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CONNECTION
Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Farmer Olivia Madigan takes Jeff and Charlie out for some exercise at Frying Pan Farm Park.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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An 'Outpouring Of Love and Kindness'

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Not the Same
But Life Goes On

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Local Sci-Fi and Fantasy Author Wins International Contest

It's 'The Voice' for amateur writers.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For science fiction and fantasy readers, Leah Ning of Herndon may be their next favorite author. A panel of professional authors recognized Ning as one of twelve "writer winners" for her entry, "Yellow and Pink" in this year's international competition, the L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future Contest.

Ning is a Boeing programmer by day and author by night. As an amateur, she entered the Contest, "...an opportunity for new writers of science fiction and fantasy to have their work judged by some of the masters in the field and discovered by a wide audience," according to the company's website. In addition to the Writers of the Future Contest, a second contest, Illustrators of the Future, was also held with twelve winners adjudicated by greats in the arts. The winning authors, along with twelve winning illustrators are featured in "L. Ron Hubbard



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Leah Ning of Herndon holds a newly released copy of "L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 36," released April 7, 2020. In the anthology, which named only 12 winner writers globally, is Ning's winning story, "Pink and Yellow."

Presents Writers of the Future Volume 36," released April 7, 2020. Awardees are from across the globe, the United States, Australia, Turkey, Vietnam, and more.

ACCORDING TO NING, although she wrote as a student, when she entered the workforce, she stopped due to time constraints. However, in the summer of 2019, Ning be-

gan again. "I never wrote a short story before...I sent my first one into the Contest, and of course, it got summarily rejected... It was terrible and deserved," she said.

Ning knew this contest was different and she persevered. "They only allow amateur authors to enter. You are not out there competing against likes of Stephen King... It's nice to have a contest like that because there's not a whole lot of stuff out there for new writers... Being a new writer is hard, man. Normally you submit to magazines, and you're competing against everybody at the pro level," she said.

Ning had other reasons for entering the Contest. "They have a tiered rejection system - Flat, Honorable Mention, Silver Honorable Mention, Semifinalist, Finalist and Winner... It helps you know where you are in terms of whether you're getting there for professional writing... Dave Farland is a New York Times best selling author... He will give semifinalists a critique on their story and tell someone, 'Hey, this is why I didn't make you a finalist.'" Ning added that the contest runs quarterly. "Basically, it runs continuously," she said. "And it has no entry fees and entrants retain all publication rights."

Ning provided a glimpse, a one-line trailer

for her winning story, "Yellow and Pink." Her first sentence reads: "How many times?" the dying man whispered." People who read the story tell Ning that it pulled them in right away and took them on an emotional ride.

Asked what she does to overcome the inevitable 'writer's block,' Ning said, "I don't sit there and stare at the blank page. That's stressful... Stress is crap for your creative process...Do something nice. Take a walk in nature or a hot shower. Drive around randomly... It's a lot more helpful for coming up with an idea... with an opening. Then, when I sit down in front of a blank page, I already know what I want to write."

DUE TO COVID-19, for Ning and other winners, the Annual Awards Ceremony in Hollywood and the intensive week of learning from established writers, artists and professionals in the publishing world is on hold.

A full-color illustration accompanies each story in the 450-page anthology. Award-winning authors and Contest judges: Katherine Kurts (Deryni series), Jody Lynn Nye ("The Phoenix's Peace" based on Volume 36 cover art), and Nnedi Okorafor (The Binti Trilogy), and the Contest founder, L. Hubbard provided bonus stories.

Scrawl Books in Reston Town Center confirmed they would offer home delivery or curbside pickup for "L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 36."

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NEWS

Who Earned the F in Best Practices?

Distance Learning goes awry for FCPS.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Maintenance releases, patch management and software updates keep users' experience optimal. Staying ahead of security threats is vital. So what caused and who is responsible for events leading up to the reflex action by the superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, the 10th largest school division in the nation located in one of the United States' wealthiest counties, to end the launch of the division's Distance Learning Plan, two days into the project because of load capacity and security issues?

That's what the twelve elected members serving on the Fairfax County Public Schools Board turned their attention toward Thursday, April 16, during their virtual Board Meeting. The first item on the Agenda read: "Distance Learning Update: Blackboard." The night before, Superintendent Scott Brabrand canceled teacher-led instruction through Blackboard scheduled for that day and Friday, April 17, due to continued login and security issues with Blackboard Learn FCPS 24-7 and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. "Our teachers are ready and willing to do whatever is necessary to provide a robust learning experience for our students... We have identified our problems, and today we are proposing solutions," said Brabrand. Later, during the School Board Meeting, Marty Smith, Chief Operating Officer, said, "We were able to identify those students by IP address, and then work with those principals to then refer those students for any additional discipline as necessary."

FCPS twelve School Board members, Bra-



FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand



Marty Smith, Chief Operating Officer



COURTESY OF FCPS

Marty Smith,
Chief Operating Officer

Latest on Distance Learning: School System Looking for 'Plan B'

Monday evening's message to Fairfax County Public Schools; parents:

"Despite attempts to address identified technology issues over the weekend, this morning it became evident that Blackboard Learn 24x7 was not able to handle the system load of our virtual class meetings. This evening, Dr. Brabrand emailed the community with his comprehensive plan on addressing the problems that have arisen with

the current distance learning format.

To ensure students have access to continuity of learning, students will resume asynchronous assignments tomorrow (Tuesday). Students should log into Google Classroom in order to access choice boards for this week. Staff will be available to answer questions via email for students needing further guidance.

We will provide you with an update soon regarding our next steps as we shift our distance

learning plan. Please know that our teachers and staff have been working and adapting with every change to best teach our students in this new environment. As new plans are identified, the staff will continue to create assignments to engage students in meaningful learning activities.

We know that this is frustrating, and we appreciate your patience as we adjust to the new plan."

brand and his Leadership Team composed of Frances Ivey, Deputy Superintendent; Marty Smith, Chief Operating Officer; Maribeth Luftglass, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Information Technology and Sloan Presidio, Assistant Superintendent and Instructional Services Department and Tim Tomlinson, Chief Product Officer for Blackboard, Inc., attended the meeting virtually.

As the 3-hour portion of the School Board Meeting wore on, individuals provided different levels of insight. Whereas Tim Tomlinson of Blackboard initially commented with a prepared statement saying: "I'm here this morning on behalf of our (Blackboard's) leadership team to apologize for the challenges experienced this week in moving Fairfax County students to fully remote in-

struction," later he added: "We had no indication, based on our years of experience running the software for thousands of customers that we would have this issue at the levels of load that was expected this week."

One hour into the meeting, Sloan Presidio said, "As a Leadership Team, we failed to properly train the staff. We failed to properly communicate the expectations, and we failed to properly monitor the implementation." Presidio comment referenced security concerns and misbehaviors exhibited by then anonymous individuals who logged into virtual live class sessions via Guest Log-In, not through the preferred, guide-lined and more secure pre-populated email address access.

Nearly two hours into the meeting, School Board member Megan McLaughlin

(Braddock) said, "I remain shocked that the 10th largest school system in the country did not know, working with its vendor, to do a load testing. There is no getting around it... I want to say that the IT failures, the lack of flow testing, the software updates that didn't occur, the fact that we're doing information to our schools to prepare for this as guidance, versus direct as mandates, do speak to a larger problem we have in the system."

A letter on the FCPS official twitter account to FCPS families dated April 17, read: "Distance learning will resume Monday morning. Blackboard continues to make the necessary upgrades to the FCPS 24-7 system to bring students back to a safer, more stable online environment." FCPS signed the letter.

Q&A: What Went Wrong and Why?

Q- School Board member Ricardy Anderson (Mason): What were the issues?

A- FCPS Leadership Team member Luftglass: The first time that we saw some slowness and some challenges had to do with logging in. We had a lot of simultaneous logins on Monday (the day before Distance Learning went live to students) and Tuesday... There were a couple of different issues (with Blackboard 24-7), one with the logging system... and then once people got logged in, it overloaded the application servers... With Blackboard Collaborate Ultra sessions, there are a couple of different ways that you can implement those sessions. You pre-populate those sessions with the specific student email addresses that you want to have in your session. That's in the guidance documents... developed in terms of creating

those sessions in a secure way so that you don't have Guest Access... Documents were created, but they were not properly shared and properly highlighted in terms of the importance, and that's our fault...Anybody could use those links (Guest Access) to get into the session...We failed.

Q-School Board member Karl Frisch (Providence): Was any request made to Blackboard to do testing to make sure, beyond simply telling them what our load would be?

A-Luftglass: No, we did not. We relied on our vendor to do that testing.

According to Tomlinson and confirmed by Luftglass, until recently, FCPS generally updated its software once a year, taking a one-week downtime after the academic school year ended and before summer school started.

Q- School Board member Sizemore Heizer (Member-at-Large): Why (wasn't) the software update... just done automatically?

A- Tomlinson: The Fairfax County Team makes decisions about when and how the software is updated... This system actually hasn't been updated in two years. We recommend that all of our clients stay on the most current versions of our software. The version of the software that Fairfax County is running is three years old. Fairfax County has made the choice not to update that software."

Q- School Board member & Vice Chair Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee): What are your best practices in place to make certain that your clients are getting the most up-to-date product from you?

A- Tomlinson: We release major updates twice a year. We release patch updates as

frequently as needed. The system that's currently running (FCPS') was released three years ago. It's had two levels of patch updates applied to it... There have been seven updates made publicly available to the software that have not been applied.

Every time Blackboard releases an update, it's communicated directly to the client by email and its availability published on the company's Support Portal. Today...over one hundred of our clients are actually now running on a stats version of our product that's hosted by Amazon Web Services in the cloud... That's the most modern version of our software that we've been recommending to all of our clients for a couple of years. (It) is updated automatically every month; no action required by the client... That's the best practice we deliver for software. It's a change that Fairfax County has not chosen to take advantage of over time.

OPINION

Honoring Women in 2020

A look at the woman leading us through the coronavirus pandemic.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
D-MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Blackwell, Clara Barton, Virginia Apgar, Rebecca Lee Crumpler, Marie Curie are just a few of the many women who have made our lives healthier through medicine and science. While women have influenced much of our society and knowledge base, health and science seem particularly important today, as we are led by Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director of the Fairfax County Health Department. As I receive email after email and attend briefings and updates on COVID-19, I am inspired by the calm intellect Dr. Gloria displays every time she relays information or responds to questions. It is leaders such as Dr. Gloria who will guide us through this pandemic and see that we emerge a stronger and more united community.

As the County's health director, Dr. Gloria directs and manages public health programs across the county and serves as health advisor to the County's Board of Supervisors, Health Care Advisory Board, and Human Services Council. In her 17 years of service as director, the Department has virtually been restructured from the ground up and several new initiatives and systems have been put in place. She has

brought a new focus on emergency preparedness, health equity, the need to promote community health and resilience, and the importance of leveraging community assets that already exist if you want to create practical, sustainable approaches to complex challenges.

During the current pandemic, Dr. Gloria's mission to reorient the Health Department toward enhancing community resilience has been especially relevant and invaluable. For instance, the Bioterrorism Medical Action Team that she created in 2001—one of the first and largest local public health volunteer response programs in the United States—prepared Fairfax County to make a seamless transition to the Medical Reserve Corps program. MRC volunteers are presently working alongside our Health Department staff to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disciplined, approachable, passionate, rigorous yet flexible, Dr. Gloria's leadership and work, honored through numerous awards, serve as an inspiring example to young women and men who aspire to making a substantial social impact because, no matter where they currently are in life, where there is a will, there is a way. No one, least of all Dr. Gloria herself,

would have predicted that a young woman from Ghana who had to clean hotel rooms to pay her way through college would someday rise to such distinction.

One would therefore have imagined that a leader of such professional accomplishments would never let on that, in her private moments, she still struggles with insecurities of one kind or another, and that she still gets stage fright when she has to deliver a speech. Three strengths have helped her overcome her personal struggles and achieve success.

First, Dr. Gloria sets high standards for herself and puts enormous pressure on herself, routinely waking up at 2 a.m. to begin her day. Second, she never gives up—no matter how complex or daunting the challenge. Even when overwhelmed, she tries not to show it, although you might hear it as a slight stammer in her speech when the pressure is really on, an impediment from childhood. Third, her deep faith, upon which her entire life is centered, anchors her and gives her a focus that allows her to ignore side distractions and concentrate on the most important goals.

Throughout history, leaders like Dr. Gloria both inspire and protect us in times of great challenge and times of great joy. We are all in this together and we thank you for your service, Dr. Gloria.

Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu,
Director Fairfax County
Health Department

Back to the Capitol

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

As you are reading this column on Wednesday morning, I will have left home in Reston and be heading south on Interstate 95 for a noon meeting of the General Assembly for its reconvened session, commonly referred to as the "veto session." A reconvened session can be deemed essential during this stay-at-home period because Article IV, Section 6 and Article V, Section 6 of the Constitution of Virginia and House Joint Resolution No. 99 (procedural resolution) require that the 2020 Reconvened Session convene on Wednesday, April 22, 2020, at noon, to act upon the Governor's recommendations and vetoes to legislation passed during the 2020 Regular Session. The constitutional requirement for a reconvened session came about after Virginians started electing a Republican governor ever so often who would have the audacity to veto bills that had been passed by the Democrat-dominated General Assembly. The constitutional amendment establishing the reconvened session gives legislators the last word as to what bills can become law without the Governor's signature if a two-thirds vote can be gotten in both houses. Also, the reconvened session provides an opportunity to correct technical glitches or provide clarifying language through amendments suggested by the Governor from



COMMENTARY

the bills that are passed in the fast-paced legislative sessions.

Social distancing will be strictly adhered to for the session which will be a challenge for legislators who are accustomed to a lot of handshaking and hugging. The House of Delegates will convene under a temporary tent covering on capitol grounds that will provide the space for the 100 members to be at least six feet apart. The Senate of Virginia will meet in a large space at the Science Museum of Virginia that will accommodate social distancing for its 40 members. The usual strict requirement that men wear neckties has been relaxed for apparently ties sweep up too many germs. The Governor and his staff are not wearing ties these days. Face masks will be required, and plenty of hand sanitizer will be available. It is suggested that members bring their own lunches.

The Constitution limits the business of the General Assembly at Reconvened Session to consideration of the Governor's amendments and objections. Of the 1,291 bills presented to the Governor, he signed 1,188 (92.02 percent), recommended amendments to 102 bills and vetoed 1 bill. An official summary of the bills passed during the 2020 General Assembly session is available at <http://dls.virginia.gov/pubs/summary/2020/summary2020.pdf>.

The effort that legislators have to make to finish our work for the session pales in comparison to the challenges that people worldwide face every day during the pandemic. I continue to be impressed with the ways that social distancing has brought us together. Every day on social media and other outlets I learn of people who are sewing masks, running food pantries, contributing to charities, and doing good deeds for others. Our medical personnel put their lives on the line every day and cannot be thanked enough. On my website, kenplum.com there is updated information on the pandemic and ways you can help. Stay safe. I will be heading back home immediately upon the conclusion of the one-day session.

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NEWS

Farmers Olivia Madigan and Paul Nicholson bottle-feed the goats.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Not the Same But Life Goes On

Frying Pan Farm Park closed to visitors.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The little piglets born at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon have no children clamoring to see them. Neither do the bottle-fed baby goats. “We miss our visitors; we miss them very much,” said Park Manager, Yvonne Johnson.

Fairfax County Park Authority operates Frying Pan Farm Park interpreting life on the farm from the 1920s to the 1950s. According to Johnson, fuzzy yellow chicks, grunting pink piglets, calves and other barnyard animals still take center stage and demand care.

“There are core people, and they rotate days of the week and shifts. It’s pretty much seven in the morning until five at night. Morning feeding takes a little over two hours for two people. That’s a lot of buckets and hay and custom blending feed. There is changing the feed when mommy is pregnant; another mommy’s given birth, and another mommy’s babies are getting bigger and eating more so she needs more food.”

According to Johnson, it takes two full-time staff members and two part-time staff members to pull off the ongoing care. The problem is, she said, the Park cannot easily find people in Fairfax County with the necessary skill sets. “It is

hard to find people who know how to do this and it’s a seven day a week operation.” One of the current challenges is if somebody in the first cohort gets sick, they’ve exposed the other three people. “They are all going to have to go into quarantine,” Johnson said. She added they have a backup cohort, and precautions are established to safeguard animal care.

Johnson said that the farmer created a 30-minute video sorting through all the chores and drafted extensive lists of what everybody’s eating. “He’s put extra written instructions in the different buildings and the different parts of the buildings, so if the second cohort that doesn’t have years of experience has to come in, they’ll have that extra written reminder—don’t forget to close the door to the chicken house, so the fox can’t get in,” Johnson said.

Frying Pan Farm Park is a farm for the people. “We farm for the visitors who come to see us. We farm for the children to come and learn about the animals. We’re keeping all the operations going, and we’re looking forward to when we can reopen,” said Johnson.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, all Fairfax County Park Authority parks and amenities are closed to the public until further notice. Trails remain open. Staff at Frying Pan Farm Park continues to monitor the farm and works in conjunction with the Fairfax County Police Department.



Farmer Olivia Madigan tosses feed to the chickens.

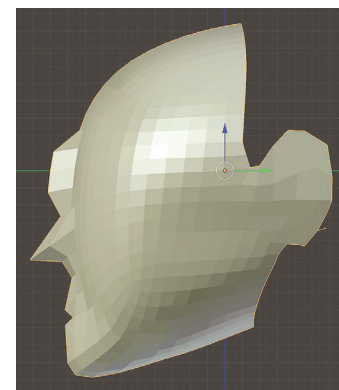


Farmer Paul Nicholson holds a newborn piglet at Frying Pan Farm Park.

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED
Parnika Saxena



The original model of the mask is designed to cover all openings of the face. Due to the transparency and flexibility of graphene, the material would be able to work well to cover the face.

High School Junior Proposes a Protective Mask

Parnika Saxena of Chantilly proposes a graphene mask as a more protective face covering for the Coronavirus.

BY JESSICA FENG
THE CONNECTION

Almost a month after the decision to close all non-essential businesses, social distancing has affected people of all ages in different ways. While many teenagers are passing time on social media and streaming sites, some are using the time to search for solutions for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parnika Saxena of Chantilly, a junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, has spent her time researching an idea for a different kind of protective mask: a graphene mask.

“Every day at the dinner table, COVID-19 was all my family would talk about. Seeing how serious it was getting and the impact that it was having on our community and around the world, I started thinking about what could be done. I had learned a couple of things from my school club, nanotechnology club, as well as chemistry class so I started looking online and did research.”

Saxena hopes this mask will be produced for both health-care workers and the public.

THE GRAPHENE MASK differs from a standard cloth mask or N95 mask in four key ways.

“What makes it different from existing masks is that: it covers all openings of the face, its use

of nanotechnology allows for the passing of oxygen yet stops COVID-19 particles from passing through, it is transparent, and it is lightweight, strong, and flexible, making it easy to fit as a mask.”

Dr. Robert Hurt, director of the Superfund Research Program Center at Brown University, focuses on nanomaterials and their applications for human health and the environment. He has done work with the use of graphene as an environmental barrier.

“This is a neat idea and the student did very good background research on the science behind it. We would not be able to fabricate such a mask in a practical way in the near term, but this is a cool futuristic vision that could define research that might lead to a graphene mask.”

A lesser-known form of carbon, graphene displays many properties Saxena considers valuable to creating a mask.

“It [graphene] is an allotrope of carbon, similar to diamond and graphite which are different forms of carbon. Graphene on its own is atomically thin; an experiment was done (this is how it was discovered) where just by taking some tape and sticking it onto graphite or pencil lead, that one layer had graphene flakes.”

SEE CHANTILLY TEEN,
PAGE 6

Obituary

Obituary

William Hughes Stokes Jr., A Reston Resident for More Than A Half Century, Dies of Coronavirus at 95

By W. Royal Stokes, Ph.D.

My brother Billy, **William Hughes Stokes Jr., 95**, died on April 13 of Coronavirus at Reston Hospital. He was a Reston resident for more than a half century, occupying apartments on Crescent and then Greywing Square, from 1966 until 2018, when he moved to a nursing facility, Dulles Health and Rehab Center, Herndon.

Billy, a D.C. native, attended the city's Gunston School and public schools in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

A World War Two U. S. Navy veteran, upon the war's conclusion in 1945, Billy attended the U.S. Naval Academy, but after a year there he opted for discharge, enrolling at the University of Maryland, College Park, earning a B.A. in Psychology in 1950.



The U.S. Foreign Service was Billy's work scene in the 1950s, first as a State Department Courier stationed at the American Embassy in Paris, flying to all continents and delivering documents, and then as an officer at the American Consulate in Cali, Colombia.

Settling in Virginia after his State Department years, Billy worked as a salesman for Friden Calculating Machine Company and then Prudential Insurance. In late life he was self-employed in various entrepreneurial enterprises.

Sailing small crafts was one of my brother's passions and he was able to indulge this when our family resided on Gibson Island, Maryland, from the late 1930s through the '40s and he crewed for friends in Star Boat races on the Chesapeake Bay.

A lifelong jazz fan, Billy became, in the early 1950s, a member of the old D.C. Hot Jazz Society. He attended many performances at such D.C. jazz clubs as the Brown Derby and Blue Mirror, where he heard Louis Armstrong's All Stars, Sidney Bechet's quartet, the Art Tatum and Nat King Cole trios, and the boogie woogie duo of Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson. He was also a regular patron of the Sunday evening jam sessions of local artists at D.C.'s Charles Hotel, and during his time as a State Department Courier in the 1950s he went to concerts and club gigs of Bechet and others in Paris.

In view of his love for jazz, it is ironic that my brother was born in a bedroom of a three-story house that his extended family rented in the 1920s and early '30s, 2019 19th Street NW, the garden-level basement of which subsequently housed the Villa Bea, a well-attended after-hours jazz club that in the 1940s and '50s was frequented by such local musicians as reed players George Botts, Charlie Rouse, and Mason Country Thomas and the bassist and blues singer Nap Turner, as well as nationally known luminaries the likes of Charlie Parker and Erroll Garner.

Billy's marriage to Laura Ricci Crisolini Stokes ended in divorce.

William Hughes Stokes Jr. is survived by his son William Hughes Stokes IV of Alexandria, his brother W. Royal Stokes of Elkins, West Virginia, three nephews, a niece, four great nieces, a great nephew, and a great-great niece.

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News

Community's Response: #restonSTRONG

Grassroots effort to coordinate charity work.

What started with a conversation by leaders on how to unite the community during COVID-19 has evolved into a grassroots movement: #restonSTRONG is a community action group collaboration bringing together charity partners, local businesses, the medical community, and the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce to address the needs in the community during this pandemic and beyond.

In those conversations, it was apparent that many of local charities were tackling the same issues related to COVID-19. "Pooling our resources and collectively taking action as a team provides our best chances for collective success," says Taralyn Tharp Kohler, Executive Director of CORE Foundation. "In addition to creating a series of drop off points for multiple charities throughout Reston, a task force has been formed to leverage contacts and match resources with needs."

"No contact" storage pods donated by UNITS have been placed in multiple locations in Reston creating a donation infrastructure for various charities. The white pods with the blue UNITS logo can be found at the Lake Anne Village Center, South Lakes Village Shopping Center, North Point Village Shopping Center, and the Reston YMCA. Residents can participate by dropping off designated requested items benefiting Cornerstones, Reston Hospital Center, and Helping Hungry Kids of Northern Virginia, a CORE Cause. These items will be collected and disseminated to the organizations in need daily. Monetary tax-deductible donations to assist with the #restonSTRONG COVID-19 relief effort can be made through the CORE Foundation at www.corefoundation.org.

Pods by UNITS will be open daily for donation drop-offs as follows:

Cornerstones: 11484 Washington Plaza West: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

North Point Village Shopping Center near Safeway:



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left: Sarah Selvaraj-Dsouza Candidate for the Reston Association, Samantha Beavers, President South Gate Cluster, and Taralyn Tharp Kohler - Executive Director, CORE Foundation.

Wednesday - Sunday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

South Lake Village Center near Chick fil A: Wednesday - Sunday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

YMCA of Reston: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Items needed for Helping Hungry Kids include microwave popcorn, fruit Cups in 100 percent juice, applesauce with no sugar added, granola Bars, single serve packets of oatmeal, pop tarts, chef boyardee 7.5 oz single serve cups, ramen noodles, single serve mac and cheese, and pudding cups.

Cornerstones is in need of brown rice, cereal, oatmeal, peanut butter, jelly, wild rice, quinoa, canned vegetables and fruit, canned tuna, coffee, sugar, flour, spices, condiments, canola oil, olive oil, diapers, baby wipes, baby formula, toilet paper, deodorant, shampoo, tooth paste, laundry detergent, feminine pads.

Reston hospital's high demand list includes n95 respirators, surgical masks, protective goggles, face shields, booties, gowns, wipes and disinfectants.

We are #restonSTRONG. For more information, visit corefoundation.org.

Chantilly Teen Proposes Protective Mask

FROM PAGE 5

To accommodate the function of a mask, Saxena proposes that the graphene should undergo a nitrogen doping process.

"Graphene is impermeable on its own, but when nitrogen doping happens, it goes through a chemical process, then it opens up these pores that selectively allow oxygen but not COVID-19 particles."

Dr. Hurt emphasizes the importance of thorough testing, especially because the process of nitrogen doping has never been implemented in a mask before.

"The introduction of pores by nitrogen doping is interesting, but one would have to test whether those tiny atom-sized defects would allow a human

to push their full breath volume through the sheet in just seconds."

While the original mask design consisted solely of graphene, further research points to a combination of materials for maximum protection. A solution Dr. Hurt proposed is to add multiple layers, but it comes with its drawbacks.

"Regarding strength, graphene is indeed super strong compared to other substances of equal cross-section, but if graphene is suspended freely as an atomically thin monolayer, that of very little material, it can rip quite easily. One might need multiple layers but then one gives up some transparency."

SAXENA proposed another solution, combining a layer of graphene with a textile.

"Graphene is atomically thin

so it can't stand on its own. As I've been doing more research. I've been looking into using it as a coating for textiles so that it could be fashioned in a 3D mask."

The high production cost and lack of manufacturing processes mean further research must be done for the graphene mask to be produced and sold. Nevertheless, Saxena believes graphene is an invaluable material and could be used in other life-saving products.

"I think it [graphene] has a lot of potential and I wanted to get the word out and start a conversation about this 'wonder material'. Perhaps people with sufficient resources can not only apply it to masks but other products."

AREA ROUNDUPS

Woman Is Killed by Own SUV

Fairfax County police say a 41-year-old Centreville woman died from injuries sustained in an April 10 accident in her driveway. Officers responded that day, shortly after 10 a.m., to the 6100 block of Asher Court and discovered Jaehee Pak unresponsive in her driveway. Fire and Rescue personnel treated her at the scene, and she was rushed to the hospital with serious injuries.

Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit preliminarily determined that Pak parked in her driveway and stepped out of her SUV. But the vehicle rolled forward and pinned her against the garage. A family member from inside the home was able to move the SUV and free her. However, Pak succumbed to her injuries last Wednesday, April 15.

Detectives don't suspect foul play, but anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

Reston Farmers Market Opening Delayed

The April 25 scheduled opening of the Reston Farmers Market is postponed due to the Coronavirus emergency. The Fairfax County Park Authority, which sponsors the Market, is in the process of finalizing protocols for social distancing and other safety measures to protect shoppers, farmer/vendors and managers during this emergency period, consistent with the provisions of Governor Northam's Executive Order # 53. It is expected that the Reston Farmers Market will open for its 23rd season within the next couple of weeks. The Market will operate every Saturday morning from 8 a.m. to 12 noon in its usual location, the main parking lot at Lake Anne Village Center. Stay tuned here for the final word on the opening date, and go to www.restonfarmersmarket.com for more information, including list of vendors and the social distancing and safety protocols that will be in effect in Market!

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.

GOVERNOR EXTENDS BUSINESS RESTRICTIONS

Gov. Ralph Northam has announced the extension of Executive Order 53, which bans crowds of more than 10 people; closes recreation, entertainment and personal care businesses; and limits restaurants to offering takeout and delivery services only, until May 8. The order was extended to allow physical distancing, and other measures shown to be slowing the spread of COVID-19, to continue. Extending the order also allows state officials to evaluate the situation and plan for how to ease restrictions so businesses may eventually operate without endangering public health. Executive Order 55 (requiring Virginians to stay at home unless they must leave for essential services) remains in effect until June 10.

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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.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JATE EARTHART



The Longmire family (from left), Daisy, Josephine, mom Julie, and Clara, made this sign for the Rev. Brennan Loveless.



New Life Christian Church members drive by their pastor's home to show support.

An 'Outpouring of Love and Kindness'

Church members honor cancer-fighting pastor with caravan.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

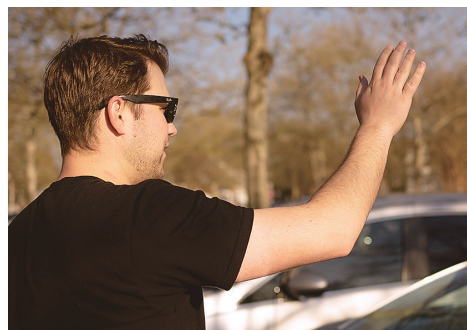
Brennan Loveless is the pastor of New Life Christian Church's Chantilly campus. And contrary to his last name, he is indeed loved – and not just by his family. On April 8, congregation members got into some three dozen cars and drove to his home to let him know it.

They were also celebrating an important victory in his fight against cancer. So they made signs and decorated their cars with streamers, balloons and encouraging messages. Then they met in a commuter lot and drove together in a caravan, honking their horns and waving to him when they reached his house.

"Brennan uses his gift from God to lead us in worship on Sundays, and his heart for people is huge," said church member Dale Spaulding. "Although he's been battling cancer, the first thing he always asks is, 'How are you doing?' and 'How can I pray for you?' He's an inspiration to us all."

LOVELESS, 34, is married and has three children under age 7. But in October 2019, he was diagnosed with stage-three colon cancer. He underwent weeks of chemotherapy and radiation and will have surgery in a few months. Doctors said his tumor has shrunk, and April 8 was his last treatment – so his New Life congregation decided it was time for a celebration.

"Car after car passed by his house as he and his wife Natalie, daughter Peyton and sons Landon and Greyson stood next to him, waving and smiling, overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and kindness," said church member Elinor Kinnier. "Neighbors,



Pastor Brennan Loveless waves to his church members.

hearing the honking horns and cheers of excitement, came outside to take part in the celebration," she continued. "And Brennan was thrilled that others were able to experience all this care from his church family."

Since his diagnosis, Loveless has used this health challenge to share his faith via social media, with his doctors and nurses, and with other cancer patients needing hope. He also learned some things, himself.

"This journey is about nine months long, so I've had to be patient with how my body has handled chemo and radiation," he said. "I'm also remaining joyful. I certainly didn't ask for this, but it's now part of my story. My resolve has been to be content with everything God has blessed me with and share some of that hope and joy with others."

Loveless is also certain that his faith and hope in God has seen him through the toughest of times. And he does his best to have a positive attitude while acknowledging that "every day isn't all sunshine and roses." He also wants people to know that his church family "has been a rock for me. They've loved and supported me and my family through a myriad of ways, and others, too, can find true community like that at New Life."

He said prayer and reading his Bible have been key to keeping down his stress and anxiety. In addition, he's made two, separate, to-do lists nearly every day. One is for things he'd like to accomplish, such as work



One of the encouraging messages written on a car in the procession.

or a project. The other is for when he's having a bad day, but can still accomplish simple things such as taking a long shower or playing his guitar and singing

TO OTHERS going through their own battles with COVID-19 or staying home, Loveless advises them to "Control what you can and let go of the rest; surrender your fear and anxiety. We may not be able to control what's going on in the world, but we can control how we love each other and our families through whatever crisis may come our way. Finishing radiation and chemotherapy was a huge relief. Then being surprised by my church family was a joyful celebration."

"Because Brennan's so generous with his smile, heart and laughter, he quickly made a way into the hearts of our whole family," said New Life member Julie Longmire. "So when he grieves, we grieve; but as he celebrates, we want to celebrate alongside him. We know how hard it is for him to be away

from his friends right now and are excited to remind him we're still here for him, even if we can't give him the hugs we desperately want to."

"Brennan took prayer requests from others so he could pray for them during his chemotherapy treatments," said member Jamie Osterhaus. "He constantly puts others first. He's more than a friend – he's family – and we're grateful he's nearly finished this battle."

Allison Williams praised Loveless's "amazing, positive attitude and perseverance." And Christine Heath said he and his family showed "grace, strength and closeness to God" throughout his cancer fight.

"Brennan has been there for so many people, even while going through his treatments," added Tom Hamberger. "It's been inspirational seeing his faith and knowing God is still working miracles."

— Elinor Kinnier contributed to this story