

WELLBEING

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From left: friends Trinity Jackson, 8, and Jessica Wilbon, 7-1/2, with a chocolate-drenched strawberry and marshmallow from Capitol Chocolate Fountains at the last weekend's Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival.

Fairfax CONNECTION

Chocolate, Ice Cream And Candy Galore

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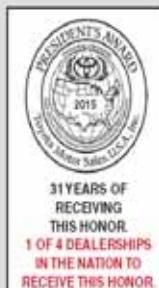


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NEWS

Meyer Talks State of Fairfax City

Development, tax base and the future.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A snapshot of the City and what's on its horizon were the topics of Fairfax Mayor David Meyer's recent State of the City address to local residents. He spoke to them during an informal, Saturday-morning meeting, Jan. 20, at Fairfax City Hall.

In the central part of the region, Fairfax has more than 24,000 residents, 15,500 registered voters and about 9,000 housing units. City schools have 3,125 students – 400 more than 10 years ago. “Almost all that increase is from existing, residential neighborhoods,” said Meyer. “So these neighborhoods are turning over; new families are moving in and having children.”

Noting that the median household income here is \$105,000, with a \$1.06 residential real-estate tax rate and a \$140 million General Revenue budget, he said, “The City's financial position is really quite strong. Forty percent of all the money we receive in [that] budget goes to education, and there's a good balance outside of education.”

Meyer said the City's total tax base recently crossed \$6 billion, due to increased value in that base, plus new, private capital coming online. “Our debt limit is 10 percent of our tax base, but our fiscal policy says we'll only borrow one-third of what we're eligible to borrow – and we're now at 25 percent,” he said. “We spend about \$8 million/year on debt service, which is a reasonable place to be. And our debt represents the quality investments we made in our schools, City Hall Annex, downtown park and police department.”

He also said the City is getting a \$26 million, one-time, cash infusion as part of the concession payment from Express Mobility Partners – the company rebuilding I-66. It will then spend \$12.5 million of it to transform the old Jermantown Road bridge from two to four lanes,

“On its east and west sides will be a lane for pedestrians and bicycles, and it will connect to our trail system,” said Meyer. “We'll rebuild Jermantown Road from the bridge to Route 50.”

The other \$13.5 million will be used to complete the George Snyder Trail from the City limits to across the street from Patriot Harley-Davidson on Route 50. “It will be the largest, single investment in trails in the City's history,” said Meyer. “The Snyder Trail will connect with a spur off another new trail to be built along the north side of I-66 east and west, forming a new T intersection coming into the City.”

IN FAIRFAX, the Snyder Trail will go behind WillowWood Plaza, Fairfax Boulevard Marketplace, Freddy's and the Outback and connect with the Wilcoxon Trail at Patriot Harley-Davidson. That way, residents of the Cambridge Station and Mosby Woods neighborhoods will be able to walk on a trail from their homes to Washington, D.C. It's the last, missing link of this trail.

Next, Meyer mentioned some residential building projects currently nearing completion, including Mayfair and the Enclave. He also noted that the Novus developer wants to reduce its costs by elimi-



David Meyer

“We need to create reasons for people to come here and live here.”

— David Meyer,
Fairfax Mayor

nating one, small, retail building and putting a swimming pool in its place, at grade level, instead of on the roof of another building.

“And on the south side, they're changing some retail to residential,” added Meyer. “We told them they must retain the affordable-housing units and underground the utilities, and we're waiting for a revised application.” He said the City's also awaiting the site plan for Fairfax Shopping Center in Northfax.

Something new proposed for the six acres behind the Courthouse Plaza shopping center is Capstone Collegiate Communities. It would be a 700-bed facility – dormitory-style, one-, two- and four-bedroom apartments for GMU students. Also proposed are 240 affordable-housing units. “So we could have upward of 1,000 people living there, and we are keenly interested in this,” said Meyer.

Regarding Fairfax's economic development, he said, “New businesses and restaurants have come into the City. But we're not a destination city and don't have a core identity. So we need to change the perception of the City and create reasons for people to come here and live here.”

Meyer said Baskin-Robbins will reopen in late April in its new location at the corner of McLean Avenue and Fairfax Boulevard, near Paul VI High. And a coffee shop will be to its left.

As for the City's challenges and opportunities going forward, he said, “A lot of our downtown portfolio is owned by Kimco, and downtown merchants are paying high rents. So we talked with them and they agreed to lower some of their rents. We've also discussed the possibility of hiring a national firm to help plan Northfax.”

Meyer said Fairfax could consider micro bids for commercial centers, establishing business-improvement areas to target economic development in the City. “I'd like to do it as a pilot in one area, but [City] Council hasn't yet discussed it,” he said. “I also want GMU to pursue an academic/cultural presence within the City. For example, it's looking for a new place for its graduate school of business.”

Continued investment to transform Fairfax's major transportation corridors, over the next five to six years, is important to him, too. Meyer also wants safety issues on Old Lee Highway addressed.

AS MAYOR, he said, “I'd like to see the City add \$500 million of new, private-capital investment in the next five years, and an additional \$500 million in the following five years – and these are conservative goals. Adding new revenue will allow us to increase our investment in our schools, public safety and quality of life, such as upgrading our parks.”

“The nice lifestyle we have is because of the investments we've made in our City,” continued Meyer. “In the future, for example, we'll need to eventually

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Andrew McIntyre of Combined Properties discusses Scout on the Circle.

PHOTO BY
BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION

Update on Scout on the Circle

Developer anticipates groundbreaking this month.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

During the recent community-outreach meeting, Andrew McIntyre, with Combined Properties, gave attendees an update on the Scout on the Circle project.

The already-approved, mixed-use development will replace an obsolete strip mall with 400 rental apartments, 29,000 square feet of retail, a Giant grocery store and two parking garages. It's at Fairfax Circle, flanked by Fairfax Boulevard (Route 50), Lee Highway (Route 29) and Pickett Road, with easy access to and from major highways.

“We love the community and we're excited to be part of the next iteration,” said McIntyre. “The cost of the total project is about \$150 million. Most developers don't have as big a stake in their projects – and that shows our commitment to the City. We recently launched our leasing effort for the inline retail. We're currently negotiating with a small, independent coffee shop which wants to be across from the grocery store.”

Clark Builders Group is the contractor, and McIntyre said

they hope to “start knocking down buildings” sometime in mid-February, with groundbreaking tentatively set for Feb. 20. And with the Metro station less than a mile from this site, a bus stop there will enable both City residents and GMU students to reach it from the shopping center.

“Going east, there'll be a new [traffic] signal near the Chick-Fil-A,” said McIntyre. “And we'll do everything we can to minimize construction disturbance to the City. It should take about 32 months from the start of work to substantial completion. There's a heavy amount of utility relocation and undergrounding to do. We expect to deliver the pad to Giant around month 17 or 18. Giant will construct its own building; we'll build everything up to it.”

Regarding the apartments, he said they'll all be rentals to make this project economically feasible. “Right now, this property is assessed only on its land – \$90 million worth of value,” said McIntyre. But once everything's in place, he said, it will add more to the City's tax base. “You'll be seeing a lot of us, over the next three years,” he told the residents. “We're excited to get started.”



Site plan for Scout on the Circle

Lawmakers Play Whack-A-Mole with Predatory Lenders

Senate panel takes action to limit one kind of high-interest loan while leaving a loophole for another.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

By this time next year, high-interest lenders may be prohibited from making consumer finance loans — at least ones they find profitable at 200 percent interest. So that loophole may be closed by the end of the General Assembly session. But it seems likely lawmakers will leave Richmond this year creating no restrictions on open-end lines of credit, raising concern among some that lawmakers are playing a game of whack-a-mole. “All of a sudden, in the last five, six, seven, eight years we’ve got title lenders, payday lenders, revolving lenders and now internet lenders jumping the fence and coming over into the consumer finance act that had never contemplated this kind of lending,” said Jeff Smith, executive director of the Virginia Financial Services Association. “So not only do we support this legislation, we drafted it.”

That legislation would create a cap of 36 percent interest rates for all consumer finance loans, closing one loophole that has allowed loans for as much as 950 percent



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Check Into Cash lobbyist Robert Baratta testifies before the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee. Last year, his company donated more than \$8,000 to members of the committee, which killed a bill that would have created new consumer protections on his company.

interest. Car-title lenders were using these kinds of loans in a bait-and-switch operation until 2016, after a series of investigative reports exposed the practice and lawmakers took action to rein in the industry. Since that time, internet lenders have moved to an unregulated product known as open-end lines of credit. Last week, lawmakers rejected a bill that would have prevented lenders from allowing lenders to have more than one loan at a time.

“The only way I would know that someone has an installment loan is if they were trying to get it from me,” said Robert Baratta, lobbyist for Check Into Cash, which

contributed more than \$8,000 to members of the committee last year. “I don’t know if they’ve gone down the street to somebody else and took one out unless there’s some kind of database we can access.”

CRITICS OF PREDATORY LENDING say payday lenders and car-title lenders already have to comply with that restriction, which prevents people down on their luck from taking out new loans to cover old loans. Of all the consumer protections considered in a series of bills this year, this is one of the most important to people who want to make sure these companies don’t take advantage

“We’d like to close this loophole to ensure that some of the most vulnerable Virginians aren’t taken advantage of”

— Kevin Mauer,
associate director,
Virginia Catholic Conference

of people who are already experiencing hefty medical bills or family emergencies. “We’d like to close this loophole to ensure that some of the most vulnerable Virginians aren’t taken advantage of,” said Kevin Mauer, associate director of the Virginia Catholic Conference.

Opposition to high-interest loans isn’t coming just from consumer groups and religious organizations. It’s also coming from businesses in the consumer-finance industry, who believe unscrupulous businesses are using their section of the code to make predatory loans. That’s why they worked with state Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) to craft the 36-percent cap. Although that bill got out of committee, his other bill that would have created similar restrictions on open-end lines of credit did not. “They’re using these open-end credit loans to evade the laws that we passed,” said Surovell. “We can’t keep playing whack-a-mole.”

Northern Virginia MATHCOUNTS Competition Held

Top teams, team members and coaches announced.

The Northern Virginia Regional MATHCOUNTS Competition was held on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018 at George Mason University. The regional competition combines the Fairfax, George Washington, and Northern Virginia Chapters of the Virginia Society of Professional Engineers.

About 418 students in sixth through eighth grades at 50 elementary and middle schools competed at the events. They have been practicing since the fall and were selected to represent their schools at the competition. Students compete as school teams and as individuals.

The top teams, team members, and coaches from each Chapter are:

♦ Fairfax Chapter Area

1. Rachel Carson Middle School (Coach: Kristen Shebek)
Students: Andrew Kim, Luke Wang,

2. Rocky Run Middle School (Coach: Melanie Roller)
Students: Aarav Bajaj, Keertana Yalamanchili, Nilima Khanna, Pranav Mathur

3. Frost Middle School (Coach: Maura Sleevi)
Students: Darin Mao, Steven Chen, Alison Song, Ja-Zhua Cheng

- ♦ **George Washington Chapter Area**
1. Mark Twain Middle School (Coach: Jack Schiavone)
Students: Jeb Cui, Eugene Choi, Irfan Nafi, Ashley Lee

2. South County Middle School (Coach: Gina Griffin-Evans)
Students: Shreyas Mayya, Michael Hwang, Sara Yoon, Sarah Khalil

3. Carl Sandburg Middle School (Coach: Nicole Yoder)
Students: Quinn Powell, Ryan Lien, Chloe Renaud, Gavin Cramer

- ♦ **Northern VA Chapter Area**
1. BASIS Independent McLean (Coach: Tyler Sullivan)
Students: Pravalika Putalapattu, Samuel Wang, Ethan Zhou, Eleanor Kim

2. Cooper Middle School (Coach: Lisa Walsh)
Students: Isabella Zhu, Danniell Cao, Kevin Shan, Bradley Cao

3. Longfellow Middle School (Coach: Mary Jo Clark)
Students: Alan Vladimiroff, Lillian Sun, Yee-fay Li, William Jiang

- The top-scoring students in each Chapter are:

♦ Fairfax Chapter Area

1. Aarav Baja, Rocky Run Middle School
2. Dhruv Alladi, Rocky Run Middle School
3. Darin Mao, Frost Middle School
4. Andrew Kim, Rachel Carson Middle School
5. Anand Advani, Nysmith School

♦ George Washington Chapter Area

1. Jeb Cui, Mark Twain Middle School
2. Shreyas Mayya, South County Middle School
3. Eugene Choi, Mark Twain Middle School
4. Michael Hwang, South County Middle School
5. Irfan Nafi, Mark Twain Middle School

♦ Northern VA Chapter Area

1. Pravalika Putalapattu, BASIS Independent McLean

2. Alan Vladimiroff, Longfellow Middle School

3. Samuel Wang, BASIS Independent McLean

4. Sehyun Choi, Longfellow Middle School

5. Ethan Zhou, BASIS Independent McLean

The top two teams and top four students who are not on the top two teams from the Fairfax Chapter along with the winning team and top two students who are not on the winning team from each of the George Washington and Northern VA Chapters will advance to compete at the Virginia State MATHCOUNTS Competition to be held in Richmond on March 17, 2018.

MATHCOUNTS is a national middle school math enrichment program offering competition and club activities designed to foster appreciation of math among U.S. students so as to prepare students for future career opportunities and success.

Additional information on the national MATHCOUNTS program is available at www.mathcounts.org.

Community Foundation Launches Opportunity Index for Northern Virginia

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia announced the launch of The Opportunity Index for Northern Virginia, an interactive dashboard to serve as a data resource for community knowledge and strategic philanthropic giving, and to help grow philanthropy for the most economically disadvantaged populations. The data and accompanying report were prepared by The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, a nonprofit think-tank that provides credible, independent, and accessible information and analyses of fiscal and economic issues with particular attention to the impacts on low- and moderate-income persons. The Opportunity Index is available to the public for free at www.cfnova.org/opportunityindex.

"The Community Foundation developed and launched the Opportunity Index to help our entire region better define, and then act on, the biggest challenges we face and the greatest opportunities we have," said Eileen Ellsworth, Community Foundation President and CEO. "The data provides a common understanding of the dynamics at work in our region, providing insights and trends to guide our future work," said Ellsworth.

Comprising several key indicators reflecting the region's economy, community health, civic life, and educational outcomes, the Opportunity Index includes data from 2000-2015 and will be updated annually to track changes and produce trend lines over time, advancing stakeholders' understanding of the true needs of the region. The data is demographically, jurisdictionally, ethnically and racially disaggregated to

shine a light on the reasons why some areas in Northern Virginia have more opportunity than others.

Northern Virginia is a diverse, growing region with a well-educated population and strong economy. However, there are a growing number of families who lack access to affordable housing and educational opportunities for their children. The data in this Index highlights trends that shine a light on these areas of opportunity and inequality. The region is becoming more diverse – in 2015, 47 percent of children in Northern Virginia lived in immigrant households and people of color made up 48 percent of residents of the region's five highest-population localities, up from 35 percent in 2000. At the same time, there are growing numbers of poor school-aged children, increased income inequality, and a widening income gap between individuals of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

"I am thrilled that the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is taking this strong leadership position to monitor the health of the region and to quantify our most critical needs. The Opportunity Index will be an invaluable resource for leaders from business, government, community and nonprofit organizations to determine how to invest in the region's future. The dashboard serves as a 'report card' for our region and provides some indispensable data that will direct the future work of the Community Foundation, and help the region as a whole become ever more vibrant, inclusive and equitable," said Paul Leslie, CEO of Dovel Technologies and Community Foundation board member.

Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Hires New Executive Director

As the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce enters its 60th year of service to the City of Fairfax and the surrounding business communities, its Board of Directors has announced the appointment of Jennifer B. Rose, MPA as the Chamber's Executive Director. Rose has served the past six years as Development Manager at local non-profit, Britepaths (formerly Our Daily Bread) in Fairfax, where she was responsible for all aspects of fundraising and community engagement.

Prior to employment with Britepaths, Rose served for three years as the Community Giving Specialist at Northern Virginia Family Service in Oakton. With more than 20 years of experience in the nonprofit world, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in marketing, communications, event planning and program development.

Rose is active in the community, currently serving as President of the Rotary Club of Fairfax. In 2017, the club awarded her its "Service Above Self" award. In addition, she has been a very active parent volunteer at Westminster School in Annandale, for nine years. Rose is also Adjunct Faculty at George Mason University in the School of Integrative Studies, where she teaches a class in Nonprofit Studies. Originally from Bedford, Va., she graduated the University of Virginia with a B.A. in Rhetoric and Communications Studies. Additionally, she received a Master's Degree in Public Administration from New Mexico State University.

Rose began her role at the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce on Jan. 8, 2018. Visit www.cfcc.org for more information on membership benefits and programs of the Chamber.



Jennifer B. Rose

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.

Abigail C. Flanders, of Fairfax, was named to the Baylor University (Waco, Texas) dean's list for fall 2017.

Victoria Clinch, of Fairfax, has been named to the fall 2017 dean's list at Buffalo State College (N.Y.).

Josiah Aden was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at Grove City College (Pa.). Aden is a 2015 graduate of homeschool and is the son of Mary and Steven Aden from Fairfax.

Olivia Grady was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at Grove City College (Pa.). Grady is a 2016 graduate of W T Woodson High School and is the daughter of Susan and Dean Grady from Fairfax.

Aaron Michael Bowles, of Fairfax, graduated from Clemson University (S.C.) with a Bachelor of Science in materials science and engineering.

Jenna Thompson, of Fairfax, an exercise and sport science major, has made the president's list at Coastal Carolina University (Conway, S.C.) for the fall 2017 semester.

Ketty Klimchuk was named to the dean's list at Johnson State College (Vt.) for the fall 2017 semester.

Yonas Tegene Ketsela, of Fairfax, has been named to Eastern Mennonite University's (Harrisonburg, Va.) dean's list for the fall 2017 semester.



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OPINION

An Opportunity To Improve TJ

To the Editor:

The following open letter was addressed to state Sen. Steve Newman, chair of the Education and Health Committee.

As graduates of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST), we were deeply troubled to read that the Education and Health Committee of the Virginia State Senate struck down Senate Bill 787, the proposal by state Sen. Scott Surovell to make the admissions policies at Governor's Schools such as TJHSST more equitable. While debates will continue about whether Senator Surovell's legislation is the right instrument, its intent to significantly alter Jefferson's admissions procedure to account for class is sound. No serious action has been taken on this issue at the state or local level since the school was designated as a magnet school and that has to change. Outreach efforts have had modest success in the past, but they are not enough to make Jefferson equitable. For this reason, we strongly support the intent of the senator's bill and ask the committee to work with Senator Surovell to draft legislation to make progress on this urgent issue.

All of us attended Fairfax County Public Schools. There's one among us who still has her yearbooks and class pictures from kindergarten through 12th grade. And in those images from schools like Saratoga Elementary School and Mark Twain Middle School are the smiling faces of friends and classmates of all races, as well as friends and classmates who lived in a nearby HUD housing development. None of the kids from that housing development made it into TJ, not one. And virtually none of the Black and Hispanic students in those other photos were admitted either.

The racial and economic composition of Jefferson has been an annual news story just about every year since it became a magnet school, and it's never good news. Last year, only 17 Black and Hispanic students were admitted — 3.4 percent out of 490 students. And only eight students (1.6 percent) eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (an indicator of students living in low-income or poor families). This despite the fact that Fairfax County Public School students overall are 25.4 percent Hispanic, 10.1 percent Black, and 29 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

This disparity between Jefferson's enrollment and the racial and socioeconomic composition of Fairfax County is unacceptable and easily remedied. Countless elite institutions — especially elite colleges — have modified their admissions procedures and requirements in recent years because they have realized that their old criteria have long been leaving talent on the table. They have softened their standardized testing requirements, engaged in admissions outreach, and sought out partners in high schools and middle schools to create a pipeline of under-represented and low-income students to draw from. These students (who would never have been admitted under the old admissions protocols) have thrived at these elite institutions — often overperforming their standardized test scores. Yet Jefferson's admis-

sions policies proceed ignorant of these developments.

We live in a time when headlines and Twitter feeds constantly observe the pernicious effects of systemic inequality and racism in the daily lives of the poor and people of color. And the state of Virginia has a long legacy of racism that the world was reminded of last year during and after the events that took place in Charlottesville. White supremacy is not just Nazis marching in the streets; it also lies in maintaining a high school that excludes the poor, African-Americans, and Latinos, and then calls itself the greatest, most meritocratic high school in the country. You and the other 12 members of the committee who struck down this modest change to Jefferson's admissions policies have voted to maintain a blatantly racist and classist flagship school.

This is a shameful display when it would have been so easy for you to answer the impassioned requests of so many parents and alumni, as well as Senator Surovell. We understand that the committee has framed its objections to this bill in terms of local rights. While in many cases local school boards are best situated to make local educational decisions, when a board ignores a pressing issue affecting its most vulnerable and disempowered constituents over decades, the state has an obligation to step in and remedy the injustice.

The one way that Jefferson, with the help of the Fairfax County School Board and the Virginia legislature, could truly differentiate itself is by showing that it is working deliberately and intentionally to combat the structural and systematic racism and class privilege that feeds students into the school. Thousands of schools and nonprofits around the country have already made meaningful change in this area, it's time for Jefferson and those in charge to take responsibility for this problem and do the same.

Alexis Clements, TJHSST '98, BA Emerson College '01, MS London School of Economics '06

Daniel Morales, TJHSST '98, BA Williams College '02, JD Yale Law School '05

Kristina Danahy (Buenafe), TJHSST '98, BS/MS University of Virginia '03, Ed.M Harvard '08

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WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Meet with Bulova, Petersen

Del. David Bulova (D-37) and Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) will hold their annual, town hall meeting this Saturday, Feb. 10, from 9-11 a.m., at Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St. in Fairfax. They will go over some of the major issues being debated in Virginia's General Assembly and will then open up the meeting for discussion.

Fatal House Fire in Fairfax

Homicide detectives have confirmed the identity of a man who died during a house fire Monday morning. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department was called to the 4100 block of Mount Echo Lane around 10:40 for a single-family house fire. The Fire Department was able to successfully extinguish the fire and locate the body of 64-year-old Charles Petrello inside. Fire Investigators determined that the fire started in a bedroom and was accidental in nature. The fire was caused by improperly discarded smoking materials. According to FCPD, homicide detectives will continue to investigate this fire-related death, and are awaiting further analysis by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. One other adult male resident was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

At a recent corporate luncheon, every Junior Achievement student in attendance received a domestic trip with Delta and two nights at an Extended Stay property.

Omega Travel Donates to Junior Achievement and Artemis House

Omega World Travel, a full-service travel company headquartered in Fairfax, offers corporate and government travel management, leisure travel, and meetings and events services. Since 1972, they have served corporations of all sizes and industries, in addition to nonprofits, government agencies and contractors, educational institutions, and more. They are an independent, certified woman-owned business offering a "high touch, high service, high tech" approach to fit each client's needs.

As a company, Omega prides itself on being an active and positive force in the communities where they do business, believing in corporate social responsibility and addressing, participating in, and responding to world and national events in communities they serve. Two of the causes Omega supports as an organiza-

tion are Junior Achievement and Artemis House.

Junior Achievement is the largest organization in the USA that helps young people gain the knowledge and skills they need to achieve economic success, plan for the future, and make the best academic and economic decisions. Their programs focus on work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

Artemis House, formerly referred to as the Fairfax County Women's Shelter, provides a safe haven for victims of family violence situations. They offer professional counseling, children's programs, court accompaniment, community education, emergency transportation, a safe and supportive community, and advocacy and links to resources for legal help, employment, housing, medical, child care, and other needs.



At a recent luncheon, Omega held a winter clothing drive, including a Mitten Tree, to benefit Artemis House, and collected 127 winter clothing items.



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Kensington Park, another Kensington community located nearby in Kensington, MD



Turmeric, powdered ginger, honey and almond or coconut milk can create a soothing and healing drink for those who are battling the flu, says nutritionist Sara Ducey.



COURTESY OF SARA DUCEY

WELLBEING

Feeding the Flu What to eat when fighting the flu.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Flu season is in full swing and, according to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it's packing a powerful punch. According to the most recent CDC report, the flu is widespread in most states, and healthcare providers report an uptick in influenza-related hospitalizations and deaths.

While the thought of eating might

“One of the best sources for protein when you have the flu is real, bone-based soup.”

— Sara Ducey, Professor of Nutrition and Food, Montgomery College

be unappealing to someone who is battling the flu, nutritionists and health care providers say certain nutrients are essential for keeping up one's strength. Soothing and healing ingredients are key allies when fight-

ing this season's virus.

“The thing you need most is water,” said Sara Ducey, professor of Nutrition and Food at Montgomery College. “You need sufficient water to bring nutrients to your cells and take away the waste. As you hydrate it gives your immune system more of a boost.”

Protein, says Ducey, will help one's body build and maintain strength. “It's important for supporting the immune system and for helping your body breakdown medicines like Tylenol,” she said. “One of the best sources for protein when you have the flu is real, bone-based soup, not ramen noodles that have chicken flavoring.”

Bone broths, like those made from chicken or beef, offer hydration, protein and amino acids, added Ducey. Broth can be sipped or used as the base for a soup. “It's a natural healing and restorative food,” she said. “At this point, everyone can assume that they're going to get the flu and prepare some bone-based broth ahead of time and keep it on hand in the freezer. You can also buy boxes of it.”

Fresh ginger can work as an anti-inflammatory, soothe an upset stomach and boost one's immune system, says nutritionist Debbie Hynes of Practical Ayurveda. “Warm water with grated ginger and honey can soothe a sore throat or upset stomach,” she

said.

Foods that are high in Vitamin C like orange juice, particularly a variety that contains pulp, can boost your immune system, says Ducey. “It's a powerful antioxidant which is important for keeping your muscles strong especially when you're sick.”

Garlic is another ingredient that Hynes likes to include in flu-fighting recipes. “It has antibacterial properties, especially when it's raw,” she said. “I add it to chicken broth along with chili flakes to sip when someone in my family has a stuffy head. The combination can clear the sinuses. And if you can stand to eat it, raw garlic has the strongest antibacterial properties.”

Turmeric works as an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant, says Hynes. “It's been known for those properties in Chinese medicine for centuries,” she said.

Ducey uses the spice in a creamy drink she creates called Golden Milk. “I take a cup of milk, a teaspoon or two of honey and a little black pepper and put it in the microwave to warm it,” she said. “You can use almond or coconut milk if you can't tolerate dairy. Turmeric is very poorly absorbed by the body, so adding a little black pepper helps absorb it. It sounds bizarre, but it's strangely comforting.”



Fresh ginger can be a soothing ingredient for those who have the flu.



PHOTOS BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Garlic is credited with having anti-bacterial properties.

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Zak Sussman and Alex Ross dip cream puffs, bananas and strawberries into the chocolate fountain.



Eating marshmallow-chocolate swirl pops are (from left) Jack Sanford, 6, and brother Max, 3.

Chocolate, Ice Cream and Candy Galore



Aaron Adkins waits on customers at The Capital Candy Jar's table.

People flocked to last weekend's Taste of Chocolate at the Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION



From left: Maddie Leasure, Ellen Graham and daughter Cameron, Misty Van Dyken and Caroline Shannon, of Cameron's Coffee and Chocolates.



Ali Aldahy, 4, enjoys some chocolate ice cream from Marinucci's Gelato.



From left: Jose Velasquez and Galo Pazmino with Pacari chocolates, which have won more than 180 international awards.



From left: friends Trinity Jackson, 8, and Jessica Wilbon, 7-1/2, with a chocolate-drenched strawberry and marshmallow from Capitol Chocolate Fountains.



From left: Druv N., Melanie A. and her sister Marianna, 10, share some Sugar Mama's coconut-chocolate crunch ice cream.

Antonio Maradiaga and his wife Maha Majdoub, with their 10-year-old twins.



PHOTO
CONTRIBUTED

Fairfax Brewer Holds a Special Fundraiser

BY NATALIA MEGAS
THE CONNECTION

For local resident and brewer Antonio Maradiaga and his wife Maha Majdoub, hosting a fundraiser on Feb. 11 benefiting orphaned chimpanzees in Liberia at their family-owned nano-brewery was a no-brainer.

"My immediate response to it was, that's great, I would love to do it," Maradiaga said.

Named after their twins, now 10 years old, Twinpanzee Brewing Company was a perfect fit for a good cause raising funds for Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection whose mission is to establish the first and only chimpanzee sanctuary in Liberia. When Loudoun resident and photographer Kristi Odom approached the brewery about the fundraiser idea, there was no hesitation.

"We've always called our twins chimps or monkeys. We've always loved nature," said Maradiaga who was born and raised in Fairfax. As a Boy Scout, Maradiaga said a love and appreciation for nature and conservation was instilled in him at a young age.

Maradiaga's strong roots in Fairfax County, where his parents still live, have kept him grounded. Although they tried for three years to bring their brewery to Fairfax County, it ultimately ended up in Loudoun County.

"I'm one of those people that stick around Fairfax," he said, adding that they're active with local community groups such as the Cub Scouts of America and at their boys' Fairfax County school.

After graduating from McLean High School, he pursued a double major in psy-

chology and English from George Mason University and a Masters in child psychology from the same university. He eventually landed a job as a software developer in 2000 after gaining experience in software packages helping at the faculty computer lab.

But it was his hobby for brewing, which began in 2006 that became the catalyst for the brewery, which opened this past August. This month is their six-month anniversary.

"The brewery is an extension of my hobby," he said, a hobby he does at night and on the weekends.

"It started with one of those Mr. Beer kits," he said, teaching him important basics like sanitizing and cleaning. After receiving an all-grain brewing kit from his wife, he was hooked.

"I just really, really enjoyed it," he said.

The fundraiser, "Primates 4 Primates" presents an opportunity to not only raise awareness of orphaned chimpanzees, victims of Liberia's illegal bush meat and live pet trades, but to offer a new beer based on food chimpanzees eat like figs and mangoes, honey, and milk lactose. The family-owned and -built brewery creates their beer flavoring with 100 percent natural ingredients.

Their hope is to raise awareness for the non-profit organization and to meet "a whole new set of people who maybe never thought of coming to our brewery."

"Primates 4 Primates" fundraiser at Twinpanzee Brewing Company will combine a love for primates, beer, and art on Sunday, Feb. 11 from 3-6 p.m. at 101-D Executive Drive in Sterling. Food and live music will be available. Visit www.facebook.com/Twinpanzee/.

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CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

“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. This mixed-media show features the work of more than 40 TFAA member artists. Each of the artists, through use of form, color, technique, or materials, aim to guide the audience into unexpected avenues and share their own personal perceptions. Visit www.torpedofactoryartists.com/event/uncommon-visions/.

“Mobile Views.” Through March 4, 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 or 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 for more.

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 for more.

FRIDAY/FEB. 9

Bingo. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638 for more.

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.

SATURDAY/FEB. 10

Cassi & Issac, Read Aloud. 11:30-4:15 p.m. at George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Introducing Cassi & Issac, an original picture book written and illustrated by Kora Coker, a Girl Scout Ambassador working toward earning her Gold Award. Sign up online for a reading session at www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054EAEA623AAFD0-cassi or kora.kykographics.com.

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 costumed historical interpreters, raffle and live auction to benefit educational programs for George Mason’s Gunston Hall. Music by Robinson High School String Quartet. Cocktail attire. \$50 per person. RSVP by Feb. 3 at 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” Kathy Strauss explores the ‘fine art’ of cellphone photography. Visit www.imagewerks.net or www.workhousearts.org.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/FEB. 9-10

Chinese Food Fest. Friday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Wegmans Fairfax, 11620 Monument Drive, Fairfax. Attendees can taste Peking duck Wegmans-style, fresh handmade dumplings, Chinese hot pot and bubble tea. Celebrity chef Martin Yan will do cooking demonstrations at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Friday, and 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday. He’ll also be available to sign cookbooks after each demo. There is no cost to attend Chinese Food Fest. Visit www.wegmans.com/stores/fairfax-va.html.

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 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. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Valentine Rose Bouquet. 2-4 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, Fair Oaks, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Create a



Going My Way? 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; the Arches Gallery at archesgallery.weebly.com/ and the Workhouse Arts Center at www.workhousearts.org.

European hand-tied valentine bouquet with Arlington Rose Foundation. Tricia Smith, floral design instructor, will demonstrate and guide as participants create a bouquet with roses, flowers and greenery. Bring pruners, a medium tall vase and a box to transport bouquet. Members \$5 at the door, non-members pay \$20 which membership for 2018. Email jhansen@actnow.com or call 703-641-9637.

Beau Soir Concert. 4-5:30 at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Known for their exciting performance style and diverse programming, this DC-based trio of flute, harp, and viola is dedicated to the performance of 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.

TUESDAY/FEB. 13

Pancake Supper. 5:30-7 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Join Grace Presbyterian Church for a pancakes. In addition to eating pancakes, there will be a pancake race. Call 703-451-2900 or visit gracepresby.org.

“Sweatheart” Dance Party. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Mott Community Center, 12111 Braddock Road, Fairfax. Fairfax Jazzercise and Fairfax Zumba host a double workout to celebrate Valentine’s Day 6:30pm (Jazzercise) and 7:30 pm (Zumba) If you’ve never tried these workouts, come and take a class for free. Wear workout clothes and shoes. Email ffjazzercise@gmail.com or call 703-909-6449.

Genealogy In Depth. 7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. The seminar sponsored by the Burke Historical Society and presented by Beach Carre will center on using tax and court/will/probate records in your genealogy research. Free. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 14

Music Showcase. 7:30 p.m. at Epicure Cafe, 11104 Lee Highway (at route 29), Fairfax. An evening of mini-concerts with guest host-producer Jay Keating. Performers include Duane Siler and Feature Laurence Baer. \$10 suggested donation goes to the featured act. Visit EpicureCafe.org for more.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/FEB. 16-17

“Loyal Heart.” Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m. at Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Woodson High senior Paul Hardin has written a musical that tells the story of young King Henry VIII, who jousting under the name Sir Loyal Heart in 1511. Hardin composed 24 original songs, fully orchestrated for a 16-piece pit orchestra. The performances are free and open to the public. Contact Pam Hardin at 703-425-7896 or pamhardin@verizon.net or Joan Brown at jcbrown1@fcps.edu.

Heather Buck as Tytania in Virginia Opera’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

PHOTO BY BEN SCHILL
PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY
OF VIRGINIA OPERA



Mystery and Magical Dreams at Mason Stage

Virginia Opera presents “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

A fanciful world where love propelled by music can sometimes be quite mad is arriving at the Center for the Arts courtesy of Virginia Opera. An operatic tale sung in English, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” by Benjamin Britten is a vivid retelling of William Shakespeare’s play about magic potions, mix-ups, sprites and spirits, along with a very special donkey called Bottom, a trickster named Puck and a group of humorous folk named “Rude Mechanicals.”

As an opera, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” is a production that through music and singing blurs the lines between fantasy and reality. Britten’s inventive, enchanting score was composed in 1960. It is one of the most produced operas in the past decades. Britten’s musical composition can be romantic for its entangled love stores, ethereal for its vivid night-time forest fantasy, and comic whenever the Rude Mechanicals appear in their spotlight.

In an interview, “Midsummer’s” stage director Michael Shell suggested audiences will know the opera from its Shakespearean roots. “This opera uses recognizable text and lines from the original Shakespeare play, though in slightly different order.”

The Virginia Opera production of “Midsummer” will use the theater world as its setting. It is a place where reality and fantasy collide. “The journey these characters take in ‘Midsummer’ explores one of the things that sets humans apart

Where & When

Virginia Opera presents “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 440 University Drive, Fairfax. Performances: Saturday, Feb. 17, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 18 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$54, \$90 and \$110. Call 888-945-2468 or visit www.cfa.gmu.edu. Note: Sung in English with projected English supertitles. Pre-performance discussion 45 minutes before the curtain with “Dr. Opera” Glenn Winters.

from all other animals; our capacity to love,” added Shell. “Love is blind. Love is irrational and can frustrate. Yet the ‘Midsummer’ characters seek it, desire it, and go after it with reckless abandon in scenes that can be silly and ridiculous about love as a driving force.”

The opera has many physical movement qualities. The performers do more than stand and deliver. The cast includes several returning Virginia Opera veterans. Soprano Heather Buck sings the role of Tytania, the Queen of the Fairies. Bass-baritone Matthew Burns has the comic role of Bottom and former Virginia Opera Herndon Foundation Emerging Artists, David Blalock and Kristen Choi return to sing the roles of Lysander and Hermia, respectively.

Joining this production will be 16 students from the Governor’s School for the Arts Vocal Music Department, under the direction of Alan Fischer and Stephen Z. Cook.

Virginia Opera’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” will be anything but pastoral. It will be “exhilarating and lively, far from staid. Come see for yourself and perhaps recognize your own younger self in love,” added Shell. Consider yourself invited.



Kira Urano created this turtle-shaped cake for the Chocolate Challenge.

PHOTOS BY
BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION

A cake titled, "My Heart Peeps for You."



This barrel of grapes, made out of chocolate by Julie Noto, won first place in the amateur category.

From Creative Cakes To Chocolate Martinis



From left: Lauri Vargas and Meagan Pence of Twins ACE Hardware serve chocolate soda and chocolate-covered, maple-smoked bacon soda.

Liquid Chocolate and the Chocolate Challenge were among the highlights of the Feb. 2-4 Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival.



Sean Kirkpatrick of Adroit Theory Brewing Co. holds a chocolate beer.



Spotlight on the Arts, Cirrus Vodka and Coyote Grille sponsored chocolate martinis at Liquid Chocolate. From left: Randy Henderson of Cirrus, Spotlight Executive Director Jo Ormesher and Spotlight volunteer Becky McNaughton.

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Announcements

News

State of City Discussed

FROM PAGE 3

update our schools. Daniels Run [Elementary] was renovated in 2000 – 18 years ago. And with the advent of online shopping, we need to change our retail centers to make them economically viable. People want experiences and entertainment, and we need to blend that in."

Former Mayor John Mason noted that, "Nowadays, college students can get their beer, coffee, food and other amenities on campus, instead of having to come into the City for them. So you're on the right

track bringing in a consultant to see what we can be."

City Councilwoman Jennifer Passey encouraged more residents to attend meetings such as this one, saying, "These kinds of informed dialogues are helpful. Great minds work really well together."

Looking ahead, Meyer said, "This is a wonderful community and we have some remarkable citizens. We're on the cusp of a major, generational change here, with new residents serving on our boards and commissions. Their new leadership in the next 15-20 years will be absolutely critical."

Legals

ABC LICENSE
Silver Diner Development, LLC trading as Silver Diner, 12250 Fair Lakes Pkwy, Fairfax, VA 22033. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Mixed Beverage on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Robert Giaino, Manager & Vpe Von Hengst, Manager. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Announcements

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BULLETIN

Submit civic/community announcements at 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.

CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

Learn more about caregiving, or brush up on a specific topic, in education programs this year at Insight Memory Care Center, including:

- ❖ **Classes for Caregivers Series** — offered the third Wednesday of each month, programs are geared with family caregivers in mind. Classes begin with the basics, and move through more specialized topics throughout the year.
- ❖ **Wellness Workshops** — offered quarterly on Saturdays, these workshops are designed for caregivers to focus on their own health and well-being.
- ❖ **Engagement Workshops** — offered quarterly on the fifth Wednesday of the month, these workshops teach practical caregiving skills. Come prepared to learn and get engaged.
- ❖ **Caregiver Bootcamp** — Short on time? Caregiver Bootcamp is a full day training session offering many popular topics all in one place. Bootcamps are offered on a Saturday each spring and fall.

Visit www.insightmcc.org for more.

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. 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 or call Kristen Moore at Volunteer Fairfax at 703-246-3531.

Planning Commission Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at Government Center Auditorium, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Topic: Proposed Goddard School. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/braddock.

FRIDAY/FEB. 9

Section 504 - What Parents Need to Know. 10 a.m.-noon at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 100, Dunn Loring. Learn how students with a disability may qualify for a Section 504 Plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of a disability. Kathy Murphy, FCPS Section 504 Specialist will present this workshop and answer your questions. Register at bit.ly/2E6X15C.

SATURDAY/FEB. 10

Office Hours. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck will host Saturday office hours. Email mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov.

- ❖ 9-11:30 a.m. at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton.
- ❖ 12:30-3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon district office, 2511 Parkers Lane, Mount Vernon.

Town Hall Meeting. 9-11 a.m. at the City of Fairfax City Hall, Council Chamber, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax. Del. David Bulova (D-Fairfax) is will hold a Town Hall meeting for his constituents in the 37th House District. Bulova will be joined by State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax). All constituents are invited to share their ideas and thoughts on issues that are important to the community. For more information or to RSVP, contact 804-698-1037 or Deldbulova@house.virginia.gov.

Stuff 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.

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“Chronic Ken”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly nine years into a “13 month to two-year” prognosis, I can hardly believe my good fortune. And though I rarely look a gift-oncologist in the stethoscope, I am happy nonetheless to count my blessings as I continue to look ahead rather than stress behind, and try not think about what was said and when.

At the initial “Team Lourie” meeting with my oncologist, I was told that there was no cure for lung cancer. I could be treated though. As to whether I might live beyond two years, I remember my oncologist responding to our desperate query by saying: “Could you be the one? Sure.” Reassuring it wasn’t, but hopeful? It sort of was.

As the years have passed and research into lung cancer has grown, an interim step to a cure has evolved: treating lung cancer as a chronic (has opposed to acute/dire) disease, similar to diabetes, as an example. Not as yet curable, but manageable over a longer period of time. A disease with which, I’m fond of saying, one can live. Live beyond the applicable word because, I have to tell you, at the beginning of my treatment, based on what my oncologist had described, living was a long way from what he was anticipating my outcome would be. Nevertheless, I began treatment the following week and the rest is history you regular readers have been privy to since June of ‘09 when I first published a “cancer” column (as I call them).

Feb. 20, 2018 will be nine years since my internal medicine office called me at work with the results of my previous week’s biopsy. He said the tumor was malignant. I remember asking him what that meant. (Duh!). He said he’d rather let the oncologist answer any questions and referred me to the doctor, the same doctor with whom I’ve been a patient all these years. Sure enough, a week later we heard the news: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. And I’ve been up to my whatsis in real or imagined anxiety ever since.

And I’m still present and accounted for as are more and more of us previously-characterized-as-terminal, non-small cell lung cancer “diagnosees.” We are not just patients any more. We are survivors, surviving longer than ever before. We are not cured but neither are we dying. Our treatments are modified when the results warrant it and life continues to go on. As much as a cure would be, and continues to be, the goal, life continues, relatively normally, for many of us. It’s unlikely however, that we’ll ever get out from underneath the weight of our cancer diagnosis. Rather than dying from it though, we’re now able to live with it months/years longer than many patients previously diagnosed within the disease.

So what’s the next step? Maybe a bigger, bouncier, longer step than before, but more than likely, more of the same, moving forward, one step at a time. To one whose present was hardly a given nine years ago and whose future seemed like a taken – away, being able now to actually live in the present without fearing/forfeiting the future is the opposite scenario many of us lung cancer patients, especially those of as staged as IV, ever imagined. Day by day was the best we could muster.

Now we’re mustering months and years and living longer more fulfilling lives. We’re not victims anymore nor are we victimized by our circumstances. We’re advocating and being advocated for. We don’t exactly have lung cancer on the run, but we may have it on the trot. I don’t know if I’ll live to see a cure but I have lived long enough to have given myself a nickname, one which I’m most proud to have earned.

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



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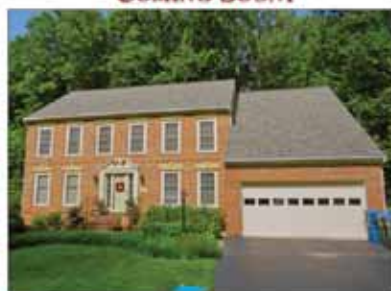
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