

# Fairfax Station **CONNECTION** Clifton & Lorton

## Gifts for Valentine's Day

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Don't be afraid to give varieties other than roses in a Valentine's Day bouquet, advises Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living.

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## Join us for coffee & conversation. Fairfax Divorce Workshop.

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**Date:** Saturday, February 10, 2018  
Saturday, March 10, 2018  
Saturday, April 14, 2018

**Time:** 9:00-9:30 a.m. – Registration  
9:30-1:00 p.m. – Workshop

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**Place:** Fair Oaks Commerce Center  
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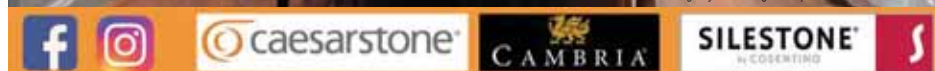
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## Buildings' Repurposing Debated

County considers vacant office space repurposing guidelines; public offers some "good ideas."

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

**A**cross the county, since the end of 2016, an estimated 18 million square feet of office space is deemed functionally vacant. A hearing at the Fairfax County Government Center on Jan. 29 sought to gather public opinion on proposed guidelines which could streamline the application process for repurposing such properties in Suburban Neighborhoods and Low Density Residential Areas.

At the hearing, members of the audience kept steering the conversation away from the specifics of the proposed Plan Amendment 2017-CW-5CP, and more towards the desire to see repurposing include community service and affordable housing potential.

In December, the Board of Supervisors authorized a similar Plan Amendment that addresses the repurposing application process for "activity centers" like Tysons and Merrifield, and in transit station and industrial areas. At that time, they directed staff to consider expanding the guidelines beyond these "activity centers." Outside of these larger, mixed-use and industrial areas, an inventory shows in excess of 607,000 square feet of vacant office space.

**OFFICIALS** see the guidelines as supporting the county's Economic Success Plan. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment on a site-by-site basis would not be automatically required as long as applicants still meet strict zoning regulations and established Performance Criteria. County planners feel



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

**Fred Selden, director of the county's Department of Planning and Zoning, answers questions and listens to comments from the public at a meeting to discuss Plan Amendment 2017-CW-5CP — guidelines designed to streamline the application process to repurpose existing vacant office buildings in suburban and low density residential areas of the county.**

that the shortened application process could encourage owners or developers to make modifications to these properties.

Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) Director Fred Selden fielded the majority of the questions and comments from the public at the hearing. Selden said that most of the buildings in question were the smaller townhouse style, or two-or-three story buildings that often house small individual businesses. "Doctors, dentists, insurance agents, Realtors, and the like," and the county believes that streamlining the repurpose process could be a real economic boon to a community, adding services and consumers.

The proposal was explained by Aaron Klibaner with the Planning Division who outlined the seven potential repurposing uses that the county identifies in the proposed Plan Amendment: Hotels, Light Industrial, Urban Agriculture, Institutional, Public Facilities, Residential Live/Work, and Retail or other commercial functions, and gave examples of the Performance Criteria that would be applied to applicants seeking to repurpose a property.

"Proposals would be reviewed for factors such as compatibility with the surrounding

existing or planned development," said Klibaner. Transportation needs and impacts would also be considered, as well as the site design, impacts on schools, parks, public facilities, historic preservation and environmental considerations. "Those requirements stay the same."

After the explanatory presentation and clarifying questions about the proposal, Klibaner and colleague Meghan D. Van Dam, chief, Policy and Plan Development Branch, asked the audience to divide into two groups to discuss the pros and cons of each usage type "to give adequate consideration to all the potential types and to be sure that all voices are heard," said Van Dam.

The audience had other plans.

There was general agreement that the question of what purpose would best suit a particular building could only be answered on a case-by-case basis, although the "Hotel" category seemed to raise the only immediate concern, with an opposition to the transient nature of the occupants being added to a smaller residential environment.

Instead of talking about categories, most in the audience wanted to talk about ways that vacant or under-utilized properties

could be redeveloped to meet urgent needs in the community.

Several attendees voiced concerns over the county's critical shortage of affordable housing: "Not just low-income housing, but units that our service providers like our teachers, police, and firefighters can afford." A woman from the Annandale area added that housing for the disabled and mentally challenged is also much needed, and that repurposing buildings could offer "live and work" opportunities for these members of the community.

Day Care and senior centers were also mentioned, as were county-supported or subsidized light industrial businesses that would bring employment opportunities along with economic gains for the county. Tax incentives and public-private partnerships were suggested as ways to encourage owners to repurpose with community needs in mind.

Selden acknowledged that, to date, the county hadn't really given much thought to "these good ideas." He reminded the audience that PA 2017-CW-5CP speaks only to privately owned structures. The county can approve or deny applications and can negotiate and put forth recommendations, but what use the property owner seeks to employ in its repurposing is "their business decision." He did add, however, that all of the comments and suggestions would be considered as the process of the proposed Plan Amendment moved forward.

**AT THE END** of the two-hour event, an impromptu "straw poll" vote by a show of hands indicated that a majority of those present supported the proposal, but the majority also agreed that the county should look to those structures for their own efforts to meet the needs of their citizens.

Another Planning Commission public hearing is scheduled for March 22. The Plan Amendment is currently on the agenda for the Board of Supervisors on May 1. The public can find more information on the county's website by searching "Repurposing Phase 2," or by contacting Aaron Klibaner at the DPZ at [aaron.klibaner@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:aaron.klibaner@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## Free Training In Basic Disaster Response Skills

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a training program administered through the auspices of the county fire and rescue department. The training prepares residents to help themselves, their families and neighbors in the event of a disaster in their community. Through CERT, residents can learn about disaster preparedness and receive training in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations, according to Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department.

At this time, the next available CERT Class is scheduled to begin on Monday, Feb. 26 at the The Oaks Community Center 5708 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. There is one session each week on Mon-

days, 7-10 p.m., that run until April 23. The class is 28 hours in length, plus the final practical exercise. The final exercise is on Saturday, April 28.

CERT training is free of charge and basic gear is provided. The minimum requirements to participate in CERT training at any level is that residents be 16 years of age or older, and either be a Fairfax County resident, or work in the county.

To learn more about CERT, go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/community-emergency-response-team-cert](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/community-emergency-response-team-cert)

To sign up, go to [volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/recruiter/index.php?requiredID=1380&class=OppDetails&oppGuid={861895E1-FFEB-46DF-9F6F-AF3E9B9AFBD0}&t=CERT-133-at-the-Burke-Centre-Conservancy](http://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/recruiter/index.php?requiredID=1380&class=OppDetails&oppGuid={861895E1-FFEB-46DF-9F6F-AF3E9B9AFBD0}&t=CERT-133-at-the-Burke-Centre-Conservancy).



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

**The next Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Class is scheduled to begin on Monday, Feb. 26.**

# OPINION

## Time for Criminal Justice Reform

BY JOHN COOK  
BRADDOCK DISTRICT SUPERVISOR (R)

**F**airfax County is joining the bipartisan, nationwide movement of Criminal Justice Reform. In 2015 the county introduced its Diversion First program, which provides treatment instead of incarceration for those with mental health challenges or developmental disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system for low level offenses. This initiative is just one step in a national movement to make the criminal justice system better serve the American people. Criminal justice reform, broadly speaking, is supported by as diverse range of public officials as U.S. Senators Rand Paul and Kamala Harris. It is well past time for Virginia to dive in as well.

Since ancient times society has recognized five purposes to the criminal justice system. One of these is “deterrence,” which is the effort to persuade an offender or potential offender not to commit a crime. Another purpose is retribution, which is society exacting punishment to make up for the pain or damage caused by the crime. Incapacitation means removing a criminal from the rest of society so he or she cannot commit more crimes. Rehabilitation refers to changing an offender so he or she does not commit more crimes. Restitution is the payment for damage caused by crime. All of these purposes must be present and well represented for a fair and effective



criminal justice system.

In the United States, our system has focused on long jail sentences for crimes. Jail serves deterrence, retribution, and incapacitation in cases of violent crime. However, it does not serve re-

habilitation or restitution particularly well. And, in the case of mentally ill offenders, jail fails to serve deterrence.

When someone with mental illness engages in crime, it is not due to evil intent, but his or her illness. Retribution does not seem fit for someone who is ill and committing crimes. Incapacitation is accomplished, but what we have done is make our local jails expensive substitutes for psychiatric hospitals.

The expense of jail is no small matter. A year in the Fairfax jail costs the taxpayers about \$82,000. A year of residential psychiatric treatment costs about \$24,000. One year of outpatient treatment costs about \$8,200. When someone with a mental illness, who is often of limited wealth, is arrested, this person often spends up to four months in jail awaiting trial for minor crimes (trespassing, disorderly conduct, petty theft) where the final sentence would generally be far less. Someone with regular income would post bond at \$500 cash and spend no more than two or three nights in

jail. Altogether the government and taxpayers are spending millions of dollars to hold people in jail before they are even convicted. Is this system really helping anyone?

We have learned in the juvenile justice system that incarceration actually creates criminals out of youth who may be only misdirected or who make stupid mistakes. Twenty years ago, our juvenile detention center held 1,509 youth. In 2017 that number fell to 533, which is a 60 percent decrease. In those two decades we learned a great deal about the benefits of jail alternatives for children. Instead of locking these children up, we are reforming, teaching, and mentoring youth and turning them away from crime. And this prevents future crimes from occurring. The same can be said for non-violent crimes by adults. Simply putting people in jail, where they lose their jobs and family contacts, does not necessarily create better citizens when they are released. In the case of mental illness, jail can actually make things worse. There is a better way.

Criminal Justice Reform is not about “going easy” on criminals. It’s about finding techniques that stop people from continuing to commit crimes. It’s about turning lives around. Oh, and it can save a boatload of money. Violent criminals, murderers, gang members and the like still need long jail sentences. But many other lesser offenders can be turned around into productive, working, self-sufficient citizens. It takes some work, but the payoff is a society with less crime, lower jail costs, and more productive citizens.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Rewarding Highest Achievers

To the Editor:

With all due respect, state Sen. Scott Surovell is looking at the wrong end of the horse (Editorial, “What’s Wrong with This Picture” – Connection, Jan. 24). The admissions to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology should be determined solely based on merit. Gender, ethnicity, race and economic status should be totally ignored.

TJ should provide the most rewarding programs possible to the highest achievers. Senator Surovell should focus on programs to increase the admission scores of African Americans and Latinos. Let’s not dilute the potentials of TJ’s classes by mandating quotas. The analogy would be to require that a certain percentage of varsity basketball players be white or Asian American, regardless of their abilities. That would be unwise.

**David Elmore**  
Great Falls

## Incomplete Picture

To the Editor:

Mary Kimm’s editorial (“What’s Wrong with This Picture?” - Connection, Jan. 24) about the demographics of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (commonly known as TJ) leaves out an important statistic, and that is that 70 percent of its students

are Asian, many of whom are first generation Americans. Many of the remaining 30 percent are also first-generation, and have family backgrounds from Iran, Arab and African countries, Russia, and Eastern Europe, or are biracial.

Is the heavily immigrant nature of TJ what’s “wrong with this picture”? State Sen. Scott Surovell’s SB787 bill’s method to increasing enrollment of black and Hispanic students is to impose quotas on middle schools and by economic background. This is a resentment and punishment approach to trying to achieve that goal, and should be rejected as such.

**Cindy Gersony**  
Great Falls

## How to ‘Fix’ Disparities

To the Editor:

I did not compete in the Olympics, gain admission to Mensa, or play professional sports. Why? Because I didn’t qualify for any of those. I understand we cannot qualify for everything. However, Mary Kimm’s article, “What’s Wrong with This Picture?” (Connection, Jan. 24) presents the idea that non-inclusion in a program “needs to be fixed.”

Ms. Kimm indicates that the Fairfax County School System (FCPS) should “fix” its admission policies to its one magnet high school, Thomas Jefferson (TJ), due to “demographic disparities” and we should commend Sen. Scott Surovell for pushing for that change.

The problem with Ms. Kimm’s and Sen. Surovell’s ideas is they miss the mark on real-

ity for many reasons, some of which are:

- ❖ Forcing demographic balance at TJ for political correctness is as much nonsense as requiring Julliard to admit everyone.

- ❖ Identifying that some minorities and low income students are not represented at TJ student population does not logically reflect a prejudice. It means they did not qualify, period.

- ❖ Ignoring the total admission picture does not represent many non-minority students who apply and also do not achieve admission.

- ❖ Disregarding the rigorous qualifications for TJ slants the presented view.

Do Ms. Kimm’s and Sen. Surovell’s ideas support qualified students being turned away just so non-qualified students be admitted, all for demographic balance? How would Ms. Kimm and Sen. Surovell feel if their jobs were replaced by non-qualified employees?

For improvements in demographic representation, Ms. Kimm and Sen. Surovell should explore reasons why some minorities are not represented.

They probably would find, as many teachers know, emphasis on academic excellence begins at home. Therefore, a better solution to change demographic depiction in school programs is to start at the elementary, through all levels, helping all families make education a priority. That would achieve the overall attitude of striving for excellence, which aids all students in the long run.

**Shannon Morgan**  
Burke

Fairfax Station,  
Lorton & Clifton  
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## ARTS



Sunset Silhouette by Kathy Strauss.

## Mobile Views

Opening Feb. 4 and on exhibit until March 4, the Workhouse Arts Center will showcase an exhibit by artist, Kathy Strauss. In her show, "Mobile Views" Strauss explores the 'fine art' of cellphone photography. She will be on hand to talk about her work and the process she used at the opening reception on Saturday, Feb. 10, 6-9 p.m. in W-9 in the Arches Gallery at the Workhouse Arts Center. The Workhouse Arts Center is located at 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday: 11a.m.-7p.m.; Sunday: 12-5 p.m. Learn more about Strauss at [www.imagewerks.net](http://www.imagewerks.net); the Arches Gallery at [archesgallery.weebly.com/](http://archesgallery.weebly.com/) and the Workhouse Arts Center at [www.workhousearts.org](http://www.workhousearts.org).



Going My Way? by Kathy Strauss.

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# Effort to Force Diversity at TJ Fails

Lawmakers reject bill that would have required governor's school to admit poor students.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

Don't fix what's not broken. That was the message last week from a bipartisan group of state senators, who rejected a bill from state Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) that would have required Thomas Jefferson School of Science and Technology to admit more students who live in poverty. Surovell's bill had only one yes vote on the Senate committee that rejected it, state Sen. Mamie Locke (D-2), an African-American senator from Hampton Roads. The vast majority of the senators on the Education and Health Committee, which includes several prominent members from Fairfax County, rejected the idea. "Quotas are a politically charged topic, and I don't think we should be going there," said state Sen. Janet Howell (D-32). "I don't think we down here have any business meddling with the decisions of the Fairfax County School Board on this issue."

Concerns over the admissions policy have been festering for years at the school, which currently admits about 2 percent of its students who live in poverty. Back in 2012, the NAACP worked with a group known as the Coalition of Silence to file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education about admissions policy at the school, which has 2 percent Hispanic students and 1.5 percent African-American students. The complaint charged that black and Latino students are being shut out of TJ because of systematic failure in the public schools to identify gifted students who live in poverty.

## SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

**Kylie T. LeBlanc**, of Clifton, was recently named to the dean's list for the fall 2017 semester at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. LeBlanc was also named Defensive Player of the Week for

The complaint didn't amount to much, Surovell said, which is why he said he filed the bill.

"The local school system hasn't dealt with it. And the School Board won't deal with it," said Surovell. "Given that my School Board seems completely incapable of dealing with the problem I figured it was

admissions policy is that it creates a pipeline from schools such as Rachel Carson Middle School while ignoring schools in the Route 1 corridor.

"People move right before seventh grade to get into Carson so that they can go to TJ," said former teacher Patricia Hynning. "There are

way into the TJ regardless of where they live.

"Kids that come up through Fairfax County public schools often get steered into advanced studies programs at certain middle schools," said state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34). "And so that's why certain middle schools are going to have 60, 70 or 80 kids. It doesn't mean necessarily that the other middle schools are failing. It's just that the best and brightest kids get steered into the best middle schools."

**SCHOOL OFFICIALS** rejected the idea that lawmakers in Richmond needed to take action to address problems in Fairfax County. They said that the new superintendent is making efforts to increase availability of accelerated math and science experiences to parts of the county that currently don't have them. The idea that the General Assembly might institute a rigid quota about how many students who live in poverty should be accepted — or how many students from specific schools should be accepted — is anathema to the merit-based admissions policy they say has worked well for years. "The reality is that TJ is

a highly competitive school, and only about 17 percent of all applicants get in," said Michael Molloy, director of government relations for Fairfax County Public Schools. "We welcome this discussion, but we don't think this is the right venue for it. This discussion should be held among our constituents, among our stakeholders."

Surovell says he remains frustrated that his constituents can't seem to get their students into the school. "I don't think the kids in my part of the county are any dumber than the kids in the rest of the county," said Surovell. "But apparently they just can't get into TJ."

University of Alabama student **Adrian Robertson**, of Fairfax Station, participated in the Cooperative Education Program during the summer of 2017 through Hoar Construction.

**Christopher McGowan**, a native of Fairfax Station, has enrolled at the University of Iowa for fall 2017 semester.

of Technology.

**Jayanth Devanathan**, of Clifton, earned the distinction of faculty honors for spring 2017 at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

**Meghan Pollard**, of Clifton, earned the distinction of faculty honors for spring 2017 at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

the MAC Conference for D1 Field Hockey. LeBlanc is a freshman.

**Xavia Alimah Batchelo**, of Lorton, was named to the dean's academic honor roll for the 2017 fall semester at Baylor University (Waco, Texas).

**Ryan Baier**, of Fairfax Station, earned the distinction of faculty honors for spring 2017 at the Georgia Institute

## VALENTINE'S DAY



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PICKET FENCE

**Accessories like Moon Melt Lotion Bars by Moon Valley Organics at The Picket Fence in Burke might appeal to those who want to create to a spa at home.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOME ON CAMERON

**A bouquet of felt flowers in assorted colors like these that were handmade in Nepal, is a gift with a charitable flair from Home on Cameron in Alexandria.**

# Gifts for Valentine's Day

Local tastemakers offer thoughtful giving suggestions.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL

One of the most heavily gifted holidays is Valentine's Day. In fact, much of the fun is the anticipation. In preparation for Cupid's Day, a few local style aficionados offer up ideas to sweeten the celebration.

For those deserving some pampering, create a spa experience at home with NW Rainforest Body Cream, advises Isabel Chiotti of Sonoran Rose in Potomac.

"Soaps and candles also make great gifts," she said.

"It can also be fun to think outside the box," said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke. "Surprise your Valentine with a gift certificate for a spa day or a shopping spree at her favorite store. Put together a basket of a few of her favorite things."

Among the things that Thomas suggests are Moon Melt Lotion Bars by Moon Valley Organics. Decadent and indulgent, these scented moisturizers combine herbs and beeswax to help fight dry skin, she says.

For the romantics, Susan Nelson and Todd Martz of Home on Cameron in Alexandria suggest a bouquet of felt flowers in assorted colors, handmade in Nepal. These eye-catching, fair trade buds offer bursts of color and benefit women artisans who are heads of households.

For the bedhead, Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living in Old Town Alexandria recommends silk charmeuse pillowcases by Branche. "These



PHOTO COURTESY OF SONORAN ROSE

**A basket of spa items like NW Rainforest Body Cream from Sonoran Rose in Potomac is an indulgent Valentine's Day gift.**



**Susan Nelson and Todd Martz of Home on Cameron suggest all natural, hand blown glass candles.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOME ON CAMERON

wonderful pillowcases help preserve one's hairdo and help to keep away wrinkles," she said.

For the stylish, a fur neck warmer is a cozy suggestion that Mertins offers. And for the traditionalists, "Flowers are always welcome and, of course, the color red being very popular as it conveys deep emotion," she said. "Don't be afraid to give varieties other than roses."

For the nostalgic, Kevin Sweitzer of Thos. Moser, Handmade American Furniture, believes that an heirloom quality beacon box to hold keepsakes would be ideal. "[It's] meant to be passed down from generation to generation," he said. "A really nice and memorable Valentine's gift."

For the entertainers, Nelson and Martz suggest all natural, hand blown glass candles, while Mertins says bar accessories work as gifts for mixologists.

For those with a sweet tooth, Chiotti recommends hot cocoa by the Cocoa Company, brown sugar toffee by Gearharts Fine Chocolates or caramels by Big Picture Farm.

For almost everyone, Suzie Clayton of Dalton Brody suggests picture frames. "From wood to Lucite to silver, there's something for everyone," she said. "It's more about finding the right thing for the right person."

"Some of the most meaningful gifts are those which are handmade including cards and a home-cooked romantic dinner," added Mertins. "Don't forget the bubbly and always lots and lots of chocolate."

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# CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

**“Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat.”** Through Feb. 4, at Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke, the musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,” a fun family show, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Sensory-friendly performance on Thursday, Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m. \$15 adult; \$10 students. Visit [goodshepherdplayers.com](http://goodshepherdplayers.com).

**“Uncommon Visions.”** Through Feb. 25, various times at 2905 District Ave., Suite 115 (in the Mosaic District), Fairfax. The Torpedo Factory Artists’ Association (TFAA) presents “Uncommon Visions,” the third exhibition at Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic.

Visit [www.torpedofactoryartists.com/event/uncommon-visions/](http://www.torpedofactoryartists.com/event/uncommon-visions/).

**Second Saturdays.** 6-9 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. The Second Saturday Art Walk is the perfect time to meet nearly 85 Resident and Associate Artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in our galleries. Visit [www.workhousearts.org/](http://www.workhousearts.org/).

**Senior Line Dancing.** Mondays, 1 p.m.; Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. at Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer’s disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8-week session. Email [barbriba@hotmail.com](mailto:barbriba@hotmail.com) or call 703-524-3739.

**Carolina Shag.** Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. [nvshag.org](http://nvshag.org).

**Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).** Wednesdays, 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na’ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. RSVP [Naama.Gold@jccnv.org](mailto:Naama.Gold@jccnv.org).

**Smoke Free Bingo.** 7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot (with breaks for smoking friends). [www.fairfaxvd.com](http://www.fairfaxvd.com). 703-273-3638.

**English Conversation Groups** weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries. Visit: [va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp](http://va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp)

**Funday Monday** 10:30 a.m., every Monday at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Especially for those who haven’t yet started school. Programs are free and open to the public, donations are gratefully appreciated. 703-385-7858 [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts).

## FEB. 2-4

**Chocolate Lovers Festival.** Various times in Historic Downtown Fairfax. Chocolate-oriented activities all weekend, including a Kiwanis Chocolate Chip Pancake Breakfast. The “love of chocolate” is the unifying theme. Visit [www.chocolatefestival.net](http://www.chocolatefestival.net) for a current schedule of activities or call 703-385-7858.



FILE PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS

## Chocolate Festival

**A plate of cupcakes in the 2016 Chocolate Challenge. This year, the City of Fairfax will be all about chocolate on Feb. 2-4 in Old Town Fairfax.**



Sunset Silhouette by Kathy Strauss.

## Mobile Views

Opening Feb. 4 and on exhibit until March 4, the Workhouse Arts Center will showcase an exhibit by artist, Kathy Strauss, “Mobile Views” exploring the ‘fine art’ of cellphone photography. She will be on hand at the opening reception on Saturday, Feb. 10, 6-9 p.m. in W-9 in the Arches Gallery, The Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday: 11a.m.-7p.m.; Sunday: 12-5 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center at [www.workhousearts.org](http://www.workhousearts.org).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 3

**Fairfax Symphony Orchestra.** 8 p.m. at George Mason University, Center for Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Special performance by the 22-year-old Korean string virtuoso, In Mo Yang, and the premiere of the 2018 Fairfax County All-Stars Youth Orchestra. Tickets are \$39, \$53 and \$65. Call 703-993-8888 or visit [www.cfa.gmu.edu](http://www.cfa.gmu.edu).

**Mason Cabaret.** 8 p.m. at Harris Theatre, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Musical Theater ambassadors, the Mason Cabaret, offering showstoppers, ballads and duets from the Great White Way. \$30 general admission in support of Mason’s Musical Theater Program. Call 703-993-8888 or visit [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 4

**Railroad Story and Craft.** 1-4 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Activities and crafts with a Valentine’s Day twist. Activities and craft supplies included in admission. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) or call 703-425-9225.

## FEB. 4-MARCH 4

**“Mobile Views.”** Various times in W-9 in the Arches Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way,

Lorton. In her show, “Mobile Views” Kathy Strauss explores the ‘fine art’ of cellphone photography. Visit [www.imagewerks.net](http://www.imagewerks.net) or [www.workhousearts.org](http://www.workhousearts.org).

## THURSDAY/FEB. 8

**Art and Lunch.** 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Visit [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts)  
**Artist Reception.** 7-9 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Come and enjoy refreshments, meet the featured artist and be a part of your local artist community. Visit [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts)

## FRIDAY/FEB. 9

**The Bonita Lestina Old Town Hall Performance Series.** 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. “The Nearness of You” featuring Darden Purcell, a Washington D.C. based jazz vocalist. Call 703-385-7858 or visit [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 10

**Champagne and Chocolates Fundraiser.** 4-7 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Champagne, small plate hors d’oeuvres, desserts, mansion tours by

# An Evening with Eva Schloss

**Presented by the Chabad centers of Northern Virginia.**

On Wednesday, Feb. 7, Eva Schloss will share her experiences as the childhood friend and step sister of Anne Frank, including accounts of the publishing of Anne’s diary.

The presentation will take place at the George Mason University Center For The Arts at 7 p.m. and will be suitable for people of all ages including teenagers. Families of all faiths are invited to attend. This is an opportunity to hear a first-hand account from someone whose life intersected with a historical figure.

Chabad of Reston-Herndon is a sponsor for the event. Partners for the evening include:

- ❖ The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington
- ❖ JCC of Northern Virginia
- ❖ George Mason University
- ❖ Gesher Jewish Day School
- ❖ Washington Jewish Week
- ❖ Fairfax County Public Schools

In 1938, Germany invaded Austria, causing many Jewish families to flee Austria to avoid persecution. Among the emigrants was 8-year-old Eva Geiringer, who with her mother, brother, and father moved first to Belgium and then to Holland, where one of her neighbors was a German Jewish girl of the same age.

The two girls became friends and playmates (though, as Eva would say many years later, the girl was “much more grown-up and mature than me”). They passed the time by skipping, playing hopscotch and marbles, and drinking lemonade that the girl’s mother prepared.

Ultimately, both girls and their families were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Later they would become step sisters.

Eva survived her concentration camp experience and made her way to England, where she married Zvi Schloss and raised three daughters. She worked as a studio photographer and ran an antique shop.

Her step-sister did not survive Auschwitz, but kept a diary that did. Her name was Anne Frank.

Since 1985, Eva Schloss has devoted herself to holocaust education and global peace. She has recounted her wartime experiences in more than one thousand speaking engagements. She has written two books and has had a play written about her life. In 1999 she signed the Anne Frank Peace Declaration along with United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and the niece of Raoul Wallenberg, who rescued thousands of Jews in Budapest.

Tickets for students are free, \$10 for adults and \$360 for VIP which includes two tickets to a VIP reception and reserved seating. Reservations can be made at [www.chabadrh.org](http://www.chabadrh.org).

costumed historical interpreters, raffle and live auction to benefit educational programs for Gunston Hall. Music by Robinson High School String Quartet. Cocktail attire. \$50 RSVP by Feb. 3 at [bit.ly/champagneandchocolates2018](http://bit.ly/champagneandchocolates2018). Call 703-550-9220.

**Artist Reception.** 6-9 p.m. in W-9 in the Arches Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. In her show, “Mobile Views” Visit [www.imagewerks.net](http://www.imagewerks.net) or [www.workhousearts.org](http://www.workhousearts.org).

## FEB. 10-14

**Singing Valentines.** 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Throughout Northern Virginia. Surprise a special someone. Singing telegrams delivered to a Northern Virginia or D.C. location of one’s choice by an a cappella quartet from the Fairfax Jubil-Aires barbershop chorus. \$60 and up. Call 571-418-3840 or visit [www.fairfaxjubilaires.org](http://www.fairfaxjubilaires.org) for details.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 11

**Table Top N Gauge Model Train Show.** 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) or call 703-425-9225.

**Design Workshop.** 2-4 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center- Fair Oaks location. 12101 Lee Highway. Create hand tied European rose arrangements for your sweetheart. Door prizes. Light refreshments. \$5 at the door for ARF members, \$20 for non-ARF members which includes a 2018 membership. 703-371-9351.

**Beau Soir Concert.** 4-5:30 at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. DC-based trio of flute, harp, and viola, standard and contemporary repertoire spanning a variety of musical genres. Reception to follow. Childcare provided. Free. Call 703-455-2500 or visit [www.standrews.net](http://www.standrews.net).



# FAITH

Send notes to the Connection at [south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

**Grace Presbyterian Church** will offer a traditional Ash Wednesday service at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 14. All are welcome. 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Visit [www.gracepresby.org](http://www.gracepresby.org).

**South Run Baptist Church** services include: Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Worship, 11 a.m.; Wednesday dinner at 6 p.m. and groups at 6:50 p.m. Pastor is Eric Gilchrest. 8712 Selger Drive, Springfield. Call 703-455-4521 or visit [www.southrun.org](http://www.southrun.org).

**St. Anthony of Padua American National Catholic Church**, 10383 Democracy Lane, Fairfax, holds mass for Contemporary Catholics every Sunday at 12:30 p.m. St. Anthony's is an independent Catholic parish, inclusive and accepting of all people. Experience true acceptance and true Catholicism. [www.MySaintAnthonys.org](http://www.MySaintAnthonys.org).

**Calvary Hill Baptist Church**, 9301 Little River Turnpike in Fairfax, conducts Worship team practice for the Praise Band in the Sanctuary every Thursday at 7 p.m. All are welcome. 703-323-1347.

**The Fairfax Church of Christ**, 3901 Rugby Road in Fairfax, has facilitators available to help those who are experiencing a separation or divorce. 703-631-2100 or [www.fxccc.org](http://www.fxccc.org).

**The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax**, 2709 Hunter Mill Road in Oakton, offers services during the summer on Sundays at 10 a.m. The regular schedule, Sundays at 9:15 and 11:15 a.m., resumes Sept. 11. [www.uucf.org](http://www.uucf.org).

**Congregation Adat Reyim**, an independent Jewish congregation, offers services Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 9:30 a.m. and Maariv minyan at 7:30 p.m. Hebrew School is Sundays from 9-11:15 for K-6th graders and Mondays from 5:30-7:30 p.m. for 3rd-6th graders. Adat Reyim is located at 6500 Westbury Oaks Court in Springfield. 703-569-7577 or [www.adatreyim.org](http://www.adatreyim.org).

**Burke Presbyterian Church**, 5690 Oak Leather Drive in Burke, worship services are Sundays at 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m., and 6 p.m. [www.BurkePresChurch.org](http://www.BurkePresChurch.org).

**One God Ministry Church**, 4280/4282 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, offers Early Morning Service at 8 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m., Sunday Worship Service at 11 a.m., and Wednesday Bible Study at 7 p.m. A Spiritual Gifts Service is the first Friday of every month at 7 p.m. 703-591-6161 or [www.onegodministry.org](http://www.onegodministry.org).

**The Bahá'í Community of Fairfax County Southwest** offers Interfaith Devotions, Children's Classes, Junior Youth Groups and Study Circles, which are open to all. See [www.bahai.us](http://www.bahai.us) or 571-320-5274.

**St. Leo the Great in Fairfax** hosts "Night of Praise" the first Saturday of each month, featuring praise music and Eucharist adoration at 7 p.m. Located at 3704 Old Lee Highway in Fairfax.

**St. Matthew's United Methodist Church**, 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Traditional service Sundays 8:15 & 11:15 a.m.; contemporary service at 9:45 a.m. 703-978-3500 or [www.stmatthewsumc.org](http://www.stmatthewsumc.org)

**The Immanuel Bible Church MOPS group** meets on Mondays at 7 p.m. at Immanuel Bible Church, 6911 Braddock Road, Springfield. MOPS is for pregnant or parenting mothers of children from infancy to kindergarten. 703-922-4295 or [www.MOPS.org](http://www.MOPS.org).

**First Baptist Church of Springfield**, 7300 Gary St., Springfield, has traditional and contemporary Sunday services at 10:30 a.m., Sunday school at 9:15 a.m. Services offered at special times throughout the year in English, Spanish and Ethiopian. 703-451-1500 or [www.fbcspRINGfield.org](http://www.fbcspRINGfield.org).

The following is a list of events at **Mount Calvary Baptist Church**, 4325 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax:

- ♦ Adult Bible Study every Wednesday starting at 7 p.m., Youth Bible Study at 7:15 p.m.
- ♦ Full Praise and Baptism Service at 7 p.m., the last Wednesday of every month
- ♦ Sunday School at 9 a.m.
- ♦ Sunday morning service at 10 a.m., the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month
- ♦ Men's Ministry Bible Class, the Saturday before the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month
- ♦ Commonwealth Care Center ministry every first and third Thursday night. 703-273-1455.

**Beth El Hebrew Congregation**, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria, has services on Fridays, 7:30 p.m. with a pre-service wine and cheese social at 6:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. with a pre-service Torah study at 9 a.m. Religious school is on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Adult learning opportunities take place throughout the year. 703-370-9400 or [www.bethelhebrew.org](http://www.bethelhebrew.org).

**The Cranford United Methodist Church**, located at 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton, hosts prayer and healing services on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Worship service is at 11 a.m., and fellowship is at 12:30 p.m.

**Grace Presbyterian Church** offers Sunday school for all ages at 9:15, and a blended worship service 10:30 a.m. every Sunday morning. Coffee and fellowship follows worship. Nursery care is provided from 9-11:45 a.m. 7434 Bath Street, Springfield. 703-451-2900 or [www.gracepresby.org](http://www.gracepresby.org).

**First Baptist Church of Springfield** offers Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., followed by both traditional and contemporary worship services at 10:30 a.m. at 7300 Gary St., Springfield. 703-451-1500 or [www.fbcspRINGfield.org](http://www.fbcspRINGfield.org).

**Lord of Life Lutheran** offers services at two locations, 5114 Twinbrook Road in Fairfax, and 13421 Twin Lakes Drive in Clifton. 703-323-9500 or [www.Lordoflifeva.org](http://www.Lordoflifeva.org).

**Clifton Presbyterian Church**, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton, offers Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. and Cup of Fellowship at 11 a.m. Nursery care is provided from 9:45-11:15 a.m. Christian education for all ages is at 9:45 a.m. 703-830-3175.

**The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center**, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. The center emphasizes working with the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit [www.guhyasamaja.org](http://www.guhyasamaja.org)

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**NEWS**

**Give Together Engages Hundreds of Volunteers**

The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia was Give Together Headquarters on Jan. 15, Dr. Martin Luther King Day, when Volunteer Fairfax welcomed hundreds of volunteers, tall and small, who came enthusiastic and ready to serve.

Service projects planned for the day were designed with young volunteers in mind. They included: making Doggie Chew Toys for Homeward Trails Animal Rescue; creating Valentines for Foster Care to Success (FC2S); assembling Sensory Bags for UCM of Alexandria; making warm fleece scarves for the DC VA Medical Center; and compiling Financial Literacy Classroom Kits for Junior Achievement.

Special guests supporting the event included Supervisor John C. Cook (R-Braddock District), and School Board Members Dalia Palchik (Providence District), Ryan McElveen (At-Large) and Karen Keys-Gamarra (At-Large).

Volunteer Fairfax acknowledges event support from Points of Light and Kaiser Permanente.

Most of all, the volunteer center appreciates the moms and dads who brought their families out on a chilly January day to help local nonprofits. Additional appreciation goes to the event assistants and to the volunteers from schools, clubs, Scout Troops, sororities and business. Special acknowledgement goes to Waples Mill Elementary parent Sara A Holtz who brought her young family to Give Together for the eighth consecutive time.

Join Volunteer Fairfax every year on MLK Day for



**Braddock District Supervisor John Cook (R) speaks at the event.**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



**Volunteer Fairfax welcomed hundreds of volunteers who came ready to serve.**

Give Together. And, save the date for VolunteerFest, another family-friendly event taking place on National Make A Difference Day, on Oct. 27, 2018.

For more information about ways to serve the community, visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

**Board Approves 5-Year Building Plan**

The School Board voted to approve the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) FY 2019-23 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) at its business meeting on Jan. 25. The FY 2019-23 CIP includes new schools, capacity enhancements, and renovations reflecting a reflecting a five-year requirement of \$813 million, or roughly \$164 million per year, to address current and anticipated enrollment increases. Included in the new CIP are proposals for three new elementary schools and one new high school. Funds approved in the 2017 School Bond Referendum and previous referenda will address approximately \$471 million of the five-year requirement, leaving a balance of \$341 million unfunded.

The FY 2019-23 CIP reflects \$315 million approved by county voters in the 2017 School Bond Referendum. Among the funded projects are a new elementary school in the northwest part of the county and two modular addition relocations, as well as planning for a Fairfax-Oakton area elementary school and additions to West Potomac, Stuart, and Madison High Schools. Unfunded projects include a new elementary school near Metro's silver line, a high school in the western part of the county, and five new or repurposed schools. Funds for renovations at 20 named elementary schools are included, as well as four middle schools and

seven high schools.

The board approved two amendments to the FY 2019-23 CIP. The first amends the Capital Improvement Plan to increase the cash flow request by \$50 million, thereby increasing the yearly sale on school bonds to \$205 million. This will allow FCPS to accelerate planning for 20 elementary schools, one middle school, two high schools, and one central office repurpose renovation project in FY 2019, with an estimated reduction of 158 temporary classrooms upon completion of the projects. In addition to these renovations, this infusion will include the funding for 23 capacity enhancements and the reduction of 184 temporary classrooms, for a total reduction of 342 temporary classrooms.

This will allow completion of the 2009 Renovation Queue by FY 2028, which is four years earlier than projected. Funding for capital improvement projects is limited by a \$155 million yearly cap on school bond sales. Additional funding sources include \$13.1 million from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for infrastructure management, and \$12.4 million from FCPS operating funds for minor capacity enhancements and routine or major maintenance.

Details about the FY 2019-23 CIP are available at [www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/facilities-planning-future/capital-improvement-program](http://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/facilities-planning-future/capital-improvement-program).



# BULLETIN

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

**Child turning 5 years old by Sept. 30?** If so, contact your child's school to make arrangements for kindergarten enrollment. Most schools begin getting information together now for parents of incoming kindergartners, and many host an orientation or open house. All kindergarten programs are full-day and located in FCPS elementary schools. Check your school's webpage or contact the school directly for specific enrollment information and dates of orientation or visit [www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration](http://www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration).

## THURSDAY/FEB. 1

**Comment Period Closes.** The public is invited to share their perspectives on the proposals with the Park Authority Board either at the meeting, via correspondence or by email. Information outlining all proposed fee changes is now available for review online, at the Park Authority's main office in the Herrity Building and at staffed park facilities, including RECenters, golf courses, nature centers and historic sites. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/feemeeting](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/feemeeting) for more.

**Registration Opens: Two-way and Immersion Programs.** Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) online registration for the county-wide lottery. Current prekindergarten students may apply for the kindergarten immersion program and current kindergarten students may apply for the first grade immersion programs for the 2018-19 school year. Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 1, for the first grade immersion program and by 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 5, for the kindergarten immersion program. Visit [www.fcps.edu/registration/world-language-immersion-programs-registration](http://www.fcps.edu/registration/world-language-immersion-programs-registration).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 3

**Job Fair.** FCPS is searching for educators with a strong academic background and a passion for making a difference. To meet increased hiring needs FCPS is hosting an invitation only job fair during which they will be interviewing candidates in all instructional areas. The fair will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3, with a snow makeup date of Feb. 24. To learn how to be considered for an invitation, visit [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu).

## TUESDAY/FEB. 6

**Community Meeting.** 7-8:30 p.m. at the Springfield Governmental Center, 6140 Rolling Road, West Springfield. The Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County Department of Transportation will host a meeting to discuss this year's paving and restriping efforts in the Springfield District. Comments will be accepted through Feb. 23. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/2018-paving-and-restriping](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/2018-paving-and-restriping).

## THURSDAY/FEB. 8

**Award Nomination Deadline.** 5 p.m. Nominate a volunteer or volunteer group that has made a positive impact on the Fairfax County community at [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org). The Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards is a community-wide celebration of volunteerism. For a complete list of categories and guidelines, visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org) or call Kristen Moore at Volunteer Fairfax at 703-246-3531.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 10

**Staff the Bus.** 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Shoppers - Fair City, 9622 Main St., Fairfax. Support **Britepaths' Stuff the Bus food drive** and help the families they serve.

## TUESDAY/FEB. 13

**REVIVE Trainings.** 11:30 a.m. at CSB's Merrifield Center, 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive (Room LL-419/425 Lower Level East), Fairfax. Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board will dispense free Naloxone at upcoming free REVIVE trainings. Naloxone, a drug that reverses the effects of opioid/heroin overdose. Trainings approximately one hour long, and are offered at numerous locations and times. Advance registration is not required. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/news/2018/free-naloxone-revive-trainings](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/news/2018/free-naloxone-revive-trainings).

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## Space In Which I Wouldn't Get Lost



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a follow up to last week's column titled "Lost in Space," I have a few recommendations for the medical profession, oncologists particularly, as it relates to their comings and goings and the effect it might have on their patients, many of whom have been characterized as "terminal," as I was.

Respecting and appreciating the fact that on a good day, our anxiety level is likely off the chart, we need you to work with us, not against us.

And though I can certainly recall how I was encouraged to reach out – either by phone or electronically, whenever we had questions or concerns, I believe there needs to be an upgrade to that advisory. That 'encouragement' works fine when you're here/on site. However, based on my most recent experience, I need that 'advisory' to work equally fine when you're not here.

Ergo: I want to meet and develop some kind of relationship with the oncologist who will be covering for you when you're absent. I want that oncologist's name, email address and phone number (none of which I had during this most recent experience). I want some assurance/acknowledgment that this oncologist knows who I am, how I'm treated and is familiar with any special circumstances pertaining to my care and feeding. Moreover, I want "t.l.c.," because I definitely deserve it.

As for the oncologist's goings; on the occasions when, for whatever reason, you're away from your office. I want to know before, not after. I don't want to learn about it by reading a default email saying you're out of the office. Though I appreciate knowing after, it's not good enough. I want to know all the time. In fact, every time you're away, I want to know. Whether or not I have any medical activities (lab work, infusion, scans) planned, I want to know, just in case something unexpected – or even expected, happens.

This would help me to prepare, anticipate, assimilate and coordinate any and all future medical activities so that I could determine in advance, if necessary, an action plan. One that would proactively solve/prevent a problem rather than reacting to one as most recently happened to me. I don't want any more surprises. I don't want to experience any lack of communication at any time. I don't care about how or why. I simply want to know ahead of any potentially complicating circumstances, not behind. I'm already feeling some relief just writing about it.

How can this be implemented? Electronically of course. I don't need any calls. A don't-reply email is fine. I know that system/process works when I want to communicate with you and/or review information which has been posted online. What I want to know next is the doctor's schedule, not hourly, maybe not even daily (although I wouldn't be averse to it), but weekly for sure, electronically in my inbox first thing Monday morning.

Knowing the doctor's availability will help me manage my expectations and minimize my stress. As a cancer patient, I never know what I'll want or when I'll want it. But finding out the easy way (in advance) is certainly preferable to finding out the hard way (during/after).

Medically speaking, I don't want to miss anything nor do I, living forward, want anything to be missed. If you can email an after-appointment summary, you can certainly email me a pre-appointment schedule of when and where my primary care physicians (oncologist and internal medicine) will be. Because out of sight unfortunately doesn't mean out of mind, unless I know otherwise.

And that's my goal: to mind my own business and not have to worry about yours.

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



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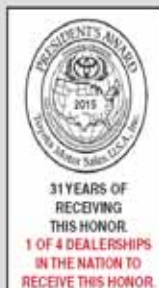
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