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The Arlington Connection

'We Didn't Know Our Last Day Was Our Last Day'

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Twins Emily and Sarah Roberts, graduating seniors from Yorktown High School

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Bear!

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NEWS



SHIRLEY RUHE/ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Arlington Hospital Center treats coronavirus patients, sets up testing sites.

Week 12-Inside Coronavirus At Virginia Hospital Center

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It's safe to say that coronavirus cases in Arlington are starting to see some leveling off but not that it is definitely going down," according to Adrian Stanton, Vice President for Business Development and Community Relations at Virginia Hospital Center.

He says, "We see 120-130 cars a week at the drive-through coronavirus collection site on Quincy Street. You need a doctor's order to set up an appointment at this site. If you are insured, the cost is covered; but we're not turning anybody away."

Stanton says early on "We had a limited number of test collection kits so the hours available for appointments at that location were tighter. Now there are more hours for appointments with the availability of more collection kits."

To help more vulnerable low-income residents get access to testing, VHC in partnership with the County and Arlington Free Clinic set up a walk up sample collection site to operate weekdays from 1-5 p.m. at Arlington Mill Community Center on Columbia Pike. To be tested patients must obtain a clinician referral and schedule an appointment.

"I've heard stories about massive lines at some locations in other localities. But the number of people here is quite low, on some days single digits. I'm not sure why. We try to make sure we are getting the word out."

He adds on May 26 there was a single open day testing site at Barcroft Fitness and Recreation Center. It is one of the test sites sponsored by the Commonwealth of Virginia at different locations. It is a free test, no doctor's order or appointment, and a person to be tested can be asymptomatic.

A Hispanic community leader indicated that while the walk up

option is important, it's not the primary reason why residents don't go to Arlington Mill for tests. She says because a doctor's order is necessary to be tested at Arlington Mill, many residents went to the one-day testing at Barcroft instead. She explained, "Many in our community are uninsured and don't have a doctor. To get instructions on how to find a doctor can take a two-hour wait on the phone, and people with kids don't have that time." The Barcroft testing site, which was scheduled to be open until 6 p.m., closed over four hours early at 1:30 p.m. when the 1,000 testing kits ran out.

Stanton says of concern to the hospital is that they are seeing fewer emergency room visits which have been down 30-40 percent in March and April. "In the beginning no one understood COVID-19, and this heightened fear about going to the emergency room.

"The key is we don't want people not to come and take care of their health. Patients with conditions which could have previously been addressed are now coming in critically ill because of delayed care." He says one of the things that people heard early on was "stay away" but the context was no one knew much about the coronavirus.

He says the message was don't come to the emergency room just to get tested to see if you had the coronavirus. People were uncomfortable with what happens if you have underlying conditions like diabetes or a heart condition. "There was heightened fear. They were scared to go to the hospital in case they may come in contact with COVID-19."

Stanton says the hospital is "perfectly safe." He said they take extra precautions to make sure everyone is safe, both patients and staff. Before a patient can even get into the lobby, the person's temperature is tested and they are given a surgical

SEE WEEK 12-INSIDE, PAGE 7

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Muslims Celebrate Ramadan at Home During Pandemic

It was hard not to be able to embrace friends and family after the 30 day fast.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

Ramadan, the month-long fast that takes place in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar year, is, after all, a time of sacrifice. For many who were under stay-at-home orders in Virginia, that spirit of sacrifice took on an added dimension. Three local Muslims shared their experience of Ramadan during the pandemic.

Manzoor Rehman, Director, Public Affairs for the local Ahmadiyya Community in Chantilly:

"It was quite different; normally, we go to the mosque before sunset and then after If-tar, too. We are normally very energetic and enjoy meeting up with friends and family for the breaking of the fast and praying. This time we did everything ourselves. All the prayers and reading of the Koran was done at home.

We couldn't meet up with other friends and family; we couldn't bring things to others in need. Our food pantry at the Mubarak Mosque kept working, though. We have been running that since the beginning of COVID-19, and assisting people through Humanity First, an organization which is like the Red Cross.

"As far as the basics of Ramadan it's no different - we rise very early, we recite, we fast, we pray ... there's no difference in that sense. But normally we break the fast together, that makes it special. So the spirit of Ramadan was missing in terms of the joy of community, fasting together, and then eating together.

"Ramadan is divided into three ten day sections called ashra. The final ten day ashra is very important: it includes the 'night of destiny' when God showed Muhammad heaven — and when prayers have even more significance. All this remains the same, whether there is a pandemic or not, but the festivities of the Eid, when we end Ramadan, were really missing something. ... We could not embrace each other and enjoy the strong feelings of brother and sisterhood that make Ramadan a joyous time,"

Zeyed Al-Shammwari, from Saudi Arabia, came on a King Abdullah scholarship to study in the United States 13 years ago. He posted an ebullient post on the Eid, telling his neighbors in Cherrydale, "Thank #USA and Americans — you made me a better man. You taught me and I've learned a lot of good things and habits from you. I've seen you, the American people welcoming multicultural people, being supportive, showing kindness, being educated, with big hearts, open mindedness, decency, good manners."

In a conversation after the Eid, he said



PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

Rizwan, co-owner of the Glebewood Shell station at Lee Highway and Glebe Road.

his father had sent him to the U.S. to learn about Americans and to report back to him what he had learned, to "be my al-Jazeera and tell me all about them."

"Now I'm focussing on reducing hate and stereotypes. People want to hear the truth, from someone who has been in both worlds, and I want to share the great gift Americans have given me: to be able to translate this and to break down prejudice."

How was Ramadan this year? "It was such a different year, not just for Ramadan, which should be with family and friends, but in every way it has been different. Ramadan this year was about being grateful that we are safe and finding happiness in new ways. I didn't feel like an exile from my family; my community in Arlington is now my family."

Rizwan, co-manager of the Shell Station at Glebe Road and Lee Highway: "Ramadan during the pandemic is not that different for me. I still get up very early and pray and eat before sunrise, then come to work early. Business has been slower because of the pandemic, and that's hard economically because we just started this business. I am by myself because my partner, Bilal, went to Pakistan to see family and can't travel back to the U.S. yet, so I am working long days, until 8, then I drive home, break the fast with my family, say my prayers, and go to bed! The only difference is that there is no traffic going home and that is wonderful."

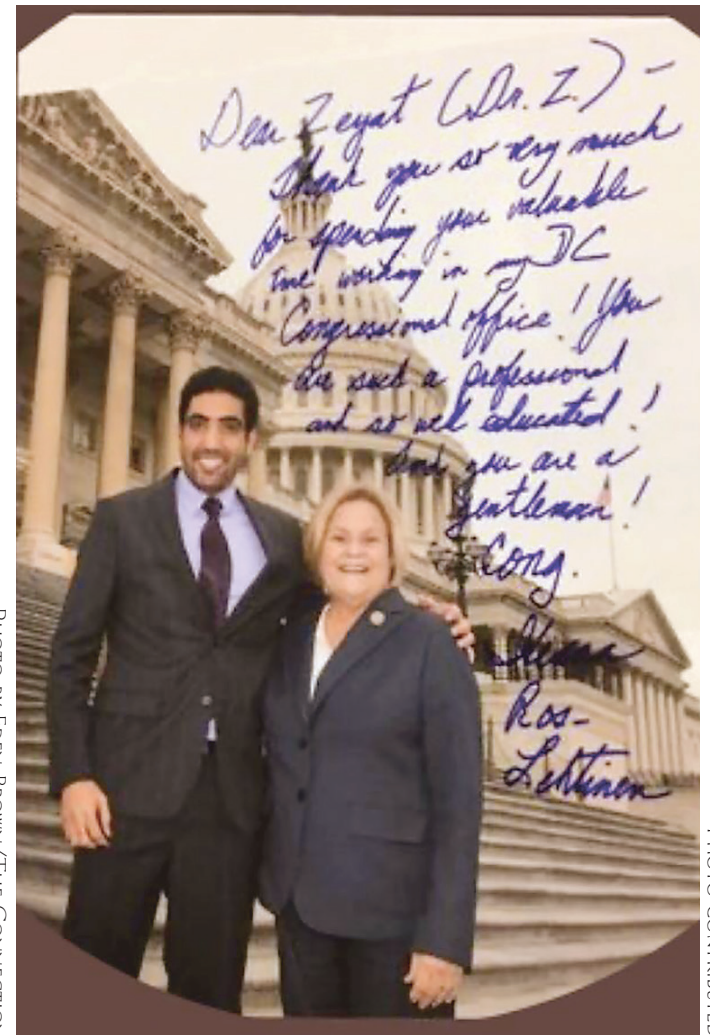


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Zeyed al-Shammwari, of Cherrydale, talks about coming to America to find a community of caring, open-minded people.

A young male bear ambled by a garbage can looking for breakfast on Wednesday, May 27. He was seen in the street by Bishop O'Connell High School about 6:50 a.m. by a construction worker who took this picture from his car. Animal Control arrived but the bear had already left. A neighbor commented she saw the bear in her backyard where she had been walking her dog earlier in the morning.

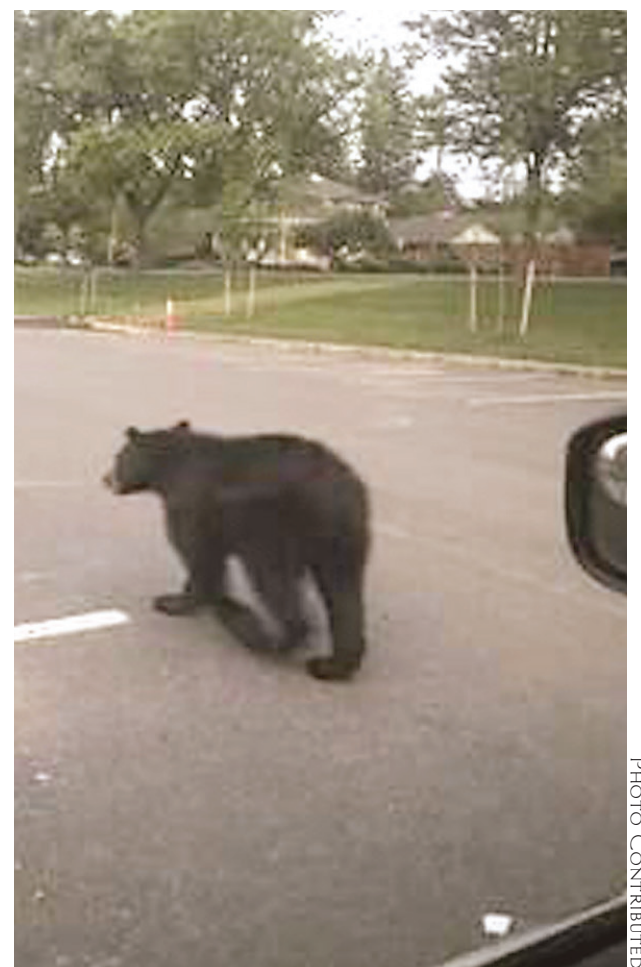


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Emily and Sarah to Celebrate Virtual Graduation

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Twins Emily and Sarah Roberts stand on their front porch with Hachi on the leash headed toward his favorite spot in the front yard. Emily and Sarah say they were still hoping for an in-person graduation even after the rest of the school year at Yorktown High School had been cancelled. Emily says Yorktown sent a couple of messages out but never really said graduation was cancelled, “so we kept hoping.”

But Sarah adds, “I think they didn’t really want to call it until necessary.”

Emily says, “I thought they would do something, distribute the chairs, have it in a field, but they hired a production company to do a virtual graduation ceremony on June 18 at 4 p.m. It’s something.”

Sarah says, “I don’t have high expectations. It’s kind of like going through your yearbook.” Emily says, “But not the same.”

One of Emily’s biggest disappointments is not having her grandma come out from Illinois. “I was so excited; she loves big ceremonies.” She was also looking forward to seeing all of those faces she hadn’t seen for a while and talking to them.

“We’ve been in Arlington Public Schools since kindergarten. We didn’t know our last day was going to be our last day.”

Sarah says, “It was a time to



Emily and Sarah Roberts, graduating seniors from Yorktown High School.

say goodbye. I wanted to make grandma proud; it was a time to be celebrated, a kind of closure. And there is something to walking across the stage.”

Both twins are looking forward to fall when they start college at The University of Virginia. Emily says UVA has indicated they hope to have classes on campus, but may do the large lectures online. And Sarah says, “They will probably shorten the semesters so it will end before Thanksgiving in case there is a second wave of coronavirus. And then not start again until after New Year’s.”

She adds, “College will start things rolling again.”

“And give some sense of normalcy,” Emily adds. Emily plans to

go into neuroscience, maybe pre-med, while Sarah is undecided but leaning toward pre-med as well.

Emily and Sarah indicated they decided to apply to universities in-state because Virginia has good schools and because of the cost. Sarah said she got accepted at some out of state schools, and she gave some brief thought to California. “Now is the time. It would be a lot of fun.” But on second thought she realized, “I have a lot of friends going to college in-state, and I knew I really wanted to be with her,” pointing to Emily standing nearby.

Emily says, “I could never go to California. I would be so homesick, and I’d miss my dog.” She says UVA is just far enough that

her parents can’t visit all the time but close enough to be able to see them. Emily says, “We did consider different schools but realized it would be really hard.”

Emily has her roommate for the fall. “To be honest a lot of people reach out online all at once on Facebook. I just tried to not be fake and see if we related.”

Sarah says she felt awkward finding a roommate this way and has decided to go random.

Sarah used this as a time to cut all her hair off. She thought it would be fun and cool but she also knew she didn’t have to “walk into school with my crazy haircut.” Now that she has tried it, “I’m growing it all the way out.” Emily comments, “It is a way to tell us apart.”

They will shop for their campus supplies and furniture later in the summer when they have a better idea what the dorm rooms will look like.

“And our grandmother gave us a Crux coffee maker for Christmas,” so they have a head start on the necessities.

Sarah says they will start taking JumpStart online community college classes for college credit on June 1. “It feels like we’re already in college.”

Emily says Yorktown did everything they could for support. “I appreciate the signs they made for us, and so many people have congratulated the class of 2020. We haven’t been forgotten.”

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Saturday Night Waiting for a Table Finally Open

Arlington favorite spots with rooftop bars or outdoor patios had lines on Saturday night. While folks in line were not masked, peo-

ple waiting were in their smaller groups and seemed to be about 6 feet apart. Inside restaurants -- even if they looked crowded -- had tables about 6 feet apart.



Hanging out without a mask in sight.



Waiting on Saturday night for an outdoor table on the rooftop Tiki Bar at Whitlow’s. Tables were set at least six feet apart. Masks?

PHOTOS BY JOAN BRADY

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Arlington Week in Coronavirus

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Monday, June 1

Arlington County Cases: 2,123
Virginia Cases: 45,398
United States Cases: 1,761,503
Arlington County Deaths: 116
Virginia Deaths: 1,392
United States Deaths: 103,700

DAY OF MOURNING: Arlington County will join other officials and faith leaders across the country for the day of mourning. The County will hold a moment of silence and lower the County flag at the government building to remember the 109 Arlingtonians — and the more than 100,000 people nationwide (101,711 as of Saturday, May 30) who have died from COVID-19.

Sunday, May 31

Arlington County Cases: 2,116
Virginia Cases: 44,607
United States Cases: 1,737,950
Arlington County Deaths: 115
Virginia Deaths: 1,375
United States Deaths: 102,785

Saturday, May 30

Arlington County Cases: 2,107
Virginia Cases: 43,611
United States Cases: 1,719,827
Arlington County Deaths: 113
Virginia Deaths: 1,370
United States Deaths: 101,711

UP TO DATE: For up to date reports on reopenings, see:

<https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>

<https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/forwardvirginia/>

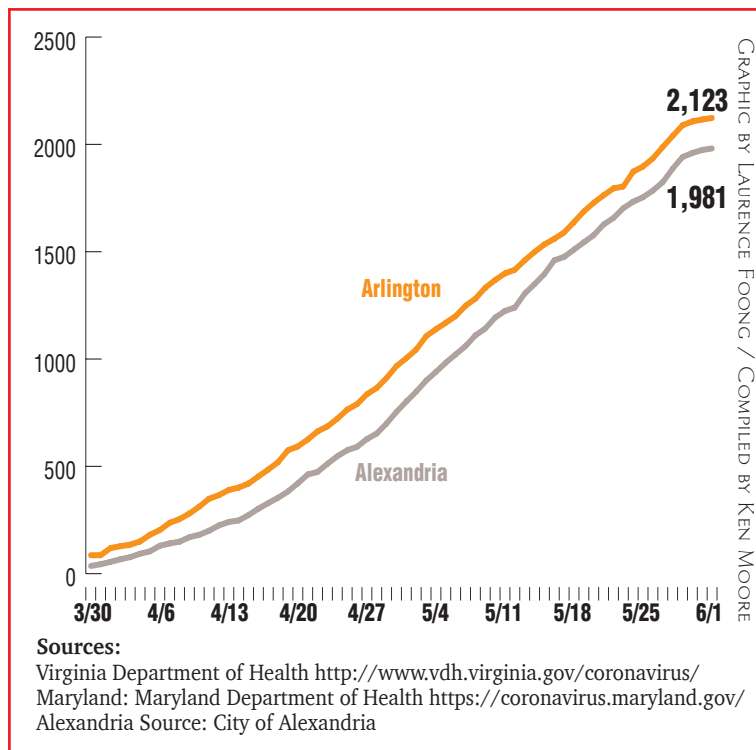
<https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/forwardvirginia/faq/>

ZIP CODE ACCURACY: Virginia Department of Health (VDH) began reporting COVID-19 data on testing encounters by health districts using more accurate ZIP Code information.

The new data will impact 37,362 test results that were previously not assigned a health district designation because incomplete patient address information was reported to VDH.

Beginning May 30, VDH will report test encounter data using a tiered approach. If a test record is missing a patient address ZIP Code, the ordering provider's ZIP Code will be used. If neither ZIP Code for the patient or ordering provider is available, the testing laboratory's ZIP Code will be used. By using the new data reporting method, testing encounter numbers will increase the health district figures as follows: Alexandria by 699; Arlington by 187; Fairfax by 3,072.

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Friday, May 29

Arlington County Cases: 2,089
Virginia Cases: 42,533
United States Cases: 1,698,523
Arlington County Deaths: 111
Virginia Deaths: 1,358
United States Deaths: 100,466

PHASE ONE: Arlington County, along with other localities in Northern Virginia, is transitioning to Phase 1 of the Forward Virginia plan on Friday, May 29.

On May 24, the five Northern Virginia (NOVA) health directors conducted a new assessment indicating the region has met four of the six critical metrics: increased testing, downward trend in percentage of positive tests and hospitalizations over 14 days, and enough hospital beds and intensive care capacity. They also cited the need for continued focus on expanding our contact tracing capacity and developing sustainable supplies of PPE.

Arlington County Board Chair Libby Garvey and other local leaders also asked for NOVA to move to Phase 2, if the data supports it, in concert with the rest of the Commonwealth when that date is established.

"We have a long way to go before we can be confident the virus is under control," said Garvey. "Continuing our forward progress depends on everyone following health guidelines. We will continue to watch the metrics closely in the coming weeks."

FACE MASKS: Starting on Friday, May 29, Virginians will be required to wear masks or cloth face coverings while inside public places such as grocery stores, government buildings, and on public transpor-

tation. A few exceptions to this requirement include during exercise, when eating or drinking, and due to medical conditions.

HIGHLIGHTS, WHAT CAN OPEN: Non-essential businesses can open at 50 percent capacity, with strict requirements.

Take-out and curbside pickup for restaurants and beverage services can continue and outdoor seating will be allowed at 50 percent capacity.

Gyms and fitness facilities can offer limited outdoor exercise options.

Outdoor swimming pools may be open for lap swimming only, with one person per lane.

Beauty and nail salons, barber-shops and other personal grooming services can provide services by appointment only and must follow strict guidelines.

Places of worship can open for drive-in services or services inside at 50 percent capacity.

Basketball courts and racquetball courts must remain closed, as well as entertainment facilities such as movie theaters.

Social gatherings of more than 10 people are still banned.

WE ARE COVERED: Arlington created the "We Are Covered" program to give businesses, multi-family residences, and houses of worship a way to show they have pledged to protect the people who come through their doors. Arlington encourages all residents and visitors to take personal responsibility to follow state requirements for face coverings, as well as maintain a 6-foot distance from other people

SEE CORONAVIRUS, PAGE 7

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PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to replace an existing 17.3' metal street light pole with a new 19' metal street light pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 26.8' at 2405 Columbia Pk, Arlington, VA (20200117). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to replace an existing 32' composite light pole with a new 34' composite light pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 39.3' near 585 N Glebe Rd, Arlington, VA (20200719). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to construct a 39' light pole at 2399 Richmond Hwy, Arlington, VA (20200729). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to replace an existing 15.3' street light pole with a new 21.2' street light pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 26.9' at 1881 N Nash St, Arlington, VA (20200136). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

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News

Arlington Week In Coronavirus

FROM PAGE 5

and avoid groups of more than 10 people.

REPORT CIVILLY: A new online tool <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f00c518a06a24102a7ae61fb0090640c> provides a way to report concerns about possible non-compliance issues in public places — a preferred alternative to calling the County's non-emergency number or the COVID-19 information line. 9-1-1 should only be called in the event of an emergency. The information generated by the tool will be used for ongoing community education and to spot trends. Potential areas of concern will be reviewed, with any follow-up by the appropriate County departments. Areas listed in the tool include parks, facilities not authorized to operate under Phase 1, and capacity limits involving outdoor restaurant seating, grocery stores, retailers and houses of worship. This tool will evolve over time to meet the guidelines of future reopening phases. For complete "Arlington Week in Coronavirus," see www.ArlingtonConnection.com

Week 12-Inside Coronavirus

FROM PAGE 2

mask. "If you have a cloth face mask, we ask you to put it in your purse and put on the surgical mask."

Then the person is asked questions about symptoms and contact with COVID-19. Stanton says if you have no temperature or symptoms, you are able to proceed to your destination at the emergency room or physician's office wearing your mask. "We have different areas where people with COVID symptoms go to a separate place. Some seats have been removed from the emergency room and some of those remaining have been blocked off. Bench seats are marked off at six-foot intervals." The hospital staff are all wearing protective gear, a little bit different when they are treating COVID-19 patients. They have face and eye protection, practice constant hygiene and are wearing protective gear which they change frequently.

Virginia Hospital Center was never short on gear but things weren't always predictable, Stanton said. "Like other hospitals, we looked ahead at how much of all the supplies we were using, tracking months in advance. When were supplies due to come in? What could we do?" He says, "We knew when regular shipments were due to come in, but then suppliers started changing on us. For instance, when we thought we were getting 5,000 masks next week, and they said we're sending 2,000. That isn't happening anymore; it's pretty true now."

Stanton says they are not asking folks at the hospital to work really long shifts. "We're making sure they are on a disciplined schedule. But this is a tough, long time caring for these patients. It's different for a couple of days but we're into what is it? 12 weeks now? It's wearing on folks physically and emotionally." As of May 30 Arlington had 2,107 cases of coronavirus with 371 hospitalized and 113 deaths.

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Night and Now Daze



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

That wasn't so bad. Approximately 29 hours in the hospital in a private room and all I had to do was drink as much water as possible and shower half a dozen times. The goal being to rid myself of the radioiodine I had been given at the beginning of my admission. This "therapy" is used to measure the iodine related to my papillary thyroid cancer and to determine presumably, whether in fact the tumors in my lungs are thyroid cancer which has moved or whether it's still lung cancer or both.

To say my life depends on the results of this finding and the interpretation of the follow-up gamma camera scans this Tuesday is perhaps a bit much. But my life expectancy sure depends on it, as well as my treatment life going forward. There's too many ifs, ands or buts to present here, but suffice to say, my future, yet again, is sort of up for grabs.

For the moment however, I feel mostly fine. I'm back eating the foods that I love, after a 31 day lull when I was on the low iodine diet, so all is semi back to normal. Being able to satiate once again does soothe the ravenous beast inside me. Nevertheless, there are bigger problems/possible solutions in the offing that M&Ms, Double Stuf Oreos and Entenmann's Marshmallow Devil's Food Iced Cake can really address. Still, if I'm going to go down, I can now go down with a smile on my face and a delicious dessert/snack in my mouth.

In a way, I'm back on the precipice. Are the tumors in my lungs all lung cancer which has previously led to my being given a "terminal diagnosis/prognosis: "13 months to two years" back in late February, 2009 or are they papillary thyroid cancer, stage II; not terminal, and not just treatable, but curable? Or are they something in between, as yet undiagnosed? Maybe I've developed new tumors? Maybe I'm to be diagnosed with a third type of cancer? Maybe, maybe, maybe. That's how I have to roll for the next few weeks (thyroid cancer) and the next six weeks (lung cancer) when I will have the usual upper torso CT scan of my lungs, the first one I will have had in over five months (all my lung cancer-related treatment was stopped while we addressed the thyroid cancer). Perhaps in mid-July I'll know the "end of the story" as radio icon Paul Harvey used to sign off; "Good day!"

For now, all I can do is wait and not "smoke em if I got 'em" but "keep my powder dry" and "keep my eyes on the prize." It's really no different than pretty much how I've managed to live my life since I got the diagnosis 11 years and over three months ago. Although, oddly enough it feels different than it did before as if I didn't have as much at stake then as I do now. Almost as if this is my last chance to catch a break, especially considering that living nearly a decade past my original prognosis I've already received a lot of breaks. Somehow though, this medical-diagnosis-to-be conjures a kind of inexplicable finality.

I don't want to go back. I want to go forward. Unfortunately, which direction I'm headed is out of my control. The endocrinologist and the oncologist will tell me whether I "Return to Jail" or "Pass Go and Collect \$200." They will be monopolizing my future and in so advising, will indirectly determine my covid-19 risk as well. Will I be visiting my healthcare provider/facility regularly for treatment and possibly exposing myself to the virus

(which would be a major complication for a patient like me: over 65, with lung disease and a weakened immune system) or will I be able to live my life without any of the life-ending-type fears I've had since 2009, and the world has had since the first quarter of 2020?

So even though I don't know for sure that my life is at stake, I think I can definitely say that my living is. Will it be cancer-centric or not? Either way, I'll live with the outcome. The only question is: for how long?

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

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