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FEBRUARY 2022

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2022

## BORN WITH HEART DEFECTS, THRIVING AGAINST ALL ODDS



TRISTAN LOREI / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Mikhael Perez Cevilla's aunt, Valerine Valdez (middle), shows the child a video on her phone and strokes Rosa Cevilla Bonilla's head as he gets an echocardiogram at the Children's Heart Institute in Fredericksburg on Friday.

## Ukraine resists as Russia advances

DEFIANT ZELENSKY REMAINS IN KYIV; U.S. PLEDGES \$350M MORE IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE

BY YURAS KARMANAU, JIM HEINTZ, VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV AND JAMES LAPORTA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine—Ukrainian forces put up fierce resistance to slow the advance of the larger and more powerful Russian military closing in on the capital, as the U.S. and EU rushed ammunition and weapons to Kyiv and announced powerful new financial sanctions aimed at further isolating Moscow.

Terrified men, women and children sought safety inside and underground, and the government maintained a 39-hour curfew to keep people off the streets. More than 150,000 Ukrainians fled for Poland, Moldova and other neighboring countries, and the United Nations warned the number could grow to 4 million if fighting escalates.

Huge explosions lit up the pre-dawn sky south of Kyiv early Sunday. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office said one of the blasts was near the Zhuliany airport, and the mayor of Vasylkiv, about 25 miles south of the capital, said an oil depot there was hit.

"We will fight for as long as needed to liberate our country," Zelenskyy vowed.

SEE UKRAINE, A6

## Spotsy baby is family's 'little miracle boy'

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Who could look at the photo and not feel for the baby with all the tubes, wires and sensors hooked up to his body?

There's a thick white bandage down the middle of his chest and an oxygen tube in his nose, held in place by adhesive gauze. The tape is cut in the shape of hearts—one on each cheek—the only cheerful aspect of the picture.

Clearly, Mikhael Perez Cevilla has been through something serious.



But another image, taken less than a week later, shows Mikhael looking like any happy and healthy infant—except for the slice down his chest where he had open-heart surgery. It's still held together by surgical glue.

"He's been like that since he was born," his aunt, Valerine Valdez, said about his pleasant nature. "He's never been fussy."

"The only time he cries is when he's hungry or has a [dirty] diaper, that's it," said

his mother, Rosa Cevilla Bonilla.

"He's been a true blessing," Valdez said. "We say it all the time, he's our little miracle boy."

She and Cevilla Bonilla are the primary caretakers of Mikhael, born 13 months ago with not one, but two, congenital heart defects. Surgery corrected the problems, allowing Mikhael to thrive and reach all his developmental milestones as any baby

SEE HEART, A14



## Central Park vaccination clinic closing this week

SITE IN FREDERICKSBURG'S CENTRAL PARK WILL GIVE ITS FINAL SHOTS ON SATURDAY

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

After administering more than 36,000 free COVID-19 vaccines, the Community Vaccination Center in Central Park will shut down Saturday.

A federal grant that allowed the Virginia Department of Health to set up nine such centers across the state ends March 31 and all locations will close by then, according to the state.

But the move also comes as the demand for vaccines has decreased nationwide. The number of Americans getting a first shot is averaging about 90,000 per day, the lowest since vaccines became available in December 2020, according to the Associated Press.

"As the vaccines have become widely available at doctor's offices and pharmacies, demand has decreased," according to a news release from the Rappahannock Area Health District. "The VDH

SEE VACCINES, A6

## Virginia legislature approves Culpeper battlefields state park

OFFICIALS EXCITED TO FILL 'DOUGHNUT HOLE' IN SYSTEM

BY CLINT SCHEMMER  
CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

The Virginia House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee approved budgets that authorize creation of the Culpeper Battlefields State Park. The spending plans also would provide \$3 million to acquire



BUDDY SECOR

The sun rises over Culpeper County's Cedar Mountain battlefield.

more land for the park. Last week, the House and Senate voted to ap-

prove their versions of the state budget. Those plans will go to a confer-

ence committee, where legislators will iron out their differing sums and

provisions. Then the budget goes to the governor for his changes and signature.

The state park would include parts of two Civil War battlefields, at Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain, and a Union army encampment on Hansbrough's Ridge near Stevensburg. It would encompass 1,700 publicly accessible acres preserved by the American Battlefield Trust, enhanced with

SEE BATTLEFIELDS, A14

