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# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station



American Legion Post 177 Commander Jeff White lays a wreath at Amos Chilcott's grave in the Fairfax City Cemetery on Memorial Day.

**SENIOR LIVING**

PAGE 9

Honoring  
'Those That  
Made Ultimate  
Sacrifice'

NEWS, PAGE 3

Park Authority Makes  
Partial Reopening Play

NEWS, PAGE 2

Distance Learning:  
Both Stress and Relief

NEWS, PAGE 6

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Disc golf team leader, Kemper Pogue (right) Woodbridge, shares work plan with volunteers (from left) Andrew Pardo, Chantilly; Nick Gonzalez, Springfield; Trey Tucker, Chantilly; Buddy Rogers, Lorton; and Kevin Carr, Burke, on basket set up plan.

# Park Authority Makes Partial Reopening Play

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**A**fter a surprise late Tuesday afternoon announcement from the Fairfax County Park Authority, maintenance operations crews were at work Wednesday morning, May 20, removing barriers from park parking lot entrances and returning them to storage sites. It was a welcome sight for citizens eager to return to area parks.

This phase of park reopening was primarily complete by Friday, May 22. Park Authority Executive Director, Kirk Kincannon, reached his decision to open in time for Memorial Day weekend in consultation with Chairman Jeff McKay, the Board of Supervisors, and after talking with officials in other park systems, said Judy Pedersen, of the Park Authority's Public Information Office.

District Supervisors Herry and Storck had urged park openings, as Herry described, "to reopen outdoor facilities so residents could exercise outside while maintaining appropriate social distance." Pedersen added that the Park Authority has heard from many individual constituents as well, who requested opening of various parts of the park system; each person wanting the opening of something important to him or her, from tennis to disc golf and more. Opposite this pressure to open quickly, was consideration of the area's overall phased re-opening, State and CDC health guidelines, and need to take into account the full park system's 427 parks and staff.

Disc golfers were among the groups waiting for word that courses could reopen. Volunteers from the NoVA Disc Golfers Association quickly organized a work team on Friday, May 22, to help. Volunteers assisted county employees in re-setting baskets on the Giles Run course to speed the course's return to play. More than a dozen volunteers answered the call, following the same mask wearing, social distancing protocols that will be needed on the course, along with play limited to foursomes. Giles Run is one of nearly a half dozen 18-hole disc golf courses in the area.

While citizens can be happy for an authorized return to the parks for more activities, groups must be



Chris Andersen, Woodbridge, assists Kemper Pogue with short basket, as Andrew Pardo, and Nick Gonzalez work on the long basket for hole 6.

held to ten or fewer people, and social distancing of at least six feet must be maintained. Park buildings, athletic fields, dog parks, play grounds, volleyball and basketball courts, water fountains and restrooms remain closed in this phase. Disc golf, and tennis courts are now open and will be ready for use as soon as baskets and nets are set up; tracks and picnic areas are open. Farmers' markets at Wakefield and Lorton open on May 27, and May 31, respectively, and join those already opened at Burke, Mt Vernon, and Reston.

Fairfax County began the phased reopening of select farmer's markets and golf courses on May 8 & 9. Both venue types opened with changes in operating procedures to create social distancing for protection of customers.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

The boat docks at Burke Lake were hubs of activity on Memorial Day.

# Park Goers Return to Burke Lake Park

Locals dotted the spaces on Memorial Day weekend as relief from the quarantine days.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he Park Authority has begun reopening of parking lots and parks just in time for the Memorial Day Weekend.

By Monday, the official Memorial Day holiday, people were flooding into Burke Lake Park, and a parking spot in mid afternoon was a rare site. Boats were launching from the docks, the frisbee golf course was busy, and many a family group were gathered around the barbecue grill in various spots.

Many were wearing masks, while practicing social distancing to some extent. There was no one at the entry gate into the park and all facilities and restrooms will remain closed, the Fairfax County Park Authority said. The Park Authority asked visitors to adhere to the

physical distancing guidelines and small group guidelines (do not exceed ten people), to avoid closed facilities or apparatus, and to keep in mind that restrooms and park buildings were not open.

Park Authority amenities that are closed are: Restrooms and all portable restrooms; Dog parks; All playgrounds; Nature centers, visitor centers, horticultural centers, and RECenters; Volleyball and basketball courts; Athletic fields; Water fountains are turned off.

To get the latest information about how the coronavirus is impacting parks and find answers to many frequently asked questions, go to the FCPA Coronavirus Response page on the Park Authority website. For more information, contact the Park Authority at 703-324-8700 or send an email to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Waterfront action took part on the kayaks and canoes on Burke Lake.

# NEWS

## 'Today We Honor Those That Made the Ultimate Sacrifice'

American Legion Post 177 holds Memorial Day ceremony.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Normally, Fairfax City officials, residents, and various politicians gather for a Memorial Day ceremony. This year, COVID-19 prevented it from happening, but a small group from American Legion Post 177 still made the day special.

There were just six members – standing far apart – yet they held a heartfelt and meaningful remembrance outside their building. Speaking first was Post Commander Jeff White.

"Today we honor our war dead, throughout the years – those that have made the ultimate sacrifice," he said. "In keeping with the dual nature of this holiday, we begin with our heads bowed in the morning. Then in the afternoon, we have a burger and a beer and enjoy our families, just as those who died would want us to do."

Next, Post historian and color guard member Gerry Lemnah played the bugle while fellow color guard member Earl Seay raised the flag. It had been flying at half-mast to honor all the COVID-19 victims, but was raised the day before the ceremony. For Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, it was lowered again at dawn and raised at noon.

Afterward, the Post's 2nd Vice Commander, Fairfax City Councilman Sang Yi – who's also a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve – addressed the group. "It's obviously a little different, the way we're recognizing Memorial Day," he said. "Usually, we're at Fairfax City Hall, reading out loud all the names of those who have fallen who were residents here."

"Almost 600,000 veterans have died in combat, and today's the day we remember



Earl Seay raises the flag outside Fairfax City's American Legion Post 177.



Veteran Gerry Lemnah plays "Taps" during the Memorial Day ceremony.

and honor them," continued Yi. "And we honor them for a purpose, because none of those men and women should have ever been thought to have died in vain. They died for one, sole purpose – a belief in our country, our way of life and in the work of those they left behind."

The whole point of Memorial Day, he said, is to remember those who've died serving their country. "We, the living, have an obli-

gation to ensure that we live a life worthy of the sacrifices that our brothers and sisters in uniform have made for us," said Yi. "I know this is a challenging time for a lot of people, and this is particularly a good reason why we need to appreciate our fallen and what they've given to us."

Then, after a moment of silence, attendees drove separately to Fairfax City Cemetery to lay a wreath on the grave of Amos Chilcott,

who fought in WWI and came home to Fairfax. "He was a farmer," said White. "And in 1944-45, knowing what the guys coming back from WWII were going to be facing, he wanted to do something, so he donated the land for American Legion Post 177. The baseball field on it, Chilcott Field, was named after him; and, each year, we honor him with a wreath at his grave. God bless Amos and all our veterans."

## Daventry Neighborhood Honors Fallen

The Daventry neighborhood in West Springfield continued its long-standing tradition of honoring those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation in a Memorial Day service. This year the service changed to adhere to social distancing rules. Local buglers interspersed through the neighborhood and played a cascading version of "Echo Taps" starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 25. Thirteen local musicians came together from West Springfield High School and Lake Braddock bands, Bugles Across America, Boy Scouts and the community. The buglers, spread 500 to 700 feet apart throughout Daventry, passed the call by sharing the first and last bars of Taps for a moving remembrance that wound through the neighborhood and touched all those who witnessed the ceremony and those who participated. Daventry Board mem-

ber David Edwards said, "I cannot begin to say how moving this was. Thank you to all of the volunteers and to each service member and their families who have fallen in the defense of this great country." Buglers met for the first time just before the service and were inspired by organizer and long-time Daventry resident USN Navy CAPT Ret. Craig Wevley as he announced, "This is one of the great honors of being a trumpet player; being able to sound Taps. This performance is going to bring a memory to many folks here in this neighborhood who are in the military, veterans, and serving the government. We have a few here in the neighborhood who lost loved ones on 9/11. This is a very important day for our neighbors and for ourselves."



The buglers meet for a distanced group photo.

Troy Burke, West Springfield High School senior who will join Texas A&M's Corp of Cadets and Air Force ROTC in the fall, said of participating, "This was an important opportunity for me to be a part of something bigger than myself and remember those who have sacrificed for our freedoms. Many people came out to the street to thank us and applaud and I just didn't expect that."

After the buglers met for a distanced



An honor of 'being a part of something bigger than themselves.'

group photo, Andrew Egerstrom, who recruited buglers from West Springfield High School, proposed an encore performance in his nearby neighborhood and the buglers jumped at the opportunity. Wevley's hope is that this concept will continue and spread to other neighborhoods and communities and that local trumpet players, young and old, will be inspired to use their talents to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

# Hate Has No Place Here

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



## COMMENTARY

The outpouring of generosity in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic has been incredible. I continue to learn of people who have responded in remarkable ways to the needs that have been brought on by the quarantine or that have been recognized as a result of our having to stay home. The lack of face masks resulted in dozens of persons working alone or as part of groups to sew face masks and make them available to first responders, medical staff and others. Access to food has been a major concern, and numerous food pantries and distribution centers have been expanded or established to make food available to those in need. Food donations have come pouring in. For a list of places where you can respond to the food crisis, my website, kenplum.com, includes a Food Resources Directory. I am so pleased and honored to live in such a caring community.

Just as I am celebrating the goodness of our

community, some misguided individual or individuals show up and for whatever their motivation decide to spray paint hate symbols on the sidewalks and buildings in one of our shopping centers. For whatever has happened in their lives to fill them with the hate they express, they are unable to exist in an open society that so many worked hard to establish. Graffiti with the worst of the hate words and symbols is bad enough, but in our state and throughout the country there are too many acts of bullying and violence. The Southern Poverty Law Center tracks more than a thousand hate groups with 36 of them located in Virginia. That is why in the last session of the legislature I introduced a bill that the Governor has signed into law to strengthen our hate crime penalties.

I thank Rabbi Michael G. Holzman of the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation for his "Call for Courage" after the recent hate event in Reston for providing me a meaningful

perspective: "The solution is to call these symbols what they are, marks of cowardice. While they claim to communicate hate and fear, they really belie the underlying weakness and loneliness of the perpetrator. We are all afraid, and courage is the ability to face a fear and carry on despite it. Cowards allow fear to drive their decisions and actions, undermining one's duties and purpose." (Full statement at [www.nvhcreston.org](http://www.nvhcreston.org).)

I concur with Rabbi Holzman's recommendation as to what we should do: "The moment calls for courage. We invite everyone to drown these cowardly messages with the message "Hate has No Home Here." Write this on sidewalks, take photos, use the hashtag, and post it online. Let us show Reston, Herndon, Vienna, Northern Virginia, the Commonwealth and the Country that we go forward together." And I would add, let us continue to show through our acts of generosity and support for our neighbors and those in need in this time of a pandemic that we are a caring and compassionate community. Hate has no place here! (Hate Has No Home Here yard signs available for purchase at <https://hatehasnohome.org/index.html>)

## Honoring Fallen in Pandemic Time

(From left) Sang Yi, Jeff White, Gerry Lemnah and Earl Seay outside American Legion Post 177. Normally, Fairfax City officials, residents, and various politicians gather for a Memorial Day ceremony. This year, COVID-19 prevented it from happening, but a small group from American Legion Post 177 still made the day special.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Local TraceX Team Develops Contact Tracing App

To the Editor:

Since late February, our small team of UVA and Notre Dame students has been working on developing an early model of a blue-tooth-based contact tracing app called TraceX. We are close to releasing this tool that we hope will help slow the spread of COVID-19 as we start to re-open our campuses. One of our main goals is to increase public awareness about how contact tracing technology can be non-invasive and help keep us safe and we're asking for your help with this.

The success of this technology will ultimately be dependent on user acceptance and uptake, and it's been exciting seeing the enthusiastic response from just our local networks of UVA/Notre Dame students. We'd really appreciate if you checked out our website <https://www.traceXforcovid.com> and wanted to ask if you'd consider sharing this with our NoVA community. We've also published a short youtube demonstration, feel free to check it out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZG6y-WrOsFw&feature=share>

We'd be happy to share our story or any more information you need.

**Rohan Taneja**  
Dan Loring

*Rohan Taneja, 20, is a Rising Senior at University of Virginia.*

### Budget Affects the Lives

To the Editor:

The large budget adopted at the recent Board of Supervisors meeting has a very real effect on the lives of workers and taxpayers in Fairfax County. The \$4.47 billion General Fund for Fiscal Year 2021 works out to be an average tax burden of \$3894 per capita, or about \$15576 for a

family of four. (Mercia Hobson, "Fairfax County Supervisors Approve Budget Plan, Fairfax RISE.") The approximate population of Fairfax County is 1,147,532 people as of July 1, 2019, according to a Census Bureau estimate.) To someone who lives in one of the wealthiest counties in the country, that might seem routine, but to some-

one who earns only \$10, \$15, or \$20 an hour, that would seem like a tax of 2 months' take-home pay.

Aside from the budget numbers, the property tax is also shocking. At \$1.15 per \$100 assessed value, the owner of a \$200,000 house would pay the government an annual \$2,300 in rent on his own property.

As is often true with government budgeting, it seems to have been based largely on optimistic assumptions. According to the Updated Budget Proposal, "In the absence of solid data and with so much uncertainty about the outlook, General Fund revenues are projected to be \$4,457,199,539, which represents no change from the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan level.

**Joshua Dunn**  
Burke



# 'It Felt Good to Be Recognized and Appreciated'

Fairfax County thanks its Public Works employees with food.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

National Public Works Week was May 17-23; and as COVID-19 has revealed whose labor is essential – not just in a crisis, but every day – Fairfax County celebrated workers in a category that doesn't immediately spring to mind. It honored its public works employees who often fly under the radar yet perform services critical to the continuity of daily life – including trash pickup, recycling, vehicle maintenance, plus jobs involving wastewater, stormwater and water treatment.

To thank these valuable workers, the county's Economic Development Authority (EDA) secured \$13,000 in funding from some local, philanthropic donors to create a special event for them. Last Wednesday, May 20, a fleet of local food vendors and food trucks served 1,400 meals (mainly lunches) from a variety of cuisines to public workers at 19 different sites throughout the county.

"It takes the skills and talents of everyone to keep



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Enjoying lunch from Arepa Zone at Fairfax County's Vehicle Maintenance facility are (from left) mechanics Scott Duvall and Quentin White.

an economy and a community safe and strong," said EDA President and CEO Victor Hoskins. "And this group of dedicated people works relentlessly behind the scenes to provide essential county services. These are jobs that keep us healthy and help provide the amazing quality of life we enjoy in Fairfax County. They can't be done at home and are physically and personally demanding."

SEE OPERATION, PAGE 8

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# Distance Learning: Both Stress and Relief

**West Springfield High School students on handling the switch to online learning.**

BY JESS KIRBY  
THE CONNECTION

Since March 13, Fairfax County Public Schools have been closed and converted to online classes in response to COVID-19. Like many other FCPS high schools, West Springfield High School classes are now held twice per week through Blackboard Collaborate, an online video conferencing platform.

The switch to online learning has brought a mix of stress and relief to students. Since FCPS announced that fourth quarter assignments cannot negatively impact a student's grade, many students are less worried about completing their assignments. Therefore, if a student has an 'A' in a class at the end of the third quarter, their grade will stay the same no matter how their performance is for the rest of the year. However, students have opportunities to raise their grades if they complete the necessary work.

"I feel like [the transition] has taken away a lot of stress because knowing that my grades won't drop and that they can only improve overall has relieved stress from school," said WSHS junior and Springfield resident Claudia Machuca.

"I didn't do the work!" said Ian Krein, a WSHS senior from Springfield. "None of it was required and I was happy with the grades I had, so my stress level has decreased."

However, the shift to online classes has made time management difficult for some students.



**Sydney Miller, sophomore, West Springfield High School (WSHS), Springfield**

"The workload hasn't necessarily increased," said WSHS sophomore Bryana Russin, a Springfield resident. "It's honestly made me procrastinate a little bit more because we have so much time."

Others are enjoying the less-structured school weeks.

"I like how we only have two days of school," said Sydney Miller, a WSHS sophomore from Springfield. "My stress levels have actually gone down because I don't have to worry about doing homework after all my sports and staying up late. Now I can do my homework any time of the day and still get my workout."

Some students worry about not meeting their teachers' expectations.

"It depends on the class whether I am stressed or not because I am afraid a



**Ian Krein, senior, WSHS, Springfield**

teacher might find my work non-proficient," said WSHS junior and Springfield resident Patrick Andrews. "All I really can do is do the work to the best of my ability. I have gone into office hours but it is generally for the students that need help understanding topics so I don't get much out of them."

At the beginning of the transition in April, FCPS experienced technical problems with Blackboard Collaborate. FCPS was not up-to-date with Blackboard updates, and when tens of thousands of students attempted to use the software at the same time, it struggled. Many students never got their classes to load at all, while others experienced no problems. FCPS cancelled classes for the remainder of that week, but the issues have been mostly re-



**Claudia Machuca, junior, WSHS, Springfield**

solved since.

"There were technical issues, but through contact with teachers and peers it was worked out," said WSHS senior and Springfield resident Peri Bloss.

"The only difficult part about the transition was the computers and all the restrictions on them sometimes caused classes troubles," said Lars Griffin, a WSHS junior from Springfield.

Overall, many WSHS students are enjoying the break from the high demands of high school.

"The transition has been enjoyable as I get to sleep more and I can do my work on my own time, which means it's done more efficiently," said Griffin.

"I've spent time reading books I wanted to read and it's been so nice," said Krein.



**Patrick Andrews, junior, WSHS, Springfield**



**Peri Bloss, senior, WSHS, Springfield**



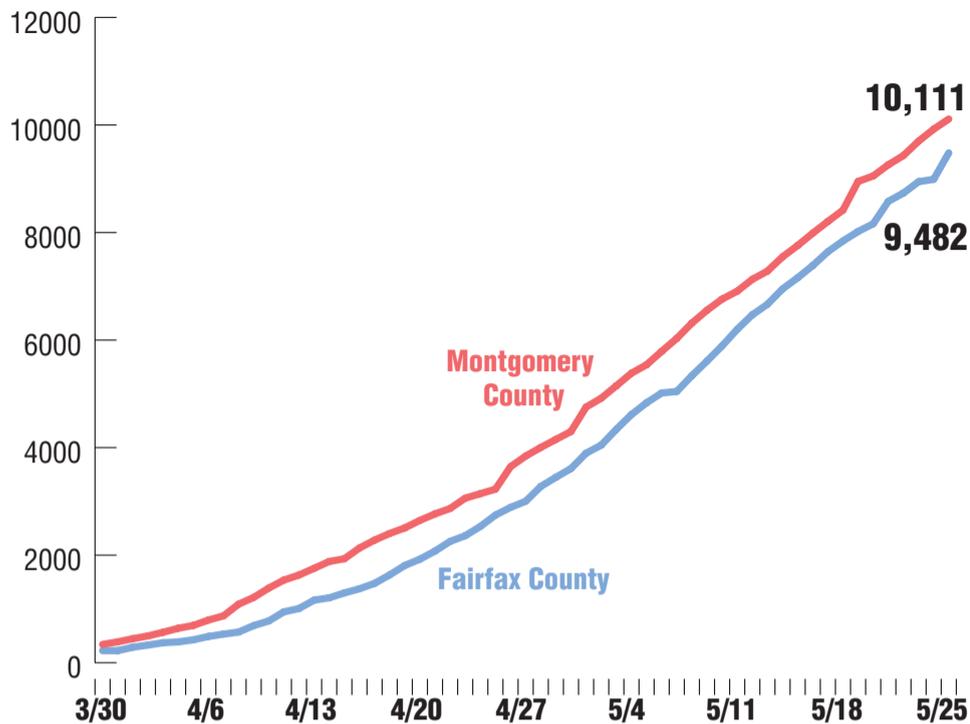
**Bryana Russin, sophomore, WSHS, Springfield**



**Lars Griffin, junior, WSHS, Springfield**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

# FAIRFAX COUNTY WEEK IN COVID-19



SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
[HTTP://WWW.VDH.VIRGINIA.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/)

## Northern Virginia will open into Phase 1 on Friday, May 29

### Monday, May 25

Fairfax County Cases: 9,482  
 Virginia Cases: 37,727  
 United States Cases: 1,612,114  
 Fairfax County Deaths: 331  
 Virginia Deaths: 1,208  
 United States Deaths: 97,049

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**Even if you do not receive a physical bill, to avoid late payment penalties you are still responsible for requesting a copy and remitting payment by Monday, June 22, 2020**

For Additional Information,  
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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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# 'Operation Appreciation' Honors Public Workers

FROM PAGE 5

And besides recognizing the people behind the public services residents often take for granted – but would sorely miss if they stopped – the event also helped provide income for the small-restaurant and food-truck owners who've also been hit hard with significant revenue losses during the pandemic.

"In this time of COVID-19, a lot of governments and economic development authorities want to put money back into the community," explained Kim Bryden, CEO and founder of Cureate, which helped organize the event and coordinate the vendors. "My company is the local, purchasing arm for governments and big businesses, and we connected the food vendors with

the public-works facilities.

"This helps the local restaurants because the meals were purchased from them," she continued. "Furthermore, a lot of people recognize healthcare workers and first responders for their efforts, but not always public-works employees – who are also essential workers. So with this event called Operation Appreciation, we wanted to

acknowledge everyone helping us thrive at this time."

**LOCALLY**, providing hot lunches for employees at the county's Vehicle Maintenance facility and I-66 Transfer Station, both on West Ox Road, was Arepa Zone of Fairfax. The Venezuelan-style meals were bowls featuring basmati rice, sweet plantains, black beans and a choice of either beef, chicken, pork or sautéed vegetables.

At the Vehicle Maintenance facility – one of four in the county – Vehicle Services Director Mark Mofatt said Arepa Zone brought food for both shifts of his 85 total employees there. "It's nice that they're honoring our workers," he said. "We do the maintenance on all the county's firetrucks, Park Authority vehicles and equipment, school buses and support vehicles."

Two people enjoying the lunch there were bus mechanic Quentin White and dump-truck mechanic Scott Duvall. White called Arepa Zone's efforts "great," and Duvall said he liked his meal. "It was very thoughtful, and I appreciated it," he said.

Ali Arellano and Gabriela Febres own Arepa Zone, which does take-out and catering. Their Fairfax kitchen is at 3160 Spring St., Unit B, and they were delighted to provide lunches for last week's event at both West Ox Road sites.

"Once this thing settles down, though, it's important to continue these efforts supporting the local and minority- and independently owned businesses," said Febres at the I-66 Transfer Station. "We're making food with dignity – food that I'd eat, myself. Everybody deserves to eat healthy, good-tasting food, and providing it has been the most-rewarding part for us, as a restaurant."

"And coming here today was super fun because we got to see people's reactions as they ate our food," she continued. "Since these employees often grab their meals and get back in their trucks, we did four types of rice bowls that they could easily reheat in the microwave. We've also been making food for local hospitals."

Because of the virus, noted Bryden, "We can't have buffets anymore, so things have to be individually packaged. And small restaurants are more conscious about who they're buying their ingredients from to protect the supply chain."

**MOVING FORWARD**, said Febres, "This has made us rethink how catering will look. And we're being more sensitive to the environment



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

At the I-66 Transfer Station, standing beneath the sign thanking Fairfax County's Public Works employees are (from left) Ali Arellano, Gabriela Febres and Hernan Rosas of Arepa Zone, and Kim Bryden of Cureate.

in our packaging. But to pivot in response to the virus, we had to make investments upfront to our software and make a new Website so people could buy our meats by the pound online and we could deliver to their homes."

"The businesses able to be creative and adapt will be the ones who'll survive," added Bryden. "At Cureate, we believe that, every day, you have a chance to invest in the future and the dreams of a small business."

As for the workers at the I-66 Transfer Station, which deals with trash and recycling, they, too, liked their Arepa Zone meals. "The pork and rice were very good, all the way around," said lead refuse operator Page Richards. "There are some nice people out there doing something special for us. You see on the news about people appreciating the firefighters, police and healthcare workers, but not us trash workers – so this is very nice."

Agreeing, Shonpaul Truss, assistant superintendent of solid waste, said, "We appreciate it immensely, and we enjoyed the food. My beef meal was very flavorful, and it's nice to know we're appreciated."

Heavy-equipment operator Allen Crigger said his chicken-rice bowl tasted great and "the plantains were good, too. We enjoyed what they gave us. It felt good to be recognized and know they appreciate the work we do for them."

"Our frontline workers are our heroes, stepping up to keep our county going during these challenging times and handling critical operations," said Deputy County Executive Rachel Flynn. "I know our employees were honored that so many were thinking of their wellbeing."

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# Organizing Boxes of Old Photos

The daunting project can be broken down in to smaller tasks.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Stacks of boxes containing thousands of photographs line the walls of the basement in Alice Denson's Fairfax home. For the past five years, the 73-year old mother and grandmother has promised herself and her family that she would begin the monumental task of sorting and organizing the photos. Still, the boxes stand, covered by layers of dust that grow thicker as the years pass.

"I even have photos of my grandparents," she said. "I want to leave them in order for my daughter and grandchildren. My daughter has been pushing me start and she's offered to help since we're not getting out of the house much these days. She's even offered to hire someone to help me, but it just hasn't happened yet."

Coronavirus-induced stay at home orders have resulted in unexpected free time, particularly for those who are most susceptible to contracting COVID19. Like Denson, many believe that this is an ideal time to sort old photos. Mustering the wherewithal to begin the project is the hard part.

Starting monumental and often emotionally charged organizational tasks like sorting a lifetime of photographs can be daunting, says organizer Susan Unger, CPO and Owner of Clutter SOS who specializes in working with seniors. "My clients are often dealing with organizational challenges, medical issues, mental health issues, perfectionism or life crises," she said.

Life experiences, the very events that photos are meant to capture and preserve, can also be the roadblocks that keep these memories stored in boxes indefinitely.

"Photos are intrinsically linked to our emotions and can be tough to get rid of," said photograph organizer Jody Al-Saigh, owner of Picture Perfect Organizing. "They can even be hard to look through if they bring up a painful memory for someone, so sticking them in a box on a shelf is just easier for some."

Unlike re-organizing a closet that's bursting with obvious clutter, photographic items like slides or film are easy to pile-up unnoticed. "Photos are often an after thought when it comes to organizing," said Al-Saigh. "Prints don't take up much room, and digital photos take up no physical space. So, they can be put to the side in order to prioritize organizing larger areas such as a garage or basement."

After deciding to begin the daunting task the first step is scouring the nooks and crannies of one's home, gathering all of the photos and bringing them together in one place, advises Al-Saigh. "You will get a true



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JODY AL-SAIGH



Tackling the task of organizing decades of photographs and storing them in acid free, archival boxes and photo albums can prevent yellowing and deterioration.

indication of what you have to work with," she said.

Knowing the amount of items that need to be organized can assist in setting a realistic goal and a deadline by which to reach it. "Don't try to take on too much

at once," said Al-Saigh. "Work in small batches over time."

Creating categories such as the year a photo was taken or the holiday it captures can be useful in the sorting process, suggests Al-Saigh. She recommends her 'ABCs' method for deciding which photos to keep and which to discard.

"A' is for albums which should hold the best photos in your collection. You don't need everything to go in an album, just the gems," she said. "B' is for box which hold photos that add to the story but can be saved separately as needed. 'C' is for can, as in trashcan. Discard blurry, bad or duplicate photos, landscapes and any photos you just don't like."

The 'S,' she says are for photos that are not of the best quality, but that help to tell a story. Those photos should be categorized as an A or a B.

"Save, scan and enjoy prints," said Al-Saigh. "Make albums from prints, put photos in archival storage boxes or sleeves, make backups of scanned images by using a cloud storage."

To prevent another photo backlog, "Make a schedule for yourself to do photo maintenance on a regular basis. Maybe it's monthly, quarterly, or every six months," said Al-Saigh. "Digital photos are easy to get backlogged because there's no limit to how many you can take."

Use moments of unavoidable idle time, such as waiting for a medical appointment and delete unwanted digital photographs. "It's time better spent cleaning off your phone rather than watching TV in a waiting room or reading an old magazine," said Al-Saigh. "Also, be mindful of the photos you take. When on a vacation, take pictures with people that you'll cherish into the future, rather than a landscape or scenery that holds less meaning."

**"Photos are intrinsically linked to our emotions and can be tough to get rid of."**

— Jody Al-Saigh, Picture Perfect Organizing

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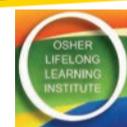
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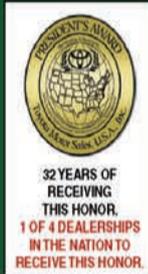
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