell

Blazing heat and sky rocketing temperatures often mean cooling off with a dip in the pool. As the summer is in full swing, safety officials are reminding the public of drowning risks and prevention methods.

“Learning to swim at any early age is all about being safe in and around the water,” said Gina Bewersdorf, owner of Goldfish Swim School in Reston, Falls Church and Alexandria. “Undeniably we all will have an opportunity to visit a pool, lake or ocean at some point, and our goal is to equip our swimmers with water safety skills early on.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cites a lack of swimming ability, failure to wear life jackets, alcohol use and a lack of close supervision as some of the top factors that affect drowning risk. According to the CDC, from 2005 to 2014 there was an average of 3,536 unintentional drownings. One in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger.

“A person can drown in a matter of seconds,” said Aaron Schultz, a lifeguard in Arlington. “When I’m at the pool, I notice that parents are often texting while trying to watch their children, but even if children look like they’re playing they could easily go under and be in danger a less than a minute. This is especially important to remember at the beach.”

Taking part in formal swimming lessons reduces the risk of drowning among children between one and four years old, but many people lack basic swimming skills, according to the CDC. “Beginning formalized lessons as early as 4 months old has shown benefit in children developing a love for water and foundation upon which to build water safety skills,” said Bewersdorf.

American Red Cross swimming safety tips such as always swimming in a designated area attended by lifeguards, avoiding swimming alone, wearing life jackets, securing a pool with barriers and making sure everyone in your family is a strong swimmer, are among those that Mary Anderson of the Montgomery County Office of Health and Human Services says the county is reinforcing.

“There’s a website that we put together called ‘Summer of Safety’, and it’s got everything from A to Z with summer safety and swimming pool safety.” Other suggestions include enrolling in courses to learn CPR, having appropriate equipment such as a first aid kit and cell phone to make emergency calls.

“If someone is around water and discovers that their child is missing, it’s a good idea to check the water first because even seconds can make a big difference in stopping a drowning,” said Schultz.

— Gina Bewersdorf, Goldfish Swim School

Photo by Marilyn Campbell

A lack of swimming skills is one of the top factors increasing the risk of drowning.

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CAMP
Youth Arts Summer Camps. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9158 Workhouse Road, Lorton. Some classes are available for ages 3-17. Themes include Doodle Tot (ages 3-5), Visual Arts Explorers (ages 6-10), Fine Arts Explorers (ages 11-13), Fine Arts Summer Intensive for Young Adults (ages 14-17). Short Film, and Game Design. All Workhouse and Theatre Camps include Let’s Play Guitar Camp, Vocal Arts Camp, Performing Arts Summer Camp Challenge, and Experimental Theatre Project Camp. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

Art Camp at the Conservatory. Through July 8 for ages 8 years old, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Three-week sessions take place Monday-Friday, July 12-23. Summer Camp is held through Burke Centre Conservatory, 11010 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Second location is Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Call instructor at 703-250-4900 or visit www.caartlessons.com. Camps include:

- Fine Arts & Crafts Camp (8 and older) – $142 plus $25 supply fee.
- Drawing Camp (8 and older) – $142 plus $25 supply fee.
- Drawing Plus Color & Craft Fun Camp (5-8 years) – $120 plus $20 supply fee.

Summer Bible Camp. Monday, July 19-23, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Harvest Presbyterian Church, 7800 Rolling Road, Springfield. Half day to week sessions for kids in grades one through 6th graders through 6th grade. See registration at HarvestPrespera.org or call 703-455-7900.

ONGOING
Art Exhibit: Candy: the Candy for the Soul. Through July 8, gallery hours at Workhouse Arts Center’s Warrior Way Gallery, 1st Floor, 9158 Workhouse Road, Lorton. See more at www.workhousearts.org.

Art Exhibit: Sonny’s Fingerprint L. Through July 8, gallery hours at Workhouse Arts Center, Building 6 Gallery and studio 6051, 9601 Workhouse Road, Lorton. Using only natural dyes, each art quilt, silk scarf and framed work is an alchemy of color and texture as unique as a human fingerprint. Visit www.MarieaRumeng.com.

Fiber National. Through July 29, gallery hours at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9158 Workhouse Road, Lorton. Fiber National is a juried exhibition showcasing the best in contemporary fiber art from around the country. The 2nd biennial of the exhibition highlights a high level work using both traditional and non-traditional techniques.

THURSDAY/JULY 5
Studio Ghibli: Porco Rosso. 11 a.m. (English dub). At Fairfax Film Center – Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. The Angelika Mosaic will feature a special screening celebration of Studio Ghibli welcomed for its originality, stunning animation, and ambitious storytelling. All tickets are regular admission. Visit www.AngelikaFilmCenter.com.

Evenings on the Ellipse with Junkfood Truck. 7 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Enjoy a variety of food and desserts such as churra, yakisoba, huli huli, daifuku. There will be also child-friendly events, a challenge course, and vendors selling authentic Japanese items. End the evening by lighting a candle in the Japanese garden to remember a loved one who has passed away. Free admission. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-239-0500.

Mount Vernon Nights. 7 p.m. at Workhouse Arts Center, 9158 Workhouse Road, Lorton. This series of free, public concerts features a variety of musical performances reflecting Fairfax County’s diversity, culture and community spirit. Bring a picnic dinner and a blanket and enjoy one of Fairfax County’s special summer traditions. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/parks/performances/mt-vernon-nights.

SUNDAY/JULY 8
Hands On Activities, 1-4 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Activities may include railroad inspired crafts, demonstrations of railroad artifacts with visitor participation as well as possible history challenges for the whole family. All craft supplies included with admission fees. Ages 16 and older; $4; 5-12, $2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfaxstation.org, www.facebook.com/FXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

MONDAY-JULY 9
The Wizard of Oz*. Performing Arts Camp, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Truro Anglican Church, 1025 Main St., Fairfax. City of Fairfax Theater Company offers a four-week camp that will present a The Wizard of Oz - Young Performers Edition at the conclusion of a four-week summer camp for kids 7-11. Tuition: $800. Aftercare available. Visit www.fairfaxtheatre.org.

SUMMER CAMP: Song & Dance Challenge, 3 p.m. at Lassiter Middle School, 3801 Jamaica Garden Drive, Fairfax. City of Fairfax Theater Company offers its Traditional Summer Drama Camp with week long sessions in July and August. The Summer Drama Camp teaches children to create a staged production at the end of each session; $170 per camper for any one-week session, $650 per camper for all four sessions. Visit fairfaxcitytheatre.org for weekly themes and registration.

SUN Beginner’s Series. 7:30 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, and a guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest program for the love of good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 733-273-3638.

Fridays Under the Moon: ET – the Extra Terrrestrial. 8 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Enjoy a night under the stars in Van Dyck Park with family and friends for all ages to enjoy. Free admission, bring chairs and blankets.

SATURDAY/JULY 14
Japanese Ozone Festival, 3-9 p.m. at Keziki Togo Temple, 4500 Lakeshore Lane, Fairfax. Celebrate with Japanese drumming, a hardwood, and traditional Japanese dancing all while enjoying authentic Japanese food and desserts such as churira, yakisoba, bali bull, daifuki. There will also be children’s games, a challenge course, and vendors selling authentic Japanese items. End the evening by lighting a candle in the Japanese garden to remember a loved one who has passed away. Free admission. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-239-0500.

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Stories of the Stars. 8:30-9:30 p.m. at Burke Lake Park, 1413 North St., Fairfax. Enjoy the wonders of the universe and learn about the constellations. An interactive evening of visual aids, the pangaion, and the pergola, participants age 3-adult. $6 per person; children must be with a registered adult. Call 703-323-6600 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/parks/barke-lake.

SUNDAY/JULY 15
Virginia’s Indian Heritage, 2-4 p.m. at Police Regional Library, 6540 Syderstrandterk Road. Dr. Karenne Wood of the Virginia Indian Program (Virginia Foundation for the Humanities) will present her research on the history and culture of Virginia’s Native American peoples and communities. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

Hoaray for Hollywood. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Enjoy an evening of popular movie themes presented by Angelika Film Center’s Jazz Band, Virginia Symphony Orchestra. During the evening, there will be a silent auction to benefit the direction of Christopher Johnston, Adults, $15; students w/ID $10; NOVA students w/ID free; children 12 and under, free. Free parking. Call 703-560-6700 or visit www.eventful.com and search “Hoaray for Hollywood.”

TUESDAY/JULY 10
Farm to Market Fair. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Old Town Square, 10415 North St., Fairfax. The market will be producers-only – meaning that all vendors at the market may only sell what they raise on their farms or make from scratch using local ingredients as much as possible. May-September, weather permitting. Call 703-385-7833.

Erie’s Epic Stories. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Old Town Square, 10415 North St., Fairfax. A variety of children’s activities and entertainment in Old Town Square every Tuesday. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/parks-recreation/old-town-square.

WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY/JULY 11-12
Studio Ghibli: Kiki’s Delivery Service. Wednesday, 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Thursday, 11 a.m. (English dubbed). At Angelika Film Center – Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. The Angelika Mosaic will feature animated films from the celebrated Studio Ghibli praised for their originality, stunning animation, and ambitious storytelling. All tickets are regular admission. Visit www.AngelikaFilmCenter.com.

THURSDAY/JULY 12
Evenings on the Ellipse with The Heat Hot! 5:30-7 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The Evenings on the Ellipse summer concert series is a family friendly event featuring unique range of musical genres. Paradise Springs Winery and The Winery at Bull Run will be providing complimentary tastings, glasses of wine and full bottles available for purchase. A Farmers Market (2:30-6:30 p.m.) will also be on site selling fresh fruit and savory snacks. Rain or shine. Free. Visit fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances.

“Bird’s Paradise,” watercolor, by Yelena Svecharnik

Yelena Svecharnik is a featured artist in the on-going show “My Way - A Perspective,” at the Old Town Hall gallery at 3999 University Dr, 2nd Floor, Fairfax, through August, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Mon.-Thurs.

“My Way - A Retrospective” by Yelena Svecharnik
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Obon Festival Returns July 14

The Fairfax Station Ekoji Buddhist Temple prepares to host its annual festival for everyone in the community

By Jenneth Dyck
The Connection

The Ekoji Buddhist Temple off the Fairfax County Parkway in Fairfax Station will be hosting the only Obon festival in the Washington D.C. area July 14. Admission is free, and the temple invites all visitors, no matter their religion or culture, to celebrate the annual event.

“It’s a time to show your gratitude and respect to all those people who’ve passed away before us, because they made the world; we are the next generation,” said Reverend Nariaki Rajan Hayashi, who has been Ekoji’s minister for the past three years.

Because of the growing number of visitors, with last year’s attendance at 1,700, the Ekoji Temple plans to extend its hours for the festival. The temple and grounds will be open starting at 3 p.m. and will continue until 9 p.m.

“[The festival] just keeps growing and growing... there’s people from D.C. who come, there’s people from all over who come for the festival,” said Vickey Churchman, the volunteer coordinator for the event.

“There isn’t anybody else who does an Obon... New Jersey’s the next place that does an Obon festival.”

The theme of this year’s festival is “Taste of Obon,” highlighting the various cuisines of Japan, such as Yakisoba and Chirashi sushi, as well as an international dessert table that showcases many cultures’ favorite desserts.

Guests can also shop amongst the vendors lined up in the temple parking lot selling different Japanese items. On the grass, children can compete in ring toss, coin drop, and yo-yo fishing games, while teenagers can play a golf-like challenge based off the Buddhists’ noble eightfold path, a set of guidelines the Buddha taught should be followed to live a fulfilled life.

Throughout the afternoon and evening, visitors can enjoy the Ekoji-based taiko ensemble, Nen Daiko. These Japanese drummers have performed throughout the Washington D.C. area since 1994, including for the spring Cherry Blossom Festival. While made up of different faiths and lifestyles, each member of the Nen Daiko have a common respect and passion for the Japanese taiko, a musical art that combines lively traditional drumming with choreography.

“When we attend cultural events in our community, we are stepping through a doorway. For a few hours, we can imagine new ways of being,” said Carla Brown in an essay to Ekoji after she attended her first Obon and eventually joined the Nen Daiko ensemble.

The festival will also feature musical talent from a youth taiko group, a live Hawaiian performance from the Aloha Boys, and a simple Japanese dance called Bon Odori, in which festival goers are invited to participate.

At the end of the festival, guests are welcomed to purchase small candles to light and place throughout the temple’s Japanese garden to show gratitude toward friends and family who have passed away.

“I find it was just a wonderful thing to do just a little bit more to remember the people that I’ve cared about that have passed away,” said Churchman.

For more info about the festival, visit ekojoobonfestival.weebly.com, email ekoji.info@gmail.com or call 703-239-0500.

Photos Contributed
Mental Health Services

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board’s Merrifield Center offers a new stand-alone program kind of its own as part of a pilot project, the new feature aims to improve the customer service experience and decrease wait times for individuals who are seeking mental (behavioral) health services. To check in individuals receive five simple questions, then the CSB’s Patient Tracking software alerts staff. Based on the assessment’s score, availability, as well as the needs of the client, individuals are triaged and seen by the next available provider. For more information on available services, call the CSB at 703-383-8500 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). In an emergency 24/7, call CSB Emergency Services at 703-377-5679 or the Fairfax Detox Center at 703-502-7000 (TTY 703-322-9080).

Volunteers Needed

Haven of Northern Virginia is committed to offering, support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. Volunteers provide individual and group support to those suffering from a loss. Volunteers must participate in 30 hours of training. To volunteer, fill out the full volunteer application and be offered in October 2018. To volunteer, call Haven at 703-941-7000.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to first-grade students during the school year. To learn more contact VP Membership Mary Gronlund at gronlund517@verizon.net.

Tuesday, July 10

Story Time: Focus and Self-Control. 10-11 a.m. at The Parent Resource Center Library, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 105, Dunn Loring. This Story Time will highlight books and activities to support focus and self-control in young children. Focus and self-control is an evidence-based executive functioning skill that involves paying attention, following the rules, thinking flexibly, and exercising self-control. Registration is limited and required for children ages 4-6 and their parents. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more.

Thursday, July 12

Story Time: Perspective Taking. 10-11 a.m. at The Parent Resource Center Library, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 105, Dunn Loring. This Story Time will highlight books and activities to support perspective taking in young children. Perspective taking is an evidence-based executive functioning skill that forms the basis for children’s understanding of their parents’, teacher’s, and friends’ intentions. Registration is limited and required for children ages 4-6 and their parents. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more.

Sunday, July 15

Public Input Deadline. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) is conducting a study to better understand how people get around the Franconia-Springfield area of Fairfax County on the Fairfax Connector transit network. Complete a survey to help FCDOT better understand transportation-related needs and issues. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/franconia-springfield-optimization to complete the survey.

Tuesday, July 17

Story Time: Making Connections. 10-11 a.m. at The Parent Resource Center Library, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 105, Dunn Loring. Making Connections is at the heart of learning. This Story Time will highlight books and activities to support this evidence-based executive functioning skill in young children. Registration is limited and required for children ages 4-6 and their parents. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more.

Well Blow Me Down

By KENNETH R. LOURIE

Ah, the whine of chain saws finally cutting their way through the nearly two dozen trees in my front half acre knocked down during the March 2 windstorm. Given wood this cut down and clean up will cost, it is not an expense to be paid out of petty cash. In fact, we needed a little help.

And considering the time allowed by Rigo (the man for the job), to come back and do the work. A time approximating three months since we shook on the deal, it’s enabled us to arrange for payment on a mutually beneficial schedule. Well, the dude works when he can and not the neighborhood (the adjacent property in fact).

Typically in the past, when I’ve received knock on my door by other tradesmen saying they’re doing similar work in the neighborhood to what I’ve needed—or appeared to need—yard clean up, tree trimming, fence repair/repaving, etc., offering me discounts because they’re “working on the street.” I’ve always resisted, for I’ve never had the money (cash) or the time to pay them.

Well, I don’t exactly have the money now, but neither do I have the time to just knock on my door. I had been given his name and number months ago by an extremely reliable former neighbor so I had the phone number and the time slot. When I spoke to Rigo and told him who I was, he said he had been expecting the call, as my neighbor apparently assured him I would.

And so, almost four months since the trees “thudded” to the ground, Rigo and his men had hit the ground. As Dennis Eckerd, a Major League Baseball Hall of Fame inductee and current member of the MLB/NBC/Roto Red Sox television broadcast so often says: “It’s a beautiful thing.”

Well, it makes this “treatment” a “beautiful thing” is not just the sense of accomplishment for work which most definitely needed to be started— and finished, but specifically in our yard yours truly is incapable of doing.

As the homeowner of a registered historic property built in 1742 (“Belly Acres”) I call it sitting on two acres, constantly in need of something or other both inside and out, to say that I am—and have been—overwhelmed since we took ownership in May of 1992, is an understatement.

The overstatement would be I am so in over my head that to invoke a childlike depression that still doesn’t make any sense: “I need to look up to seek down.”

A good-size chain saws, even starting at 8:30 a.m., as I had been forewarned two days prior would occur, is music to my ears. Any given, I can make — or rather can manage on my behalf — in stemming the tide of my maintenance marauder is huge. It’s not exactly a sense of pride, it’s more a sense of passing ownership 101, the entry level course I’ve mostly failed going on 26 years.

Needing the kind of help I do — in terms of time, money, tools, skillset and inclination — is an underlining burden of incompetence which I readily accept. Unfortunately, time does not lessen the responsibility. Nevertheless, I’m lucky to own such a unique and historic property. If some maintenance suffers, it’s not for lack of concern, it’s for lack of ability and knowledge. Moreover, I can’t summon up the necessary fortitude. Thrown in stage IV, small-cell lung cancer diagnosis and the prospects in the future for home-owning improvements are not great.

It’s been my nine-years experience that a cancer diagnosis (especially a “terminal” one) tends to realize your priorities and start squeezing your brain, so to speak. And even though I’m very happy seeing and hearing the trees being tended to, I’m more concerned about the forest.

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