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Mail carrier delivers in Arlington despite the pandemic.

Getting Beds Ready For Edible Landscape

NEWS, PAGE 3

Black Tie and Enlightenment

PAGE 4

Snail Mail Brings Joy in Pandemic

NEWS, PAGE 2

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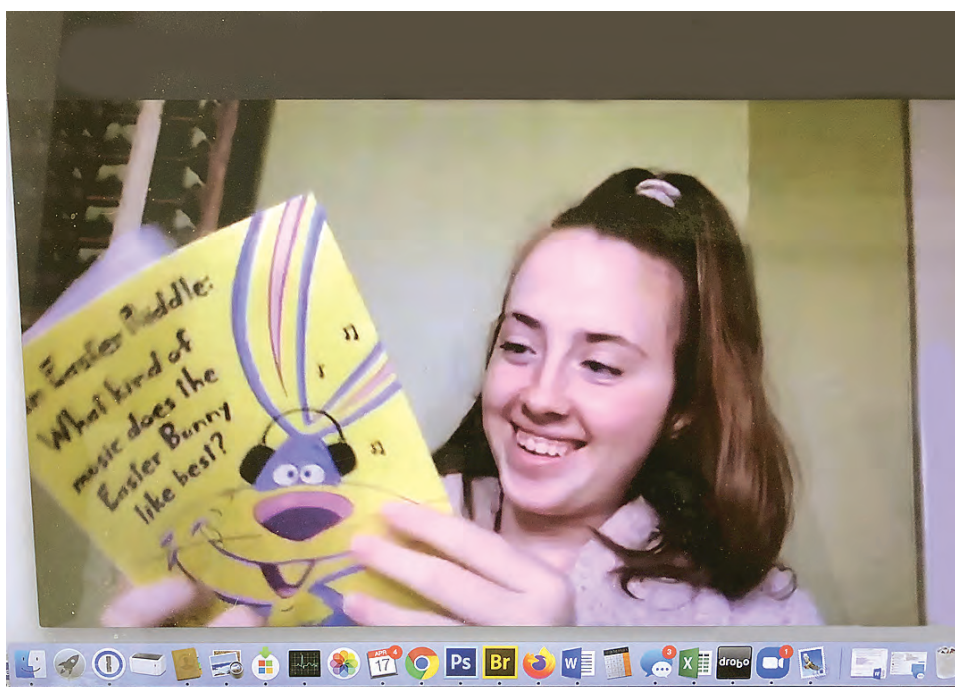
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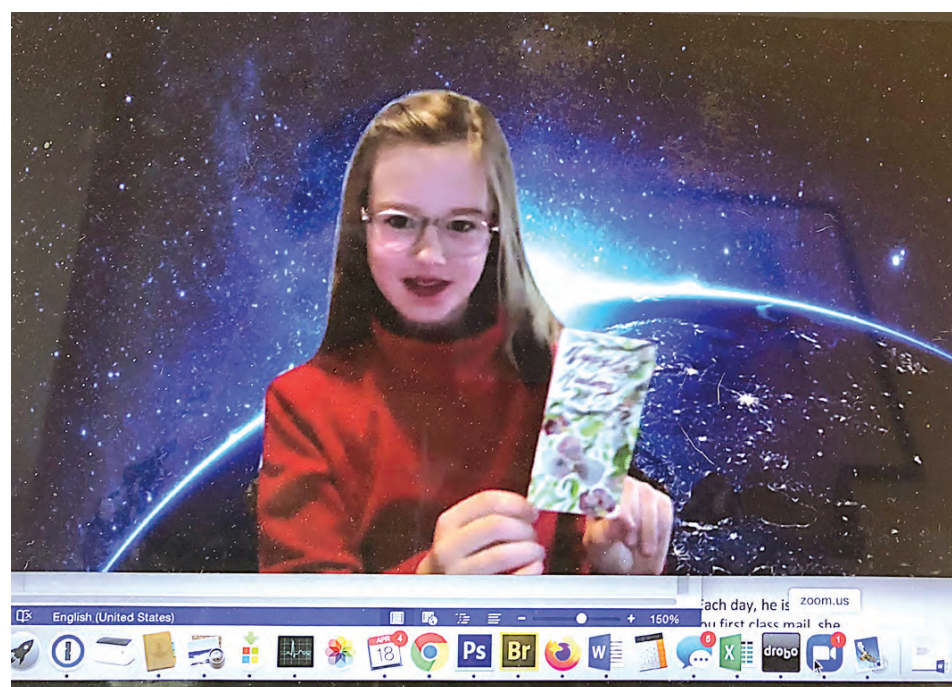
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Mia Murphy, age 15, Arlington.



Eloise Frazer, age 10, Alexandria.

Discovering Mail in Time of Coronavirus

BY JOAN BRADY
THE CONNECTION

The mail hits the floor with a thwack each day and startles nine-year-old Hailey Kerr, even though she knows it's coming.

Before the virus, Hailey wasn't home when the mail was delivered. Now she watches through her window as the masked carrier hurries from her house to the next.

Hailey is especially excited when she gets mail addressed just to her, "It's so special to get a card in the mail. It means that someone has taken the time to write to you."

Hailey is at an age where she does not have a phone. And now, without school and activities, her connection to friends is limited to a parent from each family being willing -- and able -- to loan a phone for talking or texting. So the virus and lockdown have made getting physical mail even more important to her. "Now, more than ever, it's like a piece of gold," Hailey told me.

Hailey, a student at Douglas MacArthur Elementary in Alexandria, is fortunate that she has a number of friends and family who send her mail throughout the year, including a young friend who is a big letter writer and card sender. And apparently, 10-year-old Eloise Frazer, also of Alexandria, has upped her game since being on lockdown.

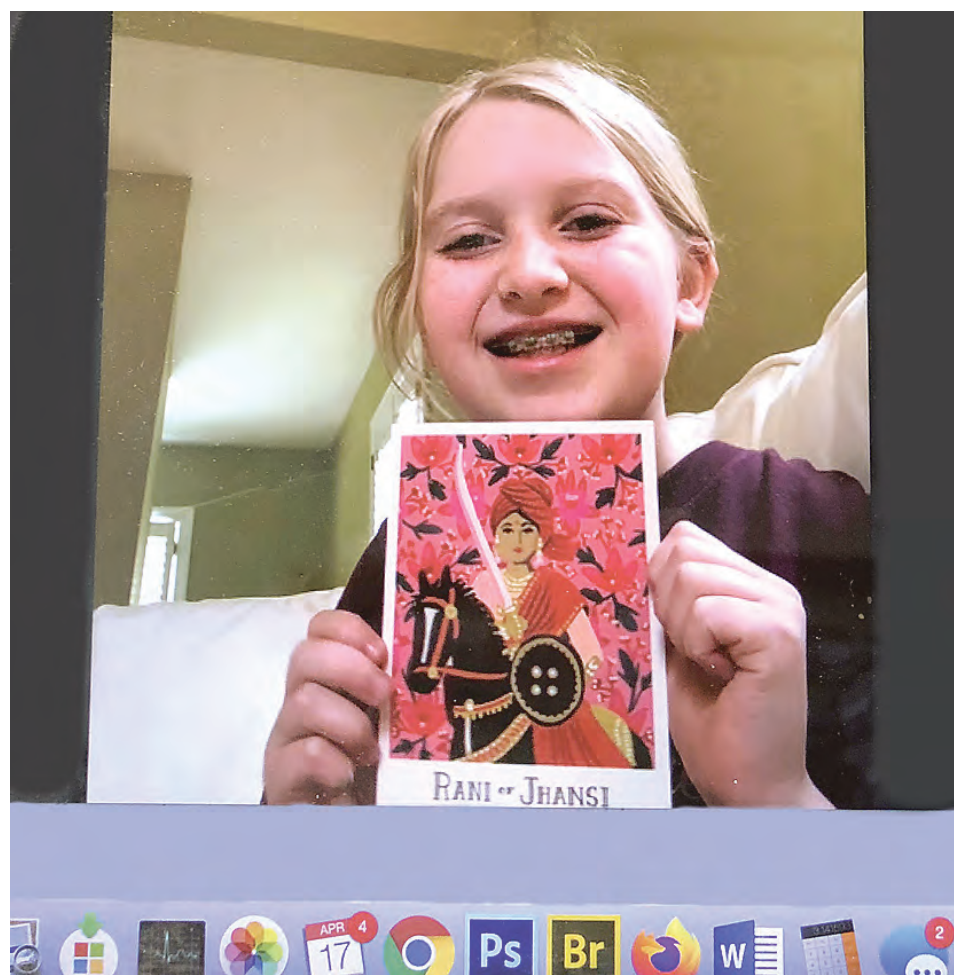
Eloise's recent card was newsy and topical. She thanked Hailey for cupcakes recently delivered, provided an update on the status of her cat, Bob, expressed wishes that "this," as she referred to the virus et al, would be over soon. And she suggested they start a Zoom book club.

I mean, really, who wouldn't be delighted to receive such a welcome break from the sameness that the virus has brought to each day.

After hearing about Eloise and her letters and cards, I had to meet her. And fortunate-

"I really get excited when I get mail."

— Mia Murphy, 15, of Arlington



Hailey Kerr, age 9, student at Douglas MacArthur Elementary in Alexandria.

ly, she was available on short notice for a quick Zoom call.

Understated Eloise, seemed surprised to learn about the impact her thoughtful letters have on Hailey. She started writing letters and sending cards when she was just seven, after making a new friend at her mom's college reunion. Three years later,

Eloise has a pretty extensive list of friends and family to whom she writes to regularly.

She appreciates the value of written communications, "That's how you get to know [people] better," she says.

For 15-year-old Mia Murphy, of Arlington, receiving first class mail is also special. Mail comes mostly from grandparents, who often give her a heads up that something is on the way. Mia loves the advance notice, which gives her the opportunity to look forward to its arrival. For her, a letter or card in the mail is more personal than a text or phone call. She says that "handwritten letters are really

important, they have so much value."

Mia jokes that glitter included in the envelope from a card received years ago is still stuck between floor boards. And she laughs talking about the cursive of one grandmother that is sometimes "difficult to decipher."

An eagerly anticipated Easter card has finally finished mail quarantine and Mia opened it on our Zoom call. In the first moments after opening, it was as though Mia had forgotten I was there, as she lost herself in her grandmother's message, smiling at

"USPS will be unable to make payroll in October absent urgent congressional intervention, putting at risk the livelihoods of the Postal Service's 630,000 employees."

— Megan Brennan,
Postmaster General

the hand-drawn cartoons and stickers. "I really get excited when I get mail. It's a fun little pick-me-up," Mia says.

And Mia recognizes the value of mail carriers, "They have the power to carry human connection through letters."

That power of the United States Postal Service remains one of few areas of bipartisan consensus today,

SEE DISCOVERING, PAGE 7
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Lawn Business Picks Up During Pandemic

People seek food security with vegetable gardens.

By Shirley Ruhe

The shiny red work truck pulls up to an Arlington residence. Tom Hayes and his workers from Edible Landscapes get busy prepping several garden beds in a backyard on April 16. “Honestly I’ve had more requests for estimates this year than ever.” Hayes started his N. Virginia business in 2007

“People are stuck in their house and don’t like the way their yard looks. They want to see something nice while they’re trapped.”

Hayes says people are also looking out for food security, afraid of when groceries might run out. “There has been a spike in people wanting vegetables.” This year



Tom Hayes, right, and two workers prepare garden beds for vegetables.

Hayes cleaned out his greenhouse that he had been using for storage and planted fifty trays of every kind of vegetable and flowers. “Then I hand the customers a ‘ready to grow garden’ and can advise them on what to do.”

Hayes has come with five workers today. One of his long-time workers and driver is at home, afraid to come out due to the coronavirus. “He has a newborn at home although I don’t think it’s much risk working outside

like this.” However, the workers today wear masks, but not the ones Hayes ordered before “this whole thing started. Now I can’t find the masks anywhere.”

The pungent smell of the premium compost mix wafts around the yard as the workers pull out the violets and weeds in the garden squares in preparation for mixing the compost into the soil. Then it needs to sit and age for a bit and a couple of rains until it is time to plant the garden.

Tomorrow Hayes has another vegetable bed prep for tomatoes, okra, peppers, cucumbers, “pretty much anything that can be grown around here. Herbs, too.” And, he adds, “people are buying fruit trees, too -- Asian pears, figs, sweet cherries and paw paws. They taste like a tropical fruit somewhere between mangos and bananas but are a hardy local fruit growing along the C&O canal. “And blueberries and people really love their strawberries. Like I said they just want food.”

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/ARLINGTON CONNECTION

William ‘Smokey’ Stover Former Chief of Police dies at 89.

By Jeanne Theismann
The Connection

William “Smokey” Stover, the longest serving Chief of Police in Arlington County, died April 17 of natural causes. He was 89.

“Chief Stover leaves an impressive legacy as a results-driven leader with extensive knowledge and experience in the public-safety field,” Arlington Police Chief Jay Farr said. “He is credited with growing and advancing the agency while ensuring it maintained a culture of professionalism and community focus.”

Stover joined the department as a patrol officer in 1956. He steadily rose through the ranks, becoming a lieutenant in the internal affairs division and deputy chief in charge of operations. He was named chief in 1978 and led the department for 18 years until his retirement in 1996 following 40 years of service.

William Keith Stover was born Oct. 25, 1930, in Quicksburg, Va. Following high school, he served in the U.S. Army and earned two Bronze Star Medals for acts of valor in combat during the Korean War.

After the war, he attended business college, using the G.I. Bill to further his education. Stover, who got his nickname from the cartoon character “Smokey Stover the Firefighter,” left the Shenandoah Valley in 1956 to join the Arlington County Police Department.

“I had decided when I was in high school that I wanted to be involved in law enforcement,” Stover said in an interview at the time of his retirement. “There’s more in law enforcement than arresting people and en-



William “Smokey” Stover died April 17 at the age of 89. He was Arlington County’s longest serving Chief of Police.

forcing the law. You can also help people in the distressful times in their life.... And to help people during those times is a worthwhile endeavor.”

As chief, Stover established best practices for community policing and led the transformation of the department with state-of-the-art technology. He served in leadership roles on drug task forces including D.A.R.E. and contributed to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Stover was a longtime member of various

organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Arlington Lions Club, and a former board member for The Salvation Army in Arlington. He was a Past President of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police.

Stover is survived by his wife, Diane; daughters Stephanie (Chavis) and Stacy (Scott); stepchildren Justin (Monique) and Jason; six grandchildren (Amanda, Walker, Maya, Caelan, Raicheal and Zephyr); his brother John Stover and family, sister-



Former Arlington County Chief of Police William “Smokey” Stover died April 17 at the age of 89.

“There’s more in law enforcement than arresting people and enforcing the law. You can also help people in the distressful times in their life.”

— Police Chief William “Smokey” Stover at his retirement in 1996

in-law and brother-in-law (Susie and Gary Wohlers); and mother-in-law and father-in-law (Jo Anne and Wayne Reed). He was preceded in death by his first wife, Nina Shiflett Stover, in 1993.

A memorial service will be planned at a later date. Contributions in his memory can be made to the Arlington County Police Friends and Family Fund, 1425 North Courthouse Road, Arlington, VA 22201

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Black Tie Dinners and Enlightenment in Arlington

Using the time to do new things and bond.

By EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

In the middle of the shut-down, with Governor Northam's stay-at-home order ringing in their ears, Fernanda and Brian Fisher held a fancy black tie dinner in their North Arlington home, getting out the good china, the long gowns, the sparkly necklaces, making the neighbors stare, and inviting ... their two daughters who were home from college and boarding school. Roberta Fisher lent her old prom gown from high school to her little sister. The four of them, dressed to the nines, took photos of themselves in dramatic poses on the lawn, and sat down to a delicious three course dinner ordered out from Aracosia McLean.

"Our best conversations are in the dining room, so we had a free ranging one about the virus and its effects on the world plus prayers for those we know who are ill, recovering or immunocompromised. Being together as a family now



The Fisher family held a black tie dinner - for the four of them - at home one night. Getting takeout from Aracosia in McLean, they served a three course dinner on good china, and talked, a lot.

has allowed all of us to practice patience, be creative and learn to adjust our expectations," said Fernanda Fisher. Later in the month they had a "Denison University Night" where everyone had to dress up in Denison gear. Next, a

Berkshire Academy night.

ONE SEES Arlington families on the streets, people one didn't even know lived in the neighborhood. The sounds of children playing, biking, or practising baseball, sounds relegated to the 1950s and 60s, are back.

Parents are cooking up a storm in the kitchen they had long ago traded in for take-out. Flour is flying off the shelves as homemade bread bakes in the home oven. People are cleaning their own homes, sending checks to their cleaning staff so they won't lose income. Cars are in the garage.

Families are eating dinner together, trees are being climbed, dogs are being walked, and walked, and walked.

But Arlington is a city of over-achievers. Playing could never be enough for them. What are they doing? Gardens are being planted. Virtual fundraising 5Ks are afoot. Couples are coming up with "Covid-19 to-do lists." One couple realized their to-do list was not progressing, and decided to make a new list: "Things we will be sorry we did not get done while we were home during the pandemic."

ANNETTE LANGE was looking forward to having some time to travel when she retired: the last thing she expected was to be self-isolating at home in Arlington. She thought about what she could accomplish during her enforced isolation: she



The two Fisher girls, Roberta and Sofie, posed on the lawn for photos with their dogs Maisie and Winston.

could organize photos or clean out closets, for instance, but she knew herself better than that. "If it has an end goal, I'll never get there." She even thought, "Enlightenment might actually be more achievable."

Lang decided that while Enlightenment itself might be out of reach, she could record hours working on being mindful and that would help her not feel guilty about being "unproductive." So she chose two hours of meditation and meditation reading and three hours of mindfully engaging in exercise, including walking and stretching every day. Housework counts, but, for her, an hour of housework equates to a half hour of exercise, even though she admits it's more like the other way around.

Lang has been practicing meditation on and off for more than 5 years. She is part of the Insight Meditation Community of Washington (IMCW) and has taken classes as well as gone on meditation retreats to Cuba and Greece. Lang says she started meditating when she had some health problems and someone recommended meditation as one useful tool to try. It struck a chord with her immediately, but until COVID-19 hit, she did not have or take the time to incorporate it more fully in her life.

"I don't really expect to achieve anything close to Enlightenment, but I would like greater peace of mind and kinder, more appropriate responses to triggers in life."



PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN

One family's generous effort to alleviate the hardships caused by toilet paper hoarding...on North Glebe Road in Arlington.

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Connection

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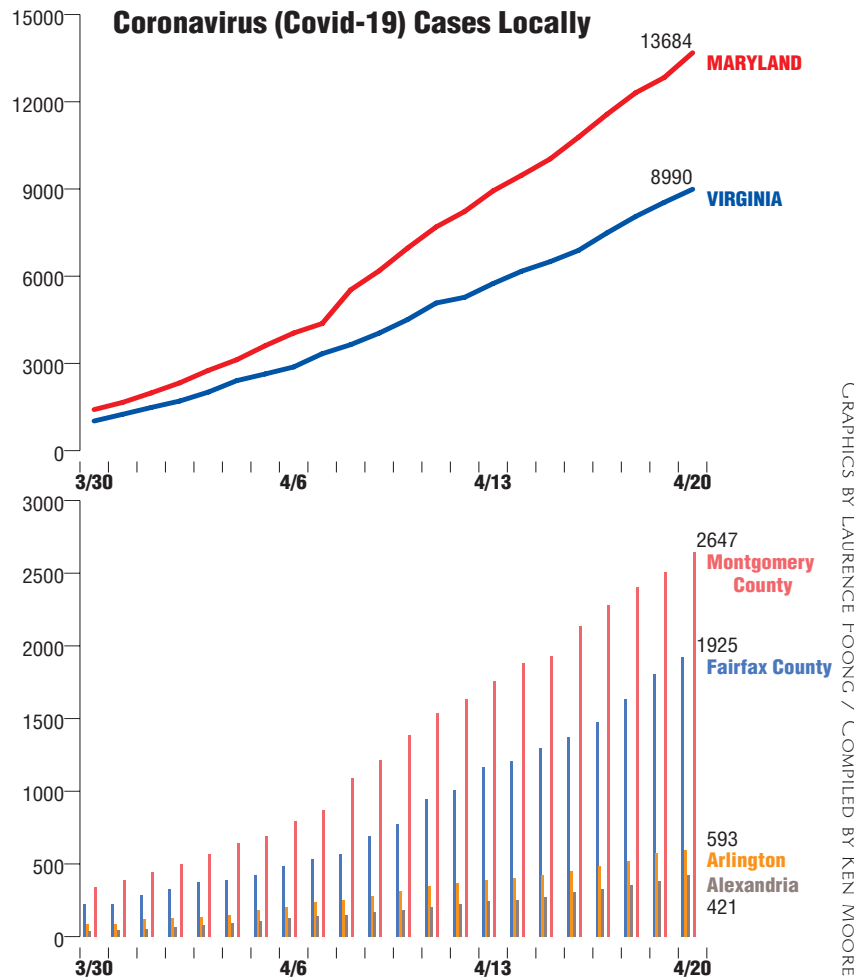
NEWS



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/THE CONNECTION

SYNERGY HOME CARE received several award designations by Home Care Pulse, a provider of analytics for home health care providers. The Arlington-based company was named an industry leader in employer of choice, leader in excellence and provider of choice. CEO Mitch Opalski, in front, is shown with Deddah Cooper, Elizabeth Glowicz, and Corrie Cyre holding the certificates of recognition.

Local Coronavirus Cases



GRAPHICS BY LAURENCE FOONG / COMPILED BY KEN MOORE

Sources:
 Virginia Department of Health <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>
 Maryland: Maryland Department of Health <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
 Alexandria Source: City of Alexandria

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AT&T proposes to replace an existing 26.8' wood utility pole with a new 35' wood utility pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 38.1' at 3660 27th St S, Arlington, VA (20200380). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

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News

ACPD Get Temperatures Taken -Go Out to Do Job

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Arlington County Police Chief Jay Farr says, "It's important to remember that Arlington already had a pandemic plan in place and we have had for years. We saw China, Italy. I thought we better dust it off."

"By the fact that we had a set of plans and protocols, it freed up time to think about the constantly changing set of coronavirus guidelines. Today nothing, tomorrow all this. You have to stay flexible." He adds, "If we didn't have something in place, we would have been overwhelmed."

He said the biggest change came with the first Governor's executive order on restaurants. "There was a whole change of dynamics with Clarendon, all of the nightlife, and how do we design a plan of action, of education and voluntary compliance. It wasn't about enforcement."

Farr says they started by giving restaurants a copy of the Governor's orders each time they changed. If the restaurant violated the social distancing or the limitation of ten people, they would get a notice. In several cases the police had to go back a second time and issue a written warning. At some point the next step would be issuing a citation violation, which is a class one misdemeanor but not an arrest.

But Farr says the Arlington community has been compliant with the rules "although I do get a lot of love mail/ hate mail about police harassment with the parks being closed." He says he understands why people get upset, "but we just give them a warning and ask them to move along."

Arlington hasn't yet had any protests about violation of civil rights like some other Virginia communities. "However, this is sort of an interesting thing. The Constitution protects the right to protest; it is really a fine line." He says, "For instance, if people protested at the Arlington County Courthouse, we would probably give them some amount of latitude. There is the letter of the law and the spirit of the law." He says usually when you allow the protesters to get their point across, they leave peacefully. "If they were to block the entrance it would be different and we would probably have to make an arrest."

Farr prioritizes resources to focus on crimes against persons before crimes against property and juggles the duties of the force as needs change. Currently the patrol function is ok. Resources have been freed up with schools closed, eliminating the need for school resource officers and the ACPD community outreach events cancelled for now so they can supplement patrol. "If I get to a certain point, I would have to call in the systems management and criminal investigations teams back into patrol" or he could extend the current 10.5 hour workday to 12 hours to cover the same area.

He said the current situation has necessitated changes in which calls the ACPD responds to and which it diverts. If it is not a crime in progress, most low-level calls can be handled online and still get the information. He said the public has been responding to the new system, and online reports are up 25-30 percent. This is in conjunction with the emergency center asking people if they really need a police officer. If ACPD does go to the home, they ask the caller to step out of the house and the officer observes social

distancing.

Farr says they follow CDC guidelines on the wearing of masks. If an officer is on a normal patrol and maintains social distancing, wearing a mask is optional but if they expect engagement, the officers have N95 masks. "The County was good at stockpiling them ahead of time."

Only one officer has tested positive for COVID-19 and self quarantined for 14 days. "He was not hospitalized and should be back at work within a few days." He says the Arlington Department of Human Resources is responsible for the surveillance work but it is a challenge if you truly believe it is out in the community.

Farr says, "The real challenge for the officers is the stress and anxiety of the unknown from me to the brand new guy on the street. How long will this last? Will there be another round?" He said a number of the officers have real stresses about whether they will take this home and how to protect their families. "This is a challenging job to start with, and the pandemic compounds the situation by throwing a curve."

Each day the officers get a temperature check when they come to work and know they are good to go. They get all the most recent program information. "We have 'Inside the Blue,' an internal system, and regular meetings each week with the senior teams. In addition, the District Commanders touch base every day. Farr says he has to filter the information so he doesn't inundate his teams. "You wouldn't believe what I get every day." On Wednesdays he shares information with others at the Center for Homeland Security Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Farr says, "The most important thing with all of the challenges, anxiety and stress, the ACPD men and women have really stepped up. They aren't calling in sick. They are out there every day putting in their best effort."



Arlington County Police Chief Jay Farr.

FILE PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/ARLINGTON CONNECTION

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Discovering Mail

FROM PAGE 2

as evidenced by Pew Research's recent government agency favorability survey, which showed that 91 percent of adult respondents have a favorable opinion of the USPS, with no differentiation in opinion between party leanings.

The USPS is the largest employer in the United States after Walmart, employing roughly 630,000 people directly and another 7.3 million in the larger mailing industry, according to U.S. Rep. Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations.

Postal workers are deemed essential, helping to ensure all Americans have delivery access to everything from prescriptions to essential medical equipment to those day-brightening letters and cards, always and especially during this crisis. The Postal Service is a particularly important resource for seniors and people in rural areas, who often have less access to other delivery services.

A representative from the American Postal Workers Union said the USPS is actually more prepared than most organizations for this pandemic, because they have to be prepared for emergencies like hurricanes and anthrax in order to continue and resume operations quickly in times of crisis.

Even still, people outside the postal office want to show support and it's hard to know what to do.

Lillian Sun Tadlock, 49, of Vienna, has always had a soft spot for her letter carrier. In the summer she shares cold drinks and even popsicles.

In the era of coronavirus, she made special masks for her mail carrier and the clerk at her local post office.

Unfortunately, as much as her local postal workers appreciate her kindness, the U.S. Postal Service is going to need more than kindness to ensure its continued existence.

The USPS, already struggling prior to this year, are at risk to become a casualty of the virus. According to Connolly's website, Megan Brennan, Postmaster General, informed the Congressional Subcommittee during an April 9 briefing that "The Postal Service anticipates "a \$13 billion revenue loss directly to COVID-19 this fiscal year. ... USPS will be unable to make payroll in October absent urgent congressional intervention, putting at risk the livelihoods of the Postal Service's 630,000 employees and the 7.3 million people who are part of the larger mailing industry."

It's pretty unthinkable to visualize a future without the U.S. Postal Service. When presented with the very idea, Hailey responded, "[The USPS] is important... people around the world have pen pals and need to be able to write to people they love ... because letters are cool."

If you have an opinion on the future of the U.S. Postal Service, contact your members of Congress. And share your letters with and experiences with the Connection. editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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Wholesale Change



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Since I'm not doing the food and pharmacy out-of-the-house shopping anymore, as I have for the last 40 years (as I may have mentioned in last week's column: "Money For What") I am no longer in control of what we buy and how much we spend. The pandemic and my upcoming thyroid cancer treatment have combined to empower my wife, Dina, to set fairly strict guidelines. Primarily that I am to stay put in the house ALL THE TIME and that during my isolation, she will fill the purchasing vacuum. The effect being that all my years of experience reducing our grocery expenses has led to this: we're paying re, re, retail for nearly all of our purchases. Not impoverished because of it but not very happy about it either.

I derived a certain pleasure in wandering around the stores, advertising circular and coupon book in hand, looking for sale items, checking the 50% off/discontinued merchandise rack, occasionally looking at the day-old bakery cabinet, using miscellaneous paper and digital coupons, buying in bulk/quantity, getting rain checks when products were sold out, as well as being open to any other in-store incentives I might find. The process, as tedious as it may sound, was not nearly so for me, especially considering that over the course of a year, according to the stores' own online tally, I saved the Lourie family business upwards of \$1,000. Now it seems as if we're paying it all back since product availability — due to pandemic pressures, has often laid waste to the stores' shelves. And also laid waste to stores' interest in offering products on sale. And why should they? Consumers are buying anything they can get their hands on, price be damned.

Moreover, the stores themselves, at least the ones where I have been a regular buyer, are providing fewer digital coupons on their sites than ever before and the advertising circulars, typically 10 to 14 pages, have now been reduced by one half or so. In addition, there are also fewer coupon inserts in the Sunday newspaper editions. The net effect of this is that the supermarket/pharmacy budget has been blown to smithereens. And the outlook for the future (immediate future anyway) is more of the same, or rather less, if you catch my drift.

Now further combine the fact that yours truly, a strategic shopper of some repute is not doing the in-store shopping anymore, and perhaps you can do the metaphorical math. Can you say through the roof? Let me be clear; this situation has nothing to do with control. It has to do with cash flow. I feel as if we're being taken advantage of, like we're sitting ducks almost, and there's not a thing I can do about any of it other than to take solace in the fact that our stimulus checks will most definitely have somewhere to go, even if I don't.

Still, I realize there are many others who are not complaining about what they're paying for groceries because they're too busy trying to make withdrawals from their local food bank. I would imagine their challenge is identical to mine, only much worse: hoping to find necessary items in limited supply without the proper money and means to do so. Means, unfortunately which are not leading to satisfactory ends. Ends which will either bust their budgets, overwhelm public-type assistance or swell credit card balances; thereby increasing future minimum payments and exacerbating pressures to even make monthly payments. A vicious circle and cycle if there ever was one, or two.

But I don't have one or two so I am very lucky. Now I do have two types of cancer but that wasn't the point of this column. The point was more narrow than that. It was simply to make a little fun at a predicament not of my own choosing but one that is impacting my life and totally out of my control. I wouldn't say that it's food for thought but it is something to chew on.

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

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