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Always smiling: Juwaan Espinal at a Centreville High football game. Sunday afternoon, April 19 – just a month shy of his 23rd birthday – this courageous, young man lost his battle.



'I Never Imagined He'd Die So Young'

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NEWS

Centreville Townhouse Fire Claims Woman's Life

A woman is dead, following a townhouse fire, early Sunday evening, in the 14800 block of Hatfield Square in Centreville. At press time, her identity had not been released to the public. A neighbor discovered the fire, called 911 and unsuccessfully tried to rescue her. Fairfax County firefighters responded to the home, April 26, around 5:02 p.m., after being alerted about the incident, with one person possibly trapped inside.

First-arriving units saw visible fire coming from the middle unit of the two-story townhouse, with flames extending from the first to the second floor. A second alarm was struck, and firefighters quickly brought the blaze under control. Meanwhile, the female occupant was found and rescued and then flown by helicopter to the hospital, where she later succumbed to her injuries. An autopsy will determine her identity and exact cause of death.



A woman died after a fire in her Centreville townhouse.

Fire Investigators determined the fire began on the first floor; they're currently investigating the cause. They say no working smoke alarms were present. Damage to the home was estimated at \$143,750.

-BONNIE HOBBS

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NEWS

‘I Never Imagined He’d Die So Young’

Family, friends mourn the death of Juwaan Espinal.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Wheelchair-bound due to cerebral palsy, Centreville’s Juwaan Espinal had a zest for life, family, friends and the community that loved him. And his positive attitude and constant smile always brought them joy.

But as time went on, digestive problems caused by his condition worsened, leading to frequent hospital stays and surgeries. And Sunday afternoon, April 19 – just a month shy of his 23rd birthday – this courageous, young man lost his battle.

“I am heartbroken; I still can’t believe it,” said his mother, Ibis Espinal. “It’s the worst thing to see your son’s last breath.”

Still, she can take comfort knowing she gave him the best and fullest life possible. “I always told him, ‘Don’t feel sad; God gave you life – enjoy it,’” said Espinal. “My mission was for him not to feel different or excluded from anything.”

Her wish came true when Juwaan attended Centreville High. “The acceptance they gave him was awesome,” she said. “He had a great support system there – the administrators, teachers, students, coaches, his peers – and that’s what makes a family. They treated him like one of their own.”

JUWAAN was a huge sports fan. And although he couldn’t participate, both the Wildcat varsity and freshman football teams unofficially adopted him. His sophomore year, Varsity Football Coach Chris Haddock gave Juwaan his own jersey, made him co-captain of the first game and gave him the game ball.

And the freshman football team wanted Juwaan at every home game and in the locker room for speeches. It won the championship that year – and the players insisted Juwaan be in their team photos.

He also made a slew of friends at school. Although he was nonverbal, they ate lunch together and chatted via Facebook and texts. He was also close with his sister Shanelle, now 25, who visited him often and took him out to have fun.

As a junior, his hero – then Washington Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III, at the height of his fame – came to Centreville to help Juwaan’s good friend Morgan Assel ask Juwaan to prom. And his senior year, his mother was presented with an accessible van for him, courtesy of the community, Redskin Pierre Garçon and Paisano’s Pizza.

The friendships continued after graduation in 2015. And at home, Juwaan enjoyed making TikTok videos, watching his favorite TV shows and Disney movies, snuggling



Juwaan Espinal was the Centreville Wildcats’ number-one fan. Photo taken in September 2014.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Juwaan with (from left) sister Shanelle and mom Ibis Espinal.



(From left) are Morgan Assel, Juwaan Espinal, U.S. Olympic fencer Nzingha Prescod and Robert Griffin III.

with his three chihuahuas and listening to pop music. Nonetheless, said Espinal, “It was hard on him. He’d see all his friends getting married and running around and would think, ‘What life is this?’”

Meanwhile, his health deteriorated, and he was in and out of the hospital with infections and bowel obstructions. Then on April 13, he arched his body and was quiet and lethargic, but told his mom he wasn’t in pain. That night, he began throwing up and she

rushed him to the hospital.

“The doctors did tests and said something was wrong internally,” said Espinal. “The next morning, they operated on him for five or six hours. The doctor said there was a lot of trauma and swelling and Juwaan had a 50-percent chance of survival.”

By Friday, April 17, he suffered complications from the surgery and was placed on a ventilator. Early Sunday, April 19, doctors had to remove more of his intestines. But

because of COVID-19, his mother couldn’t be with him afterward in the Intensive Care Unit.

“Around 11:30 a.m., the doctor called and said, ‘We did everything we could, but his intestines died,’” said Espinal. “He told me to ‘Come now to say goodbye.’ Juwaan wasn’t conscious, but he could hear me. We’d FaceTimed on Thursday; and seeing him then, I knew he wasn’t going to make it. Shanelle and I told him we loved him, he was the best kid in the world, and we were going to miss him.”

He died April 19 at 2:35 p.m. “Some of the doctors called me afterward, in tears,” said Espinal. “They knew and loved him; he touched a lot of lives. A boy even messaged me and said, ‘I only knew Juwaan from Instagram, but I know what a big Redskin fan he was. So I know he’s in heaven playing football with [deceased Redskin] Sean Taylor and being coached by the best coaches in the NFL.’”

Survivors also include his father, Rafael Espinal, and stepdad, Thomas Banks. Because of the virus, just 10 people were at his funeral, last Saturday, but countless others watched via Zoom. And a larger memorial service will be held eventually.

Courtney Thurston, who went with Juwaan to his senior prom, often had lunch with him, visited his classroom and attended his birthday parties. After graduation, they chatted via Facebook. “His smile could light up a room, and he could speak without saying words,” she said. “His personality shined through. It was inspiring because everyone takes what they have for granted, but Juwaan never did. He was happy and outgoing.”

HIS DEATH caught her by surprise because “He’d been through so much and always came out the other end; he was a fighter.” Thurston also created a GoFundMe account called “Juwaan’s Medical and Funeral Costs” to help his financially struggling family. She hopes people will honor him by contributing or sharing the link: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/juwaan-medical-and-funeral>.

Also devastated by his death is Morgan Assel, calling him “the greatest friend you could ever ask for. Even in adulthood, he always reached out to let me know he was there, no matter the distance. And he was one of the funniest people; he spoke through his eyes and body language. I never imagined he’d die so young; the rest of my life won’t be the same. And my heart breaks for Ibis and Shanelle.”

Assel said she, Shanelle and another close friend of Juwaan’s, Mike Wallace, are all getting married within the next year, and it’ll be difficult not having Juwaan with them. But, she said, “We’ll find a way to honor him. For all of us who loved him, he will never be forgotten. There’s no way a spirit that bright cannot live on.”

Return to Normalcy

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

Warren G. Harding was elected president by a landslide in 1920. He promised in his campaign speeches that he would deliver, in a phrase that he reportedly coined, "a return to normalcy" that people eagerly sought after World War I. Harding had a scandal-plagued administration and marital affairs that contributed to rumors that his wife poisoned him leading to the heart attack that killed him before the end of his term. But Harding liked to be liked, and his "normalcy" phrase captured the mood of the people.

Today there is certainly a desire to return to life as normal from the quarantine existence we are experiencing during the pandemic. There are politicians who suggest

that a quick return to life as we knew it before the coronavirus is possible, and that people should be "liberated" to live without the restrictions that governors have had to impose for public health and safety. At the reconvened session of the General Assembly last week there was a background blare of horns soundings as cars and trucks circled Capitol Square driven by protestors who wanted to let us know that they wanted restrictions lifted.

It would be a tragic mistake to lift health and safety restrictions too early based on politics rather than reliable scientific evidence. Every individual needs to act in a responsible way with social distancing, hand washing, and face masks, and we need to encourage others to do the same. There is no constitutional right to spread your



germs around.

The economic crisis brought on in part by the pandemic is another issue that will be addressed in future columns.

An activity that I believe would be helpful to undertake while we are hunkered down is to review the old "normalcy" under which we grew accustomed to living and to ask ourselves if we have learned things over the past several weeks that might be applied to life in the future. Recently there has been a significant reduction in air pollution. We drive our vehicles less. Could we continue to make a list of what we need and make fewer vehicular trips to get those items. Walking and bicycling are on the increase that will contribute to better health in the community.

There has been a strengthening of community as neighbors sup-

port each other more, and there has been a wonderful outpouring of contributions and help to those in need. Many are looking at entertainment differently as there is a need to be more inventive and creative in entertaining ourselves.

Technology is being used more frequently to deliver information and services that should be continued into the future. Do not simply go back to the old way if we have been forced to recognize better ways to accomplish a purpose. Certainly teachers and public education have gained support by those who have had to teach their children at home!

I share the desire that a life without restrictions return as soon as medical science says it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, let's think about what we have learned through all of this that might make our life be even better in the future. Share your ideas with me at kenplum@aol.com.

Living Under Covid 19-A Farmers Market Glimmer Up Ahead

BY JOHN LOVAAS
RESTON IMPACT PRODUCER/HOST

Here we are! Coming up on two months living in semi-quarantine and lockdown under the shadow of the Novel Coronavirus, or Covid 19 to those who've come to know it well.

After what seems like forever quarantining, that and social distancing seem to be slowing the spread of the pathogen, and the public health system is finally getting equipped to handle its frightening overload. This is despite the blundering, constantly self-absorbed performance of No. 1. Yet, as we are about to turn the corner, he and sad puppy Pence have no sooner presented the health professionals' plan to safely restart social and economic activity than Thing One starts blasting his tweeter. He orders his campaign brown shirts and assorted gun wielders to ignore the plan and attack those in state and local governments trying to implement it!

Many of us are choosing instead to follow the wisdom of the public health professionals. And, fortunately it is springtime and we have wonderful things to do—e.g., managing the Reston Farmers Market. Covid 19 contributed to delaying the Market's opening (from April 25). Most area jurisdictions allowed markets to open a few weeks ago. Now Fairfax County

has decided to open two markets, including the Reston Farmers Market. Operating rules to protect shoppers and vendors are still being decided. Reston's planned opening day is May 9, they say. We expect 24 of 30 vendors will be on hand opening day.

Virginia Vistas will be there with its typical amazing array of flowering plants, along with Beeswing Farm with their gorgeous cut flowers, now available online with home delivery, too! King Mushrooms returns with the best selection of mushrooms in the region. Seven of our first class produce farms will be there, including newcomer San Giovanni's Farm featuring a wonderful array of organic micro-greens. In addition, Glascock's, Reids and Toigo Orchards will be there with a good selection of apples, jams, cider and more.

I can almost smell the delicious baked breads, pies, croissants, pastries at the Baguette Republic, Grace's Pastries and Valentine's Country Meats and Bakery stands! Valentine is also in the pasture-fed meat business along with Smith Family Farm with some fine steaks, and newcomer Honey Brook Farm from Brandy Station, VA with



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

great grass fed and finished beef, fine poultry meats and more. The best local seafood is found at Arnest Seafood with the tastiest from the Chesapeake and its tributaries.

Returning favorites also include: Blue Ridge Dairy with fine artisan cheeses; Fresh Crunch with a bit of tasty pickled everything; Stallard Road Farm & Botanicals bringing honey, herb plants & herbal products; and, Zayna's Delight featuring authentic Middle Eastern food-11 kinds of hummus, garlic sauce, pita chips and more.

Opening Day-May 9 at the usual time (8 a.m. 'til 12 noon) and usual place- parking lot at Lake Anne Village Center. However, the Market will be quite different in look and feel during the Covid 19 emergency. The layout will be spread out to facilitate social distancing. Special rules for this period will likely INCLUDE:

- DO NOT ENTER IF SICK
- ❖Keep at least 6 feet from other people
- ❖Send no more than 2 family members into the market
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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
reston@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ❖ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Community Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Worker
Contributing Writer
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
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sales@connectionnewspapers.com
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Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



County's Sparse Budget Proposal

Supervisor Alcorn holds the second budget town hall.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D) hosted his second virtual town hall on the FY 2021 Revised Budget Proposal April 24, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. "This is one we wanted to do... to give the most opportunity for folks with different job arrangements and other arrangements...We're obviously looking at a very different budget for next fiscal year than we were just two short months ago," said Alcorn.

Melanie Meren, Fairfax County School Board member representing Hunter Mill District, and Christina Jackson, Director, Department of Management and Budget, joined Alcorn. According to Meren, significant need changes in the student population were occurring. Special education needs were projected to go up 3.5 percent, English as a Second Language up 2 percent and the most significant increase, children living in poverty, up 7 percent. Meren said, "We actually have a third of our students in Fairfax County living in poverty," Meren said she was looking in the budget to ease "teacher overwhelm" through limitations on class size, training, social and emotional behavioral supports, robust learning programs to meet the needs of all learners and "taking care of our facilities." Added to her concern were overcrowding issues related to boundaries.

Jackson provided an overview of the proposal released on April 7. No increases in tax and fees, including sewer and solid waste fees. "We're projecting holding revenues flat...unfortunately, there's a lag in the data...The school operating transfer is proposed to be increased by about \$7.3 million... a drop from the \$85 million that we had initially." Jackson said they also eliminated increases in pay for county employees, market-rate adjustments, and performance and longevity. "This updated proposal focuses on maintaining existing service levels," she said. According to Jackson, they anticipated revisiting the FY 2021 budget as more data became available.



Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D) hosts his second virtual town hall on the FY 2021 Revised Budget Proposal significantly changed in two months because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jackson said the County received more than \$200M from the Cares Act, and as of Wednesday, guidance was released by the Treasury Department in regards to allowable expenses. The County would try to maximize funding to the fullest extent. Unfortunately, those funds could not be used to offset revenue losses. "We anticipate setting aside a substantial portion of funding to help our nonprofits provide basic needs to our residents such as rental assistance, utility assistance, food, also funds to help sustain some of them as nonprofits," she said. The County had also started a Microloan project for its for-profit businesses.

The budget was, Alcorn said, "in an effective freeze into at least FY21."

"As we work through this year, I believe it will give us an opportunity to adjust as we can, and as we must," he said referencing previous priorities.

Q & A Highlights

Q: How will you remain committed to building and preserving affordable housing in the Hunter Mill District during and following this time of economic crisis? (Amanda)

A: We need to make sure we continue doing the things that we have been doing for affordable housing... continue to fund those programs (and) go

SEE ALCORN, PAGE 7

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NEWS



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

(From left) Patrolman First Class Rob Burch, co-owner of Pica Deli Caleb Max, Officer Amanda MacLaughlin and civilian Scott Bacon.

Gourmet Food for Front-Line Fighters Pica Deli of Reston stands up against COVID-19.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Pica Deli in Reston stood up against COVID-19 the best way they could, through food and community support. Pica Deli is a piece of Reston history. It served craft sandwiches to the community for thirty-three years under the ownership of Frank Pica. On Thursday, the Deli's new 2019 co-owners and partners, Frank's son Tyler and Tyler's childhood and Reston friend, Caleb Max, set to work feeding a different population for the moment.

"It's come to our attention that the hospital cafeterias that feed our doctors and nurses on the front lines of this pandemic have had to close down, leaving these dedicated members of our community to deal with empty shelves in the grocery store and preparing meals at home...We here at Pica Deli have made the decision to step up and meet this need," said Max. However, he and Pica couldn't do it alone, he said.

Max posted an opportunity for the community to support the need through a Facebook fundraiser on the Deli's page to help them reach their goal of \$4000. In five days, they raised a reported \$2,600 to help fund costs to donate sandwiches to front-line hospital medical staff and first responders.

Pica said he and the Deli's staff spent nearly 8 hours preparing and packaging the first \$1000 worth of deli-delicious sandwiches. They delivered one hundred of them to front-line hospital workers at Reston Hospital Center on Thursday, April 23. On the Deli's Facebook



Co-owners of Pica Deli in Reston (front row from left) Tyler Pica and Caleb Max deliver 100 gourmet sandwiches for front-line health care workers at Reston Hospital Center HCA Virginia Health System.

page, Max thanked everyone who donated. "It means the world to me," he said. Later the calls and messages began, doctors expressing their gratitude and thanks, said Max.

Not done giving, over the next few days, Max and Pica delivered more sandwiches to other health and safety front-line workers, those at Fox Mill Fire Station #31 in Herndon, INOVA Emergency

Room Reston/Herndon, INOVA Urgent Care-Reston at North Point Village Center and Reston District Fairfax County Police Station.

Pica Deli is located at 11864 Sunrise Valley Drive in Reston. Pica and Max hope to continue the Deli's effort and reach out to more front-line workers. Search www.facebook.com/picadelireston/ to learn more about the Pica Deli donation program.

Alcorn

FROM PAGE 5

through to fruition... I believe in the federal CARES Act,... a one-time stimulus program, there is some housing-related assistance that we will be able to do... some of the more critical needs of sheltering people that are at high risk...our homeless population. (Alcorn)

Q: Can you give us any updates on impacts to the library based upon the revised budget... Do we have any updates regarding plans for new library construction in Reston? (Rob)

A: We did have in... the initial Advertised Budget, expanded library hours... That is put on hold. We actually have two library projects either underway or planned. The first one is the Patrick Henry Library in the Town of Vienna. That project is moving forward. The Reston project has been tied up with the larger Reston Town Center North project, something that frankly, I'm looking to kind of hit the reset button. We've got a number of critical public service facilities in that area. It's time for us to sit down and get serious about moving forward and addressing some of those needs. (Alcorn)

Q: How will the next year's curriculum be affected by this new budget? (Phil, age 12)

A: The state has given us options on whether we want to adjust the full calendar... We do need to understand how the curriculum will be different, since some of the state testing is going to happen this year. We don't know the answer just yet (Meren).

Q: Will you work with county employee unions to use federal funds to cover hazard pay for frontline workers? (David Broder)

A: I think that's something we can look into. (Alcorn)

Q: Will the update of the Bike and Trail Plans be impacted by the budget shortfall? (Bruce)

A: I don't think so. This is a project that has already begun. (Alcorn)

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

NVTRP LAUNCHES FACEBOOK LIVE

Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) announced a new Facebook Live series, "Teddy Time" on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 2 p.m.

Hosted by NVTRP's miniature horse, Teddy, viewers will get a glimpse into the everyday happenings at O'Shaughnessy Farm in Clifton. Segments will include everything from meeting the herd of NVTRP horses and learning how to care for the animals to farm fun and educational crafts and stories. Visit the website: <https://www.facebook.com/NVTRP/>

DULLES TOLL ROAD CHANGES

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

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And So It Begins



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The six-week schedule/treatment for my stage II papillary thyroid cancer began on Thursday, April 23 with an hour-long telephone appointment with one of the doctors from the Nuclear Medicine department. He was confirming, clarifying and preparing yours truly for the arduous task at hand: a commitment to a month-long, low iodine diet beginning April 27 (no salt, no sugar, no dairy, no normal-type bread and a bunch of other less impactful nos) and 15 on-site hospital-related visits (in lab, in doctor's office and in scan area) followed by an overnight in late May when I receive my final treatment. After which, for the following week, I am to be quarantined at home (unsafe for children, pregnant woman and pets) with miscellaneous other quarantine-associated behaviors/advisories (changing bed sheets every other day, using one bathroom exclusively, flushing toilets twice, using plastic silverware and paper plates, among others) with the fun and games ending June 5th when the quarantine period ends. Then I can resume my normal/familiar routine for the treatment of my underlying/pre-existing stage IV non small cell lung cancer. Treatment for which will likely begin again in mid July after I've had a CT scan to assess the damage/success of my thyroid cancer treatment.

By then, it will have been about six months that I've actually had any current treatment/medicine for my lung cancer. Once given a clean bill of health (so far as the thyroid cancer is concerned), I'll likely restart my bi-weekly treatments for my non-small cell lung cancer (which as my oncologist said; he could treat but never cure). Treatment which began in early March, 2009 and has continued for nearly 11 years. Pending the results of that July CT scan, my life will likely return to abnormal. Still, it's way too early to speculate on life going forward. Six months (dating back to my last treatment in Jan., 2020) is an eternity in the cancer world (heck six days is an eternity).

And aside from the obvious, that planning for or even predicting scenarios two to three months hence, it has never been my oncologist's style. Then consider, as he said during our most recent phone appointment (April 17), that he's no longer certain if the tumors in my lungs are non small cell lung cancer, papillary thyroid cancer which has moved and/or, wait for it, that my lung cancer tumors have gone into remission. Can you quote the late Phil Rizzuto: "Holy cow!" None of which will be known until a week or so after my July CT scan. And not that wondering/waiting isn't already the hardest part but before I will have learned the status of my tumors, I will have been in and out of hospitals being treated for thyroid cancer right smack in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic when I'm supposed to do the exact opposite: isolate at home and stay away from hospitals. I couldn't be looking for more trouble if I planned it. Nevertheless, I just hope the old adage applies: "Time flies when you're having fun." (And I suppose I should add: flies safely.)

I don't really feel the fun? Maybe it's the needles you feel, or the fear/anxiety associated with being in and out of hospitals multiple times in a comparatively short period of time? Or maybe you feel the worry and difficulty I'll have maintaining a low iodine diet for 31 or so days, and the hunger pains and chocolate withdrawal I'll experience during that month. I'd like to think that the time/treatment will pass quickly, but I'm guessing that the demands of the diet will slow me down to a crawl and that the experience will be an extremely challenging transition/return to normal. (Particularly so for me since food has always been the bane of my existence.)

But so what? My health status, which originally had been a terminal one: "13 months to two years" has improved dramatically. I'm still likely to die from cancer but instead of the two years maximum I had anticipated (been "prognosed"), I am now living and breathing two months into year 12, post diagnosis. And depending upon what is interpreted from my upcoming CT scan, I may yet have a bit more life to live.

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

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Reston Hospital ER: Safe Place to Receive Care

Fear of COVID prevents heart attack and stroke patients from going to the ER.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

David Jacobs, MD Chairman and Medical Director of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Reston Hospital Center HCA Virginia Health System in Reston, is worried. Patient numbers are down at the hospital's emergency room in recent weeks. He suspects individuals are avoiding the ER, fearing exposure to the coronavirus. Instead, patients are choosing to stay at home too long with true health emergencies, putting their lives at risk. For some, the outcome was not good, according to Jacobs. "We've seen patients with chest pains and stroke-like symptoms going on for four to five days before they come to the hospital. It's also a rare event to deliver a baby in the emergency room, but we delivered two in the ER this week," he said.

Jacobs stressed that Reston Hospital Center has taken proactive coronavirus mitigation measures to ensure its ER and the rest of the hospital are safe places to receive care. "We want patients to know we can take care of any emergency safely without them being at risk because of exposure to COVID-19," he said.

Safety starts at the door, according to Jacobs. There are limited points of entry into the hospital and clinics now. Comprehensive screening and temperature checks for staff and patients as well as universal masking are mandatory. As always, deep, detailed cleaning to prevent the spread of any infection between each patient visit is ongoing in the ER and throughout all care sites. As a safeguard, the hospital separates and isolates COVID-19 symptomatic patients to a dedicated section of the ER and a dedicated inpatient unit. Jacobs said, "We have nurses on each shift, only taking care of either non-COVID or COVID cases. They do not intermingle."

Another message Jacobs said he wanted to get across was for people who think they may have COVID-19. They shouldn't hesitate to come to the ER if they begin feeling shortness of breath. "Sometimes, patients



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Medical staff at Reston Hospital Center HCA Virginia Health System in Reston encourages people in need of medical care to come to the ER. The hospital has taken proactive coronavirus mitigation measures to ensure its ER and the rest of the hospital is a safe place to receive care.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Come to the ER, it's safe. Paramedic Alex Apple and nurse Kelly Duckworth join Chairman and Medical Director of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Reston Hospital Center HCA Virginia Health System, David Jacobs, MD, in an ER room at the hospital.

are sick for a couple of weeks, then develop respiratory distress. I know of two patients who died at home of COVID-19 without coming into the hospital... It's simple to come in and be evaluated. We have tests for those exhibiting symptoms... and can get results in 45 minutes if admitting... Most patients with COVID-19, we send home because their symptoms are not severe. We sometimes treat them with antibiotics and telemedicine," Jacobs said.

Reston Hospital Center is a full-service, 231-bed acute care medical and surgical hospital serving residents in Reston and the Northern Virginia region. It is a Level II Trauma Center and was selected as one of only three "Top General Hospitals" in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Masked and gloved, Jim Barrett General Manager of McCormick & Schmick's in Reston Town Center loads Chefs Market grocery store items directly into a customer's trunk in the restaurant's no-touch, social distanced, pick up service.



PHOTO BY
MERCIA HOBSON/
THE CONNECTION

Restaurant Rolls Out Local Chefs Market

Fresh groceries offered at McCormick and Schmick's.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

One hundred and one Chefs Market items. That's the total number of fresh, grocery-store-like pantry and refrigerator items, not grab & goes, one fine dining restaurant in Reston Town Center is selling directly to customers. That's everything someone would have on hand to prepare most any meal if they went to the local supermarket, or if one was open, to a farmers market.

Jim Barrett General Manager at McCormick & Schmick's in Reston Town Center scrambled like other restaurateurs when COVID-19 and Governor Northam's Executive Order #53 put a stop to his dine-in customers. He navigated the new normal and reinvented the restaurant's business model to grab & goes like other food venues. Recently, he leaned into another revenue stream advocated by his customers, one that is mutually beneficial. Barrett is selling them grocery store-like items commonly found in his restaurant's menu offerings plus the ever-elusive roll of toilet paper, and he's doing so at comparable prices.

"Over the last week, I've opened it up and added about 30 items. And it really incorporated a little bit of everything to what guests have been asking

me for when they can't seem to find them in the grocery store," Barrett said. Called "McCormick & Schmick's Chefs Market," the April 18 shopping order form read like a walk through a well-stocked farmers market and more. Green beans, asparagus, goat cheese, butter, tomato juice, linguini, sourdough boule bread, chicken breast filet, tilapia, shrimp, sea bass, vanilla ice cream and yes, the toilet paper.

"Everything's coming locally," said Barrett. "Don't want to go to the grocery store and wait in lines or be surrounded by people? We are here to serve you. Here are the items we have available and bring out to your car. Call us in advance to place your order," read his Chefs Market list.

According to Barrett, many people were calling interested to learn more. "I've got two orders this morning from a couple I met walking by here yesterday. They had a friend come. So it's word of mouth right now and putting it on Facebook...I think we're creating an avenue for people who can't, or who won't go to the grocery store...There's no need for anybody to sign, or to touch, or to talk. We can put the order right out there on the table, or masked and gloved we will bring it out and put it in the trunk for you. You don't have to get out of your car. That's perfect," said Barrett.