

Senior Living

APRIL 2016



Chantilly
CONNECTION
Fair Oaks ❖ Fair Lakes

Senior Living

Taking the Long View

BY JOHN BYRD
THE CONNECTION

Budgeted, incremental improvements are the key to effective planning, aging in place.

When they decided not to move-on after retirement, seniors Mike and Sandy Nusbaum slowly began enlarging their long-term residence with several goals in mind.

Ten years and four improvements later, the couple's Alexandria home is ideal for extended visits with children and grandchildren—and all sorts of everyday pleasures.

Home improvements can come in many sizes: life-changing or simply necessary; comprehensive, or something to please the grandkids.

The real problem is practical: how to conveniently and affordably implement a list of desired improvements—especially when experience tells you that securing a satisfactory outcome for even a basic household repair can be challenging.

In this context, it's heartening to talk with Mike and Sandy Nusbaum, retired empty-nesters who have executed mid- to large-scale renovations to their thirty-year-old south Alexandria residence in phases, about once every two years and for more than a decade.



Mike and Sandy Nusbaum have enlarged their home four times in the past ten years. Each phase has improved the home's overall functionality, which has transformed it into a preferred gathering place for children, grandchildren and extended family.

Plainly, the Nusbaums like their house, a circa-1980s Colonial-style home where they raised three children. While somewhat space-constrained at its original 2,100

square feet, the structure's location adjacent to woodland and minutes from historic Old Town made it hard to beat.

As retirement neared, however, the couple began cautiously reassessing their home's basic assets, even briefly considering a move to a bigger place.

"You have to ask yourself whether the next house will actually improve your quality of life," Sandy Nusbaum says, recounting her thoughts of twelve years back. "When we looked at the alternatives ... we realized there were only a few things about our house that we didn't like."

AND SO IT BEGAN. Plans for incremental changes. Kitchen and screened porch. New family room and deck. Lower level. Enlarged Garage ... Facilitated by a new relationship, with 30-year veteran remodeler David Foster, principal of Foster Remodeling Solutions.

"We met some homeowners at a local home show who raved about David," Sandy recalls. "David has a low-key style, and a strong service orientation that helps us make informed decisions."

Looking back, while the remodeler's fresh design ideas were critical, the couple also appreciated his clearly-stated, always-reliable cost projections.

"WE WERE ON THE CUSP of retirement and didn't want debt," Mike Nusbaum says. "Our first thought was to make targeted improvements to the kitchen while keeping our options open for the larger family entertainment suite we might undertake as we assessed the budget issue."

Foster was not only supportive of such thinking, but, as the Nusbaums learned, considers "phased remodeling" an integral part of his company's service.

"I grew up in Fairfax County and have learned my business by helping

homeowners find a process that will work for them as they think ahead," he says.

Once work began, the Nusbaums particularly noted the foresight Foster brought to each improvement.

"Ten years ago, we wanted the rooms extending from the kitchen to function better as a place for entertainment. We had a small dining room that wasn't being used much. The back rooms were too dark," Sandy Nusbaum recalls.

In short order, the wall between the kitchen and dining room disappeared, replaced by a three-stool Silestone counter that has become the couple's primary kitchen gathering area. That counter surface was also positioned as a serving station for the new elevated 16-by-16-foot screened porch that is now a much-used fair-weather dining spot.

A new window over the kitchen sink adds natural light and a lovely view of the backyard. "When you walk from the kitchen to the screen porch, it feels like you're walking in the air through the trees," Sandy says. "This gave us a wonderful re-discovery of our own backyard."

From there, it wasn't long before the Nusbaums began planning an extension of the rear family room, an open-air grilling deck and a pathway that permits children, grandchildren and guests to circulate freely through a wide-ranging suite of rooms used for social gatherings.

"It was at this point that we started having holiday gatherings for up to thirty," Sandy says. "Such fun!"

WHICH LED TO THE THIRD PHASE: Transform the 800-square-foot lower level into an exercise room that doubles as a guest suite. Here a comfortable Murphy bed folds out of a discrete closet. There's a full bath, and built-in serving station with refrigerator and microwave. The Nusbaums refer to it as "the family suite." On holidays, it can be occupied for days at a stretch.

Then, just last year, Foster created a second bay for the garage by building a wing off the side elevation. The new construction is supplemented by a garden shed accessed from the yard. The contents, pruning tools, mower, freed up floor space in the garage, which now (for the first time) has room for something special: two cars.

"What we really appreciate about David Foster is there are no bad surprises, and frequently there are good ones," Mike Nusbaum said. "Last year, for instance, he repaired a window that was out of warranty and didn't charge us. That kind of service encourages you to think ahead."

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com or www.HomeFrontsNews.com) has been writing about home improvement for 30 years.

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Senior Living

Fairfax County's Living Well, Aging Well Summit, April 16

Living Well, Aging Well Summit hosted by Fairfax County and partners is scheduled for Saturday, April 16, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

This free event will feature a transportation and mobility expo, a technology fair, a volunteer fair, a CarFit program, health screenings, exhibits, seminars, presentations and more.

Physician, professor and geriatric medicine pioneer, Richard W. Lindsay will deliver the keynote presentation.

The summit "will offer multiple approaches to aging well and living well with a disability," said Summit Planning Chairwoman Melanie Rochon Bush, DPT, PT. She said the summit will provide abundant information on health and wellness, county services and volunteer opportunities.

Dr. Bush, director of Fairfax Rehab, Inc./Select Senior Options, is a member of the county's Long Term Care Coordinating Council, a group of local and private agencies that promote caring, inclusive and supportive communities. The council is the lead organizer of the event.

Parking is free and plentiful. Register at www.livingwellfairfax.org or call 703-324-7647. For ADA requests, call 703-324-5421.

Seminars include:

❖ Navigating the Medicaid Maze: Waivers, Eligibility and Documentation. Joan Irwin, Long-Term Care Self-Sufficiency Team, Department of Family Services. Learn about Medicaid's eligibility criteria, screening process, required documentation and how Medicaid funds home-based and nursing home care.

❖ Understanding Medicare Parts A, B, C and D. Bill Vaughan, counselor, Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program. Get the most out of Medicare.

❖ Healthy Habits for a Healthier You. Ana Nelson, vice president of Programs and Services, Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter. Find out how to optimize your physical and cognitive health as you age.

❖ Staying Active: Move, Learn, Create Margot Greenlee, director, BodyWise Dance. This dance class encourages increased mobility, social engagement and rhythmic accuracy.

❖ Balance, Balance and More Balance Woody McMahon, Founder, Sequoia Health and Fitness, Inc. This 1-hour interactive workshop tests your balance and offers simple ways for improvement.

❖ Fairfax County's Community Resources to Help You Live Well and Age Well. Sharon Lynn, director, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging; Bob MacMurdo and

Carlos Estrada, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. Learn about county services for older adults and for people with mental health, substance abuse disorders and intellectual disability.

❖ Social Media and Older Adults

Emily Rasowsky, Director of Marketing Strategy Social Driver. Learn about Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Skype, FaceTime and the top apps for older adults.

❖ Aging Well in the Community. Barbara Sullivan, executive director, Mount Vernon At Home; Michelle Scott, executive director, Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna; Matthew Barkley, director, Disability Services Planning and Development. Panelists will discuss transportation, social programs, accessibility and home safety, community engagement and the Fairfax 50+ Neighbor to Neighbor Initiative.

❖ Fun on the Horizon. Evan Braff, regional manager, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services; Jennifer Disano, executive director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU. Learn the benefits of participating in leisure activities that support mental and physical health.

❖ Connected Health: A Healthier You Through Technology. Telehealth, sometimes called Telemedicine, improves health by connecting the patient at one location with the provider at another site. Learn about telehealth in addressing diabetes and heart disease.

50+ Employment Expo

Dozens of job recruiters will be present at the 50+ Employment Expo on Monday April 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The day features seminars on changing careers, online job searching, continuing education and resume help. Recruiters include nonprofits, government agencies, healthcare, retail, technology and more.

The Expo takes place at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel at Tysons Corner, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. This site is accessible via Metro. Use the Silver Line's Spring Hill stop.

The Expo is sponsored by the Jewish Council for the Aging, Fairfax County and community partners. Free admission and parking. Registration is not necessary—just show up.

Senior Slow-Pitch Softball

Join Northern Virginia Senior Softball for fun, fitness, and friendship, (men age 50 and over, women age 40 and over). The average age of players is 66. Games are played Tuesday and Thursday mornings, April-July and September-October. Placement on one of 26 teams in three skill leagues is by ability assessment, not a tryout. Everyone present bats and 11 play defense. To get the ball rolling, go to www.nvss.org or call Dave at 703-524-5576.

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Photo by Ed Knepley

‘Shark Tank’ for Seniors

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Chantilly High School freshman Aru Rajpurohit remembers seeing her great-grandfather struggle to drink his morning tea and other beverages, his hands shaking from Parkinson’s disease.

“As a young child, it was heartbreaking to see him like this,” Rajpurohit said. “Often he was embarrassed after spilling in front of friends and family.”

Motivated by the memory of her great-grandfather, she’s always wanted to develop a solution for this problem of spilling caused by tremors. On Monday, March 28, Rajpurohit presented her invention called StabilityCup, a shock-absorbing beverage holder, at the first Assistive Technology “Shark Tank” Challenge for Fairfax County High School Students.

Six finalists from Chantilly High School, South Lakes High School and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology presented their innovative solutions for solving different problems that senior citizens face.

The challenge originated from the Fairfax County 50+ Community Action Plan Technology Committee, which has been working on an initiative called “Help People Stay in their Homes with Technology.”

Sharon Lynn, director of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, they wanted to encourage students to think about the possibilities for how technology can benefit people, “not just to make life easier in some way, but can benefit older adults, help them live at home for a longer period of time and benefit the community.”

The full 50+ plan includes 31 action items from a long-range trends and needs analysis to increasing employment and en-



Chantilly High School sophomores Megan Van Rafelghem and Christine Shan work on building their team’s “Ledge Wedge” for the Assistive Technology “Shark Tank” Challenge for Fairfax County High School Students.

High school students design and present tech products to improve older adults’ lives.



Chantilly High School freshman Aru Rajpurohit (left) displays her StabilityCup design with (right) Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield).

trepreneurship opportunities for older adults.

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) chairs the 50+ full committee. He said “we’ve got a long way to go” implementing initiatives like prenotification of medical conditions for 9-1-1 calls and ensuring housing options for seniors. However other projects including older adults visiting elementary schools to read and interact with

students (“Grand Involve”), and a free, ride-scheduling service (“Northern Virginia Rides”) “are moving forward at light-speed.”

Herrity is excited about initiatives like Grand Involve and the Shark Tank Challenge that engage older and younger adults, that get the generations helping each other.

“It’s the communication piece,” he said, “and getting seniors to use technology as an avenue to expand their communication and knowledge they might be missing out on.”

Srijay Kasturi, a sophomore at South Lakes High School, repurposed an ultrasonic sensor he had been developing for use with camera tripods to fashion an aid for older adults with impaired vision.

“Many seniors would rather suffer from a lack of vision than use the ‘white cane’ that blind people use,” Katsuri said. “Then they get labeled as a blind person.”

“Stride” attaches to the user’s shoe and scans up to six feet ahead within a 45-degree cone. If something’s in the way, the unit sends a vibration to a wrap around the person’s ankle.

Kasturi tested the product at both the Herndon Senior Center and Nova Labs. Though he got a lot of positive feedback, he also saw a lot of room for improvement. One user with diabetic neuropathy wasn’t able to feel the vibrations, while another was unsure of whether to go left or right to avoid the obstacle in front.

Kasturi’s initiative to go out and test the design multiple times impressed Mike Waddell, managing partner and co-founder of Reston-based Integrity One

Partners, an information technology solutions firm for government clients that sponsored the challenge.

“This youngster, something touched his heart,” Waddell said, “and he decided was going to do something about it.”

Stride wasn’t the only product that had hurdles to develop. Waddell said he was surprised that almost all of the students had a story about how they tried to make something, it didn’t work, and they kept at it.

Waddell said he appreciated “their thoughtfulness and tenacity, to go after something like this, develop all the software and hardware solutions on their own.

“These are they types of kids we’re looking to employ,” he continued. “It’s why we do this, to show the younger generation how much we appreciate what they’re doing.”

Tanvi Nallanagula, a sophomore at Chantilly High School, was part of a team that designed and built the Ledge Wedge, an automatic light that brightens staircases to help decrease the amount of injuries that occur from falling. “Seniors are a really valuable part of our society,” Nallanagula said. “You sometimes forget that. As you talk, you can learn so many things. They still have a lot to teach us and it does no good to abandon or forget them.”

Winners of the Shark Tank Challenge will be announced at the Fairfax Area Living Well, Aging Well Summit, a free convention of vendors, resources and services for seniors scheduled for Saturday, April 16 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

For more information on the 50+ Community Action Plan, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/fairfax50plus.htm or call 703-324-5720.



Chantilly High School sophomores Tanvi Nallanagula (left) and Eric Kim (right) fabricate their “Ledge Wedge” design that would help better illuminate staircases for older adults.