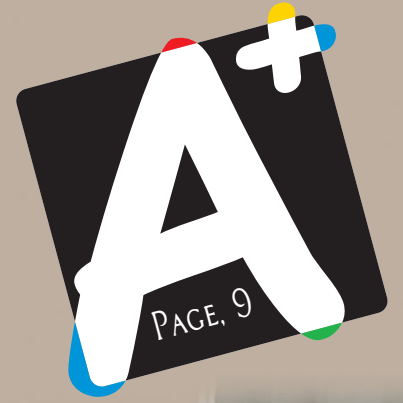


Great Falls CONNECTION



Global to Local: This Is Not a Test

NEWS, PAGE 3

Letter Seeks \$102 Million For George Washington Parkway Repair

NEWS, PAGE 7

Calling all Poetry Lovers!

NEWS, PAGE 7


Saturday, March 14: Lila Dubynin, of Franklin Sustainable Farms, takes cash from a patron at Great Falls Farmers' Market, a Winter Indoor Market located at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike Great Falls.

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

- FAIRFAX COUNTY ACTIVATES CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER**
Fairfax County activated a Joint Information Center in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 13.
- ❖ **Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage** – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus
 - ❖ **Emergency Information Blog** (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
 - ❖ **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center** – The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.
 - ❖ Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.
 - ❖ **Twitter** – @fairfaxcounty and @fairfaxhealth
 - ❖ **Facebook** – www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 25
Pregnancy, Birth, and Your Back.
6-7 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Presented by Dr. Charles Masarsky of Vienna Chiropractic. Back pain is common during and after pregnancy. This free one-hour presentation will explain the most common origin of back pain post-partum as well as during pregnancy. Practices to alleviate your pain will be discussed and demonstrated. To register, contact Kathy Blevins, Vienna Community Center, 703-255-7801 or KBlevins@viennava.gov.

Fill Us In Public Hearing. 7:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The McLean Community Center is asking residents of Small District 1A-Dranesville, who pay a real estate tax surcharge to support the center, to "Fill Us In" on what kinds of new programs and services they would like to see offered and/or improved upon in the planning for FY2022 fiscal year. MCC is holding a Public Hearing on FY 2022 Programs. The hearing is the first step in planning for the FY2022 budget cycle, which begins July 1, 2021 and ends June 30, 2022. MCC's divisions include the Robert Ames Alden Theatre and The Old Firehouse Center. New this year, residents can participate in the meeting remotely using GoToWebinar, an online video conferencing app. Residents can access the meeting on their computer, tablet or smartphone, at tinyurl.com/mcc-programs-2022, then sign in with the webinar ID: 324-478-547. Call the Center at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit: www.mcleancenter.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 31
GFES Kindergarten Orientation.
9:15 to 10:15 a.m. At Great Falls Elementary School, 701 Walker Road, Great Falls. Children who are age 5 by September 30, 2020 are eligible to enter kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year. To confirm Great Falls Elementary School serves your particular address, visit the FCPS website, click on the boundary link, and type in your address. Parents and eligible children are invited to an overview of the Great Falls Elementary School kindergarten program. Rising kindergarten



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Halloween Spooktackular
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Cars and Coffee
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Photos by Walt Lawrence

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Capital Realty Services.....	703-759-4900
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Great Falls Creamery.....	703-272-7609
Great Falls Cycle Studio.....	703-585-5631
Great Falls Family Dentistry.....	703-759-4707
Great Falls Physical Therapy.....	703-349-1030
Great Falls Pilates.....	703-480-0281
Great Falls Pools.....	703-250-5585
Jinny Beyer Studio.....	703-759-0250
John Nugent and Son	
Plumbing & Heating.....	703-291-1926
Katie's Coffee House.....	703-759-2759
Loebig Chiropractic.....	703-757-5817
New Paradigm Capital Mgmt.....	703-757-4802
Old Brogue Irish Pub.....	703-759-3309
Pio Pio Restaurant.....	703-865-7700
Property Collective.....	703-253-8505
River Nail and Spa.....	703-746-8886
Robert Mobley, AIA Architect.....	703-759-1927
Rossen Landscapes.....	703-327-2284
School of Theatrical Dance.....	703-759-5652
Spectrum Property Management.....	703-307-2965
The Saddlery.....	703-759-3500
Village Centre Mgmt Office.....	703-759-2485
Village Retreat/Massage Therapy.....	703-638-4852
Wells Fargo Bank.....	703-757-1040
Wild Ginger Restaurant.....	703-759-5040



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Global to Local: This Is Not a Test

WEEK ONE: 03/09-03/15

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

We are in this together to save the lives of people in Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation and across the globe - a fight against COVID-19. It's real; it's here, and this is not a test. Take it seriously. Cesar del Aguila, Town of Herndon Councilmember, reflected on the week's events late Sun. night, March 15. "This is a generational transformation to our country and culture. This will affect everything. How we work, communicate and congregate," he said.

During the days leading up to Sunday, March 15, events related to COVID-19 escalate. Residents and leaders in the Town of Herndon, nearby communities of Reston and Great Falls, Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation and globally try to make sense of it and how best to respond. They consider needs and risks as COVID-19 spreads.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10: The World Health Organization releases the statement: "The International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) today issued new guidance to help protect children and schools from transmission of the COVID-19 virus... In the event of school closures, the guidance includes recommendations to mitigate against the possible negative impacts on children's learning and well-being. This means having solid plans in place to ensure the continuity of learning, including remote learning options such as online education strategies and radio broadcasts of academic content, and access to essential services for all children."

In Fairfax County, Health Director Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu and Benjamin Schwartz M.D., Division Director, Epidemiology and Population Health, Health Department provide a coronavirus (COVID-19) briefing to the Board of Supervisors at its regular meeting. "What you will hear today is the Health Department turning up that dial-in collaboration with partners like the healthcare community, schools and businesses, community organizations and leaders of our diverse ethnic communities and places of worship and so on...and minimize potential impact of this global public threat on our community," says Addo-Ayensu.

Schwartz addresses the Supervisors. "The spread is mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes...those droplets do not remain suspended in the air...and only travel less than six feet. That is our magic distance," he said... Is this going to be a global pandemic that engulfs our communities and our country?" says Schwartz. "Certainly, we cannot predict the future, but I think there is a better question than what can we predict, and that is what



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
Thursday, March 12: Restaurants are empty shortly after 7 p.m.



Friday, March 13: School is closed because of COVID-19, yet only two children play on the equipment in Herndon.

we should be planning for," he says.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11: The World Health Organization officially declares the new coronavirus disease COVID-19 a pandemic. It is rapidly spreading far and wide.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12: COVID-19 becomes a reality in Fairfax County. At a press conference that evening, Jeff McKay, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, says, "It is a challenging and evolving situation, but we are well prepared in Fairfax County." Dr. Scott Brabrand Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools says they will guide with a "tiered approach" collaborating with local medical authorities and others. He adds that the public schools will stay open because there is no evidence of "community spread" in the Northern Virginia area of the virus, according to health officials.

At 11:34 p.m. that evening Fairfax Schools

@ fcps tweets: "All FCPS schools will be closed Friday, March 13, 2020. School offices and central offices will open on time with an unscheduled leave policy in effect for 12-month employees. (Condition 2). More details to follow."

FRIDAY, MARCH 13: World Health Organization announces: "More than 132,000 cases of COVID-19 have now been reported to WHO, from 123 countries and territories. 5,000 people have lost their lives, a tragic milestone. Europe has now become the epicenter of the pandemic, with more reported cases and deaths than the rest of the world combined, apart from China. More cases are now being reported every day than were reported in China at the height of its epidemic...Our message to countries continues to be: you must take a comprehensive approach. Not testing alone. Not contact tracing alone. Not quarantine alone. Not social distancing alone. Do it all."

COVID-19 Pandemic hits the area.



Friday, March 13: Fairfax County schools are closed. At Hutchison Elementary School in Herndon, Dawn Dzurilla, food manager at Terraset Elementary School in Reston, distributes grab-and-go meals to students.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam declares a state of emergency in response to the coronavirus pandemic as public school districts across the Commonwealth start to announce closures. "Quite frankly, we're getting mixed messages from the federal government. We find that unacceptable, so I'm taking the lead on this, but we will do everything and continue to do everything in Virginia to keep Virginians safe," says Northam. A declaration is an administrative tool that allows for additional flexibility in dealing with the virus.

Fairfax County Public Schools announces schools closed through April 10; for staff who work less than 12 months, schools closed for at least two weeks. According to the Fairfax County Public Schools website: "We will reassess schools reopening for those staff members after two weeks, and we will make that decision no later than Friday, March 27...Schools will be open on Monday, March 16, to assist with providing technology to students in grades 3-8 that do not have technology at home."

St. Joseph Catholic School in Herndon announces it is closed until Apr. 10. However, students can access the building to gather materials for distance learning, which begins Tuesday, March 17.

Fairfax County Emergency Information, Fairfax Alerts posts 4:26 p.m.: "Fairfax Alerts: Two new presumptive positive COVID-19 cases announced Friday, March 13 <https://bit.ly/2WdrGWW> nixle.us/BPC4E

Fairfax County Emergency Information, Fairfax Alerts posts 6:20 p.m.: "March 13 daily update: info on getting tested, school closures, SACC, courts, businesses and more <https://bit.ly/3cZ4mST> nixle.us/BPCFC"

Shelves at local Costco, Walgreens, Giant and other stores empty of given items, with rationing of goods such as rice, sugar and antiviral cleaning supplies. Home Depot in Reston posts a sign "No N-95 masks."

Emergency food programs stand up overnight at five public schools to cope with food

SEE THIS IS NOT A TEST, PAGE 6

OPINION

Session Wrap-Up 2020

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

The General Assembly session that adjourned last week was a busy one; 3,001 bills and resolutions were introduced, and 1,351 of those passed. But the historic nature of the session was not in the number of bills introduced: it was in the shift in philosophy governing the state that went from conservative to progressive. The Associated Press termed it "one of the most consequential sessions in Virginia's history."

Some of the more noteworthy bills that passed are summarized below. I voted for them unless otherwise noted.

The General Assembly ratified the **Equal Right Amendment** after about 40 years of refusing to do so. Virginia is the 38th state to ratify the ERA; federal courts will decide if the amendment was ratified within the deadline set for it.

Numerous laws that had been put in place over the last several decades to make it difficult for a woman to have **access to an abortion** were repealed including a mandatory 24-hour waiting period and ultrasound testing. Dozens of **Jim Crow era laws** that limited the rights of Black people were removed from the code as they had been declared unconstitutional by federal courts years ago. Local governments were given authority to determine the fate of **Confederate monuments** in their jurisdictions.

The **Virginia Values Act** prohibits discrimination in housing and employment for all persons. My bill to bring **protections of the hate crime law** to all persons regardless of



COMMENTARY

sexual orientation or gender identity passed as did other bills to **prohibit LGBTQ discrimination**. **Conversion therapy** on minors is banned under a new law.

Major bills passed to **make voting easier**. No-excuse absentee voting passed, and election day will now be a holiday. Repeal

of the photo ID requirement for voting passed. The environment received extra attention. The **Clean Energy Act** sets Virginia on course to be carbon neutral by 2045 as well setting timelines on the move to wind and solar power and the use of more renewables. My bill to **clean up the Chesapeake Bay** with more nutrient management of agricultural run-off passed as did my bill to manage the menhaden fishery as an important part of the ecology of the Bay.

Seven of the eight bills to **end gun violence** proposed by Governor Northam passed including my bill to establish universal background checks for all firearm purchases. Other bills to limit handgun purchases to one a month passed as did a bill to limit gun possession for persons who are the subject of a restrictive order for violent behavior.

The biggest step in decades towards **transportation** improvements passed. The additional gas tax raised by the bill will provide monies necessary to improve the roads in the state as well as provide monies for mass transit and rail. A bill to ban holding a **cell phone** while driving passed. No longer will driver's licenses be suspended for unpaid court fees and fines under a bill that passed. Undocumented immigrants will be able to get a driver's license.

For workers, the **minimum wage** will be going up from its current \$7.25 to \$9.50 this year and to \$12 in three years. My bill to raise the minimum wage at a greater level was incorporated into the bill that passed. A bill to allow **collective bargaining** between local governments and their employees passed.

Balance billing for hospital and medical costs are eliminated by another bill that passed. A Virginia **health insurance exchange** will be established to replace the federal one.

I voted against a bill that passed that allows five cities to have a referendum on **casino gambling**. I voted for a bill that will ban thousands of slot-machine-like games of skills in restaurants and stores.

Possession of a small amount of **marijuana** has been decriminalized. As part of legislation to end the **school-to-prison pipeline**, a bill passed to prohibit students from being found guilty of disorderly conduct for actions in school.

A **constitutional amendment** to have a 16-member panel of legislators and citizens redraw legislative and congressional district lines passed for a second time and will be on the ballot for voter approval in November.

A \$135 billion **biennial budget** provides more money for pre-school education, raises for teachers and state employees, more school counselors, more developmental disability waiver slots, free community college for certain eligible students, among other improvements.

For more information on bills summarized here and on other legislation passed, go to <https://lis.virginia.gov/>. Most bills have not been signed by the Governor but are expected to be.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Pattern That Can't Be Ignored

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the article titled "Wellbeing: Inflicting Pain to Gain Relief" (Connection, March 4-10, 2020.) As mentioned in the article, there has been a rise in teen self-harm over the years. I think it is important to take a step back and recognize the causes of the increases in self-harm. This isn't something that is randomly affecting people but rather something that is largely affecting teens, starting as early as middle school. This is a pattern that cannot be ignored.

Why is it that so many teenagers are experiencing self-harm? Could it be our school environments? Could it be that screen time is replacing in-person contact? Perhaps teenagers find that their only outlet left is to turn to self-harm. It's vital that we help

the individuals going through self-harm, but it is just as important that we take a step back and try to understand the outside forces that have caused this disproportionate pattern in teenagers. I believe that there is something more significant going on than individual events but rather a group of people situated in a society that could be an outside force causing this problem. It is up to us to address this.

Lianna Williams
Vienna

Inspirational Fight for Women's Rights

To the Editor:

This year's Women's History Month is particularly special because Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights

Amendment (ERA). The ERA is designed to guarantee equal rights for all American citizens, regardless of gender. While it's disappointing to know that it took so long to ratify women's equality, we have seen women, such as, Malala Yousafzai, fight for justice in all parts of the world. As a college student and young Muslim women, seeing someone like her who is not afraid to fight for women's rights while maintaining her Muslim identity is inspirational.

It is disappointing that Pakistan and other Muslim countries deny women the access to education, which is what Malala Yousafzai bravely fought for. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) emphasized the importance of education for both genders. He said, "It is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman to acquire knowledge."

This Women's History Month, as we celebrate Virginia's historic

achievement, let us also not forget about Muslim women role models such as Malala Yousafzai or political leaders, such as, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Let's come together to celebrate the achievements of women from all nationalities and religions.

Sabiha Basit
Centreville

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

Send to:

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Alexandria VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.
By e-mail:
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NEWS

The school community came together for Langley's third annual Day of Giving on Saturday, Feb. 29.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Langley School Packs 65,000 Meals for Hurricane Victims in the Bahamas

As part of The Langley School's culture of giving and commitment to service learning, the school community came together for Langley's third annual Day of Giving on Saturday, Feb. 29 to pack 65,000 meals for families displaced in the Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian in September 2019.

In partnership with the Outreach Program, a nonprofit that organizes food-packing events to support those in need at home and abroad, The Langley School mobilized nearly 450 volunteers – including students, parents, teachers, alumni, and friends – to pack meals of instant oatmeal in one-hour shifts. To cover the

cost of each meal, the school raised \$19,500 through a student coin collection and online donations.

"Langley's Day of Giving, which is organized by a dedicated group of parent volunteers, brings our entire school community together in the spirit of service," says Head of School Dr. Elinor Scully. "From three-year-olds to grandparents, it's wonderful to see Langley families dedicating their time and resources to helping those who are not as fortunate. This event provides our students with a global perspective and gives them a meaningful way to connect with the world outside the DC area."

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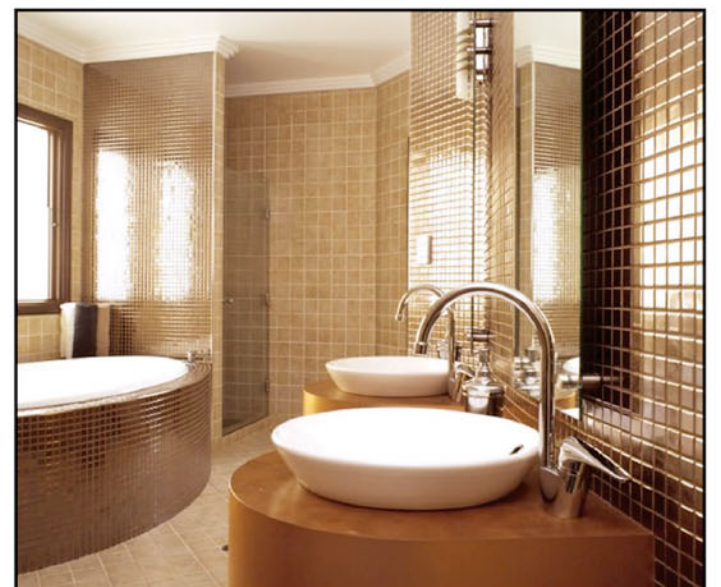
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NEWS

This Is Not a Test

FROM PAGE 3

insecurity for some of the community's neediest. At Hutchison Elementary School in Herndon, Dawn Dzurilla, food manager at Terraset Elementary School in Reston, helps out. She stands on the sidewalk in front of a table piled high with grab-and-go-meals. In the first thirty minutes of being open, she reports 96 free lunches served at no cost to students and 12 adult lunches at \$2 each distributed. Plans are to expand the food distribution to other schools the week of March 16, according to the FCPS website. A spokesperson for Fairfax County Schools confirms, "The grab-and-go meals are available to anyone, regardless of age or residency."

In the Town of Herndon, a handwritten sign inside the Herndon Community Center reads, "HCC Classes CANCELLED Friday @12:00 until Sunday night." The hallway is empty. No one is in the gym, two people are in the exercise room and one person is in the pool. At an adjacent outdoor playground, a woman, who asked not to be identified, sits with a bottle of sanitizer in her hands and watches children from a karate studio play on the equipment.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14: Fairfax County Emergency Information, Fairfax Alerts posts: "Four new presumptive positive COVID-19 cases announced Saturday. Details: <https://bit.ly/38Knv7G> nixle.us/BPEQN

"The total number of (COVID-19) cases in the Fairfax Health District is now 10. The results are considered presumptive, pending confirmation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has not yet occurred for any of the cases." The alert adds: "One of the individuals is a Fairfax County Public Schools teacher at Lynbrook Elementary School."

The release quotes Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director of Health with the Fairfax County Health Department, to say: "At this time, there is no evidence of sustained community spread of the novel coronavirus, and the risk to the general FCPS community remains low."

Reston Community Center announces on its website: "RCC will follow Fairfax County Government decision-making and guidance...Our facilities are receiving added hygienic cleaning attention regularly...Aquatics Patrons: The CDC has issued the following guidance with respect to the ability of people to use swimming pools during the pandemic: There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools and hot tubs." As of 3:30 p.m., RCC cancels 15 programs and events at its Lake Anne Community Center Only two programs remain open.

The Virginia Department of Health reports the state's first COVID-19 death, a hospitalized man in his 70s who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and died of respiratory failure after acquiring the virus through an unknown source.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15: Closures trend. "VDH (Virginia Department of Health) is no longer reporting the pending number of tests as testing capacity has expanded to include commercial laboratories. Commercial laboratories report all results to VDH," according to the Virginia Department of Health.

At 1:08 p.m. Fairfax County Emergency Information posts: Senior Centers, Adult Day Health Care Centers closed effective immediately. Details: <https://bit.ly/39To4xm> nixle.us/BPFN4.

Additionally, beginning Monday, March 16, Fairfax County will provide meal delivery service to regis-



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Saturday, March 14: John Hobson chooses some mushrooms at the Great Falls Farmers' Market, a Winter Indoor Market located at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike Great Falls.

tered participants who wish to obtain them. County staff will be contacting participants and caregivers directly to make those arrangements."

At 4:46 p.m., Fairfax County Emergency Information posts: "Fairfax Alerts: Park, library and other community facilities to close for two weeks. Details: <https://bit.ly/39To4xm> nixle.us/BPFN4

At 6:07 p.m., Fairfax County Emergency Information posts: "Fairfax Alerts: Guidance for community events includes state ban on gatherings of more than 100. Details: <https://bit.ly/33IYm2b> nixle.us/BPGBJ

The Herndon Community Center and Tennis Bubble close until Mar. 27; preschool classes close until April 10, according to the Herndon Parks and Recreation Facebook page.

At 7:43 p.m., Fairfax County Emergency Information posts: "Fairfax Alerts: Circuit Court open Monday, General District Court cancels all dockets (GDC bond hearings will continue)."

Meanwhile, small crowds are out and about at weekend events in the northwestern area of Fairfax County. An indoor Farmers Market in Great Falls Saturday at the Grange draws a reported 100 patrons over the four hours of operation, with individuals spread out over the two floors. In Herndon, families and individuals stroll and cycle on the W & OD Trail. In Reston, the Kalypso Sports Bar Leprechaun arrives by pontoon boat, docking at Lake Anne. He distributes gold coins much to the delight of the 10-person crowd. In Herndon, patrons visit a local nursery planning their next garden.

RELIABLE SOURCES (NOT SOCIAL MEDIA)

Current information on the COVID-19 pandemic changes not just daily but hourly. Situation reports are being updated; facts presented and myths knocked down. Reliable information can be sourced from local to global sites such as:

Fairfax County - Fairfax County Health Department
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus
Call 703-267-3511. The center is open from 9:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends. Residents can text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.


State of Virginia - Commonwealth of Virginia Health Department: Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus

National Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/covid19

Global - World Health Organization <https://www.who.int>

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CALL: 703-790-0123, TTY: 711
EMAIL: ELECTIONS@MCLEANCENTER.ORG
VISIT: <https://tinyurl.com/mclean-center-election>





CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Last year, backups continued for nearly three months as repairs for a culvert pipe failure and a large sinkhole were completed.

Letter Seeks \$102 Million for George Washington Parkway Repair

U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) led a bicameral letter to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao in support of the National Park Service's (NPS) grant application for \$102 million in federal funds to reconstruct nearly eight miles of the northern section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

The George Washington Parkway serves as a major commuting route for residents of Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., facilitating the travel of more than 33 million vehicles per year. Since the north end of the Parkway's completion in 1962, the roadway has been in need of repair due to large increases in traffic.

"The proposed project will address serious deterioration of the GWMP and implement needed safety improvements to protect motorists. If funded, the Park Service plans to repave nearly eight miles of road along the GWMP, repair stormwater management systems to prevent erosion at drainage outfalls; and rehabilitate two historic, scenic overlooks. The project also includes replacing guard-

rails, repairing walls, constructing new curbs, and building emergency turnarounds," wrote the members of Congress.

In their letter, the members of Congress underscored the need for urgent safety improvements on the Parkway following a recent sinkhole that shut down large portions of the roadway.

"In 2019, several portions of the GWMP were closed to address emergency repairs relating to a culvert pipe failure and a large sinkhole that took nearly three months to complete. Both repairs resulted in significant disruption and displacement of motorists along a heavily traveled section of the GWMP. Improvements to the Parkway are needed to prevent similar disruptions from occurring and ensure the safety of our constituents who utilize this roadway on a regular basis," they continued.

Sen. Warner was joined on the letter by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and U.S. Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Don Beyer (D-VA), Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) and U.S. Del. Eleanor Norton Holmes (D-DC).

Calling all Poetry Lovers!

Open Community Forum Invites you to participate in Poetry Reading.

BY KRISTIN CLARK TAYLOR

On Saturday, April 11, 2020, at 2 p.m., the Great Falls Library and the Great Falls Writers Group will host an Open Poetry Reading at the library, 9830 Old Georgetown Road, Great Falls.

Whether participants come to read their poetry aloud or simply sit back and enjoy listening to others share their work, the event is designed to stimulate creative expression and encourage intellectual sharing.

Participating poets must sign up at the Great Falls Library at least thirty minutes prior to the event (1:30 p.m.). No advance registration is necessary.

Each poet can share as much of their original work as their five-minute time slot will accommodate. (Depending on the number of participants, there is a possibility that the five-minute time sharing limit could be expanded.)

Both children and adults are encouraged to participate! Come join in the fun and be a part of this stimulating group discussion and sharing.

For more information, contact the Great Falls Library at 703-757-8560.



Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known



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www.lostdogandcatrescue.org

CALENDAR

Editor's Note: Be aware that many events could be cancelled as precaution to the spread of COVID-19. Please check before heading to events. Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Vienna Time Machine. At Freeman Store & Museum, 131 Church Street, NE, Vienna. Welcoming visitors to HVT's newest exhibit is a U-2 pilot suit worn by Lt. Col. Sam Crouse. Other timepieces include iconic toys from the decade such as a GI Joe, Etch A Sketch, and Easy Bake oven. Posters commemorate some of the 1960s' most pivotal films, including 2001: A Space Odyssey and Rosemary's Baby. Other posters and images nod to the issues that rocked the 1960s: Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, and segregation/integration. HVI encourages visitors to add a personal – and local – touch to the exhibit by sharing their story. A message board accompanying the exhibit will feature anecdotes, historical moments, and personal stories about the decade. The Freeman Store & Museum is open from 12-4 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday.

Hogwart's Vacation Bible School

Registration. At Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. The camp dates are June 22–26, 2020 for morning or afternoon sessions. Children 5 through 11 years old are invited to participate in this popular and unique summer camp experience which explores the Christian themes and lessons in the Harry Potter stories. Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Vienna is magically converted into Hogwarts School where children attend “classes” taught by favorite professors including Professors McGonagall, Snape, Hooch, and Binns. Teenage prefects lead age level groups to their activities and all students share a closing snack in the Great Hall. This year's theme will be based on book 2, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. Registration forms will be in the Church Office and online. More information: http://www.holycomforter.com/Children/Vacation_Bible_School/

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. For more information, visit the web site www.goldengirls.org

21st Lenten Devotional. Now thru April 12. At The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The church is publishing its 21st annual Devotions for Lent. The publication will be available on the church's website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com, beginning on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26, through Easter on April 12. The church also will post each day's devotion on its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/goodshepherdvienna. Printed copies will be mailed to neighborhoods surrounding the church, and a limited number of copies will be available at the church. Additionally, the church plans to hold weekly gatherings in members' homes to discuss the devotionals. Free. Visit the website: www.GoodShepherdVA.com

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

McLean Newcomers and Neighbors

Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. At Nostos Restaurant, 8100 Boone Boulevard, Vienna. State Department retiree Judy Rouse will discuss the issue of missing and abducted children. The cost is \$40 per person. To attend, pay at <https://squareup.com/market/mclean-newcomers-club>. Prospective members are invited. No reservations will be accepted after Friday, March 13. Visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org.

MARCH 19 TO APRIL 1

McLean Project for the Arts Spotlights

Student Art Work. At 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Project for the Arts will celebrate Youth Arts Month by hosting two art shows featuring the work of Fairfax County Public School elementary, middle and high school students. The Langley Pyramid Youth Art Show opens Thursday, March 19, 2020 and runs through April 1, 2020. Langley Pyramid Youth Art Show Opening Exhibition Reception: Thursday, March 19, 4:30 – 6 p.m.; show runs through April 1, 2020. Visit mpaart.org.



“Charlie & The Chocolate Factory”

The Traveling Players Studio will present “Charlie & The Chocolate Factory” in Tysons Corner Center March 21-22.

MARCH 21-22

“Charlie & The Chocolate Factory.” Saturday, at 3 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m.

At the Traveling Players Studio at Tysons Corner Center on the first floor next to Lord & Taylor. Presented by the Traveling Players Ensemble. “Charlie & The Chocolate Factory” centers on Charlie Bucket, a young boy who loves chocolate. Mr. Willy Wonka, the most wondrous inventor in the world, is opening the gates of his amazing chocolate factory to five lucky children with golden tickets. And Charlie got the last golden ticket! But what he finds inside the factory is beyond even his wildest dreams. The 45-minute performance is a professionally directed and designed show with elementary and middle school actors who participated in Traveling Players winter classes. Tickets are \$5 for children (5 and under), \$10 for adults. Group rates are available. For more information, visit www.travelingplayers.org or email outreach@travelingplayers.org.



Peeps Diorama Contest

A Peeps Diorama Contest will be held at the Great Falls Library.

ONGOING

Peeps Diorama Contest. At Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The contest is designed around a book, scene or theme from literature. Entries must be submitted in a standard shoebox, using only Peeps as characters (for examples, Google “Peep Diorama”) and turned in with an entry form to the Great Falls Library between April 13-18. Entry is free, and each entrant will receive a coupon for a free book at the Great Falls Library Book Sale. The three prize categories are age 11 and under, ages 12-17, and over 18. The rules are few: no food other than Peeps in the entry, which must be appropriate for public viewing, centered on a literary theme, using Peep figures only, in a standard shoebox, with entry form required. The community will vote on the winners while they are on display in the Library April 20-May 6. Winners will be announced at the Book Sale at noon on May 9.

MARCH 20 TO APRIL 12

Cherry Blossom Festival Central. At Tysons Corner Center, Second Level outside of Nordstrom, McLean. The public is invited to stop in for free souvenirs, festival schedules and the latest information on activities throughout the region. On March 28, the Center will host its annual National Cherry Blossom Festival Day with a special event from 1–3 p.m. with craft demonstrations, free gifts, and more. Visit <http://www.fxva.com/plan-your-trip/visitor-center>; or call 703-752-9500.

FRIDAY/MARCH 20

An Evening of Cars & Art. 7 p.m. At The Car

Barn in Great Falls. The Arts of Great Falls fundraiser where Don and Stacey Wood are hosting. While the venue's architecture is a highlight, guests will enjoy mingling with the antique cars even more. Don't miss this rare occasion when the community is invited inside the garage of Wood Motor Sports.

Young Adult Game Night. 7:15 p.m. At Breakout Games, 1073 W. Broad Street, Suite 201, Falls Church. For ages 18-30. Young Adult Game Night sponsored by the Young Adult Ministry at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church. Call the church office during normal business hours at 703-356-7200 or visit <https://www.lewinsville.org/events/young-adult-game-night-2/>

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

Faith & Public Policy Breakfast. 8:30 a.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. They will begin with a light breakfast 8:30 a.m. and the presentation and discussion from 9 a.m. until about 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Speaker, Erin McKenney, Executive Director of Just Neighbors, an immigration legal services non-profit founded by members of the United Methodist Church, will provide an overview of their work and discuss hot immigration topics of the day, including overall policy, and issues like DACA, Travel Bans, Public Charge and more. Just Neighbors provides direct immigration legal services to low-income immigrants in Northern Virginia as well as some rural areas of the state. Call the Church Office during normal business hours at 703-356-7200 or visit <https://www.lewinsville.org/events/faith-public-policy-breakfast-2/>

Historic Marker Dedication. 10 a.m. At the Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The dedication of the newly installed Fairfax County Historic Marker, honoring McLean's first fire station, will take place. Refreshments will be served. Everyone is welcome. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

MARCH 21-22

“A Midsummer Night's Dream.” Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 7 p.m.

At the Traveling Players Studio at Tysons Corner Center on the first floor next to Lord & Taylor. Presented by the Traveling Players Ensemble. A Midsummer Night's Dream follows four young lovers who evade parental rule and city law by escaping into the forest, only to be transformed by mischievous fairies. Reality and illusion interchange in the woods, as do love and hate, clarity and confusion. As the tricks are reversed and the couples reunite, we delight in their wedding entertainment provided by a set of bumbling actors. The 90-minute performance is a professionally directed and designed show with high school actors who participated in Traveling Players winter classes. Tickets are \$5 for children (5 and under), \$10 for adults. Group rates are available. For more information, visit www.travelingplayers.org or email outreach@travelingplayers.org.

Photo Show. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Area amateur and student photographers are invited to participate in the Photography Contest and Exhibit at the Vienna Community Center, at which submissions will be displayed 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, March 21, and noon-3 p.m. Sunday, March 22. Entry fee is \$10 per person, with each participant allowed a maximum of three photo submissions total across seven categories: nature, pictorial, scenic, portraiture, architecture, animals, and photojournalism. Ribbons will be awarded in all categories, in both color and black and white divisions. Student photographers in grades 7-12 will be judged in a separate category. Participants must submit their photos in person with their application either from 5-8 p.m. Thursday, March 19, or noon-3:45 p.m. Friday, March 20. The application and physical requirements for the photos are listed at viennava.gov/photo.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21, 28

Four Floor Tour. 10:30 a.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Explore the rarely seen second and third floors of Colvin Run Mill. Put on some comfy shoes, because you'll be climbing steep stairs. The second and third floor areas are not ADA accessible, but alternative arrangements will be made for those who cannot climb stairs but wish to participate. The tours are designed for participants age 10 to adult. Cost is \$10 per person. Reservations are suggested; walk-ins are welcome. Call 703-759-2771.

SUNDAY/MARCH 22

Lynn Patron Retrospective. 2-4 p.m. At BedHeaders Home, 9895 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Lynn lived and worked part-time in Great Falls from 1995 through 2018 and much of her work reflects the local environment. She was an accomplished ‘modernist’ painter and sculptress having developed a very particular personal style focused on color and form. They will be exhibiting original oil paintings and Lynn's giclée prints, both large and small scale works.

Talking to Children about Coronavirus

Sharing developmentally appropriate information can ease fears.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

From school closures to travel bans, the rapid spread of coronavirus has led to a time of unprecedented uncertainty. Feelings of anxiety and fear are rampant, particularly in children, say educators. Helping them feel grounded and having open and honest conversations can soothe feelings of angst.

"Stick to routines and schedules when possible," said Karen Kunz, Middle School Counselor at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School. "Children thrive with clear structure and schedules. Even with school closures, start to imagine what a schedule might look like at home."

A child's age will affect the approach that a parent might take. "Keep in mind, depending on their developmental level, children will comprehend and be concerned about different things regarding the coronavirus," said Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Marymount University.

Those who are of kindergarten age or younger might feel an unrealistic fear of the virus because of the ego-centrism and magical thinking which are common for that age group, says Gulyn.

"School-aged children probably have a concrete understanding of how this virus is transmitted and understand well the importance of washing their hands," said Gulyn. "Their frustration will come from refraining from favorite activities such as sports or music events, school, or socializing in groups of kids."

Assuring children that there will be a return to normalcy soon and answering their questions honestly, logically and respectfully is the approach Gulyn suggests.

"Teenagers understand the basics of the virus, but they could get caught up with myths associated with coronavirus, especially because there is a lot of true and false information online," she said. "I've observed that in my own teenage sons. Monitor and discuss what they are hearing and help them learn to distinguish fact from fiction about corona."

For this age group, living with a heightened level of uncertainty can evoke strong emotions. "Teens will be very frustrated and annoyed by restrictions placed on group activities that they love, especially those that involve time with peers," said Gulyn. "Be sympathetic to your teen about those frustrations."

"For older children, monitor the amount of social media and internet access they are consuming," added Kunz. "Social media sites can easily aggravate and heighten anxiety and worry by sharing misinformation."

While information about the virus is moving rapidly and details are evolving, maintaining a sense of normalcy can be challenging. "Stay calm and carry on," said Susan DeLaurentis, Director of Counseling and the Lower School Counselor at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School. "Modeling calm and reasoned reactions to stressful events help children manage their own anxiety. They look to parents and other adults



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Turning hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer into a game or a competition for younger students can help them find joy in a stressful situation, says Susan DeLaurentis of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School.

to see their verbal and non-verbal reactions, and will often follow suit."

"School nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers can support these discussions and follow up with students who may need additional support," added Lucy H. Caldwell, director of news and information, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). "In addition to talking with children about the importance of washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes."

When discussing COVID-19, stick to basic facts in a developmentally appropriate fashion, advises DeLaurentis. "Reassure your children that we are doing exactly what we should do right now," she said. "Also, using the fact that children don't seem to be as affected by the virus is a fact that can be reassuring to children."

"As a parent or caregiver, your first concern is about how to protect and take care of your children and family, added Kurt Larrick, Assistant Director of the Arlington County Department of Human

Services "Some basic knowledge is a great place to start." It can be comforting to highlight the actions that children can take to protect themselves, suggests DeLaurentis. "Emphasize what children can control in the situations they are in," she said. "They can wash their hands, and even turning that into a game or a competition for younger students can help them find some joy in a stressful situation."

Find a balance between staying informed and information overload and monitor the amount of time children are exposed to news about COVID-19, says DeLaurentis.

"Younger children often cannot comprehend the information they hear on the news," she said. "They may misunderstand or misinterpret the news they hear, and often this misinformation can lead to more fear and anxiety."

"Social media sites can easily aggravate and heighten anxiety and worry by sharing misinformation."

— Karen Kunz, Middle School Counselor, St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Presented by The Alden



Macdonald Scholarship Final Competition
Wednesday, March 18, 8 p.m.
Free admission

The Old Firehouse



Friday Night Activities VR Zone DC
Friday, March 20, 4-10 p.m.
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$40/\$30 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden



Spring Youth Production "Dorothy Meets Alice or The Wizard of Wonderland"
Sat.-Sun, March 28-29 and April 4-5, 2 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

Welcome the Change of Season



Spring Fest For ages 3-8
Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m.-noon
Admission: \$5 per person



A School's-Out Solution



Old Firehouse Spring Break Trips
Monday, April 6-Friday, April 10
Destinations and prices vary
The Old Firehouse
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.



The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org

Home of The Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org

1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101



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NEWS

Fairfax County Updates on COVID-19

Releases & Alerts, as of March 16, 2020.

Jeffrey C. McKay, Chairman, Board of Supervisors Fairfax County, has issued the following update to the Fairfax County Community on Monday, March 16, 2020:

"Today I had the opportunity to stop by the Health Department to see the excellent work of our response teams answering the questions of residents. In the last week, 17,000 people signed up for the County's text notifications and separately, the call center received 265 calls this morning.

Local Declaration of Emergency

What are you doing? (At 10 a.m. Tuesday) the Board is holding an emergency session to consider making a local Declaration of Emergency.

What does this do? This does two things primarily: 1. This declaration streamlines and expedites Fairfax County Government's access to emergency disaster funding and 2. It allows the County to use its authority to procure goods to address the emergency.

How can I watch? The online live stream, on TV on Cox channel 1016 or Verizon/Comcast channel 16, listen by dialing 703-324-7700, or view following the meeting on demand.

Information on Fairfax County Services

The Health Department has a number of resources on COVID-19:

- Visit the County site on COVID-19, Health Department Website, see their FAQs, and tips for social distancing.

- Sign up for text message alerts: text FFXCOVID to 888777

- Call the Health Department from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends. 703-267-3511

- Email: ffxcovid@fairfaxcounty.gov. This account will be staffed Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

If you have further questions or are in need of services, below are some good references:

Neighborhood and Community Services provides access and referrals to both government and community-based resources for assistance with, but not limited to: food, shelter, employment, financial assistance, and healthcare.

- Call: 703-222-0880, TTY 711; Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Community-based resources for food assistance and donations can again be found here.

For small businesses in need of relief, we have created a web page that we will continue to update with guidance.

Mass Gatherings and Community Events:

- Fairfax County now recommends cancelling public events with 50 or more people, per the CDC.

- All public events in Virginia with 100 or more people have been cancelled by Governor Northam.

- For events of any size (public or private), organizers and participants each have a responsibility to reduce the chance of disease transmission.

- Persons considering attending any event, regardless of the number of people attending should consider the risks and benefits in deciding to attend. In particular, those who are at high-risk of severe disease if they become infected – persons who are older than 60 years old, have chronic illness, have a compromised immune system, are pregnant – should know the status of COVID-19 in the community and not attend the event if local infection is widespread.

Here are County guidelines for those planning an event.

Fairfax County Government

All County agencies have been directed to identify core functions that we must continue to carry out. We are shifting resources to those essential functions, as needed.

We strongly encourage residents to conduct County business online if possible.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Jeff McKay, Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Taxes

- The deadline for seniors and people with disabilities to apply for tax relief has been postponed to June 1.

The following programs have been extended:

- Real Estate Tax Relief for the elderly (65+)

- Tax Relief for People with disabilities

- Personal Property or "Car Tax" Relief

Fairfax County Parks, Libraries, and Community Facilities

- Fairfax County parks (indoor), libraries, and community facilities are closed for two weeks.

- This includes: recreation, nature, community, resource and teen centers, golf courses, historic sites, athletic fields, and picnic shelters.

Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Care Centers

- All Fairfax County Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Care Centers are closed until further notice.

- Fairfax County is providing meal delivery services to registered participants who wish to obtain them.

Utilities

We have reached out to area utility companies to assure that they are working to protect those at risk of utility disconnection. We have received confirmations from:

- Verizon, Comcast, and Cox, have pledged to keep customers connected for the next 60 days and not terminate services to any residential customer or small business that are unable to pay their bills. Read more.

- Dominion Energy suspended disconnections. Read more.

- Washington Gas will be waiving late fees and suspending disconnections. Read more.

Fairfax Connector Bus

- There have been no changes to Fairfax Connector services, however cleaning protocols have been reviewed and updated.

- Increased vehicle cleaning cycles are occurring with a special focus on bus interiors and critical touchpoints. These cleanings incorporate disinfection procedures indicated to be effective against COVID-19.

Metro

Metro is reducing service:

METRO RAIL service:

- Monday-Friday: Trains will operate every 12 minutes on each line throughout the day. The rail system will maintain normal hours, opening at 5 a.m.

- Saturday: Trains will operate every 12 minutes on each line, with service from 7 a.m. until 1 a.m. (normal Saturday service).

- Sunday: Trains will operate every 15 minutes on each line, with service from 8 a.m. until 11 p.m. (normal Sunday service).

METROBUS service:

- On weekdays, bus service will operate on a Saturday supplemental schedule.

- Weekend bus schedules are unchanged.

- WMATA also asks that customers do not use Metro to go to healthcare appointments if you are showing signs of illness. Other changes:

- Fairfax County has cancelled the secure document shredding event for Saturday, March 21, at the Gerry Hyland Government Center. It will be rescheduled at a later date.

- The Supreme Court of Virginia has declared a judicial emergency. All non-essential state court proceedings are suspended effective March 16 to April 6, 2020.

Finally, we received questions about how to detect coronavirus in its early stages. According to the CDC the following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure: • Cough • Fever • Shortness of breath As we have more information to share, my office and Fairfax County Government will continue to update residents. Thank you for your support and patience as we work to manage this challenging, complex, and rapidly evolving situation. Jeffrey C. McKay Chairman, Board of Supervisors

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 2

students will meet our kindergarten teachers in the classroom for a special welcome and activities. Parents will meet in the cafeteria to receive an overview of the kindergarten program, including curriculum and the daily schedule. This is an excellent opportunity for parents unsure of whether or not their child is ready for kindergarten to come, listen, and make an informed decision. Registration packets are available online www.fcps.edu

ORANGE LINE CLOSURES

Beginning this Memorial Day, the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) will be closing three Metrorail Orange Line stations for full platform reconstruction and major station improvements. To expedite construction and minimize customer inconvenience, Vienna, Dunn Loring and East Falls Church Metrorail stations will be closed from Saturday, May 23 through Monday, Sept. 7, 2020, to allow for around-the-clock work. The station closures are part of WMATA's three-year Platform Improvement Project that will completely reconstruct the outdoor platforms at 20 Metrorail stations, making them safer and more accessible for customers with disabilities, while also addressing safety concerns and longstanding structural issues.

During the shutdown, Metrorail service will be reduced between Ballston and West Falls Church on the Orange Line, and between Ballston and Wiehle-Reston East on the Silver Line, as trains will be required to single track through the work area:

- ❖ West Falls Church Station will serve as the western terminus of the Orange Line.
- ❖ Orange and Silver line trains will pass through East Falls Church station, which will be closed to customers, using a single track.
- ❖ Between West Falls Church and Ballston-MU on the Orange Line, and between Wiehle-Reston East and Largo Town Center on the Silver Line, trains will operate every 16 minutes throughout the day, and every 20 minutes during late night hours.
- ❖ Extra Orange Line trains will be deployed at Ballston-MU, so Orange Line service will increase to every 8 minutes between Ballston-MU and New Carrollton (Monday – Saturday only).
- ❖ Blue Line trains will operate every 8 minutes throughout the day to coordinate service (Monday – Saturday only).

WMATA will be providing free shuttle bus service in the impacted area partially replacing the trains along the Orange Line. Fairfax County commuters should also consider using Fairfax Connector express bus routes:

- ❖ Fairfax Connector Express Route 698 - Vienna Metrorail Station to the Pentagon
- ❖ Fairfax Connector Express Route 699 - Fairfax County Government Center to Downtown, D.C.
- ❖ Additional trips to this route are pending Board of Supervisors approval
- ❖ Fairfax Connector Express Route 697 - Stringfellow Park and Ride to Downton, D.C.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first and third Thursday of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, scov.org. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

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Feeling Pale By Comparison



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

In a peculiar way, my cancer treatment and all has sort of gotten lost in the coronavirus talk. With so many changes to our regular lifestyle occurring on a daily basis, it feels as if nothing else matters. Granted, one's health is the most important consideration, but now the talk is about everybody's health. Nevertheless, how do I throw caution to the wind and interact with my environment when doing so might endanger the very stability I've worked over 11 years to maintain? I mean, I have to live my life, but will there be a cost to do so? I realize that the good of the many outweigh the good of the few but Spock was speaking from outer space. How do I, while in and out of treatment down here on Earth not worry about myself?

I realize life will go on for almost all of us, but will there be consequences for those unable to secure proper care? Will decisions be made about allocating resources because demand has far outstripped supply? How does life for cancer patients undergoing treatment fit into this new paradigm where so many people might need some kind of medical care? Will there even be enough health care professionals to administer the kind of life-sustaining treatment many of us seriously-diagnosed patients have come to expect and need?

Unfortunately, only time will tell, and there may very well be little of it in the interim, during which we can anticipate and plan accordingly. So many decisions will likely be made by the powers that be that might not exactly consider my set of cancer circumstances. In a way, I might be collateral damage. There simply might not be enough room and medicine and staff and all to accommodate my needs. It's nothing personal. It's just business, or rather the lack thereof. With so much of the world's population affected while going about their usual and customary routine, who, what, where and how will there be any prioritization? Moreover, what about people who are already sick and challenged by a weakened immune system (like yours truly), will the competition from newly diagnosed coronavirus patients overwhelm our health care system?

I can't assume that life will go on as it always has. That would seem to be incredibly naive. I need to proactively make the necessary arrangements and/or contingency plans. I can't presume that being a cancer patient will always get me through the door. I'd like to think I take priority. But it might not be about priority, it might be about availability and a dwindling supply not able to keep up with demand.

Still, going down this rabbit hole of fear, anxiety and worry doesn't help either. As I have since the date of original diagnosis, back in late February, 2009, I need to make the best of a bad/challenging situation. I need to roll with the punches and be prepared for any eventuality and take the good with the bad and vice versa. Normal left the building a long time ago for me. The problem is that building to which I metaphorically refer is the very building where I get my ongoing medical treatment. And though I don't anticipate being kept away from that building, the reality is that it's out of my control.

As with anticipating the results of CT scans and lab results, all in good time, or bad. I need to keep the same positive attitude as I always have because though I might be at greater risk than many of you regular readers, we are all at risk, apparently. As such, if there is indeed anything to be gained by so many people being so similarly affected, the reality is that there are strength in those numbers and even though it may feel that right now the whole world is upside down, things eventually will right themselves. They always do. I just hope I'm still smiling when the dust settles.

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

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