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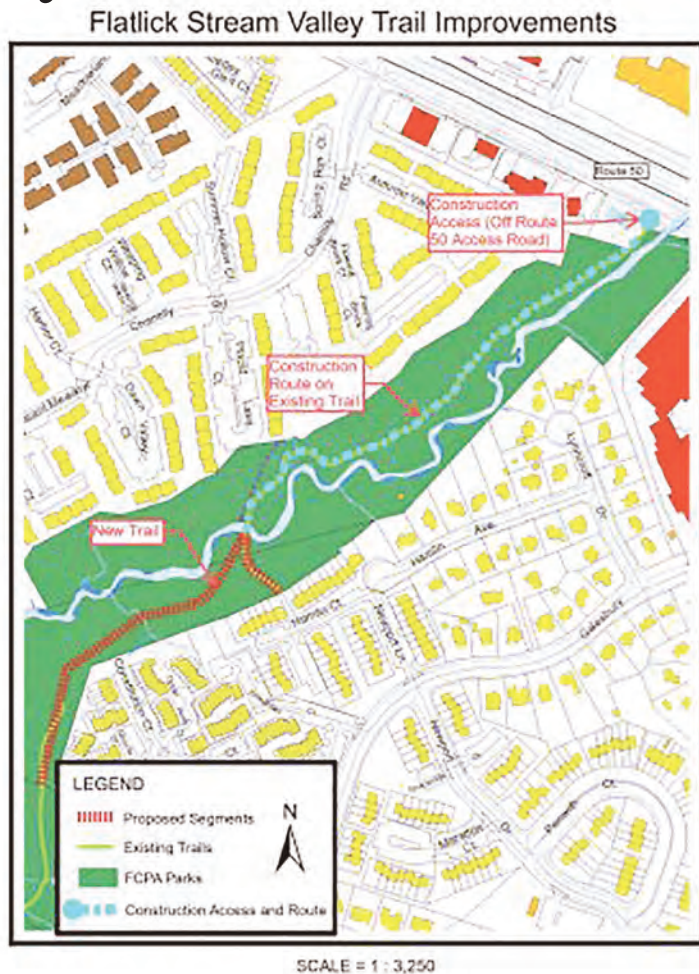


## New Trail in Flatlick Stream Valley Park

The Fairfax County Park Authority will soon begin work on a new trail in Flatlick Stream Valley Park in Chantilly. This project will entail paving some 1,250 feet of new asphalt trail, along with a concrete fair-weather crossing.

The construction entrance will be located on a public-service road adjacent to Route 50. Work will be done between Hamlin Court and Bordolino Drive adjacent to the Brookleigh neighborhood. Area residents should expect occasional traffic at the construction access-point as paving materials and equipment are brought to the site. As a safety precaution, portions of the existing trail will be closed to users during the project.

The contractor, Tibbs Paving Inc., plans to begin work in mid-May. Active construction is expected to be completed in the fall. The \$494,000 project is funded by the 2016 Park Bond. For more information, contact Project Manager Ed Deleon at [eduardo.deleon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:eduardo.deleon@fairfaxcounty.gov).



Map of the trail-project area in Chantilly.

## A Click Worth \$40K

High School senior awarded 'Opportunity Scholarship' in monthly drawing.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

One little click set Imani Irons of Herndon and senior at South Lakes High School in Reston on a path that eventually led her to be among 25 students who, after completing six key college planning steps, each at valued dollars, the College Board awarded \$40,000 in its chance Opportunity Scholarships Program. Irons said she discovered the College Board Opportunity Scholarships after she registered for the SAT, a standardized test widely used for college admissions in the United States debuted by the College Board. It was open to students from all 50 states, Washington D.C. and U.S. territories signed up for the program.

Information on the College Board's SAT website led Irons to compete in the Board's six college pathway steps and chances to earn scholarships. "Working towards the scholarship helped to keep me on track...Some steps for the scholarship were things that I was already planning to do, such as filling out the FAFSA and applying to college... There were other steps that I may not have com-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

South Lakes High School senior Imani Iron of Herndon wins College Board Opportunity Scholarship.

pleted if it hadn't been for the scholarship, such as practicing at least 6 hours for the SAT and then improving my last score by 100 points," Irons said.

SEE SCHOLARSHIP, PAGE 6

## Chantilly Man Is Charged with Murder

Fairfax County police have charged Linh Ngoc Ngo, 56, of Chantilly, with murder. They say he allegedly shot and killed his roommate, Shawn Johnson, 41.

Police responded last Monday, May 4, shortly after 7 p.m., to a condo complex

in the 4100 block of Meadowland Court for a report of a man shot inside a Chantilly home. Upon arrival, officers found Johnson suffering from an apparent gunshot wound to the upper body. He was taken to the hospital, where he died from his injuries.

Ngo was taken into custody at the scene and charged with second-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. He's being held without bond



Ngo

in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. Meanwhile, detectives are continuing to investigate the events leading up to the shooting. An autopsy will determine the cause and manner of death.

Anyone with information about this event or who may

have witnessed it are asked to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting FCCS plus the tip to 847411, or going to <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>. Tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000 for information leading to an arrest.

— BONNIE HOBBS

## Centreville Man Charged in Female Jogger's Assault

Fairfax County police have arrested a 21-year-old Centreville man in connection with an assault last week on a woman jogging in Franconia. He is Vincent Wesley, and police charged him with malicious wounding and strangulation.



Wesley

Officers responded, last Wednesday, May 13, to the 6600 block of Audrey Kay Court, around 10:30 a.m., after a report of a woman being assaulted. She told police she was jogging on a trail near the end of Thomas Grant Drive when an unknown man began attacking her. A witness came to her aid and the man ran away. The woman was taken to the hospital and treated for serious injuries that were not life-threatening.

After searching the area, officers identified and arrested Wesley

nearby. He was then taken to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and held without bond. Meanwhile, police continue to seek information about this incident. Anyone with information about it – or having home-surveillance video of Wesley in

the area – is asked to call Det. P Edwards of the Franconia District Station, Criminal Investigations Section, at 703-277-2466.

Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting FCCS plus the tip to 847411, or going to <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>. Tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000 for information leading to an arrest.

— BONNIE HOBBS

### AREA ROUNDUPS

## Help WFCM Feed Local Families

Area residents can help Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) feed local families in need, this month, by shopping at the Giant Food store on Stone Road in Centreville, buying some of the items listed below and placing them in the Lend a Box bin at the store. Local business, Lend a Box, will then bring these things to WFCM. Most needed are: Canned tuna, Hamburger Helper, boxed macaroni and cheese, canned tomatoes (crushed) and tomato paste, pancake mix, spaghetti sauce and toilet paper.



# ‘Stuffing the Bus’ in Reston

Stepping up ‘Stuff the Bus’ COVID-19 style.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

For nine years, the Stuff the Bus food drive served to fill the quickly emptying food pantry shelves of local Fairfax County nonprofits. On Saturday, May 16, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Fairfax County Government and the community came together once again to support the biannual campaign. Unlike past years, Fastran buses did not park in grocery store lots. Instead, they pulled into less-frequented lots, those for the offices of County Supervisors, such as the one at North Government Center in Reston, the Fairfax County Government Center in Fairfax, and even the County’s Great Falls Library lot on Georgetown Pike. Organizers changed the locations to allow donor compliance with social distancing recommendations during the COVID-19 emergency.

At the office lot for Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) in Reston, the clock clicked toward 10:30 with no sign of the bus but not one car packed with groceries left. Jay and Carol Hadlock of Herndon were among the many donors who patiently waited. “Where’s the bus,” Carol asked. “I filled up our trunk,” she said. The Hadlocks understood that this year, 2020, was forever marked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food for cash-strapped families was critical. Owners of small and large businesses across the County shuttered their doors and let staff go. Unemployment rates escalated. Demand for the County’s Microloan program for small businesses maxed out and closed within three days. Even before COVID-19, Fairfax County, one of the richest in the nation, had announced 8 percent of its public school students reported going hungry, and 30 percent of its students received free or reduced price lunches. These students no longer attended a physical school during the shutdown. They remained housebound because of the emergency stay at home orders.

Tony and Karen Smith of Reston walked over with bags of groceries. New to Reston, they learned of the county need in their condominium’s morning newsletter. “We live in the Carlton House, and they sent out the announcement this morning,” said Tony holding up multiple bags of groceries willing to share.

At a second Stuff the Bus location in Great Falls, Fastran driver Robert Barbieri said management had asked who would like to drive the bus for the effort and he had put his hand up. Off to slow start with nothing but an empty bus to show at 11 a.m., a car pulled up, loaded with bags of groceries. “It’s a group effort of a couple of Great Falls families,” said the woman who asked not to be identified. Barbieri helped load the bags into his bus. Four more hours to go and then he or another driver would be back Tuesday, May 19, for the second drive. Donations would benefit ten nonprofits serving those in need in Fairfax County.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**Masked and armed with food, Carol Hadlock prepares to push another bag of groceries onto the Fastran bus parked in the North County Government Center for Stuff the Bus, May 2020.**



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**Robert Barbieri, a Fastran driver, takes another bag of groceries from a Great Falls resident who delivered multiple bags from various families to Stuff the Bus parked in the Great Falls Library lot on Saturday, May 16.**



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**Israel Diaz, Jr. and Israel Diaz, Sr. install the graphic banner announcing ‘Building Excitement’ for Comstock’s Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project.**

## Remediate, Demo then Build

Comstock edges toward redevelopment of Historic Herndon.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Comstock Herndon Venture LC has yet to ink its purchase of 4.675 acres of town-owned land in the Herndon Historic District after it and the Town signed a Comprehensive Agreement approximately two and a half years ago for the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project, a partnership between the Town and Comstock Herndon Venture LC.

In the last few weeks, forward motion has been seen at the site. Workers attached a 43 x 8-foot, full-color graphic banner with the name Comstock to new fencing surrounding a portion of the planned redevelopment site where once an auto dealership had been located. According to the Town website, “Contractors will be on-site at the former Subaru dealership, 770 Elden Street. They will be removing asbestos, environmental remediation that is part of the Virginia Brownfield Remediation grant awarded by the Commonwealth to the Town of Herndon in 2017; and then demolishing the building on the site, in preparation for redevelopment by Comstock Herndon Venture LC.”

Comstock, it appears, is moving forward in other actions as well. On a new website, [www.historicherndondistrict.com](http://www.historicherndondistrict.com), and Twitter page, #HistoricHerndon, the company named Next Realty Mid-Atlantic as its source for retail and residential leasing information. It tagged its project redefining Historic Herndon with three words “ride|live|-

discover.” First, it keyed in on the location’s signature public transportation options and pedestrian/bike-friendly access. The Historic Downtown District is in close access to the nearly completed Herndon Metrorail Station, part of Phase 2 of the Silver Line extension, Park and Ride Facilities, and Fairfax Connector bus routes as well as the bikeable W & OD Trail. This 45-mile paved trail runs through the urban heartland and into the Virginia countryside. Next, to “live” in the Historic Downtown District, Comstock called attention to its BLVD | Historic Herndon apartments that will “marry classical elegance with a bohemian twist.” Finally, “discover” focused on Comstock’s revitalization of the historic downtown, bringing “heart, life and opportunity back to the neighborhood.”

“We are excited about this development and what it means for Herndon’s downtown. We appreciate the degree to which Comstock has incorporated Herndon’s heritage in their development plans and look forward to a revitalized downtown that offers 21st century residential and commercial amenities in a way that is uniquely ‘Herndon,’” said Town Manager Bill Ashton. The project is planned to include 273 luxury residences, 18,000+ square feet of boutique, restaurant and cafe space, an 8-level parking garage, three public plazas with outdoor seating and dedicated art.

No date is set to close on the deal. Comstock did not reply to requests for comment.



# OPINION

## Beyond Equality to Equitable Funding of Our Schools

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



Passing by the elementary and high schools I attended as a youngster was a small yellow bus carrying about six children to a school 12 miles away in Luray. They were black children who by the constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia were prohibited from attending school with white children. I was reminded of that experience this past Sunday which was the 66th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, decision by the United States Supreme Court. In this landmark 1954 Supreme Court case, the justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. They ruled that separate facilities were inherently unequal in public education. Among the cases that were heard along with the Brown case was a case coming out of Prince Edward County, Virginia, challenging racial segregation of public schools that I had seen as a young person.

It took more than a decade for black and white children to start attending school together

### COMMENTARY

in Virginia and throughout the Nation as state and local government actions and numerous lawsuits sought to reverse the Brown decision. Massive Resistance was the term applied in Virginia to the efforts over a decade of state legislation and court challenges to keep schools segregated.

The Brown decision 66 years ago was as critically important a step in moving towards equality in access to public educational opportunities as it was in helping to ignite the civil rights movement in the United States. Clearly it was a beginning and not a conclusion to the challenges of combating racial inequities in public schools. The concept it helped to foster was that there should be equality in funding among public schools regardless of the zip code in which they might be located.

Performance outcomes by minority students over decades demonstrate that equality of funding is not sufficient. Equal funding suggests that all students start at the same point and given the same support will progress equally. There

are many social and economic factors as well as individual differences that affect student performance.

A depiction that has become popular recently demonstrates the differences among equality, equity and justice. Three children of different heights are shown looking over a fence at a sports game. With equality, the three children are given the same height box on which to stand; two children can see the game, but the shortest child cannot see over the fence. With equity the children are given the height box each needs to see over the fence. With justice, the fence barrier to seeing the game is removed.

More than six decades after the Brown decision there are real efforts to move forward on equity funding of our schools. The most recent General Assembly session did more in introducing equity concepts into school funding than ever before. School funding is to be divided along principles that more schools would get the funding they need and not the same as every other school. We cannot let the current economic depression take away that important step in supporting our schools. We have come too far in seeking to achieve equity to let it slip away. With equity in place we can move on to justice!

## Silver Linings among the Thunderclouds of Pandemic

BY JOHN LOVAAS  
RESTON IMPACT  
PRODUCER/HOST



It is not easy to be positive and upbeat when facing the scourge of a highly contagious and deadly, global pandemic with its epicenter here in the U.S.A. In fact, it's hard to avoid falling into a state of depression when you realize that, but for a failure of national leadership, tens of thousands of deaths were avoidable as were tens of millions of jobs lost, and tens of thousands of family farms and small businesses failing. What to do? Take action, get involved. There are lots of things that can be and are being done. One sees or hears examples daily on TV and in various media—around the country and right here in Northern Virginia. Here are a few examples.

Gary Maupin of the Board of Reston Citizens Association (RCA) recently searched Reston to identify every single eatery currently open on a Grab n'Go basis. The list circulated last week

### INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

by RCA President Dennis Hays shows 71 such restaurants, the clear majority of which are Mom and Pops. Among them is enough variety to suit everyone's tastes. You can get the list at <https://rcareston.org/reston-restaurants-may2020/>. Start from the top, or bottom!

These restaurants are the small ones most in need of your business to survive the ravages of Covid 19. They likely missed out on the billions of dollars in the CARES law intended for small businesses. That \$300 billion ended up largely going to the favorites of the few banks selected to pass out the federal cash on very favorable terms. Want to help, buy your next lunch and dinner from the list of 71!

Here's a dynamic duo taking action to reach out and help to feed those most in need in our

region. Imagine Tim Chapman, a developer of low-income housing and a recent reform candidate for public office, teaming up with Cornerstones' CEO Kerrie Wilson! On May 15, the Tim and Julianna Chapman family and CORNERSTONES kicked off the Families Feeding Families fundraiser in response to the pandemic and its impact on already food-insecure families. Tim says, "I can only imagine the crippling fear and stress of a parent struggling to provide for their hungry children. My family is committed to helping other families...whose lives have been turned upside down due to this unprecedented public health crisis." For lower-income neighbors, the pandemic exacerbates their daily stress of stretching meager resources trying to somehow feed and support families - particularly for families with children at home. For many, they are unable to cover increased food budgets because their children aren't benefiting from breakfast and lunch meals they would normally enjoy at school.

The Families Feeding Families campaign is a month-long fund-

raiser, running through Father's Day, created by the Chapman family to help Cornerstones reach more neighbors in need. Gift cards and financial donations to the campaign will assure that Kerrie and team provide front-line safety net services so families and needy seniors can add to meager household budgets at this critical time. The Chapman family will match donations up to \$15,000 total so donors can double their impact. To make a donation, go to Families Feeding Families [justgiving.com](http://justgiving.com)

As we go to press, I was just told that the \$15,000 target has already been reached and that a second \$15,000, for a total of \$30,000, has been added by the Chapman family to double even more donations. That's real local impact!

A third local activity that provides a market for small farmers and related businesses, and fresh local food for the Reston community is the Reston Farmers Market. So what? That's old news, always happens this time of year, right?

SEE LOVAAS, PAGE 7

## CONNECTION

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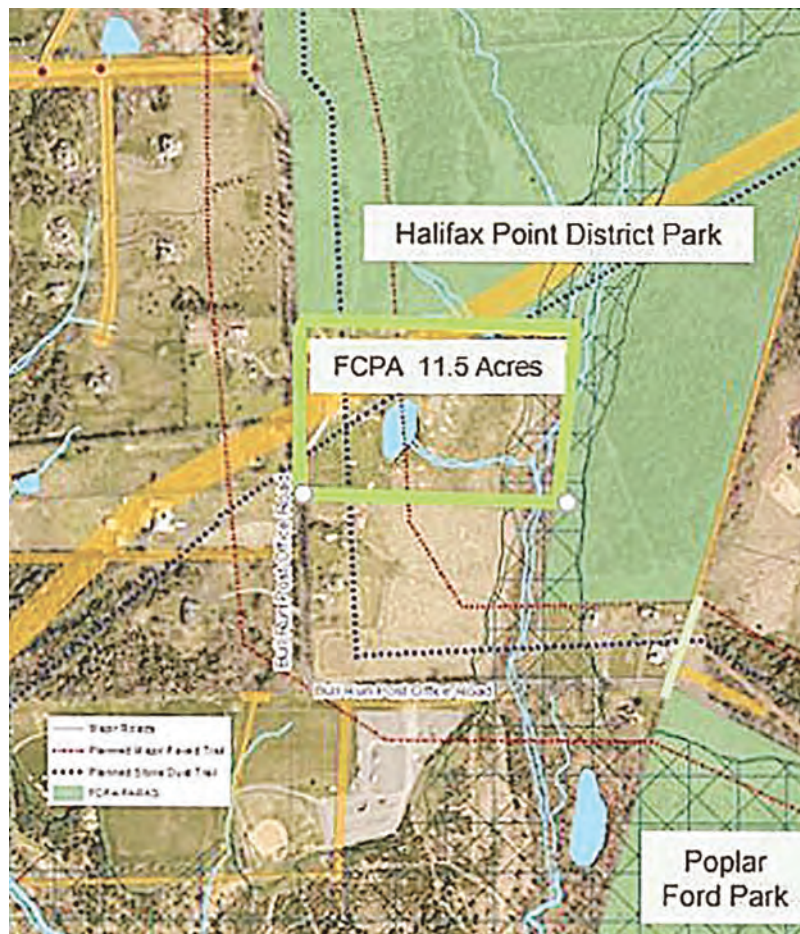




## NEWS

### New Park Land Comes to Sully District

The Fairfax County Park Authority just added more than 11 acres of land to its holdings. The new, 11.4895-acre parcel is adjacent to Halifax Point District Park at 6603 Bull Run Post Office Road in Centreville. The additional acreage in the Sully District will offer open-space connectivity in the district, as well as the potential for significant, cultural resources. This \$783,000 acquisition was funded with the 2016 Park Bond and bond premium funds.



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

## GOVERNOR DELAYS PHASE ONE FOR NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Gov. Ralph Northam issued Executive Order Sixty-Two, allowing specific localities in Northern Virginia to delay entering Phase One of the "Forward Virginia" plan to ease restrictions on certain business operations that were put in place in response to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. Northam has said that Virginia as a whole may enter Phase One on Friday, May 15, as

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## Scholarship

FROM PAGE 2

According to the College Board website, the 25 scholarship recipients completed the planning steps over the course of the program, each providing that "chance opportunity" to earn a cash scholarship. Irons did so knowing the odds to be awarded the scholarship, but also remembering completing the steps kept her pending college applications on track.

Irons built her college list - \$500 scholarship, practiced for the SAT-\$1000 scholarship, practiced improving her score-\$2000 scholarship, strengthened her college list-\$500 scholarship, completed the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)-\$1000 scholarship and applied to colleges of her choice- \$1000 scholarship. According to the College Board website, the more effort a student put in, the more opportunities the students had to earn a scholarship.

According to instructions on the website, if a student completed all six steps, they were eligible to earn \$40,000. Scholarships would be awarded through monthly drawings to students who completed each action.

Irons said, "To actually win the scholarship has just been amazing. It is a huge relief and has taken away a lot of stress to have my first year of college taken care of, and no longer worrying about how I will pay for it or going into debt with student loans. "Iron's Opportunity Scholarship could be used for any Title IV accredited institution of higher education, including accredited two-year and four-year and applied to tuition, fees, books, and other relevant educational expenses.

Irons award will be disbursed directly to the institution she ends up attending, tentatively Virginia Commonwealth University she said, so there will be no tax implications for her. "I am extremely grateful to the College Board for this scholarship and the opportunity. Scholarships are such a great program for all college-bound students," she said.

### Announcements

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

**-Werner Heisenberg**



## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

outlined in Executive Order Sixty-One, based on achieving certain health metrics. Executive Order Sixty-Two allows the Northern Virginia localities to delay implementation of Phase One until midnight on Thursday, May 28, to allow those localities more time to meet the health metrics.

### FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED ON TRANSIT

Fairfax Connector buses, as well as Metro buses, trains and MetroAccess vehicles, are joining VRE and Amtrak in requiring face coverings and masks to be worn by riders, beginning May 18. This also includes stations and facilities. This enhanced safety measure will help protect other riders as well as the bus/train operators and follows guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### SULLY DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETS MAY 27

The next Sully District Council Membership Meeting is scheduled for May 27, 2020. Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings start at 7 p.m. and are held at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly, VA., 20151. The following State Senators and Delegates who represent Sully District have been invited:

State Senators: Janet Howell (32nd District) - Confirmed; Jennifer Boysko (33rd District) - Confirmed; Chap Petersen (34th District); David Marsden (37th District) - Confirmed; George Barker (39th District).

House of Delegates: Kenneth Plum (36th District); Dave Bulova (37th District) - Confirmed; Dan Helmer (40th District) - Confirmed; Karie Delaney (67th District) - Confirmed; Ibraheem Samarah (86th District).

### RCC SEEKS ENTERTAINERS

Reston Community Center is seeking performing arts groups of all ages and cultures for the 21st Annual Reston Multicultural Festival. The festival will be held Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020 at Reston's historic Lake Anne Plaza. Applications will be accepted through June 19, 2020. Interested groups or individuals should fill out an Entertainment Application Form, available on RCC's website [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com). The Reston Multicultural Festival is a family-oriented event and material performed shall be suitable for all ages and free of any content that would be inappropriate for a diverse, multicultural and multi-generational audience. Special consideration will be given to Reston-based organizations. Artists selected for the Multicultural Festival will be notified by July 17, 2020.

## Lovaas

FROM PAGE 5

Not exactly! As you may be aware, all of Northern Virginia and beyond is locked up under Governor Ralph Northam's stay-at-home order. However, the good Governor made an exception for farmers markets. Thus, the Market opened May 9 in a Klinton-like setting, with vendors' tents about a day's walk from one another, and the rugged terrain rainbow colored by tape arrows and "Stand here" so that inhabitants do not get too close to one another. Vendors stood behind tables and in one case in a plastic bubble so as not to get too cozy with the earthlings with their no-touch credit cards, not cash. In spite of the wacky Covid-19 atmosphere, an estimated 2,000 shoppers turned out last Saturday, all wearing masks, not to disguise, but to impede the evil Covid-19. Believe it or not-they felt safe. It was an uplifting experience as all happily accepted that WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. Once again, I am so proud of this special place we call Reston

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## Time Will Tell



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly three weeks into my low iodine diet, in preparation for my hospital overnight on May 28 when I will get my radioactive iodine therapy to be followed immediately by a medical quarantine at home for a week, I wouldn't say I'm thriving. More like persevering. I can't really satiate eating "rabbit" food and what culinary pleasures I can enjoy, I can only have them in small quantities and infrequently at that. I won't give you a list, but just consider what any 10-year-old likes to eat.

As you might imagine, I've lost some weight. Granted, it was weight I could afford to lose. And though I'm not exactly a shell of my former self, I am hardly the man I once was. Nevertheless, as my friend Frank would say: "I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in." And the shape I'm in, and the diet I'm following and all the medical appointments I'm going on is to find and kill my remaining papillary thyroid cancer, the 15% or so the otolaryngologist was unable to get to on my Jan. 29th thyroidectomy.

The purpose of this treatment/activity is to locate and simultaneously eradicate the papillary thyroid cancer tumors still in my body. And since papillary thyroid cancer is called the "friendly cancer" because it is generally curable, I'm not worried about the outcome of all that I've described. However, there is an associated element to this treatment which is more important and potentially life changing.

It's possible, according to my oncologist, that my lung cancer tumors may in medical fact, be thyroid cancer tumors. Not unusual since cancer often moves throughout the body. So on paper, one can have thyroid cancer in the lungs. The thyroid cancer treatment I'm presently undergoing will be the final determination on whether the tumors in my lungs are actually thyroid cancer which migrated or still lung cancer. If the tumors are identified as lung cancer then all goes along much as it has for the past 11 years. However, if the tumors are identified as thyroid cancer, and they are all eliminated by this procedure, then a new day has dawned and life will indeed go on, much as it hasn't since late February, 2009 when I was first diagnosed.

And though I've just written it, it's really too much to consider. After living on an emotional precipice since receiving a "13 month to two year" prognosis 11-plus years ago, the thought of living a non-cancer-centric life/return to normal life expectancy is disjuncting almost. To say it would change everything minimizes the word 'change.' 'Change would barely describe the effect. I'd be reborn almost with an entirely new lease on life.

It's what all "terminal" patients dare not dream: the miracle cure, the medical mix-up, the you're-free-to-go sendoff.

It's early days though and premature until I'm told otherwise. And 'otherwise will be told sometime in early June when I will have had my post-thyroid-treatment CT scan and then the follow-up appointment with my endocrinologist who will explain the findings. Only after learning these details and then discussing them with my oncologist will I know what the future holds.

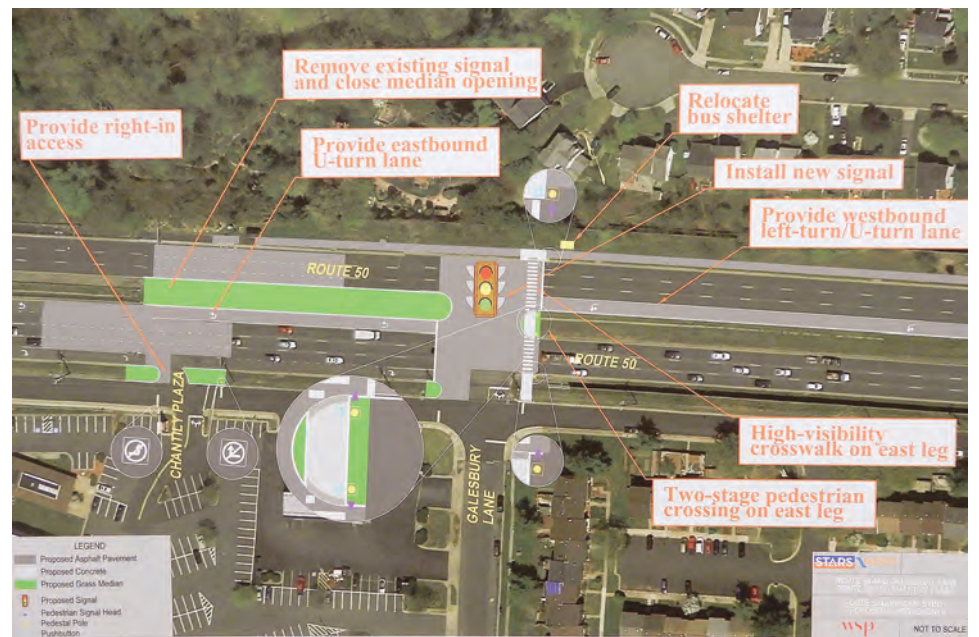
Right now, my future is a cut-up apple, a four-ounce burger for dinner with no bread or cheese, some kind of vegetable, unsalted kettle potato chips, (thank God for them) and no dessert. To say this list compares favorably to my pre-low-iodine diet is the understatement of the year. The overstatement of the year is come early June I'm likely to be cancer free.

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





Chantilly resident James Brooks (on right) asks lead project consultant Ravi Raut about bus shelters and a proposed new traffic signal at Route 50 and Galesbury Lane.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

<cl>VDOT's proposals for the Route 50/Galesbury Lane intersection seem to be the most controversial.

# ‘More Traffic Will Go Down Galesbury’

## VDOT's proposals for Route 50 intersections in Chantilly.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Under normal traffic conditions, the two-mile segment of Route 50 between Route 28 and Stringfellow Road in Chantilly is clogged during the morning and evening rush. It also averages 71,000 vehicles a day and has a high number of crashes.

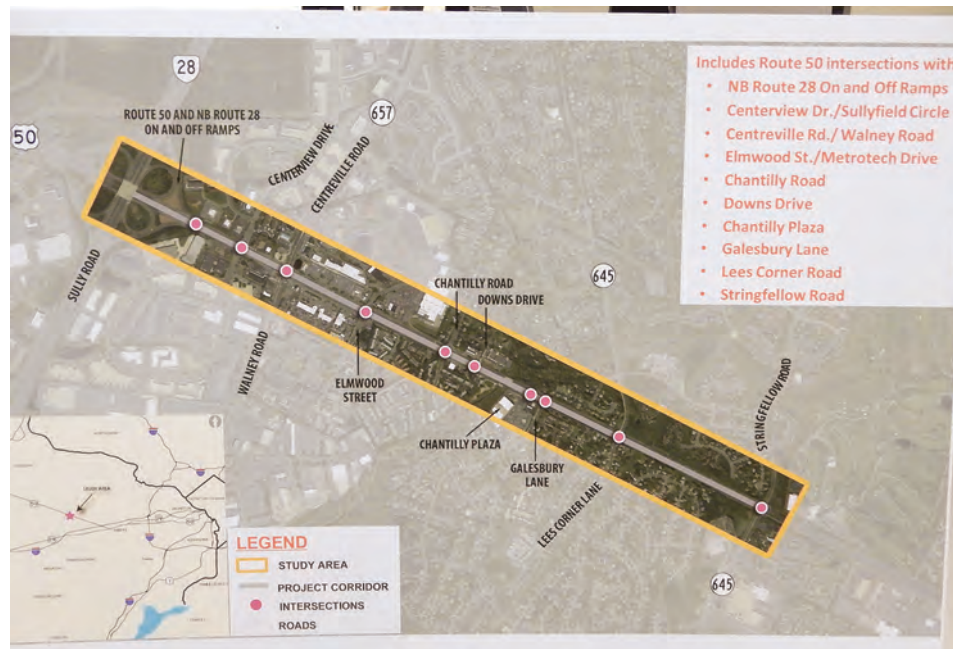
So VDOT's doing a STARS (Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions) study to assess how to make this stretch of road function better and safer. And before the pandemic started, it held a public-information meeting about it at Brookfield Elementary.

VDOT engineer Andy Beacher said STARS is used to develop low-cost solutions to traffic problems. Toward that end, he said, “We studied all the intersections on Route 50 between Stringfellow and Route 28 and are making recommendations. However, there’s no magic bullet for this corridor. It’s very congested because of all the commercial development and commuters.”

“This is a busy corridor, and we collected data on seven signalized intersections,” added lead project consultant Ravi Raut. “There are three bus lines traveling there; and between 2012 and 2017, there were 586 crashes. They were either sideswipe or rear-end crashes, and most happened at the intersections.”

He said they examined both short-term solutions that would help immediately, plus mid-term solutions that would provide relief into 2030. Potential short-term options include: Adding reflective, traffic-signal backplates making the signals easier to see; upgrading pedestrian ramps to ADA standards; and adding pedestrian signals in the median, making two-stage crossings for people walking across Route 50.

**ALSO BEING CONSIDERED** are: Adding a Galesbury Lane and Lees Corner Road sidewalk connection; moving the Chantilly



Map of all the Route 50 intersections involved in the VDOT study.

“The problems we’re having at Chantilly Plaza will be moved one block over to Galesbury – and there’s no way to fix it.”

— Lucian Acuff of Chantilly

Plaza traffic signal to Galesbury; installing eastbound and westbound, left-turn lanes at Route 50/Galesbury; replacing and adding pavement and crosswalk markings; providing additional signage; continuing to time the traffic signals; and converting bus stops to bus shelters.

But some residents said rerouting left turns to Galesbury would send more vehicles into the Brookfield neighborhood. One man said, “A traffic signal there will funnel people straight through the community.”

Agreeing, a woman said, “We’ve got 18-wheelers with pipes and fuel on Route 50, and this will only create more congestion. We need to direct this traffic in a dif-

ferent way.” However, Beacher replied that, with the addition of the new I-66 HOT lanes, some truck traffic now on Route 50 is expected to return to I-66.

Raut also noted that, overall, “There’ll be more travel time for people on eastbound Route 50 and a travel-time savings for westbound drivers.”

Potential mid-term improvement options include: Reconfiguring and modifying intersections, managing access to properties along the corridor and doing innovative intersection improvements. The study should be completed by this summer.

“The estimated cost range for these im-



Andy Beacher

provements is \$8 million to \$11 million,” said Beacher. “We currently have no funding, but we hope to get some through the Smart Scale program.”

Lucian Acuff, of Chantilly’s Waverly Crossing community, had concerns about moving the Chantilly Plaza traffic signal to Galesbury Lane. “The problems we’re having at Chantilly Plaza will be moved one block over to Galesbury – and there’s no way to fix it,” he said.

“Leaving Chantilly Plaza to go onto Route 50, people on the service road cut in front of you,” continued Acuff. “But you can’t do anything about it because of the ‘Do not block intersection’ sign. This issue will just go to Galesbury when the signal goes in, and then more traffic will go down Galesbury [which is in a residential area].”

**BROOKFIELD RESIDENT** Elnora Wright worried about drivers speeding on the service road there and potentially crashing into other vehicles. “Now, people can get onto the service road at Galesbury,” she told Beacher. “How will you prevent a number of accidents at the service road, where people just want to drive fast?” Beacher replied that VDOT would “take a fresh look at that.”