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4/22/2020.....Mother's Day Celebrations,
Dining & Gifts I
4/29/2020.....Connection Families
Spring Outlook 2020

MAY

- 5/6/2020.....Mother's Day Celebrations,
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5/13/2020.....HomeLifeStyle
5/20/2020.....A+ Camps & Schools
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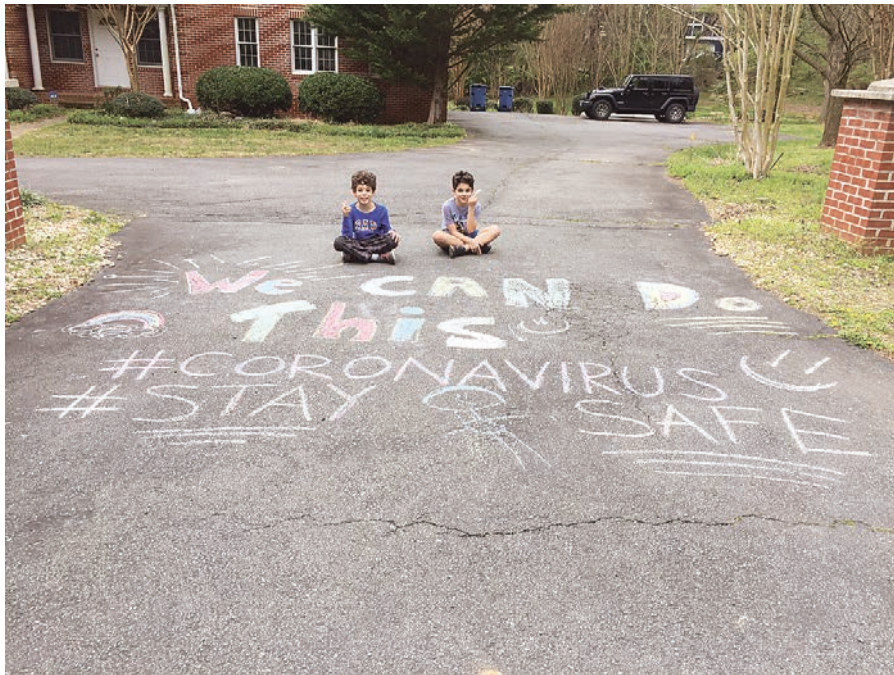
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NEWS

Keval and Nalin, brothers from Great Falls, take a break from their online classes to create a supportive message for their neighborhood.



Great Falls Children Share Messages of Hope

Following the statewide stay at home order, many of the community's youth decided to brighten their driveways, and their neighborhoods, with messages to promote a sense of hope and support amid the isolation. This is a sampling of some of the forms of outdoor art that emerged in Great Falls over the past week.

— JENNIFER FLANAGAN



Zeinab, Huda and Najji coordinated their sibling artistic talents to produce a colorful reminder to encourage residents to please "stay home to stay safe."



Ella promotes social distancing through her chalk art. She also added a link for her brother Rex's music, Rexter Productions on SoundCloud. Rex, a senior at Langley, is posting uplifting music for all to access.



Random chalk messages are drawn on paths and streets in the area reminding residents to be aware of preventive measures during this time of Covid 19.

VIEWPOINTS

Life in McLean in Time of COVID-19

— JESSICA FENG

Melanie Chuh, student, Mclean:

The pandemic has somewhat made my days more productive in that the hours I spend on the road each day are now used for other things. However, the pandemic has made me lazier in that I haven't really done anything school-related during my time at home.



George Sachs, Director, Mclean Community Center:

My daily routine hasn't changed except for making sure I have a mask when going out of my house. I come into work daily first thing in the morning, log on and follow up on email messages. Then I start communicating with staff on what they are working on. The main difference is that staff are not here at the Community Center because we are closed and most are teleworking from their homes.



Rohan Mani, student, Mclean:

The pandemic has caused me to learn new hobbies and try to fill out my time productively with the resources I have. It has also caused me to have a greater appreciation for what I had before the quarantine.



Deb Bissen, director of communications, McLean Project for the Arts:

This crisis has certainly changed the way we're working, now all in our own spaces connecting virtually through ZOOM and phone and email, but our mission remains the same. All of us at McLean Project for the Arts are challenging ourselves to stay connected to our community of art lovers and supporters by using this "pause" in our daily lives to explore new, virtual ways to share the contemporary art we've exhibited over the years, to convert our visual art classes to online offerings, and to utilize our community partnerships to continue to share ArtReach visual art activities.



Marnette Myers, director of tax administration, Mclean:

As a CPA in charge of the tax practice of the Washington Metro office of Prager Metis CPAs LLC, my professional life has been turned upside down. For us tax season generally means 7 days a week for 3 months, constantly meeting with clients and colleagues as we strive to meet the tax filing deadlines. The COVID-19 crisis has changed so much of what we do, and not just because the tax filing deadlines have been extended. There are no more face-to-face meetings with clients or colleagues. Our meetings are now done online or by telephone while we primarily telework.



No Good Choices

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



Many columns written over the couple of weeks after the ending of the annual General Assembly session this year as you may remember were filled with excitement and superlatives about the great work that had been accomplished this year. I even described the budget that was passed for the next two years as being the best on which I had voted over my legislative career. Many goals including to better fund education, mental health, homeless prevention, environment and other areas were not only met but were funded at historic levels.

Then suddenly, "poof," the good news ended as the world sank into the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting economic collapse. Monies that had been projected to be received to support the very real needs of the Commonwealth as reflected in the budget we passed evaporated. The General Assembly is scheduled to meet on

April 22 in a reconvened session to consider the Governor's recommendations on legislation we passed including amendments that are needed to keep the budget in balance. Extra precautions are being taken for the meeting because of the coronavirus pandemic, but the meeting will be very painful for the decisions that must be made on the budget. There are no good choices.

Virginia has an all-time high in rainy-day reserve funds of about two billion dollars. Those funds are built up in the good times to serve as a cushion in challenging times like now. Ideally reserve funds would be drawn on over the duration of the recession rather than being fully exhausted at the beginning, but the unknown is the length of the economic recession. Virginia has historically taken a very conservative approach to dipping into its reserves and is likely to once again with the high level of uncertainty about the future of the economy. While federal funds are expected to be made available to the states, the amount and timeline for assistance may be even more unpredictable than the fu-

ture strength of the economy.

The tendency in budgeting is often to make reductions in those items last added to the budget and to protect more established programs. Such an approach at this time would put in jeopardy an increase in the minimum wage that affects state employees as well as those in the private sector. We are way past time to increase the measly \$7.25 minimum wage that we had approved to go to \$9.50 in January. I agree with the argument of advocates who insist that increasing the minimum wage would help with economic recovery because that increase would go immediately back into the economy as it is spent on groceries, rent, transportation and other necessities. The same argument applies to salary increases for teachers and state employees. These workers with the lowest of incomes should not bear the brunt of the declining economy. More difficult decisions face us in a budget that proposes increases to programs that help the homeless, increase funding for preschool education, expand programs for persons with special needs, and expand environmental protection among others. There are no good choices!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rep. Wexton Shows Leadership on Coronavirus Legislation

To the Editor:

I am impressed by Rep. Jennifer Weston's (D-VA-10) leadership role in combating the Coronavirus and her communications to constituents about the challenges we face. In her first term representing the 10th District of Virginia in the U.S House of Representatives she has tackled important issues impacting her constituents. If you haven't yet seen it, go to her congressional website (Wexton.house.gov) and

click on the link for COVID-19. You will find a Coronavirus Constituent Guide and links to important state and local resources. The information she gives us is straightforward and based on CDC guidelines. Her words of encouragement give me hope. She championed The Families First Coronavirus Response Act and its emergency paid sick leave, free coronavirus testing, extension of unemployment benefits, and special funding for critical safety

net programs. And she led the effort to include protection of retirement savings in the act. Previously, she was on board with \$8.3 billion in emergency funding to support our state and local needs, light a fire under the development of a vaccine, and fund treatment options for people who contract the virus.

There is nothing partisan about her. She says she is driven by facts and science and her voting record

bears that out. She represents real people with real needs and she is not afraid to speak out on our behalf. She respects federal workers who work each day to do the people's business and she wants to do right by them.

She has the right stuff for the VA-10th and has a promising future as a national national leader in the Congress.

J. Jay Volkert, Ph.D.
Vienna

Maintain Distancing and Respect Quarantining

To the Editor:

There is no way to ignore the impact that covid-19 is having on the world although some still seem to be "ostriches" (homework: research the reference) of their communities. The infection is happening "over there" and will not impact my family or friends. I have used Facebook to lighten the mood and share funny memes because no matter how scary the world can be we need a place to laugh and to breathe.

Isolation is tough on many and certainly my extroverted self yearns for that contact. But helplessness is another.

I write this post as a close family member struggles in ICU with covid-19. We do not know his prognosis, but he is a fighter. This post is not for thoughts or prayers (although those are certainly welcome) but rather to recognize the

impact the terrible virus is having on people around you. I write this so people know that it is directly impacting those they know; not some distant disease in another part of the world or even the USA.

This helplessness comes from not being able to comfort him or his family beyond a telephone call. It is not being able to be with a mother whose son is currently extremely ill and she is alone. It comes from not being able to help the spouse who is also showing symptoms.

Helplessness is not hopelessness though and hope is not gone.

With this post I hope that you will maintain social distancing and respect quarantining. As far as we know this relative caught it at a Walgreen's by someone who was carrier. Repeat at a pharmacy. He was not trying to sneak into a hospital or avoid parameters. He was

not at a bar or the beach. I still see posts that state well we should be able to get back to normal soon because "normal" allows us to reduce stress and is a way to cope with the unexpected. Everything is unexpected now and that could be the new normal. This means young and old alike need to respect the disease and while you may have a slight cough your carelessness could be debilitating or deadly for another.

This post is not about a list of do's and don't's as there are plenty of those around (read them). It is about making this situation real for some who see it as faceless victims or numbers in some distant war. It is for those who do not acknowledge the severity by saying let's celebrate the ones who have survived. That fact is important too, but should not be separated from the damage and long impacts

this terrible virus will have on our own humanity.

Richard A. Stevens, Jr., Ph.D.
Herndon

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Justice Delayed

When does a defendant no longer have the right to a speedy trial?

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Judges across Northern Virginia are about to be presented with a difficult question: Does the crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic trump a defendant's right to a speedy trial?

One judge in Madison County has already determined that it does, waiving the constitutional rights of a defendant charged with stealing a car. Advocates for civil liberties are worried that Gov. Ralph Northam's declaration of a state of emergency might be used as an excuse to overlook the right to a speedy trial and keep defendants awaiting trial behind bars indefinitely.

"Any time you use an excuse to void a constitutional right, that's a problem," said Claire Gastanaga, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union

"Any time you use an excuse to void a constitutional right, that's a problem."

— Claire Gastanaga, executive director of the ACLU of Virginia

of Virginia. "At a minimum those folks should not be languishing in jail awaiting trial since they are not yet people who have been determined to be guilty of anything."

Under Virginia law, defendants charged with felonies must be tried within five months if they are behind bars. Prosecutors have nine months to try defendants who are not incarcerated. That clock starts ticking after a preliminary hearing or an indictment, which means commonwealth's attorneys across Northern Virginia are looking at their calendars and trying to figure out what to do about cases from December and January. And if the Virginia Supreme Court extends the judicial emergency beyond April 26, a huge number of defendants charged with felonies in Northern Virginia may be in danger of losing their right to a speedy trial.

"The Constitution is pretty clear about a speedy trial right," said Patrick Anderson, a prominent criminal defense attorney in Northern Virginia. "The so-called conservative jurists like to talk about the letter of the law of the Constitution, but they're the ones of course who are the most activist judges."

SEE JUSTICE, PAGE 6

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Working from Home with Children

Juggling the role of parent and employee.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

It's been nearly one month since the coronavirus pandemic led to school closures and teleworking. With most schools closed for the remainder of the academic year, parents are left with the dual responsibility of teacher and employee.

"Times have greatly changed and now everyone is trying to adjust to a new reality," said Bethesda therapist Carol Barnaby, MSW, LCSW. "I have heard from many patients who feel that they are currently a bad parent, worker, and spouse."

"Couples are fighting daily about whose career is more important in regards to who will watch the children during conflicting conference calls," continued Barnaby. "Others feel bad that their children are on their own all day while they are locked in a room working."

For those who are struggling with this balancing act, reality testing your self-expectations can offer relief, suggests Barnaby.

"Is it realistic to expect that you are going to be able to conduct business as usual while you have toddlers needing constant entertainment, school children who need school help or are fighting over devices or teens who want to sleep all day and stay up all night?" Barnaby asks. "The answer is no, it is not realistic. In normal times we would not expect someone to watch their toddler while trying to conduct business meetings. We would think that it was an absurd expectation."

Distance learning with children while simultaneously working from home is a new experience for most. Parents cannot work, teach and parent all at once. "Parents and children should develop a flexible schedule

and specify locations for each to do their work," said Jerome Short, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology, George Mason University. "Parents should discuss with their work colleagues the specific times each day they can do work-related communications."

Since the usual boundaries that separate settings and activities throughout the day are absent, it's important to create them, advises psychologist Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D. "Set hours for school or work and hours for leisure and family time,"

she said. "This allows for quality time and experiences in each camp. Of course the ability to do this will depend upon the age of your children and the type of work you do."

"Communicate about times when quiet and lack of



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Working from home in the age of coronavirus is stressful for parents.

interruption is essential, and clearly distinguish from times when you are available for questions and helping your child," continued Isenberg. "Identify specific activities that your kids can do on their own [such as] drawing, reading and throwing a tennis ball against outdoor steps."

Once a routine or schedule is established, writing and posting can create organization, says Barnaby. "This will allow children to interrupt parents less and to know when it is a good time to seek help," she said. "It will also give them a plan for their days."

If possible, designate a workspace for each family member, suggests Isenberg. "In order to stay organized and feel in control of your work, it is important to have your own work area in which to keep your belongings," she said. Scheduling time for physical activity can help minimize the impact of not having access to playgrounds, movie theaters and museums. "Have exercise time every day," said Isenberg. "Not only is it good for your overall health, but it helps with mood and we all need a little extra moving

and stretching from all of the sitting in front of computer screens. "Even if you don't have much space, getting outside every day is therapeutic. The sunshine, fresh air, and change of scenery will help everyone decompress and improve their moods."

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— Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D.

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— Bethesda therapist Carol Barnaby

"Getting outside every day is therapeutic. The sunshine, fresh air, and change of scenery will help everyone decompress and improve their moods."

— Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D.

Justice Delayed

FROM PAGE 5

THE CASE IN MADISON COUNTY may be a sign of things to come in Northern Virginia, as judges across Virginia start to hear from prosecutors who want to use the pandemic as a reason to waive the right to a speedy trial. The Madison County felony charge of theft of a motor vehicle happened back in July, and a one-day trial had been scheduled for March 25. Commonwealth's Attorney Clarissa Berry asked Circuit Court Judge Dale Durrer to waive the right to speedy trial for defendant Brian Mills over the objections of his attorney.

"The coronavirus rises to the level of a natural disaster as a communicable disease of a public health threat," the judge wrote in a March 19 opinion. "In this case, the reasons for any delay in the trial are based on unforeseen circumstances of the virus that are worsening daily and almost exponentially. Further, the court has an obligation to protect the health and safety of jurors summonsed for jury service."

In his opinion, Judge Durrer noted that the jury pool for the trial had 12 jurors over the age of 60 and seven jurors over the age of 55. In addition, he said, jurors were flooding the phone lines asking to be excused because of the pandemic and concerns about social distancing in the tight confines of the jury room and courthouse. Ultimately, he concluded that the section of Virginia code that defines a "natural disaster," in part, as a "communicable disease of public health threat" was sufficient to waive the constitutional right to a speedy trial.

"This is one trial court's opinion. It's not precedent for any other Virginia trial court," said Rich Kelsey, former assistant dean at the George Mason University School of Law. "Some other trial court could come out differently, finding that the law doesn't go as far as this judge says."

THE SPEEDY TRIAL statute presents prosecutors with a stark timeline. Under normal circumstances, they need to either conduct a trial within the deadline or cut a plea deal. Prosecutors across Northern Virginia say the governor's declaration of a state of emergency is all that's needed to cite the

part of Virginia code that creates an exemption for speedy trials based on "a natural disaster, civil disorder or an act of God."

"Not only do I think it's a viable safety valve in an emergency, I think that's exactly why that code section exists," said Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter. "But I also don't think that a judge would grant one for a very lengthy period of time. I mean it might be a week or two, maybe three weeks."

Social distancing is difficult if not impossible behind bars, so many advocates for criminal-justice reform are calling for prosecutors and judges to reconsider who is behind bars and whether they need to be there. The ACLU of Virginia, for example, is calling for all defendants accused of misdemeanors to be released. Others who have pushed for reforming the system say the pandemic should spark a new conversation about the need for mass incarceration.

"Perhaps in the longer term, the larger question this pandemic should force us to carefully reconsider is whether we overuse incarceration as the primary form of punishment," said Arlington Commonwealth's Attorney Parisa Dehghani-Tafti in a written response to questions.

POLICE DEPARTMENTS across Virginia say crime is down significantly since the governor issued a stay-at-home order on March 30, and that law enforcement has focused on serious crimes rather than nuisance enforcement or traffic violations. Advocates for criminal-justice reform have long argued that too many people accused of crimes are being held behind bars because they could not afford to pay bail, overcrowding jails that are now petri dishes for community spread. Several prosecutors say they have already worked with the defense bar and local public defender's offices as well as sheriffs to decrease the jail population in response to the crisis.

"The courts do not seem to be very concerned about what's going on with the virus," said Anderson, the defense attorney. "We filed for reconsideration of bond motions for all of our incarcerated clients given the current crisis, and every single one of them was denied."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

MONDAY/APRIL 27

Community Conversations: Transportation. 7:30-9 p.m. The General Assembly passed momentous legislation for transportation and transit in 2020. Mark your calendars for this webinar that discusses the impact of the legislation and opportunities to move clean transportation forward in northern Virginia. Webinar address: bit.ly/NOVA-Transportation.

GOVERNOR REQUESTS

MOVING MAY ELECTION

Gov. Ralph Northam requested the General Assembly move the May General Election and all special elections scheduled for May 5, 2020 to the November 3, 2020 General Election date to further mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The Governor is also exercising his statutory authority (§ 24.2-603.1 of the Code of Virginia) to move the June primary elections from June 9, 2020 to June 23, 2020. Moving the upcoming May elections requires action by the General Assembly. The plan the Governor is proposing includes the following measures:

There will be one ballot in November.

Voters who are qualified in November will be able to vote in November. An individual who was not qualified in May but is qualified in November will be able to vote.

All absentee ballots already cast will be discarded. Virginians will have an opportunity to vote for local elected officials in November. Those officials whose terms are to expire as of June 30, 2020 will continue in office until their successors have been elected on the November 3, 2020 and have been qualified to serve.

GOVERNOR SIGNS NEW LAWS

TO SUPPORT WORKERS

Gov. Ralph Northam has signed nearly two dozen new laws to support working Virginians, including legislation to combat worker misclassification and wage theft, ban workplace discrimination, and prohibit non-compete covenants for low-wage workers. The Governor proposes to increase the minimum wage starting May 1, 2021, and to advance prevailing wage, collective bargaining, and project labor agreement legislation then as well. This will ensure workers get the support they need while allowing greater economic certainty in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, Governor Northam is proposing amendments to prohibit apprenticeship discrimination on the basis of gender identity and to create a work-sharing program to support workers impacted by COVID-19.

GOVERNOR SIGNS

CLEAN ENERGY LEGISLATION

Gov. Ralph Northam is accelerating Virginia's transition to clean energy by signing the Virginia Clean Economy Act and by amending the Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act that requires Virginia to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The Virginia Clean Economy Act was passed as House Bill 1526 and Senate Bill 851, which were sponsored by Delegate Richard C. "Rip" Sullivan Jr. and Senator Jennifer McClellan, respectively. The Act incorporates clean energy directions that the Governor issued in Executive Order Forty-Three in September 2019. It results from extensive stakeholder input and incorporates environmental justice concepts related to the Green New Deal.

LEGISLATION DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA POSSESSION

Gov. Ralph Northam has approved legislation (Senate Bill 2 | House Bill 972) decriminalizing marijuana possession offenses. Northam also recommended technical amendments which must be approved by the legislature before the new law takes effect July 1, 2020. The law reduces penalties for offenses involving the possession of up to one ounce of marijuana to a civil violation – punishable by a maximum \$25 fine, no arrest, and no criminal record.

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Money For What, Exactly?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't know, really. Money comes in. Money goes out. But since I stay in and don't go out, cash is no longer king. Credit reigns supreme and since the accounting/budget system for the Lourie family business is rarely written down/planned for, I don't know from one expenditure to the next, where the money goes, unlike John Prine knew when he sang about "Sam Stone" when he came home.

As the spouse responsible for the business side of the marriage, it has been my job to financially plan what the family can and cannot afford. And since both earners were commission/tip recipients, the task of managing that cash flow, unpredictable as it occasionally was, took some emotional wherewithal. Nevertheless, we survived the ordeal, mostly, and now, as it has happened that all of us are consumed by pandemic-related pressures/procedures, our compensation history/experience has prepared us to ebb and flow with the times. But instead of spending money when we may have it, now we're spending money when the goods and services we need are available, which is similarly unpredictable as our dual incomes used to be.

The result of this inconsistent and 'unpredictable' availability is that when any of the goods and services are available one must buy immediately regardless of cash on hand/in-wallet or credit balance in tow or risk being shut out completely: "No soup for you," from a long-ago Seinfeld episode, so to speak (although my wife, Dina does like soup and therefore it is a regular item on our shopping list.) Accordingly, during these pandemic days, one must strike (buy) when the iron is hot, cash on hand be damned, and worrying about your credit card balance also be damned. We all need what we need in our homes/for our families and lack of paper money is not going to stop any of us from purchasing what staples and peace of mind a piece of plastic can offer. And thank God for those pieces of plastic with the magnetic strip. They're certainly getting a work out these days providing aid and comfort - of a sort, to all of us non-essential people staying at home.

And while we're staying/consuming at home, we're no longer letting our fingers do the walking through our local Yellow Pages. Instead, we're Googling our way instead, pointing and clicking, and then entering our credit card information while trying to keep our respective family business afloat. The evolving problem for me however is accounting for all these purchases and wondering if we're ever going to receive them, how much was actually charged and was the purchase even worth it, given the wait. Still, since we're all housebound, there are so many more purchases that have to be made over the phone/online that what control I used to have when in-person, spending the cash in my wallet, I no longer have. Now, I have to charge almost everything and then wait for the monthly credit card statement for an accounting of what financial damage I may have done. And by that time, 30 days or so later, I likely can't undo any of the damage because the customer-service operators are not available like they were during the pre-pandemic days or in some cases, not even taking calls. Resolution, clarification, compensation? Heck no. All you're likely to get is frustration, and that's after "extended waiting times."

And that previous paragraph's presumption is that I even know what I'm talking about (what I bought, where, when, how much, etc.). But the real point of this column, which concerns me more, is accounting for the purchases that I don't know about/haven't received. It reminds of a joke I once heard, David Brenner, a comedian from Philadelphia and a regular on The Johnny Carson Show tell: "It's not the mosquitoes I hear that I worry about, it's the ones I don't hear."

Three months plus into this pandemic and our new normal has become fairly familiar. The problem is that familiarity has bred some contempt.

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

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