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Mount Vernon Gazette

WELLBEING
PAGE 11

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 7, 2020



Fresh air, fruits and vegetables bring out the smiles at the county's Farmers Markets.



Ripe strawberries are a common site at the markets.

PHOTOS BY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Mount Vernon Farmers Market To Open in May

It could pave the way for more as the county could gradually reopen.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

As the country heads into the third month of COVID-19 restrictions, the Mount Vernon Farmers Market on Sherwood Hall Lane is one of three markets that are opening in May.

The other two are in Burke and Reston, which are central locations that can cater to a wide scope of the county residents, said Fairfax County Park Authority spokesperson Judy Pederson. "These three are located in different areas of the county which places them within reasonable travel distances for all our residents."

The first opening will be Saturday, May 9 in Reston, followed by Mount Vernon on Wednesday, May 13 and Burke opening day on Sat-



urday, May 16.

This is a step towards normalcy, but operations in the markets will not be business as usual, due to the pandemic. Social distancing will be urged, as will face masks. "Face covering strongly recommended," the rules state. Face masks are required at the Reston market.

Throughout the pandemic, grocery stores have been allowed to operate with special rules in place. Most stores have had tape marks on the floor to ensure social distancing. Grocery stores are

listed as essential businesses by Gov. Ralph Northam, but the markets are not. "Because of that, the markets must operate under more stringent safety protocols in order to open," Pederson said.

The governor is currently making other moves to carefully open some facilities across the state. For example, he announced that hospitals and dentists will be allowed to resume non-emergency procedures as of midnight Thursday, April 30. Northam's office put out a directive for restrictions includ-

Rules

Market shoppers are asked to comply with all COVID-19 health and social distancing requirements:

- ❖ No more than 2 family members in the market
- ❖ Face covering strongly recommended
- ❖ No pets
- ❖ Keep a 6-foot distance from others
- ❖ One customer per stall
- ❖ Do not touch surfaces. Let vendors bag purchases.
- ❖ Credit or debit card payments preferred
- ❖ No on-site eating of purchases or sampling
- ❖ Do not linger. Get in and get out quickly.
- ❖ Leave by Exits only

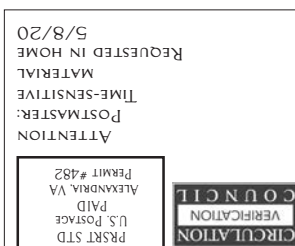
Different varieties of vegetables are available all summer.

ing extending Executive Order 53 through Friday, May 14, 2020.

Executive Order 53 originally signed on March 24, bans groups of more than 10 people; closes rec-

reation, entertainment, and personal care businesses; and limits restaurants to offering takeout and delivery services only.

SEE FARMERS MARKET, PAGE 13



McEneaney Associates has always had one motto in mind... not to be the biggest, but the best. This year marks our 40th year in Alexandria, and we are celebrating our investment in helping to build our town into the thriving community it is today. To learn more about our Associates and our firm, visit www.WeAreAlexandria.com

#WeAreAlexandria



Harborside | \$2,300,000

Breathtaking water views from every level of this sophisticated 3/4-bedroom, 3.55-bath home where a gracious open floor plan, interior elevator, custom millwork, & 5 fireplaces offer distinctive living quarters. 2 private brick terraces and 2-car deeded parking.

Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421
www.BabsBeckwith.com



Fords Landing | \$1,639,000

Beautiful 2,660-SF, end unit, brick townhome features 3 bedrooms, 2 full, 2 half baths, and a spacious 2-car garage. Sought-after waterfront community just steps to the Potomac, parks and all the shopping & dining on King Street. Contact Kristen for a private virtual tour!

Kristen Jones 703.851.2556
www.KristenJones.com



Temporarily Off Market - Call for Details

National Landing | \$1,499,000

Unsurpassed view! 2,817 SF of luxury at The Waterford House. With 3 bedrooms and 3 full bathrooms, this rarely available double unit model features a magnificent open floor plan & 51 feet of breathtaking balcony overlooking DC. 1200 Crystal Dr #1413/1414

Janet Caterson Price 703.622.5984
www.JanetPriceHomes.com



VIRTUAL OPEN FRI 5/8, 5-5:30PM

Del Ray | \$1,300,000

4-bedroom, 3.5-bath bungalow features a spacious family room with French doors to screened back porch and deck; kitchen with stainless appliances and granite counters. Finished lower level. Large fenced-in yard. Walk to "The Avenue." 211 E Howell Avenue

Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Monticello Park | \$1,299,000

Completely updated and expanded! 4,000+ sq.ft. 4 bedrooms, 4 full baths. Fabulous gourmet eat-in kitchen. Gorgeous spa master bath. High-end finishes throughout. Two wood-burning fireplaces. New patio full length of the home. This lovely home has it all!

Kim Peele & Hope Peele 703.244.5852
www.ThePeeleGroup.biz



Waynewood | \$815,000

This 5-bedroom, 3-bath house on a corner lot is generous in size with lovely features throughout. Nice hardwoods on upper level, recessed lighting, 3 fireplaces, bonus room on lower level and a garage! Walk to two parks and bike path.

Tracy Dunn 571.212.3658
www.tracybdunn.com



Fairfax | \$795,000

Graced by morning sunshine & sheltered from afternoon heat by towering trees! Lovingly maintained 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath home on an idyllic cul-de-sac. Professionally landscaped backyard. Finished basement, new windows, marble & hardwood floors.

Suzanne Morrison 703.863.3119
www.SuzanneMorrison.com



Stonegate | \$794,900

Rarely available Stratford model end unit on an extra wide lot backing to park setting. Modern elegance exudes from nearly 3,400 SF on 3 levels with 9-ft ceilings, 4 bedrooms, a study, 3.5 baths, lower level rec room, deep deck, stone patio, and 2-car garage.

Catherine Davidson 703.201.1998
www.cmdrealty.net



VIRTUAL OPEN SAT 12PM & SUN 3PM

Montebello | \$260,000

Enjoy penthouse living in a resort-like setting minutes from Old Town! This beautiful 850-SF, 1-bedroom home is on the 16th floor with incredible views from every window. Breathtaking sunroom with 180-degree, floor-to-ceiling windows. 5902 Mount Eagle Dr #1617

Christine Fischer 703.930.6349
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NEWS

Chamber Provides COVID-19 Resources

By HOLLY DOUGHERTY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused all businesses to rethink how they provide their services to the community. The community is also rethinking how they make purchases and get needed services.

Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce is providing resources for both the community and businesses to help all of us navigate new requirements to operate safely and responsibly in this environment at <https://mountvernonleechamber.org/>

LOCAL BUSINESSES OPEN

Many local businesses both essential and non-essential are open and need your support. All businesses are following Federal and Virginia guidelines to observe social distancing and disinfecting procedures. Many

businesses will welcome you and provide the same great service you have always received.

Local restaurants like Dishes of India, Roy Rogers, Cedar Knoll Restaurant, Burton's Grill, Mamma's Kitchen, McAlister's Deli and others provide online or phone ordering and curbside pickup. We all get tired of our own cooking and local restaurants can provide some needed variety.

Considering buying gift cards to provide businesses with cash now and then use the gift card later. If you know a business owner, ask them how you can help their businesses. Keep your gym membership or continue your lessons even though you can't participate right now. Call businesses to see if they are open.

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PLAN

The \$349 billion authorized by Congress for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

was depleted but more funding is on the way. These loans provide small businesses with funds to pay up to eight weeks of payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities.

According to data provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA) Virginia businesses received 40,371 loans totaling \$8.72 billion. Nationwide, a total \$342.28 billion for 1.66 million loans was approved through 4,975 lenders.

Mount Vernon Lee Chamber has contacted our Federal officials urging them to quickly authorize more funding for PPP by working across party lines and in a bi-partisan manner. The enormous demand for this program hindered smaller businesses and independent contractors from completing applications for funding in the short time the program was open.

A list of SBA approved lenders for what we hope will be the next round of PPP

funding can be found on the Chamber website.

FAIRFAX COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS MICROLOANS

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has approved a COVID-19 Small Business Microloan Program that will provide loans of up to \$20,000 at 0% interest for businesses located in Fairfax County. This program begins April 28 and applications are available at <https://cbponline.org/financing/fairfax-microloan-program/>

Mount Vernon Lee Chamber is proud to support the local small businesses that contribute so much to our community. We thank the community for supporting local businesses during this pandemic. To find local businesses or for resources available for businesses please visit <https://mountvernonleechamber.org/>

Teacher Runs 20 Miles to Visit Her Students

Alexandria Country Day School Second Grade teacher Sarah Shannon ran 20 miles on a recent Friday to visit her students in person. Shannon sees her students regularly on Zoom during live lessons, small group work, and one-on-one conferences as part of the School's remote learning program, but Shannon still missed seeing them in person and knew that after six-weeks of remote learning the kids were in need of a little boost. A runner and one of the School's Cross Country coaches, she mapped out her students' addresses and decided to run 20 miles to say hello to each kid from a safe distance in front of their home.

"Ms. Shannon is such an amazing teacher and went above and beyond to make these kids feel a little less alone during this really hard time," said Lilly Harris, a parent of a student in the class. "My daughter really misses school and interacting with her friends and teachers, so when Ms. Shannon surprised her Ellie was overwhelmed with excitement. She couldn't believe that it was actually Ms. Shannon in person."

When asked how she was feeling after her long run, Shannon replied "I can't feel my

legs, but seeing my students was so worth it."

Alexandria Country Day School is a kindergarten through eighth grade independent school in Alexandria. Offering curriculum

and instruction that challenges top students while meeting the needs of all students by offering flexibility, effective assessment, an array of methodologies, thoughtfully integrated use of technology, and a student-cen-

tered approach, the School also places a unique emphasis on speaking, writing, and multimedia communication skills across all curricular areas better prepares students for school, work, and life.





Mary Tracy points at one place along Paul Springs Road where the county project will be set up.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Marc Shapiro stands where the county staging area will go.

Creek Plan in Hollin Hills Generates Push Back

Some residents say County plan is unnecessary and expensive.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION



With social distancing in place, Monique Derfuss shares her thoughts about the plan.

A pair of streams going through the community of Hollin Hills are the focus of a Fairfax County stream stabilization project, and some residents are in an uproar about it. The project is designed to slow stormwater down to enable those streams to catch and filter more impurities before they get into the Potomac River, and restore the channel to prevent more erosion. Restoring ecosystem health, conveying stormwater, improving soils and supporting the native vegetation are part of the plan, the county project information stated.

"It's all nonsense," said Marc Shapiro, one of the group of residents against the county plan.

According to Shapiro and a group of residents in Hollin Hills, the stream restoration project will cut down hundreds of trees, ruin the wooded nature of Hollin Hills with a large project staging area, trucks coming and going, and the erosion will continue, counter to the environmental policies that are part of Fairfax County's overall objectives.

"They sold this thing on fear," said Shapiro, a resident of Hollin Hills since 1952 who played in these streams that go through Brickelmaier Park and Goodman Park.

The plan is to stabilize the shores with rocks and plants, and used a similar county project at the Big Rocky Run Tributary as an example, which was presented to residents in August 2019. There were before-and-after shots to show what the stream bed could look like.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D- Mount Vernon) said 78 trees will be cut down, and 754 trees will be planted as part of their landscaping plan, and a permanent access path will be put in. "As with all stream restoration projects, the project team has made every effort to preserve as many existing trees as possible, including ex-

panding the tree save area; however, the areas being restored are very narrow," Storck said.

Project History

Hollin Hills is a neighborhood of modern style homes constructed on the east side of Richmond Highway on the slope that leads into the Potomac River. The architecture, mid-century modern, was the work of architect Charles M. Goodman. The houses are in harmony with the surrounding wooded lots as Goodman planned, and the Hollin Hills Historic District was recognized by the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register in 2013.

This stream restoration project was first brought up in 2013 when residents came to then-Supervisor Gerry Hyland, and current Supervisor Storck (D- Mount Vernon) got some calls after that when he got into office.

"The community has wanted this project for more than a decade," Storck said. Storck has written a letter to the residents of Hollin Hills about the project and they will get it soon.

The expense to the county is \$3.6 million, and Hollin Hills resident Mary Tracy is not for this kind of spending to fix a problem that isn't really impacting the neighborhood, she said. "Most of us, our property will be severely affected," she said. "It doesn't make sense in these little skinny parks," she added.

Tracking Erosion

The streams go through Brickelmaier Park and Goodman Park, and on the Fairfax County website, there are two comparative photos of stream erosion in 2016 and in 2019, and there is quite a difference between the two pictures. The rainwater gully went from 10-12 feet in 2016 to 16 feet in 2019. "Some-

SEE CREEK PLAN, PAGE 5

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Creek Plan in Hollin Hills

FROM PAGE 4

thing has to be done,” Storck said.

An opposing fact sheet on the county’s proposal was compiled by Mary Tracy and others in the Hollin Hills Park Preservation Group. It claims a Hollin Hills resident and landscape architect who spearheaded the proposal, and project manager Meghan Fellows, came up with an idea to use “a 2,000 pound boulder approach to armoring the little streams because that’s the equipment the stream industry is sized for.”

A solution, the opponent’s fact sheet states, is to remove the sections of Paul Spring Road that truncate the stream channels and to replace them with load-bearing, low-water crossings that freely allow stream flow in channels rather than through pipes. There was no cost estimate for that option.

On the August 2019 Fairfax County community slideshow, the county cited the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, of which Virginia is a part of along with Maryland, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., West Virginia, and Delaware.

It is an agreement to restore the bay health and ecosystem. The goals of the latest agreement in 2014 states “the Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable

Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage and a diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders,” according to the EPA website.

Due to the underlying geology of the area where river gravel and sand is situated on marine clay, stormwater erosion is an ongoing problem. Fairfax County completed similar projects a few years ago at Gil McCutcheon Park, and most recently within Mount Vernon District Park. Another project is being constructed near Quander Road and Route 1, and a fourth project is in design further downstream on Paul Spring Branch near Sherwood Hall Lane.

Group member Monique Derfuss spoke by phone at the April 29 Board of Supervisor’s meeting, urging Supervisor Storck to be fiscally responsible with the money slated for the project. She said it was “inconsistent with county climate action plan to move forward with this project.”

Storck realizes everyone is not happy with the project, and he noted that it will be short term pain for long term gain slowing the erosion and sediments into the Potomac River. “That’s the nature of projects like this,” he said.

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.

FARMERS MARKET TO OPEN

The Fairfax County Park Authority will open the Mt. Vernon Farmers Market on Wednesday, May 13 from 8 a.m. to noon at Sherwood Regional Library in Alexandria. It will again offer delicious, locally grown, farm-fresh products. The market will be different than in the past, as the Park Authority complies with Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam’s social distancing orders and safety guidelines. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets

MEALS PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS

Recovery Program Solutions of Virginia, which provides free Drop-In Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Homelessness Recovery Support programs for adults across Northern Virginia, continues to offer its meals program for its homeless participants, and anyone in need, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is providing Meals-To-Go twice a day, seven days a week to support these individuals beginning at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. The program is located at RPSV’s South County Recovery and Drop-In Center (SCRDIC), 8794 S Sacramento Drive in Alexandria. RPSV’s SCRDIC is also making showers and laundry services available by appointment. Many of the homeless individuals we serve are not affiliated with shelters, they live in woods and under bridges, therefore these services are even more dire during the pandemic. Due to CDC recommendations of social distancing, RPSV has closed its centers and has moved its one-on-one and group support services online via Zoom.us.

Program offerings include Staying Happy during Social Distancing, Substance Abuse Relapse Preven-

tion, Music Therapy, Spanish Peer Support, and more. To learn more about RPSV’s virtual programming, visit <https://rpsva.org/rpsv-virtual-offerings/>.

Additionally, RPSV is offering Warm Line Phone Support for individuals who need someone to talk to regarding the pandemic or any other matter. The line is staffed by Peer Recovery Specialists who are trained to offer a kind ear and helpful advice. The number to call is 703-817-6124.

GRADUATION SPEAKER VIDEO CONTEST

U.S. Senator Tim Kaine has launched the “Everybody’s the Graduation Speaker” video contest. With many in-person graduations likely to be postponed or canceled due to the coronavirus, Kaine is encouraging Virginia’s graduating high school seniors to submit a video of an original speech they would like to give at graduation.

Kaine will select speeches to feature on his Facebook page and website during May and June to celebrate the graduates. Kaine is encouraging students to film videos of speeches that are 10 minutes or less and submit them to grad-speech@kaine.senate.gov by May 15.

FREE ONLINE COMPUTER SCIENCE WORKSHOPS

DMVHacks, founded by Lucy Chen and Ansum Khan, is conducting free online computer science workshops to increase interest in STEM throughout the community. The DMVHacks team strives to provide students with opportunities to learn more about computer science and coding, regardless of their grade or age. These workshops occur from 3 – 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays through Zoom. If you would like more information about these workshops, email Lucy Chen at lchen888@gmail.com or the DMVHacks team at dmvhacksteam@gmail.com.

Hope for the Warriors Scholarships

From now through May 31, applications are being accepted for the Fall 2020 semester for the Hope For The Warriors Military Spouse and Caregiver Scholarship program. Since 2006, Hope For The Warriors has awarded Military Spouse and Caregiver Scholarships twice a year. The program recognizes and rewards post-9/11 spouses and caregivers for their strength, fidelity and resolve despite adversity as they assume critical roles in the financial well-being of their families. Scholarships vary from \$1,500 to \$2,500 and applied toward higher education at an U.S. accredited university, college or trade school.

Honorary Scholarship – awarded to those seeking graduate or post-graduate degree;

New Beginnings Scholarship – awarded to those pursuing an associate degree, entry level classes or training;

Restoring Family Scholarship – awarded to spouses of the fallen;

Restoring Hope Scholarship – awarded to a Master of Social Work student;

Restoring Self Scholarship – awarded to those pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

To receive an application to apply for the Fall 2020 semester, visit hopeforthewarriors.org and apply for services.

GIANT OFFERS VIRTUAL NUTRITION CLASSES

Giant Food will be offering free, weekly online nutrition and healthy living classes aimed at supporting the greater community, as well as individuals with chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease. People can choose from the following online classes:

Nutrition at Noon – For those who have general healthy living questions, join Giant nutritionists Monday-Friday at 12 p.m. for quick, 15-minute Q&A sessions.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13



Rex Reiley
RE/MAX Allegiance
703-768-7730
rex.reiley@rmxtalk.com



Alex/Riverside Estates \$605,000
3026 Battersea Lane
Riverside Estates, the Biggest Bang for your Buck!! This large Virginia model offers 5BRs, 3 updated baths, a gorgeous upgraded kitchen w/granite counters, cherry cabinets & 12" ceramic tile flooring. Beautiful hardwood floors on the main level plus upgraded, energy efficient DBL pane windows throughout. The electric panel had major upgrades in 2008, & the deck was rebuilt in 2016, it looks out at the beautifully landscaped backyard complete w/a new privacy fence & underground sprinkler system. Don't miss the 2 car garage as well - Check out the competition, then come talk with us. We're always ready to reach out with a helping hand.



Alex/Riverside Estates \$579,900
8501 Wagon Wheel Road
Beautifully updated 4BR, 3BA Split w/carport - 2500+ square ft. on a large landscaped .3 acre lot w/fenced-in back yard. Freshly painted interior, newly refinished hardwood floors throughout the main level. Large family room w/wood burning FPL & 4th BR on lower level w/a refinished bath, & two large utility rooms. Perfect for workshop/storage. You can't find a better value or neighborhood for this price! 5 minutes to Fort Belvoir, (S) 15 minutes to Old Town Alex. (N) along the beautiful GW Parkway.



Fairfax City/Lyndhurst \$169,900
3790 Lyndhurst Drive, #202
Attractively priced one bedroom condo with balcony in popular Lyndhurst community. Great opportunity to put sweat equity into this home: good bones, needs paint, carpet replacement and new HVAC so being sold "As Is." Laundry and storage unit in building. Balcony overlooks green space, providing privacy. Community pool and picnic area. Condo fee includes gas, water, sewer. Great location, close to George Mason University, downtown Fairfax, restaurants, shopping, and much more!



Alex/Woodleigh Woods \$701,000
3709 Maryland Street
Welcome to this stunning 4BR, 3BA, 2 car garage, contemporary-complete w/a gorgeous court yard out front & a large deck & hot tub which overlooks a beautifully landscaped back yard. Numerous updates to include: kitchen w/granite counters & SS appliances, recently replaced DBL pane, energy efficient windows, freshly painted interior, & all 3 baths. The kitchen, dining & living rooms all face out back & have a wall of picture windows looking out at the deck, hot tub & fenced back yard. The lower level offers a 4th BR, 3rd full bath & family room that opens out to the court yard. As you walk thru this home you marvel at the open contemporary design that makes you feel like you are one w/your environment. Walkable ¼ mile to Mt. Vernon bike/walking trail along the Potomac. Five minutes to Ft. Belvoir (S), 15 minutes to Old Town (N), 25 minutes to National Airport (N), all along the scenic GW Pkwy, each season gives you beautiful views.



Manassas/Classic Springs \$651,000
12835 Classic Springs Drive
Is this huge 2 level Rambler all for me? 4BRs, 3.5BAs, 2 car garage, front & side porches & covered porch in the rear. Almost 4500 SF under roof, including about 3100 finished. Main level has Brazilian hwdws plus carpeting in the BRs. 10' ceilings w/crown molding, 6 panel doors, DBL pane windows & extra wide hallways & doors. Stunning kitchen w/dark cherry cabinets, SS appliances & dark granite counters. The bedrooms are spacious-the master bedrm has a huge walk-in closet & a magnificent master bath. The lower level has a 4th BR & 3rd full BA, large family rm & approximately 1400 SF for storage/workshops & walks out to an incredible bkyd backing to woods. You have to see this home to believe it. It's stunning!!!



Alex/Randall Estates \$660,000
2215 Shiver Dr.
Charming 2 level Rambler w/finished, walkout lower level, backing to a huge yard that reaches out to a rustic, lovely creek & woodland oasis. Nature is at your doorstep! Main level living w/3 bedrooms, 2 updated baths, stunning hwdw floors, 6 panel doors & custom wood blinds compliment the living & dining rooms. Stand at your kitchen sink & soak in the beauty of your views of the bkyd, creek and woods. Downstairs offers a huge family rm, 3rd full bath, a den, huge storage & workshop area. Plenty of room for a 4th bedroom if needed. Minutes to Old town, Alexandria along the scenic GW Pkwy, 15 minutes south to Ft. Belvoir. You won't find a quality home like this - It's a bargain!



Alex/Mt.Zephyr \$515,000
4100 Woodley Drive
Lovely all brick 2 level raised/ranch ramble deep in the heart of Mt. Vernon - Large .25 acre corner lot with carport. Lovely hardwood floors on the main level, double pane windows . 2 updated baths on the main level and an updated 3rd full bath on the lower level. 2 wood burning FPLs, one on each level. Potential 4th bedroom on the lower level. Roof is 10 years old, furnace 5 months, A/C 7 years. Commute along GW Pkwy to Old Town- minutes to Ft. Belvoir.

Thinking of Buying or Selling your home in 2020!!
Give Rex Reiley a call – 703-409-4784



For more information: www.RexReiley.com

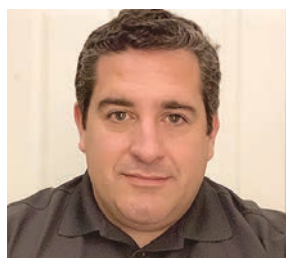
Each Office Independently Owned and Operated



OPINION



Kimberly Adams



Sean Corcoran



Ron Kuley



Tina Williams



Tammie Wondong

Hazard Pay in Honor of Frontline Workers

We are putting our lives on the line; Hazard pay honors our sacrifices.

BY KIMBERLY ADAMS,
FAIRFAX EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
SEAN CORCORAN,
FCOP LOCAL 5000
RON KULEY,
IAFF LOCAL 2068
TINA WILLIAMS,
FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
TAMMIE WONDONG,
FCGEU - SEIU VIRGINIA 512

As frontline workers and as rank-and-file labor leaders representing Fairfax County firefighters, law enforcement officers, educators, nurses, social workers, trash collectors, and other hard-working county employees, we are proud of the work that our members do every day to keep Fairfax County running.

We keep families safe, care for and educate children, keep our public spaces clean, take care of people who are sick and need support, maintain our community's infrastructure, help

people get where they need to go -- and more.

We are Black, White, Latino, Asian, and many of us are immigrants. We are every religion and every kind of family.

Right now, we are responding to the biggest crisis we have seen in our lifetimes. In the midst of this global pandemic, we continue to keep Fairfax County moving forward.

We are picking up trash, putting out fires, protecting the community, delivering health care and mental health services, educating children, cleaning and maintaining public spaces -- and so many other things that may be invisible to the community because they happen without people thinking about them.

We're also reaching out to our neighbors, raising money for nonprofits, donating food, and supporting those hit hardest by the virus and closures.

We are proud to continue serving our community during this crisis. To do so however, we are risking our health and well-being, and the health and well-being of our loved ones.

In recognition of this reality, neighboring jurisdictions, including Arlington, Alexandria, Washington, DC and the State of Maryland, have all begun offering hazard pay to their workforce.

Hazard pay honors the commitment and sacrifices that frontline workers make every day as we risk exposure to perform essential services.

Before coronavirus, when we left the house each day, many of us feared that we might not return to our families. Now, we fear that we might bring this virus home to our families.

Hazard pay offers frontline workers an extra measure of financial security to stay focused on our critical work.

We have been offering ideas, and will continue to work with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to pass a county budget that invests in good jobs, quality health care, affordable housing, public education, PPE, and services and supports for every family in Fairfax County.

We believe that budgets are moral documents that must reflect the values of our community, putting people before profits.

Fairfax County has long been a wonderful place to live, work and play. We stand united with elected officials and community leaders who are fighting to support working people throughout our county. Together, we can keep our community safe, healthy, and thriving for years to come.

Kimberly Adams is President of the Fairfax Education Association. Sean Corcoran is President of FCOP Local 5000. Ron Kuley is President of IAFF Local 2068. Tina Williams is President of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. Tammie Wondong is President of the FCGEU - SEIU Virginia 512. United together, we advocate for good jobs and quality public services for all people in Fairfax County.

Now Is Not the Time To Put Off Vaccinations

Pediatricians report a 30-76 percent decrease in administering routine childhood immunizations.

BY DEL. PATRICK HOPE
(47TH - ARLINGTON)
AND DEL. PAUL KRIZEK
(44TH - FAIRFAX)

We probably spend too much of our day worrying about and responding to the novel coronavirus. We work from home, or don't work at all, worrying about this infection's economic impact on us and our community, even if we are comfortable. We teach our children at home while gaining new appreciation for their teachers. We plan our trips to the grocery store and pharmacy like the strategic operations they are, ensuring we have facemasks, remembering our social distancing, and having enough hand sanitizer. Through Zoom and Facebook,

we socialize and even worship on-line, wondering if this virtual reality substitutes for our actual communities.

We wonder endlessly about our health. Most of us did not anticipate these challenges, while those few who did couldn't get the attention of national leaders responsible for making a timely, proactive and aggressive response. We've redefined 'essential personnel', and they are our new heroes. Everyone is making tremendous sacrifices.

Yet, things may be changing for the better. In some places, new cases have plateaued or declined -- in proportion to the vigor with which disease mitigation measures have been pursued. U.S. deaths predicted have decreased in some models, to 'only' 90,000 -- a tragic number still far greater than all the American lives lost in the Vietnam

War. Our hospitals have not been overwhelmed. Our stocks of medical equipment and PPE are increasing. Diagnostic tests are becoming more available and innovative, too; we can, finally, predict a time when we can do all the tests we need. Scientifically sound research into treatment and prevention is progressing rapidly.

Hospitals are resuming elective surgeries, and soon houses of worship, and many businesses will begin to resume their original functions, albeit exercising prudent care and safe social distancing practices.

BUT NONE of this should make us feel completely secure. Public health departments have been working in the dark, due to testing shortfalls; worse, they remain understaffed to do the contact tracing

-- crucial to an evidence-based reopening of the economy. The good news: Governor Northam just announced that the Commonwealth will be hiring 1,000 new people to work as contact tracers and has taken measures to rapidly increase Virginia's testing capacity to what it needs to be. The bad news: medical supply chains are under-resourced, nationally disorganized and insecure. Frontline clinical providers are few in number, at high risk for infection themselves and impossible to replace quickly. Societal inequities putting communities of color at increased risk remain huge problems dating back to the Civil War.

Overshadowing this is the fact that this coronavirus is a novel infection, which confounds precise planning. Will there be a second wave worse than the first, like the Spanish flu? Will it reoccur seasonally?

SEE NOW IS NOT, PAGE 14

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Neighborhood Health's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Neighborhood Health is a non-profit community health center with 13 clinics serving more than 30,000 low-income, mostly uninsured and immigrant patients in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County in Northern Virginia. Our patients are being disproportionately impacted by this crisis, and our team is working tirelessly to assist our patients and the community.

COVID-19 Testing: Neighborhood Health has set up four COVID-19 testing sites for our patient population – two sites in the City of Alexandria, one along the Route 1 Corridor in Southeast Fairfax County, and one in Fairfax. We plan to open a fifth site in collaboration with a community partner in the low-income Bailey's Crossroads area of Fairfax County soon.

Tests are available to Neighborhood Health patients who first receive a telehealth assessment and an order for the test by one of our medical providers. We are accepting new patients, with an emphasis on accommodating people with COVID-19 symptoms.

COVID-19 Test Results: We are seeing an alarming number of patients test positive for COVID-19 in the communities we serve. Of the almost 800 tests that we have conducted so far, more than 50% have come back positive, compared to 25% for Northern Virginia and 17% statewide. 86% of the positive patients are Hispanic and 74% are uninsured.

Contact Tracing: We have a team that is conducting contact tracing with patients that test positive. They are reaching out to those who may have come into

contact with the patient (patient information kept confidential) before the onset of symptoms. They are advised to quarantine for 14 days since time of exposure. Contact tracer calls contact daily to monitor for symptoms and assist with entry into care and testing if necessary.

Support for COVID-19 Patients: As a positive test result comes in from the lab, our medical provider reaches out to the patient to discuss symptoms and determine the level of monitoring needed. For those with more acute symptoms, the provider will recommend the delivery of a pulse oximeter to the patient for regular oxygen level monitoring.

Our family support team delivers the pulse oximeters, and also reaches out to the patient to determine if there are other needs

that we can fulfill, such as masks, food, cleaning supplies, etc. We are working with a community partner agency so that our team can pick up food from a local pantry and deliver it directly to COVID-19 families in need.

Telehealth Visits: Non-COVID patients are being served mainly through tele/videohealth visits, with the goal to keep our patients as healthy as possible, renew needed prescriptions, and prevent ER visits. Dentists are providing teledentistry for patients in pain, with limited in-person dental emergency visits. Since March, we have provided more than 5,000 telehealth visits, with an emphasis on patients with chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Open Clinics: Practicing under enhanced infection safeguards, six of our clinics are open for limited

in-person visits.

Mornings are reserved for well-child check-ups so that children younger than two are able to receive developmental assessments and vaccines. Pregnant women are also receiving critically-important intake appointments and most visits in person. Patients coming to pick up their free or low-cost medications must phone before arrival and our on-site pharmacy technicians take medications to them at their vehicles. For HIV+ patients unable to reach the clinic due to transportation challenges, a member of our team is delivering medications (and masks, if needed) to their homes so they are able to remain isolated.

For Information: Nyrma Hernandez, Development Director, development@neighborhoodhealth-va.org – Ph: 703-628-3225



Water bottles on the banks of Cameron Run.



Ben Swanson and Caleb Merendino.

PHOTOS BY ADVOCATES FOR CLEAN & CLEAR WATERWAYS

Trash Advocates Find a Mess At the Alexandria Recycling Center

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

At the Alexandria Recycling Center, the trash all over the ground caught the eye of Ben Swanson and Caleb Merendino, a pair of environmentalists that make up the new organization "Advocates for Clean & Clear Waterways," supporting environmental conservation in the metropolitan area. Trash was all over the ground outside the dumpsters at the center on Eisenhower Avenue, and there were holes in the fence that allowed garbage to spew out, down the hill to Hunting Creek, into the Potomac River and eventually the Chesapeake Bay.

"They need to get the recycling center under control," Swanson said.

It's all part of the job for the two twenty-somethings at their newly formed organi-

zation that just became official in April. They ride their mountain bikes around, track litter back to the source, and bring it to the attention of authorities to get it cleaned up. At the Alexandria center, they went straight to the mayor in Alexandria, and said they initially got some response about the COVID-19 pandemic, but eventually the city did send out people to clean and fix the center. "We're not buying that," about the pandemic, Swanson said. "There's no way this could all be happening since the pandemic. We're just calling it negligence," he added. Upstream from the recycling center, the creek was cleaner, they noted. They made a video about the recycling center, and on the video there are several shots of the trash outside the dumpsters, holes in the fence and trash falling down the stream bank. Lots of water bottles everywhere near the stream. They filled 110 trash bags in 6 days. "Pretty shocked at what we

found," Swanson said on the video. "Alexandria, what the heck is going on?" he asked.

When they reached out to the Department of Environmental Quality, they got the feeling that trash on the ground at a recycling center is to be expected.

Next stop was Lake Cook where there were not enough trash cans around, but their suggestion that an additional trash can be placed by the dock was shot down. "They came back and rejected it," Swanson said.

Swanson is from New York and Merendino is from Arizona. The two came up with the idea for the Advocates after seeing the influx of trash around the area and registered their company in Washington, D.C. and got a 501C3 designation. They serve the whole metropolitan area, and have sights on another project in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. In addition to litter, they are focusing efforts on saving sea turtles too.



Along the fence at the Alexandria Recycling Center, trash is present outside the many dumpsters.

OPINION

The Nature of Covid

And in the quiet, a sigh, a breath, the whoosh of the birds wings above my head like an exhale.

The earth is returning to itself. The relief is wrapped in the birdsong, the deer's silent footfall, the fox stealing by my porch, the wild turkey by the roadside.

It's as if nature is coming out to see why the world has become so hushed. And in this silence we return to the beginning. To a time without distractions, without endless errands and events to attend. we return to our own homes. Our own families. Our own selves.

And we sit with the silence in joy, in grief, in happiness and in sorrow. We sit with the anxiety, the hope, the love and the distress.

And the only sound is the sigh of the earth all around us as nature says 'let's all take a deep breath'....and start again. Nature is reclaiming us all.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

How The Closing Of A Coffee Shop Made Me Realize That COVID-19 Was Not A Hoax

BY LERONDA BROOKS

As the world scrambled to stock up on water, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper (for some reason), I remained blissfully ignorant of the savageness of COVID-19—that is, until a casual scroll through my Instagram feed led me to a message from Compass Coffee stating that “this too shall pass” and that Compass Coffee was closed indefinitely.

“This must be a joke,” I thought. “Is it April 1st?” No, it wasn't a joke, and no, it wasn't April 1st. In fact, it wasn't even April.

It was March 17, the day that the brutality of COVID-19 hit me harder than the losses in federal Thrift Savings Plan accounts. Yes, America was officially in a crisis, and the one place that I could go to escape was closed.

Now, I was in full-on panic mode. I grabbed my ski suit, because that was the closest thing to COVID-19-proof clothing that I owned, goggles, and cleaning gloves for a quick trip to Whole Foods. I looked like a science fiction film character, but I didn't care. I needed supplies for my virus survival kit and knew that Whole Foods would be

SEE LETTER, PAGE 13

Thank you!

To our doctors, nurses, EMTs and all the heroes in the medical profession. Thank you to our frontline businesses working long hours stocking shelves, cashiering, bagging and cleaning. Thank you to our government officials and leaders who are making decisions to keep us safe. We appreciate all of you!

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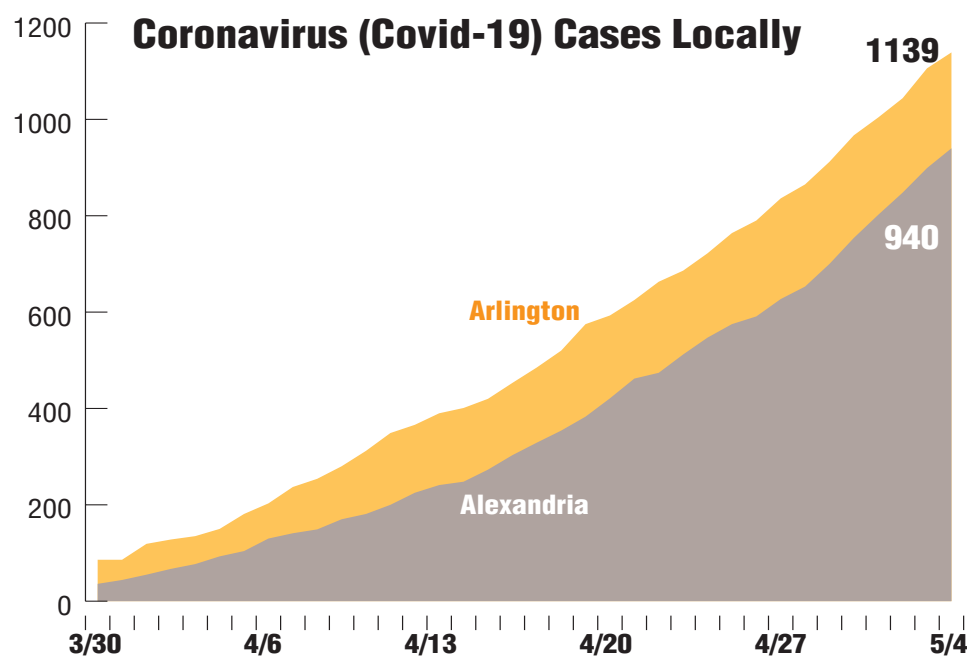
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This Week in Coronavirus

Phase I would ease some limits on business and faith communities, and would transition the stay at home directive to a “safer at home” guideline, especially for those in vulnerable populations.



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

BY KEN MOORE
THE GAZETTE

More at www.connectionnewspapers.com.

Tuesday, May 5

Alexandria Cases: 983
Virginia Cases: 20,256
Fairfax County Cases: 4,834
United States Cases: 1,152,372
Alexandria Deaths: 26
Virginia Deaths: 713
United States Deaths: 67,456

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Virginia received \$7,387,190 in federal funding to help promote access to housing in the Commonwealth, according to Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine. The Fairfax County Housing and Redevelopment Authority received \$1,076,686, Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Authority received \$351,652 and the Arlington Housing and Redevelopment Authority received \$325,540.

“In this time of deep uncertainty, the last thing families should have to worry about is whether they can afford a roof over their heads,” according to Warner and Kaine. “That’s why we’re glad to know this federal funding will go towards helping provide needed housing assistance for families across Virginia.”

Through the CARES Act, Congress provided \$1.25 billion for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, which funds the Housing Choice Voucher program that helps lower-income families, the elderly, and disabled individuals afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. This funding includes \$400 million for increased subsidy costs and \$850 million for administrative and other expenses incurred by public housing authorities (PHAs), including activities to support or maintain the

health and safety of assisted individuals and families, and costs related to retention and support of participating owners.

Monday, May 4

Alexandria Cases: 940
Fairfax County Cases: 4,615
Virginia Cases: 19,492

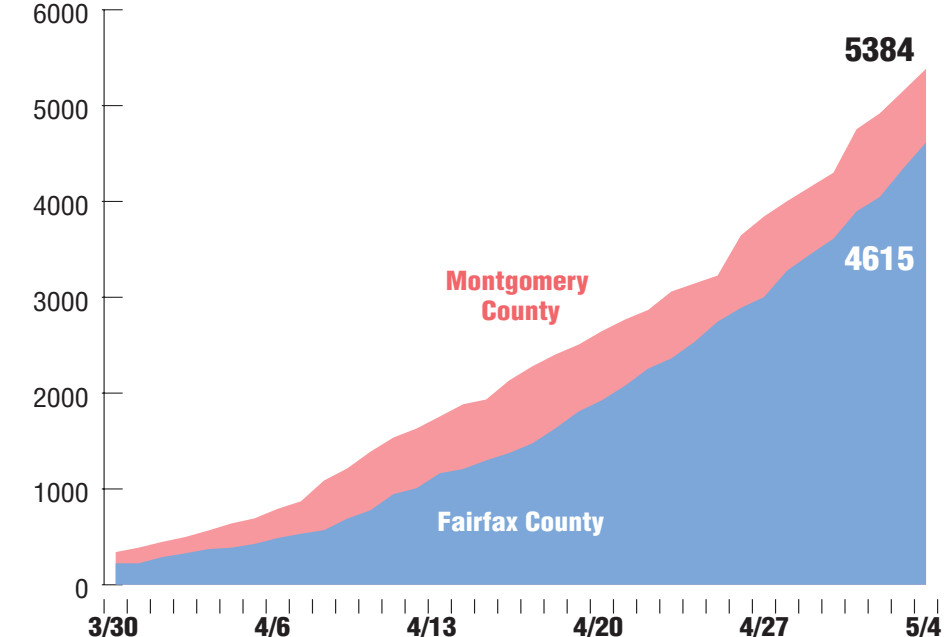
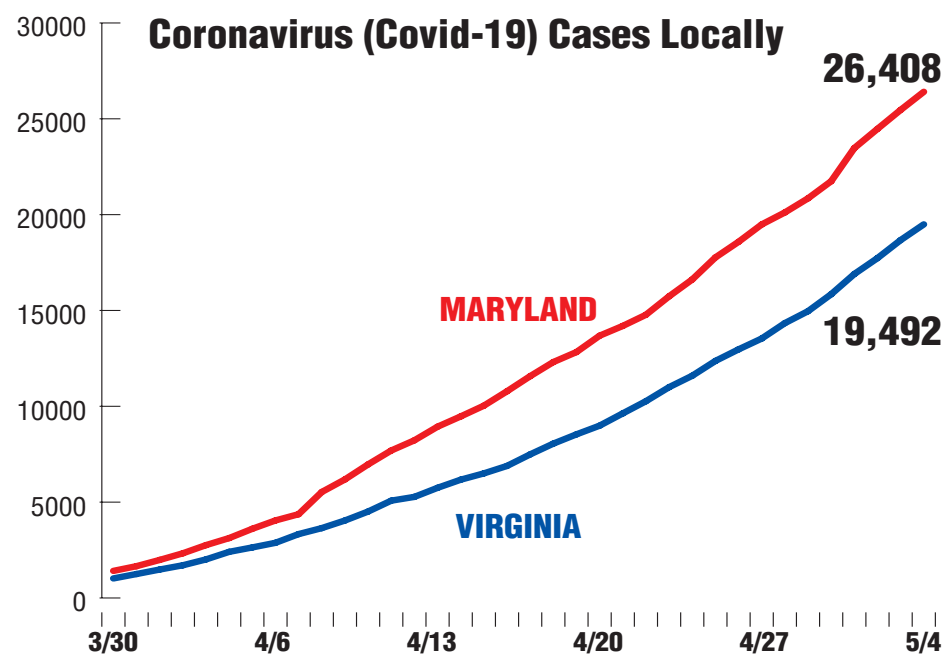
PHASE ONE EASE: Gov. Ralph Northam outlined a three-phase plan to ease restrictions on businesses and gatherings, when health data supports doing so. Northam said he will extend restrictions on businesses and gatherings of more than 10 people, at least through next Thursday, May 14. Officials will continue to monitor health data to ensure cases are trending down, that hospital capacity remains steady, that testing is increased, and that hospitals and medical facilities have necessary supplies of PPE.

Phase I would continue social distancing, teleworking, recommendations that people wear face coverings in public, and the ban on social gatherings of more than 10 people. It would ease some limits on businesses and faith communities, and would transition the stay at home directive to a “safer at home” guideline, especially for those in vulnerable populations.

Phase I would likely last two to four weeks, as would the two subsequent phases, depending on health metrics.

The next two phases will continue to ease restrictions as long as there’s a downward trend in key health data. These include the number of positive COVID-19 tests, hospitalizations and ICU capacity, and a stable supply of personal protective equipment, along with other factors.

In phase two, other as-yet unnamed restrictions will be eased but social gatherings will be limited to 50 people.



GRAPHICS BY LAURENCE FOONG / COMPILED BY KEN MOORE

To move to the third phase, the governor said officials will be looking for no evidence of a rebound of infections for a “sustained period of time.”

As part of his announced actions today, the governor also will be revising his stay at home order, calling it “safer at home.”

Sunday, May 3

Report from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue: TESTING: This includes those who have received testing at the site designated for first responders and those who have shared their results from testing conducted at a private physician.

Known FCFRD personnel who have tested positive for COVID-19: 13

FCFRD personnel who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have recovered: 9

Four personnel are currently COVID-19 positive. Nine of the thirteen COVID-19 positive personnel have fully recovered.

All personnel are closely monitored by a nurse at Fairfax County’s Occupational Health Center.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue will notify the public or any applicable persons if there is any concern of exposure.

WORKER RELIEF AND SECURITY: Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) with Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) released a draft framework for the Worker Relief and Security Act, legislation that would tie ongoing expanded unemployment benefits to the public health emergency and economic conditions. The bill would use automatic triggers to ensure that assistance continues to flow to workers for the duration of the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis even in the absence of action by Congress, said Beyer. “In the face of an historic crisis, the federal government must take extraordinary steps to give the American people sustained help and prevent this economic downturn from becoming a depression,” Beyer said. “This pandemic and the resulting economic crisis may continue to inflict horrifying suffering on the country for many months to come.”

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WELLBEING

Virtual fitness classes aid in the effort to stay healthy and fit.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
CHRISTIAN ELLIOT



Virtual Fitness Classes Offer Options

Online choices for those who want to get or stay in shape.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Staying physically and mentally fit is proving to be a challenge for some as local gyms, yoga studios and weight management clinics have closed their doors in an effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. As a solution, many local health and fitness studios are offering live-streamed and recorded digital classes that can be joined from almost anywhere. From pre-recorded sessions on Facebook to live sessions with an instructor and personal sessions with a physical trainer, instructors are giving the curious and uninitiated a look inside their cyber classrooms.

“I am encouraging people to focus on the mental health benefits from exercise and movement to help deal with the stress of COVID-19,” said Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at the Washington Center for Weight Management and Research in Arlington. “I am also encouraging people to be okay with exercise looking and feeling different right now. Something is better than nothing.”

Practicing yoga can offer mental health benefits, says Luann Fulbright, Studio Director of Dream Yoga in McLean. “Yoga means to unite, and human beings, like other mammals, need to connect to stay well,” she said. “The virtual classes enable our community to continue to come together to practice.”

A disrupted schedule can lead to increased anxiety during this time of uncertainty. “The crux of regular exercise for many people is routine and familiarity, when that gets interrupted, it can be difficult to establish a new normal with exercise,” said Trope. “This is a very tricky time. We are using both live exercise classes and pre-recorded exercise content combined with written workouts.”

Creating as close to a real experience as possible

for students, including allowing for teacher-student interaction makes the classes more effective. “We transformed one of our classrooms into a virtual studio with good equipment so our classes look as professionally done as possible,” said Fulbright. “We have a good camera, microphone, umbrella lighting, and large monitor screen so teachers can better see their students and alignment.”

The students who are joining the classes represent a wide demographic. “Many of our regular students have gone virtual with us,” said Fulbright. “The ones that surprised us were our older students in our Yoga for Creaky People and other classes. At first, we wondered if they would want to Zoom, but we were wowed. Most of them are Zooming with us now. They are rocking it.”

There are even solutions for who those who are only marginally interested in fitness or need help staying motivated.

“I had a former client reach out to me yesterday saying she just couldn’t stay motivated doing the free home workouts because no one cared if she did or didn’t show up,” said Christian Elliot, Health Coach at TRUE Whole Human. “She’s finding she prefers an appointment to keep her accountable. The one-to-one personal training with trained eyes watching, although more expensive, often provides the most accountability and bang for the buck, especially if you don’t have much equipment to work with.”

Classes can be tailored to the abilities and interests of each student. “I’ve found, probably not surprisingly, that different people prefer different formats,” said Elliot. “Not having to think of what to do may be the biggest draw, regardless of the format. Some like the structure of a program and thoughtful movement and a slower pace, others like showing up at a particular time, doing whatever the workout is for the day, and knowing when the workout will be over.”

“I’m excited to watch our great, collective, American ingenuity have a new outlet for creativity,” added Elliot. “I look forward to seeing how this strange blip in history brings new and better solutions to the market that we otherwise would not have come up with.”

“I am encouraging people to focus on the mental health benefits from exercise and movement to help deal with the stress of COVID-19.”

—Rachel Trope,
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U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, who died in 1977, is shown with his son Gary Powers Jr. in a family photo.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Francis Gary Powers beside a U-2 spy plane. Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960 and held captive for two years before his release.

‘An American Hero’ Gary Powers Jr. details U-2 incident.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET



Gary Powers Jr. talks about his father's experience in a Soviet prison at the height of the Cold War during a virtual meeting of the Alexandria Rotary Club on April 28.



British journalist Chris Pocock, considered the leading authority on the U-2 spy plane, participates in a Zoom meeting of the Alexandria Rotary Club discussing the 60th anniversary of the U-2 incident.

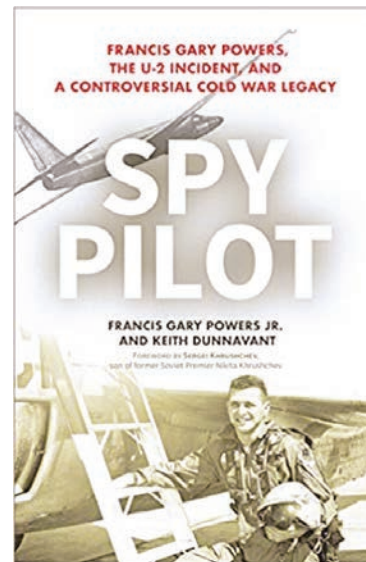
It was the height of the Cold War. A new surface-to-air missile had been developed by the Soviet Union and on May 1, 1960, one locked onto a U-2 spy plane flown by 30-year-old pilot Francis Gary Powers. What happened next has been the subject of rumor and misinformation for 60 years.

"There will continue to be fallacies and conspiracy theories associated with my father and the U-2 Incident," said Gary Powers Jr. in a virtual presentation to the Alexandria Rotary Club on April 28.

"Fortunately, because of Freedom of Information Act requests and the declassification of documents, the misinformation surrounding my father's involvement has been put to rest. The official record of my father is that of a hero to our country, which my family knew all along."

Powers Sr. had been quietly soaring through the atmosphere at the edge of space on a CIA reconnaissance mission when he was shot down over Sverdlovsk, now present-day Yekaterinburg, Russia. His capture, imprisonment and eventual release became the center of an international diplomatic crisis, most recently depicted in the Steven Spielberg movie "Bridge of Spies."

"Many saw my father as a traitor," said Powers Jr., who served as a technical advisor on the film. "But the film helped set the record straight – that my father acted honorably. He was at his assigned altitude of 70,500 feet when he was shot down and upon capture,



Gary Powers Jr. recently released the book "Spy Pilot" to clear up lingering misconceptions regarding the downing of his father's U-2 spy plane by the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960.

followed orders. He did not divulge classified information to the Soviets and refused to denounce the United States of America."

Powers Jr., founder of the Cold War Museum in Vint Hill, Va., is the author of several books on his father, including the recently released "Spy Pilot." The forward of the book is provided by Sergei Khrushchev, son of former Soviet Union President Nikita Khrushchev, who charged Powers Sr. with espionage. Through many years of research, the two sons became, and to this day, remain friends.

Said Sergei Khrushchev: "I have watched Francis Gary Powers Jr. work tirelessly to honor and preserve the memory of his father,

an ordinary American who was caught up in extraordinary circumstances. I, too, have made great efforts to honor and preserve the legacy of my father."

Following the release of Powers Sr. from captivity, he returned to the United States and lived for a time in Alexandria during his CIA debriefing sessions. A Senate inquiry exonerated him of divulging any significant information to the Soviets. Still, it was an uphill battle for Powers Jr. to secure the military recognition he felt his father deserved.

"Because this was a CIA mission, the Air Force initially denied my father any military honors," said Powers Jr., who spent years writing letters and advocating on behalf of the Powers family. "But newly unclassified documentation showed that this was a joint USAF/CIA operation so in 2000, on the 40th anniversary of the U-2 incident, he was posthumously awarded the Prisoner of War Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross and National Defense Service Medal."

In 2012, Powers Sr. was posthumously awarded the United States Air Force Silver Star for "gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States."

"It's been a long journey," said Powers Jr., who was 12 years old when his father died in a helicopter crash in California in 1977. "It really wasn't until after he died that I realized the significance of what he went through. Up until that time I thought all kids had fathers who were shot down and exchanged for a Soviet spy. I didn't appreciate then what I do now – that my father was truly an American hero."

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LETTER

How The Closing Made Me Realize

FROM PAGE 9

fully stocked with all of the essentials recommended by the self-proclaimed experts on social media. Now I wished that I had listened more closely to my co-worker who told me that I needed to prepare for the COVID-19 storm.

Instead, I was left with countless messages that told me to weather the storm and to buy toilet paper. Why toilet paper? I digress.

I hastily walked into Whole Foods, to the coffee aisle, and my heart immediately sank. There was no Compass Coffee. The shelves were nearly empty, and the only brand left was one that I'd never dared to try. Here I am, in the midst of an apocalypse, without my favorite coffee to

soothe and envelop me like a comfort blanket. I stared at the empty shelves in disbelief as my phone buzzed, signaling that a new article had posted to my news app. Yes, I even downloaded a news app, a true sign that I was in a crisis. The article was about a holocaust survivor who had just died from COVID-19. Another headline stated that a World War II vet had passed away from the virus. A third story centered on the recent death of a 14th-century Black Plague survivor who...wait, what? That last story was satirical, but it should be obvious where I'm going with this. People

were dying from the virus, and I was whining about not having coffee. I was being ridiculous. I needed to find a way to help those who were truly suffering from COVID-19.

I grabbed two bags of an off-brand coffee, along with a few other essentials, and drove straight home. I unfollowed the self-proclaimed commentators on social media and opted for advice from medical experts. I reached out to family members, called my elderly neighbor across the hall, and texted friends to make sure they had what they needed. I donated to local COVID-19 funds, shared articles about helping students who depended on school meals, and prayed. Prayer is what I needed, what we all need.

During this time of crisis, I was reminded that my place of safety was rooted in prayer and faith, not in fear or coffee. I needed to pray for the strength, wisdom, and protection to make it through this storm. Like that Instagram post from Compass Coffee stated, I needed to stand on the faith and truth of knowing that this too shall pass.

LeRonda Brooks
Alexandria

LeRonda Brooks is an economist and a long-time Alexandria resident.

Mount Vernon Farmers Market

FROM PAGE 1

Executive Order Fifty-Five, which directs Virginians to stay home unless they must leave for essential services, including buying food, remains in effect until June 10.

Market Masters

According to the Fairfax County Park Authority, there are usually two market managers overseeing each market, and the size of the market, depends on the number of vendors at the site.

"As we open the markets this year, because of the extra safety precautions related to the pandemic, we're seeking to place between four and six volunteer market masters and park staff members at each market," Pederson said.

There will be a combination of old and new vendors at the markets, and as with the market standards that have been in place through the years, each vendor has to go through the application and acceptance process.

Three to Open in May

Reston:

Saturdays, beginning May 9: Reston Farmers Market at Reston Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, 8 a.m. to noon.

Mount Vernon:

Wednesdays, beginning May 13: Mount Vernon/McCutcheon Farmers Market, Mount Vernon Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, 8 a.m. to noon.

Burke:

Saturdays, beginning May 16: Burke Farmers Market at Burke VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, 8 a.m. to noon.

The Fairfax County Park Authority markets are strictly producer-only, which means that all of the farmers and producers sell only what they grow on their farms or make from scratch.

To stick with the "locally-grown" mantra, the vendors must be located within 125 miles of Fairfax County. "We also encourage value added vendors to use local ingredients," Pederson said.

After evaluating these three market openings, the Park Authority will assess the situation to determine if any changes are needed. The agency is hoping for successful 2020 market debuts that will pave the way for the opening of all FCPA farmers markets, their information said.

Up to date information about COVID-19 can be found at virginia.gov/coronavirus.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

Topics discussed during these classes include healthy snacking habits, must-have pantry staples and healthy meal ideas for at-home cooking.

Eating for Heart Health – Attendees can learn about foods that promote heart health, manage cholesterol and hypertension, and how to improve blood pressure, pulse rate and other heart vitals in this weekly online web series.

6 Steps to a Healthier You –

Whether it's a concern about weight, chronic disease management or just optimizing health, participants will learn how to identify relatively simple and gradual lifestyle changes to help them live healthier lives.

Eating for Prediabetes and Diabetes – For those with prediabetes and diabetes, learn practical and delicious ways to keep blood sugar rates in check.

Attendees will also be able to learn some simple lifestyle changes to prevent the progression of prediabetes and diabetes.

Giant is also offering free personalized online consultations with their team of registered and licensed dietitians for customers who have further questions about their health and wellness. Consultations are by appointment only. To schedule a consultation, sign up for a class or participate in the weekday "Nutrition at Noon" series, go to giantfood.com/nutrition or email nutrition@giantfood.com.

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Hair Today, Not Gone Tomorrow

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Sheltering in place while isolating at home, like so many others are, in a state, Maryland, where non-essential businesses remain closed, life has mostly come to a screeching halt. And unlike Georgia and nearly 30 other common-sense offenders, salons - among many other trying-to-get-going concerns, are not open. Moreover, given the social-distancing guidelines and the stay-at-home mandate, it's unlikely I'll be receiving any service providers in my home either. And considering that I'm not running a bowling alley in my basement, the chance that my hair stylist is going to unexpectedly knock on my front door is fairly slim. As a non result, what's continuing to happen then is my hair is continuing to grow. Despite my year of immunotherapy, I have a full head of hair; now more than ever, in fact. So what did I dream about last night? Getting a haircut.

As it was dreamt, I was in Virginia (I live in Maryland) doing non-barbershop/salon things when quite unintentionally I walked by a salon that was open and operating. Since I wasn't on a schedule and I needed a haircut, to quote Bob Seeger: "I tucked my hair up under my hat," (sort of) and went inside to make inquiries. I remember asking, as I have previously in real life, if anyone there knew how to cut curly hair. One stylist/operator, who was not familiar to me, offered his services for the task at hand. That's all I remember except feeling pleased with myself when I woke up this morning as if I had accomplished something overnight. Which of course, I hadn't. Oh, how the mighty have fallen.

Of all the things I've dreamt about: interacting with my deceased parents, flying through the air with the greatest of ease, sex, the past, the future, adventures, etc., I dreamt about getting a haircut. How pathetic is that?

One week into my low iodine diet (as preparation for my thyroid cancer treatment), when I haven't had any salt, any dairy, any bread, any most especially, no chocolate or sweets of any kind (jelly beans are on back order), I would have thought that if there was a dream to be dreamt, it would involve food at the very general and chocolate at the very specific, like being in an endless dessert buffet line (social distancing and limiting crown size notwithstanding). But no. What my subconscious focused on was yours truly getting a stupid haircut. There was no special occasion or event for which I was needing my hair cut, it was simply, maintenance. All the more disappointing given the endless possibilities to dream that exist in our heads. What a waste of a deep sleep.

What makes the dream even worse is that for the past month or so I've had very poor sleep, lying in bed for hours with very little to show for it. Specifically, rest, relaxation and dreams; not dreaming at all in fact. Then, in the midst of this poor sleep pattern I awake this morning with the recollection of having dreamt (meaning a deep sleep) about getting my curly locks cut. Mundane minutiae if there ever was such a combination.

Granted, getting my hair cut was a very important part of my life, particularly so for my mother. For my mother, her sons getting a proper haircut was paramount and once she found a barber, Rocky Spirazzo, who cut hair with a scissors instead of a clipper, she was smitten, so to speak. As such, we followed Rocky to whatever barbershop/salon he worked at, including some of the finest hotel barber shops in Boston. We even occasionally went to his home in Roslindale, where he had a barber chair set up in his unfinished basement. I can still that lone bulb above my head attached to a chord hanging from the ceiling.

And so it was, throughout my life when my mother had control of my hair-cutting, that hair cuts were not nearly so arbitrary as they might have otherwise been. Without really admitting it, I guess I would say that getting my hair cut is of some importance, dating back to my "yout," to quote Joe Pesci from "My Cousin Vinny." Like it or not, my mother's influence persists. Now in the midst of a pandemic, with so many other potential problems impacting our life, apparently my subconscious still has its priorities.

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

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OPINION

Now Is Not the Time

FROM PAGE 6

Are survivors immune and, if so, for how long? More than 70 vaccines are in development, but a widely deployable vaccine won't be available for many more months. Given the severity of this infection and the large numbers at risk, we cannot rely on natural 'herd immunity'.

We know some important ways to respond to this pandemic. Wash our hands thoroughly, stay at home inasmuch as possible, socially distance properly and maintain personal healthcare.

However, there is more that we need to think about today. One of the negative repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic is an alarming drop in routine vaccination rates.

REMEMBER THE LESSONS from the measles outbreaks. We in Northern Virginia remain at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases.

Pediatricians report a 30-76 percent decrease in administering routine childhood immunizations, including measles and influenza, because well-child visits are being conducted virtually. This season, 390,000 cases of influenza have been diagnosed, with 24,000 deaths. To avoid compounding the coronavirus pandemic, we must 'double down' on routine immunizations - a cornerstone of public health.

This General Assembly session we passed our House Bill 1090, mandating that immunizations required for school attendance comply with authoritative national standards. We are still working on legislation to tighten standards for granting medical and non-medical exemptions, decreasing financial barriers providers face administering immunizations, and facilitate access for patients.

In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to get your children vaccinated. The Governor, himself a pediatric neurologist, urged parents to make appointments for their children to be vaccinated. Pediatricians throughout the region have made accommodations to safeguard parents and children at such visits.

Last week was National Infant Immunization Week; the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics reminds us that childhood immunizations are essential - even life-saving - with additional value during the pandemic.

We understand that many parents hesitate to bring their child to a doctor's office right now, but we assure you that it is both safe and necessary.

We want to prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases like Pertussis (also known as whooping cough), Meningitis, Rotavirus, the measles, and others. Please reach out to your pediatrician to find out what accommodations they are making, whether your children are up to date on their vaccinations, and to schedule their inoculations. Remember, vaccines are critical to protecting the health and welfare of our children and our community.

We don't want to precipitate a second public health crisis.

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