

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

The Way of the Sword Demonstrated

NEWS, PAGE 7

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

HOMELIFESTYLE

PAGE 8

Community Presses Police Chief And Chairman for Answers

NEWS, PAGE 3

'These Investments Will Pay Off in the Future'

NEWS, PAGE 9

Lorton's Community Market took a choreographed step into the times of ancient Japanese martial arts last weekend, recognizing May's Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Christopher Durr faces off in one-on-one combat with Angel Lebron (out of picture) observed by instructors Josh Bodgley and David Drawdy.

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Elevating the Bathroom

Ideas for budget and luxury bathrooms

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Sometimes regarded as a strictly functional space, bathrooms might bring to mind brushing and flossing rather than style and comfort. Whether you're working on a tight budget or creating the bathroom of your dreams, two local designers offer inspiration.

"Even if you're only able to spend a limited amount of money, creativity is a necessity," said Marcie Taylor of Marcie Taylor Designs in Alexandria.

Taylor recalls helping a couple who'd grown tired of the outdated master bathroom in their Springfield home, but couldn't afford a total overhaul.

"I told them that they needed to invest in one statement piece and then add some less expensive accessories," she said. "We salvaged a crystal chandelier and hung it over the bathtub to create a focal point. We replaced the grout

around the tub and sink which looked dingy against the existing white tile. We then added a matte black faucet and found a shower head in the same color."

When designers at InSite Builders & Remodeling transformed a cramped and outdated Jack and Jill bathroom in Bethesda into a master bath suite befitting a luxury spa, they had to expand the footprint of the bathroom by using square footage from an adjacent bedroom. The additional space was used to add a double sink, a new closet and a large zero-entry glass shower.

PHOTOS BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG



White countertop, dark wood cabinets, floating vanity, black fixtures create a spa-like atmosphere in this bathroom by InSite Builders & Remodeling.



The hinged glass shower door are consistent with the contemporary design of this bathroom by InSite Builders & Remodeling.



Full-size porcelain slabs make the shower a major focal point in this bathroom by InSite Builders & Remodeling.

Helping to create a sense of tranquility, the design team used materials such as a white countertop, dark wood cabinets, a floating vanity, black fixtures, and a hinged glass shower door. "The shower is a major focal point," said Stephen Gordon, InSite Builders & Remodeling. "It [has] full-size porcelain slabs which eliminate grout lines."

"Even if you're just doing a spruce-up, a bathroom project can seem like a major undertaking," said Taylor. "But I can't recall anyone who didn't think it was worth the effort."



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Pit stops like this one from years' past will not be as social this year.

Biking and Trail Use Continues to Grow

Pit Stop gathering is out, but Bike to Work Day is Still on for May 21.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION



It's been 20 years since Bike to Work Day began, and it grows each year showing that there is another side to commuting that uses no gas, has health benefits and is fun, even if it's only one day a year for many.

As with everything else in the covid year of 2021, it's going to be a little different this year but a good thing nonetheless. There will be tee shirts with the skyline logo, like years past, but at the pit stops, it will be a quick stop for the tee shirt, and onto points beyond - no convoys, no chit chat at the pit stop or a local mechanic checking the brakes as seen in previous years. Since many are working from home still, it will be grab the tee shirt and head back to the home office. The Bike to Work organizers are fine with that, it says on the website.

One change is the "pit stop," name, it's now called "tee shirt pickup point." At the stops, there will be a strict covid policy, which includes a mask requirement, no hanging out and socializing, any food is required to be pre-packaged and not consumed on the premises, and no live raffles. "The emphasis will be on bicycling for exercise and mental well-being," the Bike to Work website said. Cyclists will travel on a one-way path to pick up the tee shirt and each rider will be socially distanced.

Hitting the Trail

According to Colin Browne, Communications Director at the

Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Bike to Work Day is run by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Commuter Connections program. WABA is part of the steering committee and manages the registration process. Although it was cancelled last year to comply with CDC recommendations about gathering, participation has grown every year. In 2018, about 17,000 people signed up for the event and in 2019, just under 20,000 people signed up. This year is impacted by the pandemic with offices closed and many working from home, although people working from home can still ride up and get a tee shirt. "We're expecting 10,000 or so riders this year, as many people are still working from home, and pit stop activities have been scaled back," said Browne.

Trail Use and the Pandemic

The Capital Trails Coalition looked into trail use, and found that across the nation, trails are seeing more users than ever before. According to data provided by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, nearly every week in 2020 saw an increase in trail users compared to numbers of the same week in 2019. Several weeks in March and April even saw as many as 1.5 - 2 times the number of trail users as the year before. In Arlington at the W&OD Bon Air Park counter, there was a 37 percent increase in bike use, and a 23 percent increase in people running and walking.

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