

Great Falls CONNECTION

Great Falls resident David Chien delivers 100 N95 masks to Todd McGovern, Director of Marketing and Communications at Reston Hospital Center.



Reston Hospital Center

1850

Hospital Entrance
Admitting
B

Masked With Love

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NEWS

Coalition Pleads for Removal of County SROs

NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition proposes redirecting of funding to hire counselors.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

“While schools’ primary role is to serve as an institution for learning, it must also remain a suitable place for young people to mature and sometimes err, without being subjected to the unquestionably perilous path of the criminal justice system,” wrote members of the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition in a July 6 letter to Fairfax County Public Schools Board and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. In it, the 29 organizations, faith-based groups and others that compose the coalition, urged FCPS to remove school resource officers (SROs) from its schools and “rely exclusively on administrative security officials that reported to FCPS.” The coalition also called on the Supervisors to redirect funds budgeted for the SRO program to go to hiring counselors instead.

School resource officers gained popularity after the 1999 Columbine school shootings. According to Schools, 51 Fairfax County Police Department officers serve as SROs in the County’s middle, high and secondary schools, one to each school with the exception of Robinson, Hayfield and Lake Braddock Secondary Schools that each have two. An SRO is a sworn police officer assigned to a Fairfax County Public School and employed by the Fairfax County Police Department. According to the FCPS website, school administrators, to include school principals, teachers, and school security staff have exclusive responsibility for school discipline. “SROs are prohibited from any involvement in student discipline. But they may attend disciplinary hearings (per the MOU) at the request of FCPS administration.” <https://www.fcps.edu/node/36892>

In 2018, Fairfax County School Board approved a revised Memorandum of Understanding between Fairfax County Public Schools and the Fairfax County Police Department for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. At that time, the FCPS website reported, “Superintendent Scott Brabrand and FCPD Police Chief Edwin Roessler produced a revised draft agreement that was reviewed during three community meetings by the SRO Community Review Committee, which included individuals representing FCPS and community-based organizations.”

IN THEIR JULY 6, 2020 LETTER, the Equity Agenda Coalition challenged whether the revised memorandum was achieving its goals and if School Resource Officers were a disservice to students. The coalition offered an alternative and how to fund it.

CSRO programs nationwide have rocketed the “school to prison pipeline” into hyperdrive, and Black and Latino children are paying dearly,” stated the letter by Equity Agenda Coalition. It read: “In Virginia, black students make up 39 percent of the students enrolled in public schools with at least one



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kofi Annan, The Activated People | NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D), Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

“In light of newly discovered data demonstrating that students continue to be subjected to the justice system for disciplinary issues that should be handled administratively per the 2018 changes to the SRO Memorandum of Understanding, the NOVA EAC strongly urges the School Board and Board of Supervisors to phase out this harmful program.”

— Kofi Annan, The Activated People | NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition

arrest, but they also comprise 75 percent of school-based arrests. Even more alarming is that the overwhelming majority of these arrests are for relatively common and minor transgressions like fights, arguments or theft...This must end, and Fairfax County should lead the way in Virginia.”

Kofi Annan is the founder of The Equitable People, one of the organizations that signed the letter “In Solidarity.” Acting on behalf of the coalition, Annan wrote in a cover note accompanying the email with the attached letter and supporting documentation: “In light of newly discovered data demonstrating that students continue to be subjected to the justice system for disciplinary issues that should be handled administratively per the 2018 changes to the SRO Memorandum of Understanding, the NOVA EAC strongly urges the School Board and Board of Supervisors to phase out this harmful program.”

According to the letter, the revised 2018 Memorandum was supposed to ensure a distinct line between officers and school administration, and restrict officers from get-

ting involved in non-safety-related matters; mandate crisis intervention and disability awareness training, and require SROs to read students their rights before crime-related questioning and alert parents before their student was searched or questioned. However, NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition said follow-on data provided by Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court demonstrated the 2018 guidelines were not implemented consistently or effectively.

The letter read: “According to data uncovered by the Northern Virginia Equity Agenda Coalition, the full 2018-2019 year showed a decrease in the number of arrests and charges, but unfortunately no change in the types of charges being filed. Between August 2018 and June 2019, SROs processed 321 juvenile cases (278 individuals). 116 were for Possession of Marijuana; 36 for Assault; 10 for larceny; 6 for Trespassing; and 13 for Disorderly Conduct. In keeping with previous trends, over half of the students charged are African American or Latinx. The fact that these practices continue despite the new

regulations demonstrates the inability for FCPS to exercise proper oversight over the SRO program, and to hold Fairfax County Police Department or its administrators accountable for following the Memorandum of Understanding between the school system and the police department.”

James R. Walkinshaw (D) is the Braddock District Supervisor. Upon receiving the letter and documentation of new findings, he said, “Clearly, the Board of Supervisors and the School Board need to re-evaluate the SRO program as part of our broader reform effort. In Fairfax County, every child should have the opportunity to grow and thrive and we have a responsibility to address any issue that contributes to disproportionate outcomes.”

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay thanked Annan for the email and his work in the community. “I appreciate your thoughtful letter and the work of the Equity Agenda Coalition,” he said.

ANNAN said he received phone calls from School Board Member Karen Key-Gamara and a few other School Board members. He said, “Unfortunately, none of the responses indicated there was a sense of urgency around the topic, and none of them appeared ready to commit to removing the SROs before the beginning of the new school year. We are very concerned that both the FCPS school board and Board of Supervisors intend on dragging their feet with the expectation that the issue will die down, which as we’ve witnessed will only lead to the criminalization of more black and brown children. Black and brown communities in general, and the children of these communities need meaningful solutions now more than ever, and the community has spoken loudly and clearly that more police should not be part of that solution.”

Next Steps

Virginia legislature must take significant next steps in the closing months of this year.

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

Readers of this column are certainly aware that on more than one occasion I have praised the work of the 2020 General Assembly session as being historic and transformative. I believe historians will agree with my assessment of the work of the legislature in the early months of 2020 to rid the state of discrimination of all kinds, but I wonder how they will explain the subsequent phase within several months of its adjournment. Within just a few months, the legislature was faced with the need to take even more historic steps to transform the state and to do so with a sense of urgency.



While the COVID-19 pandemic is a historic event that overlays what was happening in the social and political structure, it played a minor role. If anything, the pandemic demonstrated that the federal government under the current office holders is incapable of taking responsible actions regarding the coronavirus

or the social and political unrest that abounds in this country. The pandemic has shown that state governments must step up in leadership related to the health crisis and to the stark inequalities in our society.

The pleas of George Floyd that he could not breathe were echoed by Black persons in Virginia and throughout the country that they could no longer live

under the suppression of a knee on their necks that they have endured for centuries and has kept them from realizing equality under the law and in society. That is why the Virginia legislature cannot rest on the important steps it took in the opening months of this year towards a more just society but rather now must take significant next steps in the closing months of this year.

The House Courts of Justice Committee and the Public Safety Committee on which I serve will be identifying the next steps that must be taken beginning in a special session of the legislature in the next month or two. The Legislative Black Caucus (www.vablackcaucus.org)

has outlined next steps, with which I concur. These steps include declaring that racism is a public health crisis in the state, reinstating parole, creating a civilian review board of police actions with subpoena power, defining the use of excessive force including banning the use of chokeholds, and ending no-knock warrants. The Caucus also proposes the important step of investing more in community and less in law enforcement, funding mental health professionals to respond to those who may be having mental health crises, replacing resource officers in schools who are often police personnel with mental health professionals, restricting the use of militarization tactics and weapons against citizens, and expanding the use of body cameras.

In issuing its agenda, the Legislative Black Caucus said in a printed release, "And on a larger scale, this moment is calling on leaders to combat institutional racism and societal discrimination that exists in the criminal justice system, economic structures, housing, education, in healthcare, mental health, in environmental policy and many other areas."

Your suggestions on next steps are welcome, kenplum@aol.com.

Commonwealth's Attorneys Voicing Support for Criminal Justice Reform

Dear Senator Surovell, Leader Herring, and Chair Bagby:

We are a group of Commonwealth's Attorneys who represent and are responsible for the safety of over 40 percent of the population of the Commonwealth of Virginia. As the national dialogue and push for meaningful systemic change within criminal justice and policing continues, we submit this letter to you as a statement of our commitment to these changes and meaningful reforms and of our willingness to be partners by offering our assistance to you and to your colleagues as you propose and implement these critically needed reforms.

We have seen the Senate Democratic Caucus' and the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus' list of priorities for the upcoming Special Session,

and beyond, and truly appreciate the agenda's commitment to meaningful measures.

We would like to offer our support and advocate our strong commitment to the advancement of these proposals, including, but certainly not limited to:

- ❖ All measures related to police officer accountability for use of force misconduct and other behavior-related complaints, to include the requirement to allow prosecutors unrestricted access to all police reports, information, and disciplinary records of officers involved in a matter before the court;

- ❖ A requirement that all warrants be served during the daytime and include a knock-and-announce provision with additional showing to a judge, not a magistrate, for (i) night-

time service and (ii) no-knock service;

- Hon. Amy Ashworth, Prince William County and City of Manassas
- Hon. Anton Bell, City of Hampton
- Hon. Buta Biberaj, Loudoun County
- Hon. Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, Arlington County and City of Falls Church
- Hon. Steve Descano, Fairfax County and City of Fairfax
- Hon. James M. Hingeley, Albemarle County
- Hon. Stephanie N. Morales, City of Portsmouth
- Hon. Joseph D. Platania, City of Charlottesville
- Hon. Bryan Porter, City of Alexandria
- Hon. Shannon L. Taylor, Henrico County

Send Photos for the Pet Connection

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of July, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Thursday, July 23.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and humans.

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FILE PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION
Robert Reed enjoys the company and a walking assist from canine friends.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Andrea Worker
Contributing Writer
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

Jean Card
Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Salome Howard-Gaibler
Display Advertising
703-415-5394
salome@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

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

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

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

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



VIEWPOINTS

McLean Students Discuss Life During a Pandemic

— MARIN HEBERLIC

Kareen Gill, 16, McLean, National Cathedral School

The worst part of quarantine has been the lack of social interactions in person, and also being away from the cathedral close. The best part about online school was that classes were shorter and more manageable. I'm excited to be back on campus but also anxious about how the new socially distant classes will function with so many restrictions and key differences. My school is doing a hybrid approach - half online half in person, and it will be interesting to see how it plays out.



Anjali Donnelly, 16, McLean, Sidwell Friends School

The worst part of quarantine for me has been that I can't see my friends that much anymore. We went from seeing each other almost every day before quarantine, and now I've only been able to see them a couple of times. It's also difficult to find things to do because everything is shut down. The best part is definitely spending more time with my family. We've started taking walks together and playing board games in the evenings. I feel like all of us have gotten closer over the past few months as we've seen each other more often. I'm excited to go back to school because it has been quite some time since I have last seen my classmates and teachers. I'm not quite sure what my school plans on doing for next year, as they will be sending it out later this month.



Brent Moore, 16, McLean, National Cathedral School

The worst part of quarantine was not being able to see my friends and people at school. I realized that I took school and the class environment for granted which was something I didn't realize before quarantine. Also, spending so much time with my family was definitely not enjoyable. The best part of quarantine was definitely the extra hours of sleep and less stressful school schedule. Also, seeing my friends for the first time after months of not being able to see them was memorable. I am weary of my school's plan of 2 groups with alternating schedules next fall, because it means there is a high likelihood that I will not be with some of my friends. Also I think we will have complete online learning in the fall because COVID-19 cases keep increasing.



Will Denton, 17, McLean, St. Albans School

Personally, the worst part of quarantine has been not being able to see friends, and also not being able to travel. Although, it has been nice to catch up on sleep and have more free time than usual. St Albans has not released a plan yet for the fall, other than doing a mix of online and in person learning. I feel nervous about everyone going back to school, but I do think that there is a way to do a mix safely.



Ryan Cilluffo, 17, McLean, Landon School

Missing the last few months of school including baseball season and prom was the worst part of quarantine. Also, not being able to see my friends as much hasn't been very fun. The best part of quarantine is that I have gotten to spend more time with my family. I also have been able to try some new things that I may not have had the time to do otherwise. I am excited to hopefully go back to school in the fall. Right now, there is not a definitive plan, but there is supposed to be some sort of hybrid system, where we are sometimes in school and other times at home.



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Dr. Codrin Lungu
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in the Division of
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Susan I. Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP
Speech-Language
Pathologist
LSVT-LOUD
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Keep in mind that the PFNCA Communication Club is not therapy; it is a group approach to applying exercises and skills to help enhance communication skills. The program is available at no cost. To learn more about PFNCA, visit www.pfnca.org.



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COVID-19 Gives Time for Reading

From current events to mysteries, books can fill time and lead to lively family conversations.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

During a recent 12-hour car ride to their summer home in Michigan, the Leland family finished two books, "Bridge To Terabithia" by Katherine Paterson and Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird." They plowed through the audiobook version of both classics. While encouraging her children to read during the summer is usually met with eye rolls, Meg Leland says that her 14-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter were more receptive to audio books, and when they listen as a family, meaningful discussions ensue.

"We have a lot more free time this summer, so I say audio books are fine because at least they're absorbing books and exercising their brain more than they would if they were constantly texting their friends or playing video games," she said. "But I'm still trying to get them to read more books with real pages."



BOOK SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMER READING

"Roll of Thunder, Hear Me Cry," by Mildred Taylor
"The Girl Who Drank the Moon," by Kelly Barnhill
"Brown Girl Dreaming," By Jacqueline Woodson
"Finding Audrey," By Sophie Kinsella
"I'll Give You the Sun," by Jandy Nelson
"An Ember in the Ashes," by Sahara Tahir
"The Silence of Fountains," by Ruta Sepetys
"Love from A to Z," by S. K. Ali
"SLAY," by Brittney Morris
"It's a Whole Spiel: Love, Latkes, and Other Jewish Stories," by Katherine Locke and Laura Silverman
"Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You," by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
"My Hero is You, How Younger Kids Can Fight COVID19," by Helen Patuck, (free as a PDF)

with literature, but she believes that there are other methods for motivating children to delve into physical books as well. "Obviously one of the most effective ways to inspire children to read is for parents to read and model that behavior," said Cram. "Beyond that, read books on how to do a particular activity and then do it together as a family. Children can read about gardening and you can plan a family garden together. Cook a meal or a dish from a book that you've read."

Other methods for making reading more enticing, says Cram, include reading a book and watching the movie or selecting books that are related to current events. "COVID19 is an obvious topic," she said. "A suggestion for middle school students is 'Fever 1793' by Laurie Anderson which deals with the 'The Yellow Fever Epidemic and can lead to a discussion about resilience and survival. For younger children I suggest, 'My Hero is You, How Younger Kids Can Fight COVID19,' by Helen Patuck. It's free as a PDF and teaches children the ways that they can stay safe."

Literature for sparking meaningful conversations about racial injustice abounds, Karen Bentall, Librarian at Oakridge Elementary School. For younger children she suggests "Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice, by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins and Ann Hazzard. "[It's] a direct entry to conversation about what is happening today," she said.

"This summer is what it is and there's very little that we can do to change it," added Cram. "But we can finish out the last half of summer more in a meaningful way that doesn't lead to brain drain."

As COVID19 restrictions have curtailed the traditional activities like camp and vacations, families like the Lelands have more free time to fill. The constraints and limitations have left many children bored and parents struggling to decrease screen time and get their students engaged in reading.

"Since this past school year ended on an academic roller coaster, it's important to pull together a balance of fun and light academics like reading," said education consultant Lisa Cram. "Picking up a book might be the last thing some children want to do, so parents have to get creative."

That creativity, says Cram, needs to be rooted in structure.

"Create a daily schedule that includes time for reading or other academics, but also includes time for recreation," she said. "Predictability will let kids know what to expect, so they'll be less resistant to academics especially if they have another activity to look forward to."

While Cram doesn't believe that all screen time should be eliminated, it shouldn't be the only form of recreation. "Physical activity is just as important as academics," she said. "Ride bikes and go on hikes as a family."

Audio books are a way to infuse long summer days

Randolph-Macon Academy Fully Opening for Fall 2020 Semester

Randolph-Macon Academy in Front Royal, Va. will open for on-campus operations for all students and staff for the Fall 2020 semester. All classes will be held in-person with full course schedules and teacher instruction.

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NEWS



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Great Falls resident David Chien delivers 100 N95 masks to Todd McGovern, Director of Marketing and Communications at Reston Hospital Center.

Masked with Love

Great Fall resident and extended family donate N95 masks to hospital.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

David Chien of Great Falls and his extended family who reside in Hong Kong donated 100 N95 masks to Reston Hospital Center. Chien made delivery Friday afternoon, July 10 after the masks made a near month-long journey from Korea, to China, to Great Falls and finally into the hands of Todd McGovern, Director of Marketing and Communications at Reston Hospital Center.

“My relatives in Hong Kong, China are very special, caring people,” said Chien. “They want-

ed to help when they heard the pandemic was hitting the United States hard... Hong Kong had gone through that, reduced the numbers, and have no new infections... (They) realized we are from different countries, but we are all people, and humans should help each other,” said Chien.

“On behalf of Reston Hospital Center, I want to express how grateful we are for the generous donation of masks provided by David Chien and his family,” said McGovern. “Our caregivers sincerely appreciate the thoughtfulness... We are fortunate to have such kind neighbors in Great Falls and throughout the Northern Virginia region.”

Five 2020 Graduates Named 2020 National Merit Scholarship Winners

Five Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) graduates from the class of 2020 have been named winners of college-sponsored scholarships by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). Recipients of college-sponsored scholarships from the NMSC, with their probable career fields in parentheses, are:

Rithika Balguri of Chantilly High School (biology), National Merit Virginia Commonwealth University Scholarship.

Tanya Kurnootala of TJHSST (medicine), National Merit Virginia Commonwealth University Scholarship.

Rohan Voddhi of TJHSST (computer science), National Merit University of Chicago Scholarship.

Jessica Yoon of TJHSST (oncology), National Merit Emory University Scholarship.

Mikhail Allen of TJHSST (computer engineering), National Merit University of Maryland

Scholarship.

College-sponsored Merit Scholarships provide between \$500 and \$2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship. Nationwide, more than 7,600 students have won Merit Scholarship awards in 2020. This is the final group of scholarship recipients for the class of 2020.

National Merit Semifinalists are named each September on a state-representational basis in numbers proportional to each state's percentage of the national total of graduating high school seniors. Semifinalists for 2020 are students with the highest scores on the 2018 Preliminary SAT-National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT-NMSQT®), which serves as an initial screen of program entrants. Winners are chosen by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which administers the program.

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Home Proves to Be Truly ‘Essential’ in COVID-19 Time

How has pandemic impacted McLean and Great Falls Real Estate Market.

BY KAREN BRISCOE



The first half of 2020 has come to a close. At the end of the first quarter the real estate market was showing a strong opening season. Second quarter was met with the COVID-19 pandemic with stay-at-home orders by the Virginia Governor effective March 30, 2020. Unemployment skyrocketed and the financial markets experienced significant fluctuations. All of this impacted the residential real estate market as well as mortgage lending. The good news is that the US Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security (CISA) included residential real estate and related professions on the list of essential services during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. This included real estate agents and brokers, inspectors, lenders, settlement services and governmental workers who facilitate those industries.

PEOPLE DISCOVERED during this unprecedented time that home is truly “essential.” Shelter went beyond meeting the basic human need and also became for many people their workplace, school for students, location for physical exercise, meal preparation and dining, entertainment, rest and recreation. Governmental officials and medical

McLean & Great Falls Half Market Analysis of Home Sales (Based on List Price):

2020 1st Qtr compared to 2019 and 2010						
2020 1st Half Total Sales: 525						
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22102	1 3 4	1 5 6	12 18 30	10 7 17	8 9 17	53 47 100
22066	1 1 2	2 3 5	18 26 44	13 19 32	24 20 44	2 12 14
Total:	19	30	146	80	131	119
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 195			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 330			
2019 1st Half Total Sales: 595						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	7	18	72	39	83	24
22102	6	7	21	23	27	123
22066	2	4	39	35	42	23
Total:	15	29	132	97	152	170
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 176			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 419			
2010 1st Half Total Sales: 441						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	4	3	28	27	56	82
22102	3	7	12	12	23	96
22066	0	5	23	18	33	19
Total:	7	15	63	47	112	197
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 85			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 356			

Key to show the impact of Covid:

#	#	#
1st Qtr + 2nd Qtr = 1st Half		

professionals stated that people are safer at home during the pandemic. People were encouraged to shelter in place and for many it became their sanctuary.

Even during a pandemic, people often have a need and desire to make a move. There are those that discover their family could use more space. Others are looking for more physical distance, moving out of more dense urban areas. Life changes occur

including death, divorce, marriage, having children, job changes that lead to making a physical move. People continue to buy and sell homes even during times of crisis. The volatility in the stock market led many people to invest in real estate as a safe haven as many view real estate as a more stable investment.

The total number of sales for McLean and Great Falls in the first half of 2020 was

525. These numbers mean there were 525 sellers and 525 buyers. And although those numbers are strong for a pandemic, they are down almost 12 percent compared to 595 in the same time period 2019. The good news is the market has considerably improved over a decade ago in 2010 which came in at only 441. That represents an increase in sales of 19 percent over the last decade. Thus even as we as a nation and world were navigating the impact of COVID-19, people still were in situations where they had a need to move.

The most significant gains were in the upper brackets which constitutes homes over \$1.25 m, with sales increase of around 11 percent. This could be a strong indicator that prices are rising in the under \$1.25 m segment as buyers stretch into the next segment in order to buy. Further, there is considerable demand for under \$1.25 m and thus the drop off in number of sales could likely be due to a lack of inventory. Good homes priced correctly for the market are selling.

THE REAL ESTATE COMMUNITY follows CDC protocols to serve clients in almost all capacities in the buying and selling process. Agents continue to list houses for sale, show properties to buyers, write offers and negotiate contracts and settle on transactions. Advanced technology is available such that many services can be performed on digital platforms which includes virtual showings and open houses, Zoom meetings, document eSigning, and online notary cam or drive-by closings.

<Ist>Karen Briscoe with HBC Group at Keller Williams is an active and experienced Realtor® in the Northern Virginia marketplace. Karen, alongside her business partner Lizzy Conroy and team, works with sellers, buyers, investors and builders in all price ranges. www.HBCGroupKW.com, 703-734-0192, Homes@HBCGroupKW.com.

Controversy over Hidden Creek Country Club Erupts

Stakeholders and county supervisor speak out.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

It is approaching three years since Connecticut-based real estate developer Wheelock Communities announced its acquisition of Hidden Creek Country Club in Reston. Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan designates the property to be a golf course. In early June, Wheelock began exploring public reception to its vision to repurpose the private golf course and country club into a public park and sites for new homeownership. With that one move, Rescue Reston, an all-volunteer

grassroots organization dedicated to saving green space, prepared once again for a possible clash with a developer. The organization had waged a successful four-year battle defending the green space at Reston National Golf Course. This time, it launched a campaign to save Hidden Creek open space.

Dan Green is Principal with Wheelock Street Communities. Scott E. Adams at McGuireWoods LLP spoke on Wheelock’s behalf and shared information about the proposal for Hidden Creek. Reston National Golf Course and Hidden Creek have the same zoning and land use designations. Both properties are termed “private recre-

ation use, more specifically to remain as golf courses,” according to Fairfax County.gov.

Adams said part of what they are trying to do is reimagine Hidden Creek-take what is currently a private country club “serving about 400 members” and transform that into a significant public park amenity open to all in Reston. “The creation of a 100-acre public park in the heart of Reston is a generational opportunity for the rest of the Reston Community...Our goal is to have that conversation with community and all stakeholders... We are having meetings with the clusters and the neighbors that are directly adjacent to Hidden Creek

because they are the most impacted by the changes to the property,” said Adams. He added their community outreach includes mailings to surrounding communities and online virtual meetings meant “to have a conversation with those neighbors and then get feedback.” Adams said that they had registrations equivalent to about 25 percent of the people surrounding the golf course in one of their online meetings. He added they held meetings June 8- June 11 and would continue doing more moving forward.

Lynne Mulston is chair of the Rescue Reston North Committee. She expressed disheartenment at the prospect of Hidden Creek Country



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

“Save Hidden Creek” flags go up around the golf course in Reston.

SEE BATTLE, PAGE 10

Great Falls Teen Releases Debut Album

Elizabeth Rothenberger, 16, is releasing her debut EP starting with the single ‘Ricochet.’

BY JESSICA FENG
THE CONNECTION

Like most teenagers, Elizabeth Rothenberger of Great Falls enjoys listening to music. Unlike most teenagers, she’s releasing her own music starting with her debut song “Ricochet” and including five new songs released in thirty-day intervals. At only sixteen-years-old, Rothenberger juggles attending the Connelly School of the Holy Child and developing an aspiring music career.

Along with producer Chris Keup, Rothenberger has co-written her first professionally recorded and released songs. She talked about finding her passion for singing after auditioning for musicals in elementary and Cooper Middle School.

“I discovered how much I loved singing and I began taking voice lessons to grow and learn more about it. I brought my guitar that my parents gave me to my voice teacher on a spree and from there, I learned how to sing songs with my guitar.”

Karen Rothenberger, Elizabeth’s mother, recalls her singing from a young age and improving through performance.

“Elizabeth started taking voice lessons and then added guitar at Potomac Falls Music with Ashley Cash. She also did some student showcase performances at a local restaurant and played at some open mic nights at The Old Brogue.”

Vocal coach Katie Talbot has been working with Rothenberger since the summer of 2019. Talbot says she aims to make singing easier so Rothenberger can focus on developing her personal style.

“My experience with Elizabeth has been nothing short of amazing. She is young but beyond wise and diligent for her age! She understands practice and is such an incredible student! Plus she has such a wonderful and natural talent with her voice as it is.”

Not only is Rothenberger talented musically but at school, she is also a caring classmate. School music teacher Elsbeth Fager remembers first working with Rothenberger during her freshman year.

“Elizabeth is a kind, thoughtful, and compassionate young woman. She is always supportive of her classmates and respectful of her teachers. Her passion for music is infectious and it is a joy to be around her in the classroom and on stage.”

Writing the EP gave Rothenberger a taste of the music production process such as combining different elements. About the debut song “Ricochet,” Rothenberger said writing it was faster because it came naturally.

“When writing the EP with Chris Keup, he brought ideas for the melody of a new song and we listened to it and tried to string lyrics together to fit it. Recording the EP was very fun but it took us lots of takes to put the vocals together.”

Rothenberger cites the therapeutic qualities of music as a reason for her passion. In



PHOTO BY MICHAEL JN BOWLS
The cover art for Elizabeth Rothenberger’s debut song “Ricochet” released by Rebel Coast Media.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL JN BOWLS
Elizabeth Rothenberger holds her guitar, an instrument she learned to use in conjunction with singing.

the future, she hopes to continue developing her style and improving.

“Songwriting is all about authenticity and

how the words flow to the beat of the music. I love bringing out thoughts or worries on my mind into the songs to make them more

relatable and personal. I really want to discover how to become my own artist and find my unique style to put into my music.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN ROTHENBERGER
Performing at school, Elizabeth Rothenberger sings while playing her guitar.

“I love bringing out thoughts or worries on my mind into the songs to make them more relatable and personal.”

— Elizabeth Rothenberger, 16, of Great Falls



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH ROTHENBERGER
Elizabeth Rothenberger at the beach with her brother Chris.

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NEWS

Battle for Green Space Continues

FROM PAGE 8

Club considered for anything but a golf course. “We’ll stop when Wheelock stops,” she said. Rescue Reston called attention on its website that the golf course is home to a variety of wildlife. Reston residents and visitors make use of the community resources on abutting trails. The permeable ground helps maintain the health of the downstream watershed.

THE ORGANIZATION created an online “Advocacy Action Center” for the public to contact its representatives to voice their agreement that the County should not compromise on Reston’s remaining open space. It urges officials not to re-open the Comprehensive Plan for either of Reston’s golf courses.

Seeing the response over the weekend of July 10-12, Mulston said, “Rescue Reston’s North Course Committee is elated by the outpouring of support and the sheer numbers of supporters who are participating in the Action Center Campaign. To date, upwards of 500 respondents have sent nearly 6,000 emails to Supervisor Alcorn, Chairman McKay, Planning Commissioner Carter and the Reston Association Board of Directors. A function of the Action Center allows us to see the locations of the respondents on a granular level, giving Supervisor Alcorn exactly the information he is seeking in order to make a determination that tells Wheelock, ‘NO’ to their requests for an out of turn amendment to the Comp Plan.”

Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D- Hunter Mill District)



SOUTH PARK ACTIVE REC AREA
 COURTESY OF SCOTT ADAMS AT MCGUIREWOODS LLC
Proposed amenities in the vision for Hidden Creek

said, “As you are aware, the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan clearly designates the Hidden Creek property as a golf course. And I have long and consistently stated – including during last year’s supervisor election, and since – that unless and until communities surrounding the golf course indicate their desire to initiate a change to the Comprehensive Plan, I will oppose any such change. That could potentially be demonstrated as a vote by cluster association members, although I have yet to hear that any such vote has taken place. Also, I have let Wheelock know that if there is uncertainty surrounding any reported votes of support in surrounding communities, my office would conduct an independent survey of residents to confirm.”

ALCORN added, “I do realize my position may seem unusual in Reston, where we have become conditioned to top-down land use decisions, perhaps starting with the excellent Master Plan developed by Robert E. Simon in the 1960s. With the full use of the comprehensive plan process in Reston starting in 2014 proposals to change the comp plan to allow more development will now need support from the residents most affected before I would authorize consideration of any out of turn comp plan amendment.”

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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

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

SATURDAY/JULY 18

Blood Drive. 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean (location is the former Lord & Taylor Department Store). The Washington Capitals, Mace-rich (Tysons Corner Center owner) and Inova Blood Donor Services partnered together for the good of the community to encourage individuals to donate blood. Blood donors will receive a Washington Capitals Garnet Hat-haway Bobblehead and T-Shirt. Visit <https://www.inovablood.org/inovabloodupdate/>.

PARK AUTHORITY SCHEDULES VIRTUAL JOB FAIR

The Fairfax County Park Authority is still looking for workers to fill seasonal positions now that COVID-19 safety restrictions are being eased and park facilities are reopening under Gov. Ralph Northam's phased Forward Virginia Blueprint. Parks, lakefront areas and golf courses, playgrounds, historic sites, and other unique locations offer fun places to enjoy the summer season, as well as earn competitive pay. Many positions are primarily out-of-doors, and all positions have new safety protocols in place for both workers and park customers. Save the date if you are interested in learning more about jobs in:

Golf (https://bit.ly/jobfair_golf) on July 15, 2020 at 11 a.m.

Park Services and Resource Management (https://bit.ly/jobfair_parks) on July 16, 2020 at 2 p.m.

Park Operations (https://bit.ly/jobfair_parkops) on July 17, 2020 at 10 a.m.

TAKE A SPIN ON A CAROUSEL OR TRAVEL BY TRAIN AT COUNTY PARKS

Carousels are once again spinning at parks in Fairfax County, and the Burke Lake Park train is choo-chooing along the rails. Take the kids for a ride on your next park outing. The Park Authority has colorful carousels at six parks and a miniature locomotive that runs for 1.75 miles through Burke Lake Park. You can now purchase tickets in advance for all of these amusements:

Burke Lake Carousel
Burke Lake Train
Clemyjontri Carousel
Frying Pan Carousel
Lake Accotink Carousel
Lake Fairfax Carousel
Lee District Carousel

JULY 9-24

Scholarship Contest. Oakton Family Orthodontics will award a \$1,000 scholarship to the student who submits the winning essay response to "How has receiving orthodontic treatment positively impacted your life and plans for the future?" All current and former patients entering college this fall are encouraged to enter. Winner will be announced by mid-August. Applications can be submitted online at www.oaktonbraces.com.

METRO REOPENING MOST CLOSED STATIONS

Metro announced that 15 rail stations that had been closed as part of the transit agency's COVID-19 response reopened on Sunday, June 28. They include the following stations: Grosvenor-Strathmore, Cleveland Park, Federal Center SW, Federal Triangle, Mount Vernon Square, Judiciary Square, Archives and Smithsonian. After June 28, Arlington Cemetery will be the only Metrorail station without regular service. Arlington National Cemetery is currently closed to the general public.

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It's a Twofer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And not just Tuesday, either. All week in fact, I'll be waiting to hear the music. One day, I'll hear from my oncologist and on another day, I'll hear from my endocrinologist. What I'll hear first is the status of my underlying non small cell lung cancer, stage IV (diagnosed Feb., 2009) and later in the week, I'll get results concerning my most recent party crasher: papillary thyroid cancer, stage II, diagnosed Jan. 2020. This will be the first time I will have been waiting for results simultaneously, concerning TWO cancers that I now have. (What? One wasn't enough?) And B.B. King thought the thrill was gone. For those of us unlucky enough to have been diagnosed with two different and active cancers, this is the kind of week which tests your mettle and is as far away from thrilling as one could possibly imagine.

C'est la vie, or at least it is because I'm not ready to be morte. Who says taking five years of French between seventh and eleventh grades was a waste? Here I am 50+ years later and I'm still able to dip into that old bag of tricks. I fear however, that the longer I'm still living as an active, still-being-treated cancer patient, the more my health is at risk. Cancer is not exactly a friendly visitor. Rather it's the kind of uninvited guest that takes up residence in your home and never leaves, like dust mites, fleas and mold. In some instances, you know they're present; in other cases, you're told. And the longer they stay, the worse the situation becomes.

My cancer diagnosis was sort of like that, a surprise. A lifelong non-smoker with no immediate family history of cancer, I woke up one day with a pain in my left rib cage. A few days later, after the pain had migrated to the other side, combined with difficulty I was having catching my breath, I decided to go to the Emergency Room. A brief examination followed but revealed very little to the doctor. He suggested I return in a week to see the pulmonologist. Which of course, I did.

By that time, the pain had totally subsided and I remained pain-free for the next eight weeks until I got "the call" from my internal medicine doctor advising me that the previous week's biopsy confirmed a malignancy. Then I was in pain, emotionally - and afraid, as you can probably imagine.

But here I sit, 11 and one half years later, living proof that a "terminal" diagnosis is not necessarily terminal. Somehow, through a combination of conventional wisdom/treatment, some non-Western alternatives in the form of pills and potions and a good attitude which has meant keeping my glass half full while trying to maintain a good sense of humor, I have been lucky enough to see my beloved Boston Red Sox win their third and fourth World Series Championships of the 21st century. (Their first two championships in 2004 and 2007 were pre-Kenny's cancer diagnosis.)

But looking backward, as gratifying and rewarding as it can sometimes be, has not been my modus operandi. My 'operandi' has been to walk quietly, laugh heartily and be positive (like our friend, Ray's blood type) and not presume any facts which are not yet in evidence. Moreover, try taking any and all news in stride and be a patient patient (which is not double talk) and put one foot in front of the other and see where it leads.

For me, it has led to a future that I wasn't supposed to have and a present for which I am eternally grateful, even during weeks such as these when I'm about to enter when my life, vis-a-vis what I am told by my oncologist and endocrinologist, is hanging in the balance not once, but twice. Really, twice is a bit much, don't you think? I mean, I think I'm doing my unhealthy bit by having one type of cancer. There's really no extra credit/extra benefit in having two types, especially at the same time. Nor is there any BO-GO-type discount on my health insurance costs. Quite the contrary, actually. But if I'm still alive to complain about it, then I'm still alive and that's nothing to complain about.

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



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