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Great Falls

CONNECTION

HOMELIFESTYLE

PAGE 6

Robin Fleming wears one of the masks that she created from scraps of fabric (and some old Halloween costumes). She has sewn more than one hundred and donated fifty to Fairfax Hospital to date.



Langley High Students Win STEM Excellence Award

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Great Falls Residents Share Their Experiences In Coronavirus Time

NEWS, PAGE 7

Great Falls in Pandemic Time: A Community Of Helpers

NEWS, PAGE 3

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CELEBRATE GREAT FALLS FOUNDATION

OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

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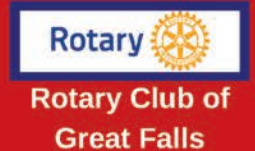


Bob Nelson Team

www.HelpGFBusinesses.com

BothBobs@BobNelsonTeam.com

(703) 774-9830



Hello Neighbors,

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly difficult for restaurants, small businesses, their employees and the owners. The Bob Nelson Real Estate Team in coordination with the Great Falls Rotary Club hope to spotlight local businesses and restaurants and let you know how to continue to support them until our economy gets back into full gear.

We have set up a website (www.HelpGFBusinesses.com) where we will post a short description advising modifications the small businesses are making to their business practices to best serve the community and to keep everyone healthy and safe.

We would all ask that you be sure to transact business with these businesses as much as possible and do a little extra for those you consider your favorites. We also strongly encourage you to purchase gift cards to these businesses. This will help increase their cash flow at a time when business is off by 50-75 percent or more.

Please check back to www.HelpGFBusinesses.com as we continue to add other businesses and share ideas about how we can all work together as a community to help our local small businesses thrive during this difficult time.

Thank you,

Bob Sr. and Bob Jr.



Chat with
your community

- We're also setting up twice weekly, open to the public, Zoom coffee chat calls. Our plan is to do these on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 am starting this Thursday.

The goal of these calls/video chats will be simply for people to come chat with their community. We'd love to have you participate in these as well! To find out more and register

- please visit: www.bobn.us/coffeechat



Keller Williams Realty

NEWS

Great Falls in Pandemic Time: A Community of Helpers

Groups, business and citizens step up to spread community during COVID-19.

BY JENNIFER FLANAGAN
THE CONNECTION

When Governor Ralph Northam banned gatherings of more than ten people on March 24 and issued a statewide stay at home order on March 30 to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) leadership knew they had to quickly adapt to keep effective communications with each other and the public. Health concerns had already led to the cancellation or postponement of four important meetings in March on land use, transportation, schools and the county budget, and the usual meeting place for the GFCA was closed until at least May.

"We are looking at the many ways to collaborate so that we do not have to have face to face meetings and still keep members informed," said Peter Falcone, co-chair of the GFCA Communications and Outreach Committee.

All GFCA committees will remain fully engaged on issues affecting the community and are investing in technology to host speakers on webcasts so members can participate in meetings from home. Two upcoming meetings that are now virtual are the Land Use and Zoning Committee Meeting scheduled for April 8 and the Special Committee on Schools meeting with the Fairfax County School Board District Representative Elaine Tholen scheduled for April 29.

Bill Canis, President of the GFCA, said it's important to the group to not only try to provide virtual attendance for GFCA sponsored events, but to encourage other organizations to explore virtual means for events that affect Great Falls residents as well. "Members would not only be informed, but have their views expressed at all of these meetings," said Canis.

Canis points to the cancelled March 18 Fairfax County FY 2021 Budget Proposal and Dranesville Town Hall Meeting with Supervisor John Foust as one that he hopes will be rescheduled as a virtual event.

"We have multiple times urged that either there be a county-wide webinar type forum or that our supervisor provides a format where people in this area can learn about the new budget, ask questions and provide input as we do annually," said Canis.

THE GFCA COMMITTEES will keep the GFCA's website (gfca.org) and social media



A Great Falls resident organizes a rainbow hunt for kids around town by putting rainbows in windows, mailboxes, and on chalk painted on driveways to spread community during the statewide stay at home order. This is one of many activities shared by the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation on social media with the hashtags #quarantinethingstodo #quarantinehelpers.



Bill Canis, President of the Great Falls Citizens Association



Peter Falcone, co-chair of the GFCA Communications and Outreach Committee

updated with information on how to attend the virtual events.

The GFCA is joined by other local groups in their efforts to preserve community in Great Falls amidst the social distance measures.

The Celebrate Great Falls Foundation started an initiative to highlight members in the community who thought of interesting or fun ways to pass the time during the stay at home mandate. The group is sharing photos of these activities on the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation's Facebook and Instagram pages with the hashtags #quarantinethingstodo #quarantinehelpers.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CELEBRATE GREAT FALLS FOUNDATION
A sample of the masks sewn by Robin Fleming.



Bob Nelson, Sr. of the Bob Nelson Team at Keller Williams Realty. He is organizing communications to highlight ways to support local businesses as well as virtual "coffee chats" for Great Falls residents.

Some of the activities featured in the project to date include a victory garden, a worm farm, a teddy bear and rainbow "hunt," online art classes through The Arts of Great Falls, online animal visits with Squeals on Wheels and online Pilates with Great Falls Pilates.

To take part in the project, Great Falls residents can submit a photo and short description of their activity to erinlobato@celebrategreatfalls.org.

"Celebrate Great Falls Foundation's mission is to build and preserve a sense of community spirit within Great Falls. Usually, this means holding popular events such as our annual Summer Concerts and September Movies on the Green or our 4th of July Parade and Fireworks. It also means reaching out to new neighbors with a signature blue bag full of goodies and information about our community and raising money for our local elementary schools through our annual Charity Golf Tournament in the spring," said Erin Lobato, Director of the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation.

"We are always looking for opportunities to work with neighbors on other projects to help our community and during this stressful time, it seemed like a natural fit to use social media to help share some of the more creative and interesting ways that our neighbors are coping with the 'stay at home' orders."

Lobato noted all age groups are involved in the project. "I am struck by how many of the helpers are teenagers - a group that is

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 7

Community Helping the Hungry

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

At a critical time in our history when our federal administration is displaying a level of ineptness that is head-shakingly unbelievable, the importance of community becomes more evident to us. Whether that community is at the state level as we live-stream on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 2 p.m. the quiet bed-side manner of our physician now Governor Ralph Northam as he tells us the steps we need to get through the COVID-19 crisis as best as humanly possible or whether it is the neighbors on the street who emerge to the stoops of their homes at noon one day to sing happy birthday to a young person who is celebrating a mile-marking 18th birthday, we as members of multiple communities are facing a history-changing crisis. The way we emerge on the other side is likely to be dependent more



on our community support system than on government action.

The federal Congress has already passed legislation of historic proportions that at any other time in our history would have been called socialism. There seems to be wide-spread agreement that it is not enough and that further federal assistance will be required both for individuals and families as well as the economy. To ensure that you are aware of the various

programs of assistance that might be available to you and your family, visit my website at www.kenplum.com for a description of programs.

The General Assembly is required by the state Constitution to meet in a reconvened session after the Governor has reviewed and signed, vetoed or proposed amendments to bills passed in the recent regular session. The reconvened session is scheduled for April 22 this year, but there are serious questions as to whether it is a good idea to have 100 delegates and staff meeting in one room while 40 senators and staff meet in another room. However the issue is re-

solved we will be ploughing new legal ground. Whenever the General Assembly meets it will not bring good news; the sharp decline in revenue will wreck what was an historically good budget. The reductions will be many, and they will be deep.

What can we as a community do while we are hunkered down? As people are demonstrating in communities throughout the country, there are many life-saving and useful things we can do. First, we can, and we must respond to the needs of people who are hungry. On my website, www.kenplum.com, is a directory of food banks and pantries that are responding to the needs of the hungry. Congratulations and thank you to all who have put together these wonderful efforts. All of the rest of us can help them. Without leav-

ing your home you can donate online to the food banks that can use your contribution to buy food. You can buy groceries online and have them shipped to the local food bank. Or if you choose you can buy extra when you are doing your own shopping and contribute it to a food pantry. We are community, and we can help our neighbors who are hungry.

Japanese Experience: Distancing Ingrained in Culture

BY LUCY CHEN

You have seen the statistics. More than twenty-thousand dead worldwide as of today. You have seen China, you have seen Italy. I weep for them.

People are dying in their homes and no one is coming to help them. Doctors and nurses are exhausted from treating the sick. The impact is devastating.

Now it's in America. The US now has the most number of cases in the world. Hospitals are running out of much-needed masks, ventilators, and hospital beds. Healthcare professionals are now re-using protective gear. Is it too late, or can we still stop Covid-19 from spreading?

I was looking through the statistics to try to find an answer. One thing caught my eye. It's Japan. Japan used to have the 3rd most number of Covid-19 cases, but it has since dropped to number 31. How? After all, Japan was one of the first countries to get the virus. It has an aging population and high population density. It hasn't put in any strict regulations until recently. Shouldn't Japan be the epicenter of this virus? Yet, only 1866 people got the virus, and only 54 have died.

Perhaps the Japanese government hasn't carried out enough tests. But if Japan was just under-reporting, then its hospitals would have been overrun with sick patients weeks ago, regardless of the number of cases confirmed. This



Lucy Chen, 17, is a junior at Langley High School. She is interested in current events, public health, and technology. She is also an avid debater and enjoys having cultivated discussions.

means that the Japanese people are doing something against the coronavirus that is working. So what is it?

I decided to call my uncle in Japan, and I asked him, what is Japan doing that other countries are not? He didn't know. He told me that the coronavirus hadn't changed much in Japan. But people also continue to go to work on a daily basis and they still commute on crowded trains. Shouldn't the virus spread faster with crowded public transportation? I was confused.

After scrupulously comparing my life to my uncle's, I found a couple of important differences between the strategy of the US and

Japanese to combat the virus. Here are the two key takeaways:

1. Social Distancing

We hear this phrase all the time. Maintain a 6-foot distance away from everyone.

That's because it's important.

The social distancing already ingrained in Japanese culture has allowed the Japanese to naturally mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. They do not hug, shake hands, or kiss in greeting. Instead, they bow to each other. They also refrain from touching each other and even family members socially. It's working.

It's hard to stay cooped up in your own home. But it's just something you have to do temporarily. Stay at home. Avoid contact with others. It's not easy, but everyone needs to do it together. Don't be selfish. Don't endanger the lives of other people.

Unfortunately, there's one problem with social distancing. It's not fool-proof. For social distancing to work, you also need to practice good hygiene.

2. Good Hygiene

The Japanese practice a "combination of wearing masks when sick, regular doctor's visits, and a willingness to follow the advice of health officials, among others," says Dr. Matthieu Felt, a professor of Japanese culture at the University of Florida. Good hygiene has been very effective for Japan in combating the coronavirus. We should learn from them.

If you are sick, or frequently

come in contact with someone who is sick, wear a mask. It is very disrespectful in Japanese culture to disregard good hygiene habits because doing so could endanger other people.

"Wash your hands with soap and water." We hear this from doctors all the time, but we don't take it seriously. At least, not as serious as people in Japan do. My uncle washes his hands before he goes to bed, after he wakes up, before and after he eats, after he goes to the store or to the bank, after using the restroom, after he touches money, or a doorknob...you get the point. Now he does it even more. It's just the cultural norm in Japan.

You absolutely can not ignore this. Hand washing is the last barrier between you and the virus. Even if you self-quarantine, you will still get in contact with the outside world; whether it be through shopping at the store or online. Because of the coronavirus, we must treat every surface as unsanitary.

These actions will dramatically decrease the spread of the coronavirus and reduce the pressure on our healthcare system. We are now at a critical moment, and everyone needs to do their part. So please. I don't care if you're young or old, sick or not, but I ask you to do yourself, your family, your friends, and your country a favor. Practice social distancing. Wash your hands with soap regularly. Remember, that the killer is in your hands, and it is in your hands to stop it.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

**1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

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NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pictured - from left: Jimmy Flood, Andrew Westenhoff, Noah Wallace - Master of Ceremonies, John Phillips and Kyle Williams.

Reston Troop 1970 Promotes Four Eagle Scouts

On Saturday, March 7, 2020, four local families hosted a quadruple Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Jimmy Flood, John Phillips, Andrew Westenhoff, and Kyle Williams. These young men earned Scouting's highest rank as members of Boy Scout Troop 1970 in Reston. Troop 1970 is sponsored by the United Christian Parish.

Flood, Phillips and Williams are 2019 graduates from South Lakes High School and Westenhoff is a 2019 graduate of Battlefield High School. Flood and Phillips are first year students at University of Virginia, Westenhoff is attending George Mason University and Williams is attending Christopher Newport University.

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Home Office Design

Creating a professional backdrop for video conferencing.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

In the age of coronavirus, working from home and connecting with colleagues using video conferencing platforms like Zoom has become the new normal. From staff meetings to happy hours, virtual connectedness is keeping offices linked in a world of social distancing. For some, however, this means scrambling to give their home office a sense of professionalism moments before a meeting. Now that mad dash can become a thing of the past.

Create a dedicated work zone away from other distractions, suggests Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder Design/Build. “You will feel more at ease if your space is set up to work for you,” she said. “It will also in turn make you feel more calm and prepared to be productive.”

Organization is the first step in creating that space. “Start by cleaning up clutter,” said St. Claire. “But before you start purging, set goals. What would you like to accomplish?”

A part of this thought process should include envisioning the look and feel of the space. “What type of spaces make you feel the most calm?” asks St. Claire. “A zen-inspired minimalistic retreat? A library-like space to display your favorite collectibles, art work and precious things? A lush, soft room? Each of these goals will require different items in different quantities.”

In fact, incorporating decorative objects from other parts of one’s home can add an air of professionalism to a workspace. “Nothing puts the ‘home’ into home office better than antiques,” said Annie Elliott, Annie Elliott Design. “An antique desk or table topped with beautifully framed drawings and photographs adds such character to a space.”

“When your home office is a desk out in the open, it’s critical that you tuck your work out of sight at the end of the day,” continued Elliott. “Every desk should have drawers not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks, and ideally your laptop.”

An aesthetically appealing workspace can offer a sense of serenity that can be enjoyed even when not on a video conference. “Working at home with the kids and pets can be overwhelming right now,” said Pamela Harvey of Pamela Harvey Interiors. “Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers.”

In fact, lighting is key when creating office-worthy backdrops for a video conference. “Lighting is everything,” says St. Claire. “Natural light is the best, especially northern light. ‘Open up and let the light shine in. If natural light is scarce, decide on the right artificial lighting. Is cozy warm lighting or brighter whiter lighting better for your daily work? Dimmers are great as they help to control the amount of light you may need throughout the day as the natural light changes.’”

Desk lamp lighting shouldn’t be overlooked, added Tracy Morris, of Tracy Morris Design. “Leave behind the harsh fluorescents of a traditional office and add



PHOTO BY GREG POWERS

Create a clean and uncluttered home office environment, says interior designer Tracy Morris.



PHOTOS BY JENN VERRIER

Every desk should have drawers, not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks and ideally your laptop, advises interior designer Annie Elliott.



Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers, advises Pamela Harvey.

in warm light from a lamp,” he said. “This will also better illuminate your desk than overhead light and help prevent eye strain.”

“Just because you’re doing real work doesn’t mean your desk can’t be attractive,” said Elliott.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

CHANGES TO THE COURTS

The Fairfax County courts are making new changes to their schedules and procedures in response to the coronavirus, including further postponing dockets. While the Fairfax County Courthouse remains open to the public, the Circuit Court, General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court have changed their bond and arraignment schedule until further notice:

General District Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Circuit Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 2:30 p.m.

The Circuit Court introduced a temporary process to waive oral argument for motions in an effort to encourage social distancing. To be eligible, the waiver must meet certain conditions, including that all parties agree and evidence is not required. The Circuit Court continues to postpone non-essential, non-emergency proceedings through Monday, April 27.

The General District Courts have now postponed most dockets through Thursday, April 30, except for bonds, arraignments, emergency motions, protective orders and attorney court.

Regular court hearings for incarcerated individuals are expected to begin Monday, April 13, as technology permits.

For people who aren’t in jail, any civil, criminal and traffic court cases that were previously scheduled for this month will be continued. Look up the specific status of your case using the Online Case Information System.

DULLES TOLL ROAD CHANGES

The Dulles Toll Road will suspend manual cash-exchange toll collecting until further notice beginning Monday, April 6 due to COVID-19; toll booths will be unattended. Only electronic and exact change coin payments will be accepted. Motorists without E-ZPass, other electronic forms of payment or exact change will receive bills through the mail. All lanes and toll booths on the Dulles Toll Road are equipped with electronic tolling features. Any lane can be used with a valid E-ZPass account or other form of electronic tolling. Customers can visit E-ZPass Virginia at <https://www.ezpassva.com/> for information on how to obtain an E-ZPass, or the GoToll mobile phone app at <https://www.gotoll.com/>. Customers are encouraged to visit <https://www.tollroadsinvirginia.com/ViolationToll/PayViolation> for information on paying toll violations.

FIRE STATIONS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

In order to protect the health of firefighters and medics, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue is closing all fire stations to the public, effective March 27. These closures are in coordination with Fairfax County government’s decision to close county government buildings to the public. Notices will be posted to the front door of each station directing visitors to call the station for any inquiries. Exceptions will be made for any emergency that would require members of the public to enter the station for treatment.

DMVS ARE CLOSED

Until at least April 23, all 75 DMV customer service centers are closed and all DMV 2 Go and DMV Connect services postponed in response to the continued spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). DMV weigh stations have also suspended operations for the same duration.

Driver’s licenses and identification cards set to expire between March 15 and May 15 are extended 60 days from the original date of expiration. This includes credentials for individuals aged 75 and older who are typically required to make an in-person visit to renew.

Vehicle registrations that expire in March and April are extended for 60 days.

<cal1>Park Authority Closes All Parks

<cal2>Effective Tuesday, March 24, all Fairfax County Park Authority parks and amenities will be closed to the public until further notice. This change is in response to Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam’s order to close public access to recreational facilities.

Park Authority closures include parking lots, athletic fields, sport courts, restrooms, nature centers, visitor centers, golf courses, historic sites, picnic areas, playgrounds, amusements, boat launches, skate parks, off-leash dog areas, outdoor fitness equipment and any areas for open recreation. While all parks and amenities are closed, trails will remain open for individual use, but not group use.

METRO REDUCES SERVICE HOURS

As part of its ongoing efforts to limit frontline transit workers’ exposure to the public during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, Metro’s Pandemic Task Force will further reduce rail and bus hours, starting Monday, April 6, 2020. Metrorail will close at 9 p.m. every day: Mon.-Fri.: Open 5 a.m.; Close 9 p.m.; Sat.-Sun.: Open 8 a.m.; Close 9 p.m. Metrobus service also will end earlier each day, with the last trips departing at or before 11 p.m. Buses that enter service at or before 11 p.m. will continue to the end of the route before going out of service.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

Community Responds to Pandemic

FROM PAGE 3

often maligned for being self-centered and spoiled. These children are really stepping up to show us the best of themselves and inspire us," she said.

Lobato said the inspiration for the project stemmed from Mr. Rogers (of the old Mister Rogers' Neighborhood) who was known for saying, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would always say to me, 'look for the helpers'. You will always find people who are helping. 'If you look for the helpers, you'll know that there is hope.'

"This quote inspired us to also focus on the many things that our neighbors were doing to help one another during this time. Things like setting up a table in the driveway to share books, games and puzzles with neighbors; a local college student posting an offer to shop and run errands for neighbors in need; sewing masks for the Fairfax Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; or one local teen who is emailing three original photographs of spring to a growing list of people across the country who are not able to enjoy the outside as a way to lift their spirits. There are so many 'helpers' in our community."

Robin Fleming is an example of such a helper. She has sewn over one hundred washable masks with a filter pocket. She donated fifty to the NICU unit at Fairfax Hospital.

Finn Thai, which opened in Great Falls only last month, is another. The restaurant offered free toilet paper to residents last week and is providing meals free of charge to medical staff at local hospitals.

"I've tried to do my part to the community, so I decided to give away food to our hospital staff since they risk their lives to save us," shared Willy Chaokrajang, the owner of Finn Thai, on the Great Falls Neighbors Network.

Finn Thai temporarily suspended its sit-down dining service but is offering a take-out to keep business open during the stay at home orders.

Bob Nelson, Sr. and Bob Nelson, Jr. of Bob Nelson Team Real Estate are organizing communications to spotlight local businesses such as Finn Thai which are affected by the stay at home measures. In coordination with the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation and the Great Falls Rotary Club, the Nelsons are collecting information from local businesses about the different ways that residents can help support them to share with the greater Great Falls community.

THE NELSONS normally run a full-page advertisement once per month in the Great Falls Connection but decided to dedicate this month's space to local businesses.

"We thought that it wouldn't really be appropriate to run the normal "business is booming" ad this month so instead wanted to dedicate our full-page advertisement to ask the community about how they support all... the small businesses of Great Falls," said Nelson, Sr.

This information will also be published on a webpage - www.HelpGFBusinesses.com - where the community can look for ideas on how to continue to support local businesses.

Small businesses that would like to be included in

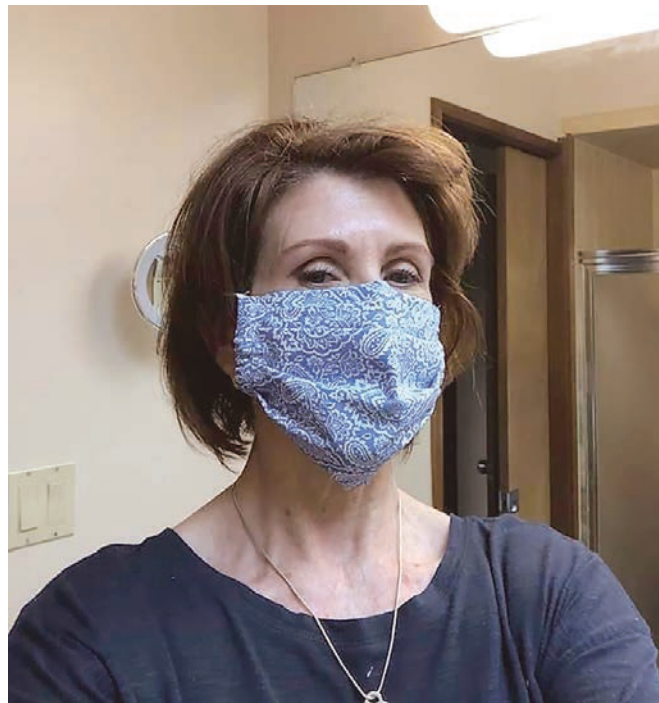


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CELEBRATE GREAT FALLS FOUNDATION
A sample of the masks sewn by Robin Fleming.

"I am struck by how many of the helpers are teenagers - a group that is often maligned for being self-centered and spoiled. These children are really stepping up to show us the best of themselves and inspire us."

--Erin Lobato, Director of the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation

this effort are asked to send a short note to BothBobs@BobNelsonTeam.com and include "HelpGFBusinesses.com" in the subject line, with the following:

- Logo attached to the email
- What the business is doing to keep going
- Safety precautions in place to protect staff and customers
- Hours of operation
- How people can order from the business (e.g., website, calling in, GrubHub, UberEats, etc.)
- Primary point of contact (this won't be in the ad or on the website)

The Nelsons are also organizing a Zoom coffee chat open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. "The goal of these calls and video chats will be simply for people to come to chat with their community," according to Nelson, Sr.

The stay at home order in Virginia extends to June 10. As Great Falls residents continue their quarantine lifestyle, perhaps they will feel a bit less socially distanced and a bit more hope thanks to all the community "helpers."

VIEWPOINTS

Great Falls Residents Share Their Experiences in Coronavirus Time

--JENNIFER FLANAGAN

Elaine Shadid, Co-manager of Great Falls Farmers Market

"When the news first broke about the pandemic my sales plummeted. But when they announced the school closings, my business blew up. I went from being concerned I was going to have to close, to the highest volume I have ever had for one week. Many of my customers commented that they wanted to support all the local small businesses and wanted to make sure I survived. Their support and their words meant a lot to me. There's still huge uncertainty, but I'm going to try to continue operating as long as permitted and/or safe."



Meghan Bentz, Great Falls

"I served as a volunteer in Malawi where I worked to improve English literacy, girls' empowerment and HIV prevention and education. I was 4 months shy of completing my 27 month service when we were evacuated. We had a short 24 hours to pack our bags and say goodbye to all of the students, neighbors and friends who had shaped our experiences there. I was upset about leaving Malawi while grateful that the Peace Corps decided to send us home when they did. It's lovely to be home but I continue to worry about my friends in Malawi who live in close quarters and have limited access to proper sanitation and healthcare. The fears I have around finding a job and staying safe seem insignificant compared to what my friends in Malawi may be up against. As for now, I'm self quarantining after traveling internationally. I can't wait to hug my parents when this is all over!"



Meghan Bentz with friends in Malawi



Members of the clergy gather at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church to record service to be uploaded on Facebook, Youtube, and their website for the community to watch remotely.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

McLean Presbyterian Church, which usually welcomes around 1,800 worshipers across two sites on Sundays, has moved all services and programs online. Senior Pastor James Forsyth preaches during the online service.

Staying Connected Spiritually During COVID-19

Area churches are adapting to serve their communities during social distancing and continuing to support those in need.

BY JESSICA FENG
THE CONNECTION

With the outbreak of Coronavirus pushing Governor Ralph Northam to close Virginia public schools, his decision to close all nonessential businesses and ban public gatherings came as no surprise. Now, a week before Easter Sunday, many church communities are overcoming obstacles to connect with church members while adapting to the social distancing requirements.

At McLean Presbyterian Church, Senior Pastor James Forsyth emphasized the difference between the end of in-person activities and the end of the community.

"We have canceled activities at the church but we have not stopped being the church! We're worshipping online, posting daily devotionals, meeting in smaller groups for an online community, and seeking out ways to serve our neighbors and communities. God knew this was going to happen. Now we get to participate in Kingdom work in new and creative ways."

TO COPE with the lack of interaction, programs have been put in place to foster the same tight-knit atmosphere as before in churches such as Lewinsville Presbyterian Church.

"Every Monday, one of our Pastors does a short video blog which is posted on our Facebook page, our YouTube channel, and our website. Every Tuesday, our congregation receives our current Prayer List via email. Every Wednesday, we invite our folks to our Weekly Bible Study, now via Zoom video conference. Every Thursday, we send out information about our upcoming Sunday Worship Service online, our Christian Education classes, and any announcements we may have. Every Friday, our Director of Music Ministries provides a music video we post on Facebook, YouTube, and the website. On Saturdays, as the need arises, we make our folks aware of any mission outreach needs such as SHARE, Second Story, and Christ House."

Pastor Sandy Kessinger of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer describes the ways



Senior Pastor Robert Wallace prepares for a streamed Wednesday night Bible study from his house for the McLean Baptist Church congregation.

members of the clergy are working to produce services remotely.

"We are videotaping our services right now. Our musicians tape the music part of our liturgy from home. I tape the spoken parts of the liturgy and sermon and then we have someone who puts it all together. On Fridays, we email everyone the link to the videos (traditional service and contemporary service) along with the bulletins for people to follow the written word."

IN THIS TIME OF NEED, Senior Pastor Dr. Robert Cheeks, Jr of the Shiloh Baptist

Church leads the community in helping others.

"Recently, we've created the COVID-19 response team specifically to assist with transportation, shopping, pickup and delivery needs for all of those at high-risk and the elderly. We've even asked Shiloh, and the Friends of Shiloh, to contribute financially to aid the unemployed."

McLean Baptist Church along with Senior Pastor Robert Wallace has turned the focus onto the meaning of the holidays.

"The 'mandate' Jesus gave which gives Maundy Thursday its name is to 'love one another.' We have asked the congregation to put together short videos that show ways they have 'loved one another' during this time of separation. Some have been baking for the family. Some have been sewing medical masks."

Although these conditions may not be ideal, Pastor Joy Majied of Garfield Memorial Christian Church urges congregation members to use this time to reflect on the restoration of humanity.

"It is my hope and prayer that when it [social distancing] is all said and done and we rush to return to normal, that we have spent some time examining and deciding which parts of normal are worth rushing back to, or what we truly desire our 'new' normal to look like."

Langley High Students Win STEM Excellence Award

Emily Sun and Abigail Xu, students at Langley High School, have been selected as the 2020 recipients of the AAUW McLean Area Branch's STEM Excellence Award. The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Excellence Award is given to a female student or team from a high school in the McLean area with an outstanding project in the field of Engineering entered in the Fairfax County Regional Science Fair. This year the students participated in a Virtual Science Fair by submitting three-minute videos for the judges to review.

The AAUW award recognizes the work done by Emily and Abigail on the project, "Flashlight Powered by Heat of Human Hand." Abigail and Emily developed and tested a flashlight that uses Peltier tiles to transfer body heat from a hand into electrical energy. They expanded on earlier work to develop a flashlight that works in a large range of temperatures. For the award, Emily and Abigail each received a Certificate of Merit and a check for \$100. The students will also be recognized by AAUW at a branch program in the Fall.

In addition to receiving the AAUW STEM



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left -- Abigail Xu and Emily Sun, students at Langley High School, are shown in a video clip that they prepared for the Virtual Fairfax County Regional Science Fair.

Excellence Award, Abigail and Emily were recognized at the Virtual Science Fair with a Certificate of Merit from the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association, Northern VA Chapter (AFCEA), and an award from Hunton Andrews Kurth, LLP for preparation, filing, and prosecution of a US Patent Application.

For more information on the American Association of University Women and the McLean Area Branch, visit the AAUW McLean Area website at <http://mclean-va.aauw.net>.

REAL ESTATE

Good News on Home Sales

McLean and Great Falls Market: First quarter comparison 2020 to 2019 to 2010.

The first quarter of 2020 has come to a close. January showed the signs of an early spring, February a robust market and March experienced the initial impact of COVID-19. The statistics for real estate transactions in McLean and Great Falls have been tallied. The number of sales are up 22 percent year over year, with 241 total transactions in first quarter 2020 compared to 197 in 2019. The even better news is the market is considerably improved over 2010 which came in at only 169. That represents an increase in sales of 42.6 percent over the last decade. The improvement in the early months of 2020 in the market is likely due to several reasons. The weather in January and February was more springlike than is typical for the Northern Virginia winter season. There was considerable pent up demand in many segments of McLean and Great Falls. The emergence of COVID-19 later in the quarter led to volatility in the stock market and many people sought the security of a home as a safe haven. Further many view real estate as a more stable investment.

In light of Governor Northam's Temporary Stay At Home Order effective March 30, 2020, many may wonder how this affects real estate activity in our market area. The good news is that the US Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infra-

structure Security (CISA) updated the list of essential services during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis and expressly included residential real estate. Housing is a basic human need.

The real estate community continues to serve all of our clients in almost all capacities. As professionals we have responded quickly to the current market to provide the best and safest service to all of our clients. Agents continue to list houses for sale, show houses to buyers, write contracts and settle on transactions. With the powerful and nimble technology available to agents today in the real estate arena, many of these functions have moved to virtual platforms which includes virtual showings and open houses, Zoom meetings, eSigning, and online notary cam closings. And, when activities must be conducted in person, real estate professionals follow CDC guidelines to take necessary precautions for the safety of all parties, which includes maintaining a 6 feet distance from others, sanitizing surfaces and washing hands.

Many people have asked how the market is doing and I am pleased to say that 82 properties in McLean and Great Falls have gone Under Contract since March 1, 2020 and there are 408 in Active/Coming Soon status as of April 1, 2020. Even as we as a nation and world navigate the impact of COVID-19, people still are in situations where they have a need to move!

McLean & Great Falls Quarterly Market Analysis of Home Sales (Based on List Price):

2020 1st Qtr compared to 2019 and 2010						
2020 1 st Qtr Total Sales: 241						
	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
Zip Code						
22101	6	9	37	11	31	2
22102	1	1	12	10	8	53
22066	1	2	18	13	24	2
	Total: 8	Total: 12	Total: 67	Total: 34	Total: 63	Total: 57
	Combined Total Upper Brackets: 87			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 154		
2019 1 st Qtr Total Sales: 197						
	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
Zip Code						
22101	3	9	17	11	31	10
22102	0	2	7	10	11	45
22066	0	2	17	8	7	7
	Total: 3	Total: 13	Total: 41	Total: 29	Total: 49	Total: 62
	Combined Total Upper Brackets: 57			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 140		
2010 1 st Qtr Total Sales: 169						
	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
Zip Code						
22101	2	3	11	9	20	29
22102	0	1	3	7	14	44
22066	0	1	6	5	11	3
	Total: 2	Total: 5	Total: 20	Total: 21	Total: 45	Total: 76
	Combined Total Upper Brackets: 27			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 142		

Karen Briscoe with HBC Group at Keller Williams is an active and experienced Realtor® in the Northern Virginia marketplace. Karen, alongside her business partner Lizzy Conroy and team, works with sellers, buyers, investors and builders in all price ranges. www.HBCGroupKW.com, 703-734-0192, Homes@HBCGroupKW.com.

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Spring Outlook 2020

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Coalition to County: Reduce Number of Inmates

County responds to NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition initiative.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Exactly when and how coronavirus first entered the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center remains unknown. According to a March 30, 2020 statement on the Sheriff's Office website, an inmate in his 20s at the Center tested positive for COVID-19. "While we are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of illness, it is possible that additional cases will occur since individuals already could have been exposed," the statement said. Incarcerated since Jan. 29, 2020, the man is quarantined at the Adult Detention Center.

"Jail and prison populations across the Commonwealth and the country are extremely vulnerable to contracting the coronavirus ... [and] challenged to consistently preserve the recommended hygiene practices. ... Inmates at the ADC [Adult Detention Center in Fairfax] were sentenced to be detained, not sentenced to death," said Kofi Annan, CEO of The Activated People LLC.

On March 31, in a statement from Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano's office, Descano said, "In the pursuit of justice, we always take the health and well-being of our community into account when making prosecutorial decisions — that includes the wellbeing of incarcerated individuals." Descano detailed measures taken ahead of the first confirmed case at the detention center. "I proactively sought and received a list from our Sheriff of inmates scheduled for release in the next 60 days. ... Wherever possible, we've begun recommending the release of individuals who have adequately paid their debt to society and do not pose a threat to community safety," Descano said.

KOFI ANNAN of Herndon is CEO of The Activated People LLC, one of 18 organizations comprising the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition. On March 31, he emailed Fairfax County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Jeffrey McKay, all Supervisors, Sheriff's Office, Chief Edwin Roessler Jr., Fairfax County Police, and Peter Flynn. "The purpose of this communication is to urge the County to take more deliberate short-term measures to reduce the number of inmates housed at the Center until COVID-19 abates. This is even more pressing in light of the revelation that an inmate tested positive."

A March 31 letter emailed by Annan on behalf of NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff's Office and Police Department said in part: "While the [Sheriff's] Department is taking meaningful measures to protect inmates, it is not clear that Fairfax County as a whole is taking holistic, aggressive measures necessary to reduce the number of inmates housed in the county detention facility. ... To reduce the risk of exposure ... all must work together



Kofi Annan of Herndon is CEO of The Activated People LLC, one of 18 organizations in the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition.



PHOTO COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY

Sheriff Stacey A. Kincaid, Fairfax

to both reduce the current jail population and the in-flow of new inmates. We urge Fairfax County to ... reduce pre-trial detention. Only make arrests for violent offenses and issue other citations for non-violent offenses. Release older inmates and those currently being held for non-violent offenses. Limit the number of check-ins (for) people on parole and probation have to make or implement virtual check-ins. Eliminate medical co-pays in jail."

The Coalition raised an important issue involving those who are incarcerated and those who operate the facility, said Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville). "I know the Sheriff and Commonwealth's Attorney. I'm sure they share this concern ... [and] will do everything they can to protect the inmates as well as the employees who work in the jail," he said. Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said that any effort to reduce the time convicted criminals spend in the



Dr. Vernon C. Walton is Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church in Vienna, one of the 18 organizations in the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK.COM

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

jails "should take into account the impact on the victims, public safety and the severity of the crime." He added the County needed to ensure its Sheriff's deputies had the protections to stay safe "and do what we can to keep the inmates that remain in jail safe during the pandemic."

"Fairfax County follows procedures set forth by the Code of Virginia and Department's General Orders," said Lieutenant Stephen R. Wallace, Commander for Media Relations Bureau Fairfax County Police Department.

As for steps and measures taking place as well as information and best practices during the pandemic, Sheriff Stacey A. Kincaid said, "We have worked tirelessly with the medical professionals in the Health Department to stay informed and to implement the best protocols to help fight the spread of this invisible threat. ... Transfers of inmates to the

Virginia Department of Corrections has been suspended. ... We are also working with the courts to limit the transfer of individuals between jurisdictions for court hearings. ... We have also proactively arranged through the courts for video hearings to be held to limit traffic within our facilities."

Dr. Vernon C. Walton is Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church in Vienna, one of the organizations in the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition. "Crowded, confined spaces leave those incarcerated particularly vulnerable to the spread of the COVID-19 virus," Walton said.

Annan echoed Walton's words and added they were pleased that the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney's office was taking steps to reduce the inmate population at the Adult Detention Center. "However, these unprecedented circumstances demand bold, innovative solutions that are singularly focused on saving as many lives as possible," Annan said. "While the release of 36 inmates is a very good start, we continue to urge the County to take the additional steps we highlighted in our original [March 31] letter."

A JOINT RESPONSE from Sheriff Kincaid and Chairman McKay regarding the March 31 letter Annan emailed on behalf of NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition said: "The recommendations of your group merit consideration as we are all working toward a common purpose — preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping our community healthy and safe. ... The Police Department is making fewer arrests. On April 1, the ADC population was 589 compared with March 1, when it was 731. ... Only the courts, through magistrates and judges, have decision-making authority regarding who goes to jail and the length of their sentence. If a court issues orders to release certain inmates, the Sheriff's Office will comply with those orders. The terms of probation also fall under the courts. Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano indicated he has reviewed case files and will petition the courts to release selected non-violent inmates with limited time remaining on their respective sentences."

Regarding medical care and co-pays in the Adult Detention Center, Kincaid and McKay said: "There is no co-pay for the care they provide nor for over-the-counter medication. We have on contract, a medical doctor, dentist and optometrist. Co-pays apply only with these contracted providers and not in every case. ... Please know that together we are taking every possible measure to ensure the wellbeing of those entrusted to our care and the community at large."

Valerie Slater, Esq. is the executive director of RISE for Youth, another organization in the Coalition. She works with incarcerated youth. Slater said, "We must strive now more than ever to support community youth in trouble who pose no threat to others. After reviewing the cases of all youth held at the NOVA Juvenile Detention Center, two youth were successfully released to community care, according to Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, Commonwealth Attorney of Arlington... We must not forget about the children."

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 6

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS CLOSED

To help limit the spread of the coronavirus, Fairfax County will close all government buildings and facilities to the public starting March 27, until further notice. However, the county government remains open for business online and by phone and mail. Closing government buildings will help protect the health and safety of residents and employees, and the move is intended to promote social distancing, a key action to help limit the spread of the coronavirus. Some specific public services may continue to be provided in-person as determined necessary by county agencies and employees will continue to be able to access these facilities.

NOVA PARKS OPEN TO TRAIL, PASSIVE USE

NOVA Parks (Northern Virginia Park Authority) will move to the Passive stage of Pandemic Plan effective March 24, 2020. At this stage, all entrance gates and parking lots will be closed to vehicular access. The public may continue to use the trail systems and is encouraged to use proper social distancing. Previously NOVA Parks had closed all buildings, restrooms, golf courses, historical sites, gardens, nature centers, boat launches, playgrounds, campgrounds, and visitor centers.

COUNTY EXTENDS TAX DEADLINES

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved a one-month extension for filing vehicle and business personal property taxes and paying the first installment of real estate taxes.

The board took action today at its March 24 meeting to assist taxpayers during the coronavirus outbreak.

With the extension, residents now have until June 1 to report any changes in vehicle ownership and location, among other changes. Normally, residents must file these changes with the county by May 1 or face a 10 percent penalty. However, the 60-day deadline to register any new vehicles with the county — whether newly purchased or moved into the county after June 1 — remains the same. Vehicle owners can register online.

Businesses now have until June 1, to file their personal property with the county. This includes vehicles, furniture and fixtures, machinery and tools, and computer equipment that are located in Fairfax County as of January 1. The county extended the deadline to pay the first installment of real estate taxes until Friday, Aug. 28.

Normally, the first installment is due by July 28. For more information, call 703-222-8234, TTY 711.

FAIRFAX CONNECTOR DETOURS BUS ROUTES

Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) announces that due to the temporary closure of the McLean and Van Dorn Metrorail Stations beginning Thursday, March 26, 2020, Fairfax Connector bus routes that serve those stations will be re-routed to serve open Metrorail stations. The Fairfax Connector detours will be in effect until further notice. Passengers should also note that due to these detours, the estimated arrival times of their bus in Fairfax Connector BusTracker may not be accurate.

Fairfax Connector Routes Serving McLean Metrorail Station

Route 721 - Buses will follow regular weekday schedule but will travel a route used during midday and weekends in order to provide access to the Tysons Corner Metrorail Station. Due to this change in the travel pattern, passengers should expect significant delays.

Route 724 - Buses will stay on Dolley Madison Drive bypassing the Colshire Meadow Drive loop, and will continue on to the Tysons Corner Metrorail Station (see attached map).

Fairfax Connector Routes Serving Van Dorn Metrorail

Route 109 - To access the Huntington Metrorail Station, take Huntington-bound trips on this route. You can catch these trips across the street from your regular stop.

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Manual Labor



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having recently received in the mail the three-ring binder/manual on the dos, don'ts and what-fors concerning the upcoming treatment for my stage II papillary thyroid cancer; and information as well (including a cookbook) about the low iodine diet I am instructed to start two weeks before my actual treatment begins, my takeaway is that it is going to be long and hard six weeks from start to post-quarantine finish.

The reason for my apprehension is twofold. First and foremost is that I am an extremely picky/limited eater. There's only a handful of foods that I will eat on my best day ('best day' meaning completely normal circumstances where cancer is not involved), let alone on my worst day ('worst day' meaning in the midst of cancer treatment where what I eat is restricted). As a direct anticipated result, I fear there may be some heavy lifting - metaphorically speaking, ahead, specifically between April 27 and June 4.

The second reason which compounds the problem referred to in the previous paragraph is that we happen to be in the midst of a pandemic. Accordingly, the pandemic and the associated stay-at-home directives will minimize casual visits to the supermarket, restrictions intended to prevent the spread of the virus. Moreover, due to panic buying and the likely employee/staffing shortages at the supermarkets as the virus continues to take its toll, there may be more and more food shortages which will further eliminate what few food choices I had in the first place, before I even start this specialized diet.

This second reason is made even problematic because I am very much in an at-risk category: over 60, underlying medical condition with a compromised immune system, which prevents me or rather empowers my wife to prevent me from doing what I have done (the shopping) primarily, for the entirety of our marriage. That process never suited my wife, but it has always suited me. Consequently, I have become dependent on my wife to perform many of the tasks I have spent a lifetime perfecting: what to buy where, and when, and how to save some money doing it. Let's just say I am, as Sy Sims and his daughter Marci used to say, "an educated consumer." In our marriage, I have always described my role as the one taking care of the "business side," whereas my wife has always been the one taking care of the "social side." However, as we all try to navigate this pandemic, she is fulfilling both roles.

Now, as I roll the dice, so to speak, and plan/purchase for the present and the low iodine diet in the very near future, I am, to a certain degree, at her mercy. Given that the shopping process is hardly the adventure for her that it has always been for me, I have to rely, a little bit, on her benevolence and hope she keeps an open mind while in-store on the various indulgences that I require. Indulgences which, unfortunately, are very different from hers. As but one example, she loves a tuna fish sandwich whereas all I ever need is a cheese sandwich (and let's not even discuss the chocolate issue which is likewise not her priority as it is mine); and to quote my father: "the twain will never meet on the twack."

What many of us in this country have long taken for granted: 100 percent availability of food, medicine, health and miscellaneous household products is presently not so true anymore. Not purchasing some of these products until they go on sale is a pattern I likely won't be able to follow. If I do, their purchase may be too little, too late. The last thing my future diet/medical treatment can tolerate is 'too little, too late.' And I would imagine that unless I stay on track, the "twain" will be the least of my problems.

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

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