

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

SENIOR LIVING

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The Petersen family is enjoying their living laboratory in the backyard of their Springfield home.

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NEWS

Assistance League of Northern Virginia Sponsors Online Auction

Assistance League of Northern Virginia (ALNV) is sponsoring an online auction of the items that would have been raffled at its Annual Spring Fundraiser luncheon, which was cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead, items are being offered for auction starting Friday morning, July 24, through Friday evening, July 31. Bidders can choose from a variety of more than 35 themed baskets, and a wide assortment of 20 gift cards and certificates. The baskets are filled with food and drink, jewelry, beauty products, beach items, children's gifts, gardening and home products. The certificates include golf outings, dining, wine tasting, a pirate cruise, and more.

The auction begins at 8 a.m. on Friday, July 24, and closes at 8 p.m. on Friday, July 31. You can find instructions for viewing items and participating in the auction from Assistance League's website: www.alnv.org. Click on the green "Take Me to the Auction" button for instructions on bidding. Bidders can register and view the items available at any time. The auction will close at 8 p.m. on Friday, July 31, and after that, the highest bidders will be notified by email. Assistance League will make arrangements for delivering the baskets locally to the winning bidders in VA, DC, or MD. Gift cards and certificates will be mailed.

Proceeds from the auction will help fund the Assistance League's philanthropic programs that feed, clothe, educate, and provide comfort to many children in Northern Virginia.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

COUNTY OFFERS 14

SATELLITE ABSENTEE VOTING
 In anticipation of a high voter turnout, Fairfax County will offer 14 satellite locations for in-person absentee voting for the Nov. 3, general election. The Board of Supervisors established these locations during their July 14, meeting. For the 2020 presidential election, the county is increasing its absentee voting locations compared to the nine that were available in 2016. Election officials called for added locations because they are anticipating a high turnout—especially with the new state law that allows

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(File Photo) Fairfax County School Board.

County Pivots Back to Virtual Learning

Superintendent sought Board consensus.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Members of the Fairfax County School Board reached a consensus during its July 21 Work Session and accepted Superintendent Scott Brabrand's recommendation to begin the 2020-21 school year 100 percent virtually. The surprise item on the Board's agenda came six days after the deadline passed for students, teachers and school-based technology specialists (SBTS) to respond to two Instruction Options for the 2020-21 school year, in-person or online for the academic school year.

Brabrand said, "The bottom line is this. We must place the health and safety of our teachers, our students and our families first. The COVID-19 pandemic looks much different than it did even three weeks ago. Then, the science told us we could offer in-person instruction safely if we took the right precautions."

BRABRAND shared the situational analysis that led him to the recommendation starting with



Scott Brabrand, Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools



Karl Frisch, Providence District Representative



Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District Representative



Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Member-at-Large

PHOTOS COURTESY FCPS

health conditions, the impact of those conditions on operations, technology readiness, and more. "There is a record number of new (COVID-19) cases in the country and the mortality rate is rising. Governor Northam stated last week that he would be prepared to go back to Phase Two if needed. Last night, multiple health officials and Maryland's most populous jurisdictions asked the state to reconsider its in-person activities. We have also seen today that the U.S. Surgeon General has said that transmission rates must be lowered before schools can reopen. Just hours ago, the CDC reported

data that the actual number of coronavirus infections is probably 10 times higher than the reported cases in Fairfax County. We have seen some declines... But more recently, the decrease has stopped. Our numbers have remained steady or sometimes have increased each day." Brabrand said several regional school divisions recently announced virtual starts to their school year due to those concerns, including Arlington and Manassas schools. Brabrand added that one-third of FCPS employees live outside Fairfax County, with the number for teachers at 37 percent and principals, assistant

principals and directors of activities at 40 percent. "We know that the coronavirus does not recognize boundaries, and we have thousands of employees who live in other jurisdictions but come in daily to Fairfax." Another reason Brabrand said he sought the Board's consensus to open 100 percent virtually was that health conditions impacted operations. Data received the week before from the Enrollment Form Choice revealed 60 percent of students preferred in-person learning, yet only 48 percent of teachers signed that choice as their preference. Brabrand said substitute applications

were down by a third compared to last year, and ADA accommodation requests for teachers with medical needs soared to 1522 in June. "Ten percent of the teaching workforces may not return in person... This number remains fluid and it's expected to increase throughout the year." Brabrand said there were not enough teachers to meet in-person student needs.

AS FOR TECHNOLOGY READINESS, Brabrand assured the Board that when the students return in September, there will be "robust virtual instruction that will be the pride of this country." He underscored a new help desk for children, a project team, and directions in eight languages to use the new computers. "We have ways to make the links easier in Google and Blackboard Collaborate ... We can share with the Board later about how we're going to teach teachers best instructional practices in virtual instruction." He said the division now had the latest updates for load capacity, noting that Blackboard Collaborate was now in the cloud, and there would not be security issues either as they fixed that.

Highlights of School Board Member Questions

Q: We've got a significant portion of our school staff population that has not yet been surveyed for their views on returning to work and are obviously impacted in a virtual environment. What considerations are being made for them, and when can we expect to plan for them? (Karl Frisch, Providence District Representative)

A: We're looking at ways that we can ensure that our employees can come to work safely and engage in social distancing... typically, because the current phase three that we're in. And so, we would certainly want those employees to

come into work and work on the site. Those employees who could continue to telework can certainly continue to take advantage of our telework regulation. And then looking at ways that we could utilize that for different functions of the school system. We also know that with our lack of distribution. We've held back a portion of approximately 3000 laptops for our school-based support employees who can also engage in and support things and activities in the classroom. (Sean McDonald, interim assistant superintendent, Department of Human Resources)

Q: I need to know more about what we're going to do to make sure that we can have

a robust education for our students, not the ones who are going to log on all the time, but the ones who are disconnected. (Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Member-at-Large)

A: I will work to provide that; I appreciate it and we are going to find ways to connect with those that have not been connected from the spring and to reconnect with them, and I'll be glad to bring updates to the Board on how that will be. (Superintendent Scott Brabrand)

Q: What are we going to do in partnership with the county to help our working families, so that they have a way to have their

children be safe for those who have to return to their jobs, and do it in light of this decision? (Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District Representative)

A: We (will) continue to have conversations with SACC and our early childhood.

I recognize that virtual may make the needs for childcare even greater... We're working on childcare with in-person, and when we pivot to in-person, we still want to offer our teachers and all of our school-based staff...the opportunity for the four-day in-person instruction. (Superintendent Scott Brabrand)

John Lewis Legacy

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

The body of John Lewis will be laid to rest this week, but the legacy of his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement will live on. In his role as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, he was the youngest person to speak at the March on Washington in August 1963. While his words that day are not as well remembered as those of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who spoke after him that day with his "I Have a Dream" speech, the message of John Lewis is as relevant today as it was then. He exhibited a style of frank speaking that day that became famous over the decades of his leadership in the Civil Rights

Movement when he told the crowd:

"We are tired. We are tired of being beaten by policemen. We are tired of people being locked up in jail over and over again. And then you holler 'be patient.' How long can we be patient? We want our freedom, and we want it now!"

He must have had some sense of satisfaction when last month with District of Columbia Mayor Muriel E. Bowser he visited the Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House and stood where the Black Lives Matter message was painted in the street.

That day was in sharp contrast to the day in 1965 when he marched with others in the Civil Rights Movement across the bridge in Selma, Alabama, and



suffered a skull fracture from being hit in the head with a police baton in what became known as "Bloody Sunday."

John Lewis was the last of the great civil rights leaders of the 1960s. He lived long enough I believe to realize that his message was being more widely heard than ever before in this country. Should John Lewis be beginning his career today rather than ending it, I have no doubt he would be at the forefront of Black Lives Matter. While Lewis experienced the police batons, dogs and fire hoses, others today have felt the knee of white authority pressing on their necks or bullets hitting them in the back. The words "I cannot breathe" have come to be more than the last words of individuals whose lives

were being snuffed out but are the words of generations living under a society of oppression because of the color of their skin. I cannot breathe means to many that they cannot live freely in an unjust and discriminatory society.

John Lewis never gave up through many challenges that are now being chronicled by other writers. In recent years I have appreciated his efforts to get the Congress to take action to end gun violence that affects communities of color disproportionately. What would John Lewis have us do? He offered this advice: "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just: say something, do something. Get in trouble, good trouble, necessary trouble." We can participate in making a more just society when we follow John Lewis in getting into necessary trouble!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Going Back to the Dark Ages

To the Editor:

With the July 8 decision by the Supreme Court to ban insurance coverage for contraceptives for women, we have gone back to the Dark Ages, where men in management will decide "what is best" for women who work in their offices and in their companies.

Perhaps this Court should have instead tried this case under the Fourteenth Amendment, which notes that no state may "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Is this not blatant discrimination based on gender to favor the men and not the women in applying this insurance ruling?

Why is there no uproar when males use the generic forms for the sexual prowess drugs like Viagra and Cialis and submit those receipts to their insurance companies for reimbursement?

Thanks to the voting by the 5 male majority members of the Supreme Court, my boss now has the right to decide what prescriptions my insurance will cover, and not my doctor.

This is not a new problem.

In 1873, Congress passed the Comstock Laws which criminalized the use of the UP Postal Service for anyone to send out by mail any information on contraception. In 1909, lawmakers tightened the law to prohibit delivery of those materials by railroads. And in 1922, Congress banned any

foreign importation of these 'salacious' materials.

These intrusive and insulting laws remained on the books until 1965 when the Supreme Court intervened in the case of Griswold v Connecticut, when it ruled that it was unconstitutional for the federal government to prohibit married couples from using birth control. At that time, 26 states also prohibited the dissemination of birth control information for unmarried people.

In 2021, it is time for the Courts, Congress and various religious officials to stop equating "sex" with "sin" and to instead treat birth control as a private medical option, and not as a not moral issue or an economic one.

These jurists and politicians should take the advice from my Irish Catholic, church-going mother, who was pregnant 9 times. We lived in Oak Park, Ill., which the local newspaper declared "Oak Park's fertile acres." The data supported this assertion. In a two-block area, there were 242 kids. That included the Gallagher's with a brood of 14; the Graney's with 9 girls; and the O'Brian's with 9 boys. I had only one friend who was an only child.

Before she died, my mom said she wanted to have a "serious conversation" with me, as the oldest child. She noted that, "after much thought," she had finally decided that "birth control isn't a sin." And

she wanted me to convey that information to my sisters. I said no, since it was none of my business. But added that's the kind of information that should come from one's mother.

My mother never got around to the contraception conversation, and died shortly afterwards. One sister at that time had 2 tiny tots--and went on to have 10 more children.

There is great irony that the defendant in the birth control case is an order of celibate Catholic nuns, who have no need for this medication.

Nor have they been required to pay for it for anyone else. Similarly, 5 of the Supreme Court Justices have had ties to the Cath-

olic Church and its birth control doctrines. They join the all-male hierarchy of the Catholic Church in promulgating the birth control philosophy---applicable to women.

In America, we have a right to expect that our Courts and their judges do not decide such cases on the basis of religion---either theirs or anyone else's.

The Constitutional mandate for the separation of Church and State does not have one set of rules for women and another for men. Maybe we will need a new Scarlet Letter tee shirt for women that proclaims: NCI, or Not Covered by Insurance.

Kathleen M. Burns.
Alexandria

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Terraced Garden Becomes a Natural Escape

Springfield backyard brings batches of beans, cucumbers and science lessons.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Petersen garden in Springfield started as a project to build a couple of terraced garden bed on their hillside backyard, and turned into a classroom of sorts to fill the quarantined hours, give the family a togetherness project and act as a horticultural laboratory for lessons the whole family could not get in any school.

"It turned into a quarantine family project when we found out the kids were going to be out of school," said David Petersen, the father of Sofia, 8, and CJ, 5.

The backyard of the Petersen's Springfield house has a portion on a steep hillside, and in the previous year, they started with a single level of terraced garden beds up by the house.

Then a few trees died in the backyard and after cutting them down, they were left with a bunch of logs, so they researched how to build multiple terraces, and began the project in early 2020. Then the coronavirus altered things in eve

ry household across the area, so they made the best of it, and started cutting up all the logs and researched building terraces on the internet.

Now they have gardens on several levels with green beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, spices, broccoli, strawberries, cantaloupes, squash, pumpkins and a few flower plants.

"We started them from seed," said Alicia Petersen, the mother of Sofia and CJ.

They also worked with Nalls Produce, an old fashioned garden store that's nearby, to get some of the soil, mulch and advice in addition to tapping into their neighbor's knowledge. "She actually gives us gardening advice," Alicia Petersen said, pointing to their next-door neighbor that works for the Food and Drug Administration.

Sofia is full of plant knowledge and is learning more every day, especially about the pollinators and the plant regeneration. "I'm really excited about having pumpkin pie in September," she said, and hopes there is one to carve at Halloween too. "It's going crazy," she said of the pumpkin vine. Everything is natural, and when they had aphids causing harm to some plants, "we released ladybugs when we had aphids," said Alicia Petersen.

They see toads, snakes, birds, chipmunks and a fox who are all part of this ecosystem. "We just started it because we wanted to learn how seeds grow," Alicia Petersen said. "It was exciting to see, we're learning as much as they do," she said, pointing to the children.

So far, the cucumbers have grown so fast, they end up giving a lot away to the neighbors, and the cherry tomatoes are a good addition to their dinner salads.



Sofia Petersen is keeping an eye on this pumpkin for a future pie or a Jack-O-Lantern.



Some of the extra logs created a great classroom down by the back fence.

The lettuce, a cold weather vegetable, came in the early months this spring, and the watermelons are just taking shape.

"We call this our grand experiment," Alicia Petersen said.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Your Future is in Your Hands



If you were asked five years ago what you envisioned your life would be like in 2020, we doubt that 'quarantined during a pandemic' was on your list.

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At the Crossroads

Lawmakers to slash the state budget and consider criminal-justice reforms.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The threadbare Franklin and Armfield office on Duke Street stands at the crossroads between racial injustice and economic crisis. It's a ramshackle building now, but it was once the headquarters for the largest domestic slave trading firm in the United States, present at the creation of the systemic racism that plagues Virginia cops and courts. It's also the city's latest acquisition, and the state budget was to include \$2.5 million to help transform it into the Freedom House Museum.

But then the pandemic hit, and the governor hit the pause button on that line item as well as all the other spending priorities of the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate.

Last week, the governor called for a special session on Aug. 18. Lawmakers will head back to Richmond and rebalance the books after the revenue losses associated with the coronavirus pandemic. They'll also consider a host of criminal justice reform efforts that have emerged in the wake of the death in May of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who was killed by white police officers in Minneapolis.

One of the budget line items on the chopping block is that appropriation to help renovate the old Franklin and Armfield office.

"Our investment in restoring Freedom House dovetails with what we are trying to learn and what we are trying to teach people about this issue," said Sarah Graham Taylor, legislative director for Alexandria. "But we're also realistic about the budget environment and the competing priorities."

Before the pandemic, the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed an ambitious \$135 billion budget loaded with new spending priorities. Then the economy crashed, and Gov. Ralph Northam hit the pause button, unalloting \$2.2 billion of new budget line items. At the time, a doomsday scenario from the Secretary of Finance projected that lawmakers would need to slash as much as \$2 billion out of the budget. But the revenues weren't all that bad, and members of the General Assembly are probably going to be forced to cut only \$1 billion.

"I was able to get funding into the budget for sexual assault and domestic violence, making sure we have an education program and that we're supporting social services," said House Majority Leader Charniele Herring. "That's still a priority of mine, but because of what's happened we may have to triage. So it may not be able to be fully funded."

Public-school teachers might not end up with the 2 percent raise they were promised before the pandemic. Colleges and universities might not get money that was earmarked to help keep tuition from increasing. Local governments might not get money for affordable housing programs, and a series of water-quality improvement projects might be on the chopping block. Lawmakers are hoping Uncle Sam will bail them out.



Before the pandemic, Alexandria was to receive \$2.5 million to help renovate the old Franklin and Armfield slave-trading office into the Freedom House Museum. Now that money is in doubt.

Before the pandemic, new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed an ambitious \$135 billion budget loaded with new spending priorities. Then the economy crashed, and Gov. Ralph Northam hit the pause button, unalloting \$2.2 billion of new budget line items.



"If you're mentally ill and something's wrong and someone shows up with a gun and a uniform that's not as reassuring as having a mental health counselor come and de-escalate if an officer wasn't needed."

— Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30)

"We don't have anything from Congress as to how much support they may provide because they've not provided any support thus far related to revenue reductions," said Sen. George Barker (D-39). "In fact when they did the CARES Act back in April, they explicitly said none of this can be used for that. Everything has to be used for expenditures that are new expenditures specifically related to the coronavirus."

CRIMINAL-JUSTICE REFORMS will take up time and attention during the special ses-

sion, and lawmakers will be trying to navigate their way through a series of complicated changes at breakneck speed. Last month, Senate Democrats released an expansive list of proposals including everything from banning no-knock warrants and chokeholds to cancelling funding for police departments that have disproportionate use of force incidents. The list also includes reforms like prohibiting officers from having sex with detainees and prohibiting police from shooting at moving vehicles.

"I think the most important thing, because

"Our investment in restoring Freedom House dovetails with what we are trying to learn and what we are trying to teach people about this issue."

— Sarah Graham Taylor, legislative director for Alexandria

it's what created the situation, is policing. We have to deal with the recruitment, training and pay," said Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw. "Three years ago, the beginning pay for a state trooper was \$36,000. We raised it to \$44,000 because we were losing people left and right. You can't tell somebody to put their life on the line for \$44,000 a year. It's absurd."

Some of the proposals from Senate Democrats would expand local authority, which is limited by a quirk of Virginia government known as the Dillon Rule. One proposal would create an option for local governments to have citizen-review boards with power to investigate, and possibly even discipline, officers accused of wrongdoing. Another proposal would create authority for local governments to use mental health staff to respond to particular calls for service instead of law-enforcement officials, sometimes called Marcus alerts.

"If you're mentally ill and something's wrong and someone shows up with a gun and a uniform that's not as reassuring as having a mental health counselor come and de-escalate if an officer wasn't needed," said Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30). "When they talk about defunding the police, this is where a lot of this misinformation comes from because rather than defunding they're talking about adding funding to have mental health counselors available."

Although Senate Democrats have released a list of proposals they'll pursue during the special session, House Democrats are taking a different approach. They have scheduled a series of virtual public hearings where they will take testimony from interest groups and stakeholders. Then, after the hearings, House Democrats plan to announce a list of priorities. Del. Mark Levine (D-45) said he will use his position as chairman of the Public Safety Subcommittee to make sure police unions aren't exerting undue influence over disciplinary decisions.

"There's a question about police unions, and I think we need to divide them up into seeking benefits like pay, health care, PTSD, paid-family leave and vacations, which I think they have every right to collectively bargain for," said Levine. "And then there's things like chokeholds, discipline and use-of-force standards. They can have their say in the discussion, but it can't be part of any police contract."

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SENIOR LIVING

Discarded Electronic Equipment Helps Seniors in Need

Handheld devices keep the elderly in contact with healthcare providers, family and friends.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

On a recent summer morning, a group of college students gathered in Chantilly to sort and sanitize handheld devices ranging from smartphones to tablets. The equipment was given to a local medical clinic and then distributed to seniors who don't have the means to purchase their own, but need to stay connected to healthcare providers, family and friends.

"Through my work, I've seen seniors isolated at home," said Tanvi Nallanagula, a junior at the University of Virginia and an EMT (emergency medical technician). "This effort is important to me because I can't imagine being quarantined in my house without access to doctors or friends and family."

"Sometimes it's difficult for seniors to know how much medication to take, for example," she continued. "These devices will make it easier for them to ask for help and get the information they need."

The students, primarily college juniors with an interest in medicine, founded the Virginia State Telehealth Access for Seniors, a non-profit organization with a mission to collect and distribute handheld devices to low income seniors and veterans. Once they collect and sanitize the devices, they contact clinics that serve those populations.

"Clinics give us a ballpark of what they need and we tell them what you can reasonably deliver," said Sneha Thandra, a junior at Emory University and the Virginia State Lead for Telehealth Access for Seniors. "We've been talking with INOVA because they have so many clinics all over Northern Virginia. Within a month we'll have devices to donate to them."

The group is in need of smartphones or tablets that have cameras and the ability to connect to the Internet.

"There are people who have devices in their homes that they no longer use because they've upgraded," said Thandra. "Older and low-income patients tend to be more vulnerable and have more complicated medical needs. These devices give them the opportunity to access care and prevent unnecessary medical complications."

"We're also collecting money



Northern Virginia college students collect and sanitize handheld devices to help seniors stay connected to health care providers, family and friends.



Rachana Subbanna, a junior at the University of Virginia, dropping off 25 devices this week at the Charlottesville Free Clinic.

For More Information or to Donate

<https://www.telehealthforseniors.org/>

from corporations, family, friends or through fundraisers to buy new ones," added Rachana Subbanna, a junior at the University of Virginia. "Anything helps, even \$5. If someone doesn't have an old device to donate, but wants to donate \$40, that's enough money to buy a device."

The organization was founded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is part of Telehealth Access for Seniors, a national organization run by 120 volunteers

in 26 states

In addition to devices, the student volunteers provide instructions and free tech-support. In order to continue providing this service in Northern Virginia, they need more volunteers and continued donations.

"An interesting approach is to focus on mental health," said Thandra. "We know that during this time a lot of seniors will be lonely so we wanted them to be able to connect with family and friends."



The Norsky family: Charlie (dad), Matt (the ECHO food collection is his Eagle Scout Project), Peter (Matt's older Eagle Scout brother), Jessica (mom & Scoutmaster T-1145G (girls' troop), Emma (Matt's younger sister & Scouts BSA T-1135G member) at the ECHO parking lot in Springfield.

Patriot District Food Drive to Support ECHO

BY W.T. 'BILL' DEXTER
PATRIOT DISTRICT
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

On Saturday, June 20, 2020, Patriot District delivered two tons of donated food to ECHO (Ecumenical Community Helping Others). There is hunger among a significant portion of the population living in the Burke, West Springfield, Springfield, Fairfax Station and Fairfax City communities. Families in need of food turn to ECHO for support and ECHO reports that they are providing food to approximately five hundred families or three times the number of people they normally assist.

Patriot District, BSA members collected and delivered non-perishable food in non-breakable containers and personal care items such as toothpaste and toothbrushes.

Individual Scout families gathered food from their homes and friends, neighbors and relatives. Scouts then wore their uniform, either Class A or Class B, when they delivered the food to a pick-up point.

Seven units notified us that they participated; Pack 873, Pack 1344, Troop 50, Troop 1131, Troop 1344, Troop 1345G, and Troop 1347.

At two collection points, Westwood Baptist Church on Old Keene Mill Road and St. Stephen's United Methodist

Church on Braddock Road, parents and scouts dropped off donated food. At ECHO a scout team unloaded the arriving trucks, brought the donations inside, weighed and sorted the food.

The leader for the food drive was Life Scout, Mathew Norsky. Mathew is a member of Troop 1131 and this was his Eagle Project.

He recruited twenty-two scouts from Troop 1131, the Order of the Arrow and other troops to include several female scouts. Mathew organized them into three teams and dispatched them to the two collection points and ECHO's main location. Mathew then personally led the operation at ECHO.

Stephen Richardson, ECHO's major food drive coordinator, oversaw the project for ECHO. He wore his scout uniform since he is also an adult scout volunteer as the Committee Chairman of Old Dominion District.

ECHO had numerous adult volunteers supporting the food drive from their side. In total, counting youth and adults from Patriot District and ECHO, approximately fifty volunteers completed this project.

Together, we made it happen. We did our "Good Turn for the Day". We collected two tons of desperately needed food so that ECHO could distribute it to five hundred families in need.

COURTESY OF VIRGINIA STATE TELEHEALTH ACCESS FOR SENIORS

PHOTO COURTESY OF G.C. 'CARY' BLACK, III

'It's a Place Where We Can Support Growth'

Fairfax approves plan to revitalize Northfax West area.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It's been years in the making, and last week, the Fairfax City Council greenlit a sweeping proposal to revamp and revitalize the City's Northfax West area. It entailed a rezoning, special-use and special-exception permits and approval of The Lann Company's Master Development Plan.

The OK came after a nearly 5-hour public hearing, last Tuesday, July 14. Citizens were divided, but the Council stood united. "This is an activity center," said Councilmember So Lim. "And it's a place where we can support growth for the City of Fairfax."

*Phase One infrastructure improvements include construction of a storm-drainage culvert, utility relocations, realignment of Orchard Street, and the addition of three crosswalks, a walking trail, sidewalks and bike lanes.

*Phase Two is the construction of 56 townhouses by Madison Homes along Farr Avenue and Orchard. They'll be 44 feet high and have 112 parking spaces (two per unit), plus 22 surface spaces for 134 parking spaces total.

*Phase Three comprises a seven-story, senior-living facility by Brightview. It'll contain 114 independent-living units, plus 86 assisted-living units and structured parking.

*Phase Four is the future development of 3.3 acres along Orchard and Chain Bridge Road. Planned are 25,000 square feet of office, retail and restaurant uses; 180 housing units and a 140-room hotel.

THE PROJECT also includes the extension of Farr Avenue and the restoration of part of Accotink Creek in Van Dyck Park, an 8-foot trail to Perry Street and Howerton Avenue, plus a pocket park and tot lot for the townhouses.

Concerned about the environment, Councilmember Sang Yi asked, "What kind of flooding could we expect once the site is developed and becomes even more impervious?" Brooke Hardin, director of Community Development and Planning, said the culvert would consume the 100-year floodplain



Northfax West site plan showing the townhouses, senior-living facility and future-development area.

and be designed to eliminate this property's current flooding.

And Mayor David Meyer noted all the money this project is anticipated to bring into the City's coffers. "It's expected to be just under a quarter of a billion dollars – just in our real-estate tax base," he said.

Attorney Lynne Strobel, representing the applicant, said the senior-living building would have an "H" shape to reduce its mass, and stressed that it'll be the first senior-living facility in the City." She also said the trail will connect the Cobbdale neighborhood to Chain Bridge Road. "We're contributing to the City schools financially for capital improvements," added Strobel. "And

we're providing open space and planting about 200 trees. This project will enrich the community and serve as a catalyst for further development, in keeping with the City's plans for this area."

Then, after 21 people called in to voice their comments, pro and

con, during the online meeting, the Council discussed the plan once more and then approved it unanimously. "Moving forward on Northfax has been a City goal for 25 years," said Councilmember Janice Miller. "With citizen input, we overhauled the Comprehensive Plan, and Northfax – including this proposal – was a cornerstone of it."

Yi said he'll take the applicant-provided information in good faith and hoped it'll work with residents who have problems with parts of it, such as the trail near their homes. "We need the development," he said. "What's there now isn't suitable for the City's growth. We're here to advocate for our residents, and I really appreciate the citizen input – we heard you. But I think the pros outweigh the cons here."

COUNCILMEMBER Joe Harmon said this project is about balance. "Once we lose green space, we won't get it back," he said. "But this area has always been planned for commercial development, and I like the stream restoration in Van Dyck Park."

"We have to do what's right for the long term and future generations," said Councilmember Tom Ross. "And we need to be competitive to support our tax base." He also called the new trail connections "a tremendous benefit to the citizens."



Artist's rendition of the townhouses to be built by Madison Homes.

'Don't Replace Natural Resources with Townhouses'

Fairfax City residents weigh in on Northfax West project.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Before Fairfax City Council last week approved the new plan for Northfax West, nearly two dozen residents called in with comments during the online public hearing. And the majority were opposed.

Resident John Sullivan said he belongs to the Isaak Walton League, a conservation group, which is also opposed. "We have to design and plan for the post-COVID era," he said. "Nobody's going to want to move into a senior-living facility like that, with such density. And calling something twice as wide as a sidewalk a 'linear park' is patently absurd."

Garrett Smith's backyard touches the property being developed; so, he said, "I have a personal interest in this. I paid nearly half a million dollars for my townhouse, two years ago, because it backed up to green spaces, trees and wildlife – and nobody told me this was being built here."

"I worry about flooding and privacy issues from the new town-

houses," he continued. "And what's the long-range traffic plan for this project? Consider the human impact of this proposal and vote no."

Matt Moore, who lives in Smith's neighborhood, was concerned about the senior-living building's height, but supported the overall project. "Water issues in our community have been compounded by nearby construction, and we hope

this project improves some of the problems."

Moore also liked the trail to Cobbdale and its park, but worried about construction traffic potentially damaging his neighborhood's roads.

Katie Frasier was not happy, at all. "When are you going to protect our environment af-

SEE NEIGHBORS. PAGE 9



Artist's rendition of the senior-living building by Brightview.

Neighbors Question Northfax West Project

FROM PAGE 8

ter 600 trees are bulldozed and a stream is buried?" she asked the Council. "And shoehorned townhouses aren't meeting the vision of the Comprehensive Plan. This is next to I-66 and should primarily be commercial."

She said residents there "bought their property with environmental and other protections in place. We love the woods behind our houses, and you're letting us down. This is about the developer's greed."

"Green spaces make our City special," said Erin Frank. "Let's keep them and not replace our natural resources with townhouses. Please deny or postpone this proposal."

Agreeing, Patricia Quintana said, "If approved, the City will be voting against its own environmental-protection goals and destroying 5 acres of Resource Protection Area [RPA]."

Katie Johnson also pleaded with the City to save the natural resources there. "The Council holds the power to do the right thing," she said. "Just because you can amend the RPA and Chesapeake Bay Ordinance doesn't mean you should."

But Arthur Hammerschlag favored the plan. "It restores Accotink Creek in Van Dyck Park, reduces flooding in adjacent neighborhoods and improves the inter-sections," he said.

Ronald Tyler lives adjacent to the Perry Street/Howerton Avenue intersection and bought his property because it was next to the creek, so he opposed the extension of the culvert into that area, as well as the trail near his home.

Cobddale's Chase Wiley said, "We shouldn't be taking down all these trees and culverting a stream. Cobddale's a cloistered community and we oppose that trail – and the developer didn't tell us about it."

Fairfax County ecologist Chris Ruck said this stream is "actually in the top 11 percent of all the county's streams" and questioned the "reliability and accuracy of the applicant's data saying the stream was in bad shape." He also worried that "they're digging a 10-12-foot deep, 50 feet wide pit for stormwater management adjacent to the tot lot and townhouses."

"Removing most of the trees in the RPA is just wrong," said Douglas Lillard. "The developer is interested in profit, not in being a steward of the environment."

Betsy Bicknell, however, wanted the project approved because of the Accotink Creek restoration. She said that, overall, it would degrade the wildlife habitat, but the Chesapeake Bay would be improved by the better stormwater management.

But Cynthia Seabring was opposed, saying, "We need to maintain green spaces; we don't need more buildings. We need a healthy ecosystem in our area."

Douglas Stewart, with Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth, said the project "will provide a new, street grid and new uses and will connect Farr Avenue and Orchard Street to create a more walkable City – as will the trail connecting to Cobddale. And there's an opportunity to provide more affordable housing on site."

Also in favor, Michael Fabio said, "We need strong development in that area to encourage others nearby to develop, too. And we need this for our City tax revenue to keep providing the services we all enjoy."

Former Mayor John Mason agreed. "It's crucial for development of a major commercial area in Northfax," he said. "Don't turn this down." And in the end, the Council approved the project unanimously.

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FROM PAGE 2

"no-excuse" absentee voting. Until now, voters were required to have a reason to vote absentee.

These 14 satellite locations will be open for in-person absentee voting starting on Oct. 14:

- Centerville Regional Library, 14200 Saint Germain Drive, Centerville
 - Franconia Governmental Center 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria
 - Great Falls Library 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls
 - Herndon Fortnightly Library 768 Center Street, Herndon
 - Laurel Hill Golf Club 8701 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton
 - Mason Governmental Center 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale
 - McLean Governmental Center 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean
 - Mount Vernon Governmental Center 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria
 - North County Governmental Center 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston
 - Providence Community Center 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax
 - Sully Governmental Center 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly
 - Thomas Jefferson Library 7415 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church
 - Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church
 - West Springfield Governmental Center 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield
- These locations are currently proposed to be open weekdays from 1 to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, the Fairfax County Electoral Board may decide to adjust these hours later this summer based on the interest in absentee voting by mail.

FREE ONLINE COMPUTER SCIENCE WORKSHOPS

DMVHacks, founded by Lucy Chen and Anam Khan, is conducting free online computer science workshops to increase interest in STEM throughout the community. It offers multiple workshops, ranging from basic Scratch (for those who have little to no experience coding) to advanced Web Development (for those who are already familiar with a coding language). They also place a special emphasis on Python and Java. These workshops occur from 3 - 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays through Zoom. For more details, email Lucy Chen at lchen888@gmail.com or the DMVHacks team at dmvhacksteam@gmail.com.

SUMMER CAMPS, REC-PAC, SACC CANCELED

The Fairfax County Park Authority and the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services are announcing the cancellation of 2020 summer camp programs due to the COVID-19 crisis. Included in these cancellations are all FCPA sponsored summer camp programs, REC-Pac programs held at local schools, summer camp programs sponsored by NCS and SACC programs.

Collectively, these programs represent childcare and recreational opportunities for thousands of families across Fairfax County. Impacted NCS programs include RECQuest, SACC summer programs, Therapeutic Recreation Camp, Value in Prevention Camp (VI.P) and Teens in Action. Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Care Centers remain closed to all participants until further notice. Additionally, community centers, neighborhood centers, resource centers and teen centers are closed.

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Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to replace an existing 28.5' wood utility pole with a new 34' wood utility pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 37.2' near 9555 Blake Ln, Fairfax, VA (20201286). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

Employment

Asst Professor of Computer Science - Prep/deliver lectures to undergrad students on comp sci topics, initiate/facilitate/moderate classroom discussions, administer/grade exams. Req'd PhD in Comp Sci + 6 mos exp w/ demonstrated research interest in contrast b/w asymmetric unification/disunification. Resume by mail to University of Mary Washington, ATTN: Beth Williams, Office of Human Resources, 1301 College Ave, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

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FUN THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

ONLINE CODING CLASSES FOR KIDS

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Their teachers take a students-first approach to teaching Python, Java, HTML/CSS, and JavaScript that guarantees students will reach their potential. New summer classes are starting on August 3. Visit www.CodeWizard-HQ.com.

TYSONS CORNER DRIVE-IN MOVIES

Tyson's Corner Center is hosting Drive-In Movie Nights, in partnership with the Hyatt Regency Tyson's Corner Center, on the second weekend of each month. Located along Fashion Blvd. between Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's, will open for parking, be sure to bring your ticket. Show starts at 8:30 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 14 -- "Aladdin"
Saturday, Sept. 12 -- "Mrs. Doubtfire"
Reserve your spot - space is limited. Reservation and movie details are located at <https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/Events>

DRIVE-IN MOVIES AT WORKHOUSE

Address: 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA 22079. Film starts at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$80. Visit the website: workhousearts.org. Call 703-584-2900.

Schedule:
❖ Friday, July 24 -- "The Dark Crystal."
❖ Saturday, July 25 -- "Labyrinth."
❖ Friday, July 31 -- "Hot Fuzz."

MOSAIC DEBUTS OUTDOOR DRIVE-IN MOVIES

EDENS Mosaic has launched a new outdoor drive-in movie series this summer. Located on the top level (7) of Market Garage across from Mom's Organic Market and Hyatt House. Check-in is on level 6. Address: 8295 Glass Alley, Fairfax. The films begin at 8 p.m. The lineup includes:

Friday July 24: "Toy Story 4" at 5:15 p.m.; and "Jurassic Park" at 8:45 p.m.;

Friday Aug. 28: To Be Announced
There is a \$28 fee to reserve a designated spot in accordance with the new social distancing guidelines. Tickets can be purchased at https://mosaicdistrict.com/events/event/drive-in-at-mosaic/?event_id=8599 Visit www.mosaicdistrict.com.

WORKHOUSE SUMMER CAMPS

Ready for in-person Summer Camps? The Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton will be offering July and August Summer Camps for kids in-person on campus. They've got half-day and full-day camps for kids of all ages starting the week of July 20 and Aug. 3. Camps include the following:

Game Design Camp where campers learn about computer technology, visual arts, storytelling and music with creative and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. And the Game Design camps integrate all of the STEM core competencies in a fun and engaging way.

Young Writers Camp gives campers in grades 7-12 the chance to write creatively in a variety of genres, learn about new genres through mini-lessons and receive response to their work from writers.

Performing Arts Summer Camp Challenge offers campers the opportunity to work collaboratively to create a new theatrical work in just two weeks' time! They will write a script, consider production design elements and ultimately perform their new, original work in front of an audience of family and friends! Visit the website: www.workhousearts.org.

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Growing Pains



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After more than six months away from the infusion center, due to the treatment for my papillary thyroid cancer stage II, I make my return on Wednesday, July 22. My non small cell lung cancer stage IV for which I have been treated since early March, 2009, once again becomes front and center after having been back-burnered since early January while we addressed my thyroid cancer. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the risk of miscellaneous drug/treatment interactions, both cancers couldn't be treated simultaneously. Now we go forward in hope, just like we did 11-plus years ago.

Having completed the thyroid cancer treatment protocol after a recent CT scan showed no residual signs of cancer, I am now free - so to speak, to return to the scene of crime - to euphemise, and resume treatment for my underlying/pre-existing lung cancer. I am also returning for treatment because during the six month interval when I was not receiving any current lung cancer treatment, the lung cancer tumors grew. My oncologist was unable to characterize the growth, other than to say there was growth everywhere, (he didn't say a little; he didn't say a lot). For some context, he did read aloud some comparative tumor measurements written in the radiologist's report which were less than ideal. No matter. Cancer is by itself less than ideal so that's nothing new, really.

The theory of immunotherapy is that it trains your cells to fight the cancer regardless of whether the patient receives current treatment or not so the battle continues. Now whether my six months of not receiving treatment was responsible for allowing this growth or kept it from getting worse, my oncologist wouldn't say. What he did say/recommend was that we restart the opdivo (immunotherapy that I had been on for the previous year) since it had been effective for the year during which I was receiving regular bi-weekly infusions. However, I'm scheduled for my next CT scan in only two months instead of the usual three months so that my oncologist can make an assessment sooner rather than later. In the absence of any new symptoms before or at present, the scan becomes the arbiter of my destiny. (I imagine waiting for the results of that September scan will be stressful.) But this is life in the cancer world, and the longer I experience it, the luckier I'll be.

In the interim, I am happy to go forward and resume my treatment. Nearly all the medicine that has previously been prescribed for me has been successful at managing my cancer (keeping it stable) so I have a reasonable expectation that my next two infusions will yield encouraging results. Nevertheless, I am well aware that any guarantees left the building on Feb. 20, 2009. That is when I first received a phone call from my internal medicine doctor advising me that the previous week's lung tissue biopsy had indicated a malignancy.

Slow forward to the present (one does not go fast forward enduring cancer) and I will be back in a very familiar place: the infusion center. Though I don't view my return as one of a conquering hero, I am still alive and reasonably well after being treated for a second cancer while my original cancer was not in remission. (No small accomplishment.) Nor was it in hiding. To invoke one of my late father's favorite words: the treatment for my lung cancer had been held "in abeyance."

Now the 'abeyance' is over and I am back to being a garden variety non small cell lung cancer patient. The delay in my treatment caused some damage I presume but it doesn't really worry me yet (talk about naive). I'm glad to once again be current - and active, in my treatment and I continue to remain positive about the negative. My oncologist has referred to me as his "third miracle" (after having survived so long after an initial "13 month to two year" prognosis). However, that was then. This is now.

I don't think my ship has sailed but there does appear to be some activity down at the docks. No matter, I'm an excellent swimmer.

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

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NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 7/31/20.

BRAKE SPECIAL
\$79⁹⁵

Includes: Install Genuine Toyota front brake pads, inspect front & rear rotors & drums, check tire condition and inspect all hardware. Pads only.

MACHINE ROTORS ADDITIONAL

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 7/31/20.

BG VITAL FLUID SERVICE
10% OFF YOUR FIRST SERVICE
15% OFF YOUR SECOND SERVICE
Power Steering • Automatic Transmission • Brake System

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OIL & FILTER CHANGE
\$24⁹⁵ NON-SYNTHETIC
\$34⁹⁵ SYNTHETIC

Includes: Genuine Toyota oil filter, up to 5 qts of conventional oil*, inspect windshield wipers, check tire condition, check battery (with print-out), inspect and adjust all fluid levels, inspect air & cabin air filters.

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NEW HOURS SPECIAL!
DROP OFF YOUR VEHICLE BETWEEN 6AM & 7AM
WITH A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT & RECEIVE 12% OFF ANY ONE REPAIR.

MAXIMUM DISCOUNT, \$150
NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA PARTS CENTER ONLY. GOOD THRU 7/31/20.

Jack Taylor's
ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

TRUESTART™ BATTERIES
\$129⁹⁵

INCLUDES BATTERY INSTALLATION
Includes: 84 month warranty, 24 month free replacement, 24 month free roadside assistance. Does not apply to hybrid batteries.

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 7/31/20.

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