



Less Shade in Upton Hill Park

NEWS, PAGE 3

In Upton Hill Park, Jonathan Melo, 3, Tomás Weber, and sister Vera Weber, 7, with their new friend, a poodle named Juno.

ArPets:
Meet Khale the Kitty
PAGE 2

How Will You Vote?
DROP BOX PAGE 9

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN
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ARPETS: MEET KHALE

Let's help her find her forever home.

BY JOAN BRADY

Joan is an award-winning Connection Newspapers columnist and local photographer specializing in pets, children and families and contemporary business portraits.

I was devastated when mom and dad told me they had to leave me behind. They had to move away to take care of elderly relatives and they couldn't take me with them. I'm living at a shelter now and despite what I was told, this is definitely not like staying at a fancy hotel.

Don't get me wrong, the people who work at the Animal Welfare League of Arlington are very nice. But with the coronavirus, there are fewer people around. I'm a snuggler and desperately want to go back to being around people all day long.

I've been waiting since April. And, to be honest, every day feels like a year. It's pretty quiet here, which I kind of like, but it's also lonely. Maybe this makes me an unusual cat, but I really miss being close to people who love me.

I have no experience with dogs, so I'm not sure how I'd feel about a canine sibling. I'm cool with kids though, as long as they don't pull my tail. To be clear, I really enjoy all of the attention of being the sole feline, so much as desperate I'm desperate to find a loving home, I'll have to veto any that have other cats.

I hope you will help me to find a family to cuddle with. You can check me out on the Animal Welfare League of Arlington website (awla.org) You can even schedule a virtual date with me where I can draw you in with my amazing eyes by emailing: awla.foster.lorrena@gmail.com. And while I hope you pick me, I do have some other adoptable feline and canine friends here who are also hoping to find forever homes. If you don't have room in your home and heart for me, maybe you know someone who does.

ArPets is a weekly feature for highlighting the well-loved pets of Arlington as well as animals who are available for adoption. If you or your dog, cat, iguana, bunny or any other pet, has an interesting pet story to tell, email me at joan@joanbradyphotography.com.

How can you resist these eyes? Khale is ready.

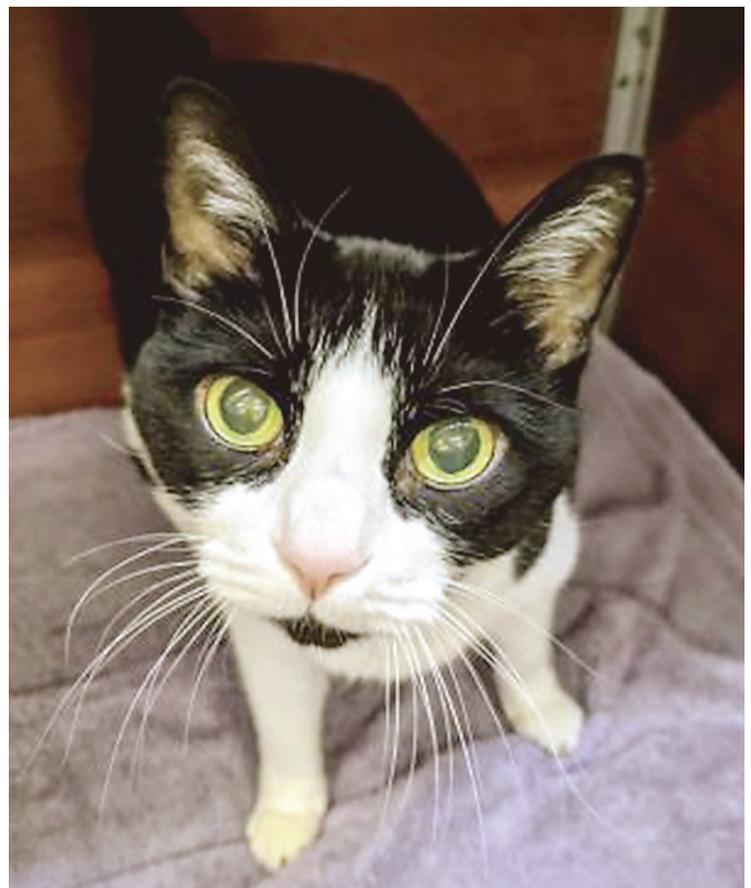


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED AW/LA

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.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 10

Desegregating Private Schools. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. The U.S. Supreme Court outlawed racially segre-

gated public schools in 1954, but whites-only private schools flourished throughout the South for decades. The Supreme Court's 1976 decision extending the ban on racial segregation to private schools involved a segregated pre-school here in Arlington. Join local resident Richard Samp as he discusses the

people and places involved in this Arlington-focused case and its interesting aftermath. Richard Samp is a semi-retired lawyer who has lived in Arlington for 35 years. He currently serves as President of the Old Glebe Civic Association. Among his Arlington-focused writings is a history of his Old Glebe neighborhood and a history of the

Saegmuller and Madison Elementary Schools. Visit the website www.Arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

Roots, Fruits, Nuts, and Leaves: The Glories of Fall Foraging. 10-11:30 a.m. Online. Fall is a wonderful time of year for foraging. Paw-paws, ginkgo nuts, sassafras and

more can be found in the urban surroundings by foraging in the wild (and not so wild) areas. Speakers are Extension Master Gardeners Rebecca Halbe and Jane Longan and longtime gardener and educator Puwen Lee. Free. RSVP at <https://mgv.org/events/> to receive a link to participate.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6

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Tomás Weber, 4, stands next to his new bike, one his grandfather Elvis found in a local shop, with horse head, tail and saddle.



Sometimes it is hard to tell who is having more fun at the park, the kids or the grandparents. In this case, it was a toss up. Grandfather "Papi" (Elvis) Melo instructed the kids on their bikes and then took off for a victory lap around the park to enjoy the pristine blacktop for himself.



PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN

Ann Shanley, 91, hadn't had her hair cut since late February, when her assisted living facility ceased salon services. She was too afraid to go out for a cut; she didn't want to put others in her residence at risk. But she finally reached the point where she had to have a hair cut. In June, she learned Jim Moore's barber shop on Lee Highway was cutting hair by appointment: Moore's safety measures and the neighborhood reputation of his shop convinced her to go.

Moore's Barber Shop Open, Staying Safe

Older, vulnerable residents look for low volume barbers who go the extra mile.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

Jim Moore was finally able to open his barber shop, Moore's Barber Shop, on May 29th, when Virginia gave the green light to hair salons and barber shops. Up until that time Moore had been closed for more than two months, a real hit for a small shop like his. But he didn't want to take chances with his health, his co-worker Clay's health, or any of his clients. He was still working as a volunteer fireman and they followed a strict protocol given the numbers of firefighters who had fallen ill early in the spring.

Moore opened his shop by texting clients, saying he would be open by appointment only. He would ask clients coming in to wear a mask, have their temperature taken on arrival (100.1 was the upper limit), and demonstrate good oxygen levels. Only two clients were allowed in the shop at a time. He and Clay would wear masks, gloves, and thoroughly clean surfaces after each client. Moore's is still operating at low capacity, without the usual gathering of young and old men waiting for their hair cuts and discussing the week's events, but he's working again, "and it feels great," said Moore. To make an appointment, text 301-801-6993 or download theCut and book an appointment online at booktheCut.co/jimmoore.

Upton Hill's New Parking Lot Is Full of Cyclists

Park in transition serves young and old, but shade trees are gone.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

On the Friday before the long Labor Day weekend, Tomás Weber, his sister Vera Weber, and their cousin, Jonathan Melo, and grandfather "Papi" (Elvis) were enjoying the smooth, unscathed new enlarged blacktop parking lot at the Upton Hill Regional Park, along with several other young cyclists who were reveling in the near empty lot so they could show off their bike riding skills. Thomas and Vera were visiting Arlington with their mother Sara, who moved back to Pittsburgh from Arlington this year; they were taking advantage of the long weekend to visit family. Sara is a graduate of former Washington and Lee High School, and was happy to be back "home."

Upton Hill Regional Park was in the news

in 2017-2018 because of the renovation planned by NOVA Parks (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority) which owns and manages the park. Tree and urban forestry advocates in Arlington lobbied the County Board to halt plans to take down trees at the park. Citizens argued the last thing Arlington needed was another, bigger parking lot, especially for a park that is within walking distance for 80 percent of its users and offers respite from the heavily blacktopped area near Willston Shopping Center.

Developed in the 1970s, Upton Park has always provided a balance of active uses and natural resource management. The waterpark underwent a major renovation in 2006. It attracts about 50,000 users a year. Mini Golf is another family friendly feature, attracting about 30,000 visitors a year, and the batting cages are a popular attraction, with over 100,000 rounds per year.

But for many users, the quiet forest paths were the reason they visited. For those users, arriving at the park last week was a surprise: trees in the old parking lot were gone, and the paved area was much larger.

In 2015, NOVA Parks surveyed over 400 park users to see what features might be added to the park. Half those surveyed

said they wanted adventure features like a ropes course or zip line.

NOVA Parks responded to the concerns of tree advocates in Arlington by agreeing to save 49 mature trees marked for cutting, 35 living trees and 14 dead ones, and noted they would be able to expand the current upper parking lot without having an impact on the forest resources. Parking has been an issue on most summer weekends, NOVA Parks said. Using low impact development techniques, the new larger parking lot was to have a much smaller ecological footprint than the old parking lot. Old parking lots have all the water after storms flowing rapidly into streams. The new parking lot is designed to capture the storm water and release it slowly to protect the surrounding environment. One feature to improve water management is an underground storage tank or "cistern" that will capture the storm surge and release it slowly. Sections of the parking lot now have pervious pavers, designed to absorb the water and release it slowly.

And for now, at least, the parking lot is a pothole-free, glossy paradise for kids who have new bikes and a long weekend to put them through their paces. If only there were a few shade trees to keep the sun off

Arrest Made in Trail Assaults

Over the weekend, the community provided numerous tips and investigative leads which led to the identity of the suspect involved in a series of incidents along Arlington trails. On the evening of Sunday, Sept. 6, police executed a search warrant at the suspect's residence and took him into custody without incident. The suspect, a 55-year-old Arlington, Va. man was arrested and charged with Robbery, Assault and Battery (x3), Indecent Exposure (x5) and Felony Possession with the Intent to Distribute Marijuana. He is being held in the Arlington County Detention Facility on no bond.



The investigation into the suspect's actions is ongoing. Anyone with additional information related to this investigation is asked to contact the Police Department's Tip Line at 703-228-4180 or ACPDTipline@arlingtonva.us. Information may also be provided anonymously through the Arlington County Crime Solvers hotline at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477).

Members of the public reporting additional criminal incidents are asked to use the police department's online reporting system.

In the month of August, police received five reports of an aggressive cyclist involved in confrontations with pedestrians walking along trails. Based on witness interviews and evidence collected, detectives are investigating this as a series involving the same individual.

At 7:25 a.m. on August 11, police were dispatched to an assault that just occurred in the area of S. Glebe Road and S. Four Mile Run Drive on the Four Mile Run Trail. Upon arrival, it was determined

the male and female victims were walking along the trail when a cyclist approached them yelling to stay on the right side of the yellow line. When the male victim yelled back, the cyclist approached and circled the victims on his bicycle before pulling down his shorts and exposing his buttocks. The cyclist then allegedly struck the male victim on the arm and unsuccessfully attempted to take the female victim's phone from her hand.

At 5:03 p.m. on August 15, police were dispatched to the late report of an assault on the W&OD trail between Sparrow Pond and Columbia Pike. Upon arrival, it was determined that at approximately 10:06 a.m., the male and female victims were walking on the trail when they were approached from behind by a cyclist traveling at a high rate of speed. When the male victim took out his cell phone, the cyclist allegedly attempted to strike the him twice, making contact on the second attempt. The suspect then pulled down his shorts and exposed his buttocks before riding away.

At 3:35 p.m. on August 16, the



reporting party and male victim were walking on the W&OD Trail in the area of Columbia Pike at S. Four Mile Run Drive when they were approached from behind by a cyclist. The cyclist allegedly yelled for the pedestrians to get off the trail and passed closely by at a high rate of speed while yelling obscenities. When the male victim yelled back, the cyclist allegedly pulled down his shorts and exposed his buttocks. The cyclist then rode back towards the reporting party and victim, continuing to yell obscenities before making a U-turn and leaving the area.

At 11:39 a.m. on August 21, police were dispatched to the report of an assault which occurred on the Custis Trail at approximately 10:30 a.m. Upon arrival, it was determined the female victim was running on the trail in the area of N. Frederick Street when she was approached from behind by a cyclist.

As the victim attempted to move over, the cyclist passed her at a high rate of speed and allegedly struck her in the back of the head and neck with an open hand and yelled for her to move over.

At 7:24 p.m. on August 29, police were dispatched to the area of S. Park Drive and S. Columbus Street on the W&OD trail for the report of an assault and battery. Upon arrival, it was determined that the male and female victims were walking along the trail when they were approached from behind by a cyclist traveling at a high rate of speed.

When the male victim yelled for the cyclist to slow down, the suspect dismounted, confronted the victim and allegedly struck him in the face.

Bridges to Independence Merges Green Valley Neighborhood will benefit from merger.

By EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

Bridges to Independence announced a merger with Bonder & Amanda Johnson Community Development Corporation (BAJCDC) last week. The combined non-profit organization will enhance services to Northern Virginia families in need, and deepen ties to Arlington's Green Valley community. Bridges to Independence is a Northern Virginia provider of housing and vital services for at-risk families

and individuals. Bridges has been working with and for homeless families since 1985, formerly as the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless. Established in 1999.

BAJCDC is a community-based non-profit with a mission to address the health, education, financial empowerment and social service needs of people living in Arlington's Green Valley neighborhood. Green Valley is one of the original African-American communities of Arlington.

"Our merger with this great organization will allow Bridges to

expand the scope of support it provides to at risk individuals and families in our community, and increases our capacity to respond to the current economic crisis and meet the ongoing demand for low-income housing in Northern Virginia," said Bridges board president Patrick King. "BAJCDC has maintained a longstanding commitment to the less fortunate in our community, and our combined organization creates more opportunities to help Arlington families achieve stable, financially-independent futures." Bridges and BAJC-DC will unify under the Bridges

organization to provide youth education, social service referrals, health and wellness guidance, and financial education – adding to Bridges' current housing, employment and youth development portfolio. Bridges also expects to maintain operations at BAJCDC's Green Valley Community Services Center on South Shirlington Road. Former BAJCDC Executive Director Cecily Whitfield served the Green Valley Community for more than four years, and joined Bridges' staff as Chief Program Officer in April 2020. Whitfield will maintain her position on the Executive Com-

mittee of the Green Valley Civic Association Board. The merger is expected to finalize in December 2020.

"We are excited that this merger will allow even more neighbors and families who face daily challenges and housing insecurity to be served," said BAJCDC board president C.C. Jenkins. "Combining forces with Bridges will expand our footprint within the Green Valley Community and offer assistance to more families, which is critical during this pandemic environment."

CALENDAR

SEPT. 1-28

Reflection. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2120 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Reflection, a solo exhibition of acrylic abstract paintings by Vian Borchert. Many were produced during quarantine and Coronavirus times, as she reflects on our new reality and our new normal. Visit the website: <https://galleryunderground.org/2020/07/reflection-september-show/>

SEPT. 9-OCT. 14

Weekly Free Outdoor Yoga Class. 6-7 p.m. At Del Ray Psych & Wellness Parking Lot, 1900 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Maureen Clyne, an affiliated agent with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in the Alexandria office, will be leading free outdoor yoga classes in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. This community event, Harvest Moon Yoga 2020, is suitable for all levels and open to the public. The class is taught by Clyne, a senior yoga instructor, and is sponsored by Del Ray Psych & Wellness. Contact: Maureen Clyne: 703-967-8884.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

Fridays at the Fountain. 5-8 p.m. Featuring Collective a Chord at The Stand at the Crystal City Water Park, 1601 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Pack a picnic, grab a beer or a bottle of wine (and your mask) and head down to the Water Park for live music and a good – socially distant – time. Visit the website: <https://nationallanding.org/do/fridays-at-the-fountain>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Outdoor Choral Concert. 6-7 p.m. At The Rectory, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. Choral Music Returns: "A Brand New Day" in Alexandria. Presented in a special physical configuration to maximize safe social distance between

singers and audience, Classical Movements presents the Choir of Hope & Harmony, conducted by Anthony Blake Clarke, in a first-of-its-kind outdoor, socially-distanced concert. Twelve professional singers perform 400 years of choral music by Byrd, Britten, Panufnik, Coleridge-Taylor, Barnett and more on themes of hope in times of

Uncertainty. Cost is \$45. Visit the website: www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/

SEPT. 12-13

The 18th Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival, formerly known as the King Street Art Festival, will take place Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 12-13 at a new location at John Carlyle Square in Alexandria. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. The address is 300 John Carlyle Street in Alexandria. The city and the Old Town Associations feel the new location will provide a solution to the challenges faced with the intense traffic and parking for both artists and patrons alike. Admission is free; time slot reservations are required through eventbrite with COVID-19 safety measures.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

Local Author Lecture Series: The Cabinet. 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Local author Dr. Lindsay M. Chervinsky will discuss her new book, The Cabinet: George Washington and the Creation of an American Institution. The U.S. Constitution did not create the president's cabinet — the delegates to the Constitutional Convention explicitly rejected the idea. But faced with unprecedented diplomatic, constitutional, and domestic challenges, President George Washington concluded he couldn't make decisions alone. Two-and-a-half years into his presidency, Washington convened the first cabinet meeting with some now-famous figures: Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jeffer-

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8

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Protecting The Postal Service

Hundreds of calls and emails from constituents urging Congress to stop efforts to sabotage the USPS.

By U.S. REP. DON BEYER (D-8)

This August the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) unexpectedly became a center of national attention. Three weeks ago, President Trump admitted during a FoxNews interview that he was blocking funding for USPS to prevent people from voting by mail.

Within days I received hundreds of calls and emails from constituents urging Congress to oppose Trump's efforts to sabotage USPS. Many also reported delays in mail delivery, which harmed local businesses and prevented people from receiving life-saving medicine, and most were fearful of the effects on the election in November.

I took these comments directly to US Postal Service headquarters,

where I joined my colleagues from the region to stand in solidarity with postal workers and demand an end to attacks on the agency.

Upon hearing of operational changes, including elimination of overtime and other staffing cuts and the removal of blue mailboxes and sorting machines, members of Congress requested an Inspector General investigation, which was subsequently launched. The House and Senate are also holding hearings as part of their own investigations, which have already turned up troubling evidence of recent, sharp declines in USPS delivery service.

In a hearing held by the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the



Beyer

recently-retired former USPS Inspector General told me that the changes ordered by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy were not previously planned and would not save USPS money. I have called for DeJoy's resignation.

Days later, the House passed (and I voted for) the Delivering for America Act, which would block and reverse the recent changes put in place by DeJoy, require the restoration of mailboxes and sorting machines, and direct \$25 billion in emergency funding to USPS to ensure improvements in delivery service and protect our elections. More information on the bill, which passed on a bipartisan vote, is available here.

I have been in touch with local postal officials, who express their commitment to ensuring the timely delivery and return of all ballots. This could be an issue in many parts of the country, however, and I will be working with my colleagues to exercise constant vigilance and ensure that elections are fair and safe. My Northern Virginia colleague, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, serves as the chair of the Oversight Subcommittee on Government Operations, and with his tireless leadership the House will do all it can to fix these problems and restore operations and service at USPS.

The U.S. Postal Service is enshrined in the Constitution and has helped keep Americans connected to one another for centuries. We must do all we can to protect it.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Vote Yes on Amendment 1

As a volunteer over the last four years advocating to end gerrymandering and reform the way our legislative districts are drawn, I wanted to let you know that we have a chance to approve a state constitutional amendment to create the Commonwealth's first ever redistricting commission. By joining me in voting yes on Amendment 1, you can help end the long-time practice of allowing politicians to pick their voters instead of the voters electing the politicians.

We redraw electoral districts every ten years, and in Virginia, we've left this critical responsibility up to members of our state General Assembly. As a result, our "elected" officials have drawn maps to protect their own interests

and keep themselves in power.

If we pass Amendment 1, we can create a transparent, bipartisan, citizen-led commission to draw legislative districts. This means that instead of shady backroom deals, the new system will be completely open to the watchful eyes of all citizens. Public meetings will be held across Virginia, with all the proceedings available for public scrutiny for the first time.

The amendment also adds the minority protections of the federal Voting Rights Act into the Virginia Constitution to protect against lapses in federal-level safeguards. For decades, Virginia has depended on federal protections for minority voting rights, but those have been steadily

eroded. Amendment 1 ensures that "districts shall provide, where practicable, opportunities for racial and ethnic communities to

elect candidates of their choice" no matter what.

Amendment 1 has support from a bipartisan list of Virginia-based advocacy groups, nationally recognized anti-gerrymandering organizations, major Virginia newspapers, and over 70% of registered

voters in the Commonwealth. Join me and so many other Virginians in taking the pledge to VOTE YES ON AMENDMENT 1 and transform Virginia into a state whose redistricting process is finally fair.

Bonnie Hershberg
Alexandria

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Videoconference with a Landscape Designer. 9:30 a.m. Need a quick consultation about your garden or landscape design? Plant Nova Natives is planning a series of interactive video conferences in which you can ask landscape designers for advice on improving your native plantings. Featuring Elisa Meara, Native Plant Landscape Design - Topic: Designing on hillsides, including small residential hillsides or big slopes on community property. Submit your questions and photos ahead of time if you can.

Visit the website: <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

International Coastal Cleanup. Staggered hours between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. At Barcroft Park, 4200 S Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington. EcoAction Arlington is partnering once again with the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup and Clean Virginia Waterways to tally trash for analysis.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 13

Master Gardeners Autumn Fest. 1-3 p.m. At Glencarlyn Library, 300 S. Kensington Street, Arlington. View

three short educational videos on gardening at mgnv.org. You may pre-order native plants, local honey, and compost tea and pick them up at the library parking lot between 1 and 3 p.m.

TUESDAYS THRU OCTOBER

FRESHFARM Farmers Market. 3-7 p.m. At The Grounds, 1102 South Eads Street, Arlington. The National Landing BID is teaming up with nonprofit FRESHFARM to bring the farmers market back to Crystal City every Tuesday at a new location to accommodate for social distancing. Visit the website:

<https://nationallanding.org/do/fresh->

[farm-farmers-market](https://www.freshfarm-market.com)

FRESHFARM MARKET'S OPEN

Local FRESHFARM Markets are opened. Residents are encouraged to pre-order as much as possible, but grab-and-go and prepackaged options will be available for purchase at all of the markets listed below. Saturday Markets: Arlington, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. -- N Court-house Rd. and 14th St N, Arlington; Oakton, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. -- 2854 Hunter Mill Rd., Oakton. Sunday Market

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10



OPINION

Special Session Looks at Nursing Homes, Reporting Outbreaks, Election Reform

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

As the third week of the General Assembly's Special Session draws to a close, several major legislative accomplishments are moving forward. The floor of our makeshift chamber in the Science Museum of Virginia was emptier than usual when Senator Bryce Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) contracted the novel coronavirus and was absent for a week. Thankfully, he returned this week, having recovered fully. The complexity of crafting legislation to address the dire health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as addressing urgent calls for racial justice and police reform, all while navigating a new location and virtual meetings, has led to some unusual occurrences. It is rare to have any member absent for an extended period of time during session, even rarer to have several missing, but as this protracted session is occurring in August and September--when legislators are usually working on our other jobs, many Senators have been absent for extended periods. Senator Amanda Chase (R-Chesterfield), who claims to have a medical condition that prevents her from wearing a mask, has been confined to a plexiglass box, akin to a hockey penalty box, to keep herself and others safe from possible infection. Through the fog of these distractions, the Senate has remained focused and deliberate, passing a number of bills to adapt to COVID-19, ensure folks can stay safely at home during the pandemic, and enact equitable reform in our justice system. Nursing homes have been hit especially hard during the pandemic, where close quarters causes infections to spread incredibly quickly through the most vulnerable populations. As the pandemic continues into the fall, the toll taken by isolation has increased, with many Virginians unable to visit their parents and grandparents for up to six months. The Senate passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia Beach), to require all certified nursing homes to remedy this situation by providing an opportunity for weekly visits to patients either virtually or in-person, provided special safety precautions are observed. We passed legislation to ensure transparency and accountability by requiring the Virginia Department of Health to report outbreaks of communicable diseases publicly on its website, and require school boards to post their

coronavirus mitigation plans on their public websites. Key election reforms have advanced from both chambers, expanding the ability to vote absentee and enacting safety measures to protect the health of voters and election officials. In addition to these pressing reforms, we passed several bills to protect frontline workers and healthcare professionals. Legislation to ensure frontline workers in healthcare, nursing homes, schools, and public safety have access to rapid diagnostic testing for COVID-19 passed unanimously. Bills to supply school employees and childcare providers with personal protective equipment (PPE) also advanced. In addition to these public safety measures, the General Assembly has begun to reassess who is sent to prison and for how long they stay incarcerated.

America incarcerates more people per 100,000 than any first world nation by a long shot, and most of the people incarcerated are people of color; In Virginia, over 60% are Black or Latinx. That's why I was glad the Senate took much-needed steps to provide prosecutors with discretion over which transgressions they take to trial, and which ones they defer penalties on for extenuating circumstances. The Senate also passed legislation to allow for the release of terminally ill patients from confinement, give the Attorney General oversight of patterns and practice investigations of local police departments, and to expunge criminal records for certain nonviolent offenders who have served their time and repaid their debt to society. I had originally hoped for this Special Session to last for a few weeks, but due to a week-long delay by the House of Delegates while setting their rules, and the complex nature of some of the proposals before us, the end is still not in sight. Leadership has told us to plan on spending the next several Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in Richmond for floor sessions. While most committee meetings are occurring in person during those days, some are also meeting virtually on Mondays or Tuesdays. SB5015, the special session budget bill, which offers a number of amendments to our state budget has yet to be taken up, and, as of writing, the House has only reported about ten bills for our review, with nearly 100 still yet to be acted upon in their chamber. We are in it for the long haul, but the final product will be worth the time spent.

It is my continued honor to serve the citizens of the 30th District.

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HOME LIFE STYLE

Last Chance to See the ASPIRE HOUSE in McLean

Design showhouse closes on Sunday, Sept. 13.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Designing a dream home can be likened to assembling a haute couture wardrobe. The right foundational pieces and accessories combine to create an aesthetic that is at once polished and nonchalant.

This weekend offers the last opportunity for the public to see and derive inspiration from such a space. The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13. The 9,600-square-foot home, located in McLean, was curated by 28 handpicked designers, architects and remodelers. Each of the home's 30 rooms is a showcase of thoughtfully designed vignettes.

The spaces, "represent the very best of the design community," said Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair. "[It celebrates] great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

A predilection for antique furnishings served as inspiration for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule. Using a French antique sculpture as the focal point, she gave the space a sense of intimacy by hanging framed antique drawings on the walls which she swathed in floral wallpaper. The floor is covered with an antique rug in jewel tones of deep reds and greens.

"I wanted the space to be a place that would catch the attention of visitors," said Asack, of Masseria Chic in McLean. "I wanted it to be a space where guests could have a private conversation."

When designing the gallery, Lenore Winters of Lenore Winters Studios in Bethesda used intricately detailed panel moldings as a natural frame for the art that would inhabit the space. "Our primary intent was to...showcase the artworks to be displayed, said Winters. "Having that element as our primary focus, the design was carefully edited to respect and enhance the visitors' experience of each individual artwork."

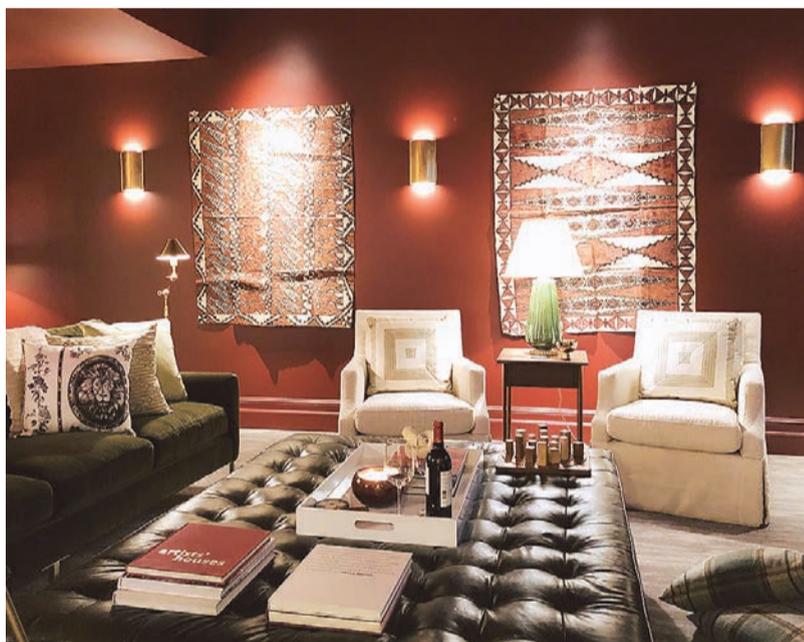
A theatre without traditional stadium-style seating is the image that Courtney McLeod of Right Meets Left Interior Design used as the concept for her creation of the home's cinema, an entertainment space where family and visitors alike would gather to watch movies.

McLeod imagined that the homeowners would be well-traveled, so the space should appear as though it had evolved over time. "We wanted the room to have a collected feel, filled with pieces from around the



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13.



COURTESY OF COURTNEY MCLEOD OF RIGHT MEETS LEFT INTERIOR DESIGN

A leather ottoman in olive green adds warmth and texture to the cinema designed by Courtney McLeod of Right Meets Left Interior Design

"Great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

—Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair, ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House

world," she said.

The walls and ceiling are painted in Rickwood Red by Sherwin Williams. "By using the same color on the wall and ceilings, we were able to camouflage the fact that the ceiling height changes, which felt awkward when we first saw it," said McLeod.

A leather ottoman in olive green sits in the center of the room, surrounded by seating in shades of cream. "It's a big, multifunctional piece of furniture," said McLeod. "The ottoman is a perfect spot for a tray holding a glass or wine or snacks or put your feet up while you're watching a movie."

The show house is for sale, priced at \$6.75 million and is located at 952 Mackall Farms Lane, McLean, VA. It will be open through Sunday, Sept. 14th from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. with in-person tours every 15 minutes. The last admission is at 4

p.m. All visitors must wear masks. Tickets are \$50 for adults, \$45 for military and \$45 for seniors and a group tour is a max of 12 people at a time (12 ticket holders). Proceeds will benefit the ASPIRE DESIGN AND HOME Diversity in Design Scholarship Fund.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 5

son, Henry Knox, and Edmund Randolph. Over the next several years, they provided crucial support and advice as Washington established cabinet precedent. Cost is \$6 available at alexandriaville.gov/shop.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

Secrets, Spies, Sputnik and Huntley. 10 a.m. to noon. At Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria. Take a stroll through the less-visited side of Huntley Meadows Park to uncover its history of spies and espionage. Learn how the Cold War struggle between the US and the former Soviet Union shaped Huntley and the Fairfax County we know today. Meet at the South Kings Highway entrance to the park, and plan on a 2.4-mile walk over flat terrain. The cost is \$10 per person. Call the park at 703-768-2525.

MONDAY/SEPT. 21

Outdoor Storytime. 9-9:45 a.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Throw down a picnic blanket or just sit in the grass with your children and listen to Green Spring's storytellers weave their tales. Afterwards, take some time to explore around the gardens, ponds and historic house. The cost is \$3 per person, and the program is designed for participants age 2 to adult. Call 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 22

Evening Hike. 6:30-8 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Celebrate the first night of fall with a pleasant evening tour of the park at sunset. Learn about common wildlife in the marsh and where to find these critters. The cost is \$8 per person. Meet at the outdoor classroom. Masks or face coverings are required for outdoor programs at Park Authority facilities when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions will be made for health reasons or for activities such as eating or exercising. Call 703-768-2525.

ALEXANDRIA

DRIVE-IN THEATRE

The Alexandria Drive-In Theatre, presented by Alexandria based businesses ALX Community and The Garden, is now opened. The six-part movie series will run on Saturdays through October 3 and will feature a popular collection of movie classics and family favorites. The drive-in theatre will be located in the Eisenhower section of Alexandria in the parking lot connected to commercial space owned by real estate developer and event partner Stonebridge. The lot can accommodate up to 215 cars per screening. Alexandria Drive-In Movie Line Up: Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020 -- "Trolls" Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 -- "Field of Dreams" Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020 -- "ET" Saturday, Oct. 3, 2020 -- "Mamma Mia" Website: www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com. Cost: \$30 per car/per screening. No refunds. 100% ticket costs go to two local Alexandria-based charities.

ONLINE CODING CLASSES FOR KIDS

CodeWizardsHQ is offering online after school coding classes for kids and summer coding classes for kids with a structured curriculum that is comprehensive, developmental, challenging, and fun. Students get to code a project in every class. Expect the most fun and effective live, teacher-led coding classes for kids with support, including live office hours and 24/7 access to their proprietary coding platform. Their teachers take a students-first approach to teaching Python, Java, HTML/CSS, and JavaScript that guarantees students will reach their potential. Visit www.CodeWizardsHQ.com.

GIRLS WHO MATH

Girls Who Math is a student-run charity started by high schoolers at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. They provide free individual tutoring and group classes to students of all ages. Although initially created as a way to empower girls with interest in STEM, they have opened up their programs to students of all gender identities to encourage all students to keep learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The classes they offer cover a wide variety of STEM topics from computer science to biology, and are held once a week. The one-on-one tutoring is suitable for students with a wide variety of needs. In the time that they have been established, they have helped over 600 students from over 25 different countries. They also often host seminars and information sessions to inform students of competitions, career opportunities, and scholarships. To learn more about Girls Who Math and programs that are currently offered, visit their website at <https://girlswomath.net/>

THE BIRCHMERE

The Birchmere in Alexandria is reopening with limited capacity. During the public health emergency, there will be a \$25 food and beverage minimum and a \$5 Covid fee. There will be no bar service and no gathering in the stage or bar areas. Customers will be escorted to their seats, and those without reserved seats will be seated by staff to ensure social distancing. Schedule of Shows: Friday, Sept. 11 -- The Eric Scot Band Saturday, Sept. 12 -- 33 Live's Killer Queen Experience Friday, Sept. 18 -- Eaglemania Thursday, Sept. 24 -- Kick -- The INXS Experience Friday, Sept. 25 -- TUSK -- The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Saturday, Sept. 26 -- The Night-hawks Friday, Oct. 2 -- For the Love of Linda Saturday, Oct. 3 -- The Prince Tribute Experience Sunday, Oct. 4 -- Django a Gogo Tuesday/Wednesday, Oct. 6-7 -- Raul Malo The venue is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. All shows at 7:30 p.m. in the Music Hall. Visit the Birchmere's website: <http://www.birchmere.com/>

Drop-Box Election

Pandemic protocols
rewrite rules on voting.

When absentee ballots are distributed in the next two weeks, voters will have a new option to exercise their franchise: a drop box, which will be installed outside the Registrar's office on North Royal Street. As the election approaches, more drop boxes will be installed at three satellite voting locations throughout the city. On Election Day, every voting precinct will have a drop box where voters can deposit absentee ballots instead of walking into the building and putting themselves at risk of contracting COVID-19.

"We are in unprecedented times, and we don't have to choose between addressing public health and ensuring a functioning democracy," said Tram Nguyen, co-executive director at New Virginia Majority. "We can do both."

The House of Delegates and the state Senate have both approved legislation appropriating \$2 million to fund prepaid return postage for mail-in absentee ballots, legislation that also sets the stage for registrars to install drop boxes for voters who don't want to use the Post Office.

The development comes four months after Attorney General Mark Herring ditched the requirement that absentee ballots include the signature of a witness. Republicans fear the political parties and advocacy groups will be able to weaponize data about unreturned absentee ballots.

"For my friends on campaigns that always lament that the field staff isn't respected enough, well, they should get a lot more respect now because they're basically becoming election officials," said state Sen. David Suetterlein (R-19). "They're going to be the ones responsible for getting these ballots in."

WHEN THE PANDEMIC hit in March, the League of Women Voters filed

a lawsuit challenging Virginia's requirement that every voter filling out an absentee ballot must open, mark and refold their ballot in the presence of a witness. Now that the signature of a witness is no longer required on every absentee ballot, the addition of new drop boxes may rewrite the rules for get-out-the-vote operations. Information about voters that have requested absentee ballots but not



returned them is publicly available information, and Senate Republicans attempted but were unable to restrict use of the drop boxes to voters casting their own ballots. Democrats say fears of ballot harvesting are overblown.

"Nobody has to hand their ballot over to anybody if they don't want to. It's the voter's decision," said Del. Marcus Simon (D-53). "If somebody comes along and offers to help get their ballot where it needs to go, it's up to each voter to decide whether they want to trust that person to take the ballot or if they want to do it themselves. We're trying to make it as easy as possible."

Lawmakers did not lay out what

returned them is publicly available information, and Senate Republicans attempted but were unable to restrict use of the drop boxes to voters casting their own ballots. Democrats say fears of ballot harvesting are overblown.

"I guess you could secure it with people," said Del. Robert Bloxom (R-100). "I guess you could get the sheriff to do it, although there's probably not enough deputies to do it. Or I guess the governor could call in the National Guard."

ELECTION FRAUD is extremely rare in Virginia, and the few problems are discovered and prosecuted long before any votes are cast. For example, in 2016, a volunteer for New Virginia Majority submitted falsified voter registration applications to the Alexandria registrar's office.

Election officials identified the problem and turned the case over to the prosecutor's office, who secured a conviction. Now Republicans are imagining scenarios where the drop boxes could be used for mischief.

"I don't believe you will ever know if someone decides to attack a box, to pour bleach in a box or to destroy a box," said Sen. Steve Newman (R-23).

Democrats say the risk of not having drop boxes outweighs the risk of having them.

"Let's make our elections smooth, and let's make it easier to cast a vote," said Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-31). "This will help on Election Day so people can move in and out of precincts efficiently without being stuck in long lines breathing on each other."

THE PANDEMIC ELECTION this

"Let's make our elections smooth, and let's make it easier to cast a vote. This will help on Election Day so people can move in and out of precincts efficiently without being stuck in long lines breathing on each other."

— Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-31)

kind of security precautions would need to be in place for the drop boxes, leaving that task for the Department of Elections to determine at a later date. Because the drop boxes are expected to be up and running when absentee ballots are distributed two weeks from now, election officials in Richmond are racing against the clock to come up with a system to ensure confidence in the new system. Republi-



November will feature many new ways for voters to participate, changes designed to allow people to keep their distance and avoid waiting in lines and coming in contact with people who might spread COVID-19.

Regular mail can take up to 10 days within Arlington, according to the elections office, which does not recommend mailing a ballot less than 10 days before an election.

In Arlington, ballots can be dropped off at the Bozman Government Center, 2100 Clarendon Blvd, 1st Floor. Additional Locations will be posted later in September.

The Board of Elections is waiting for legislation to be signed that will allow more drop locations. <https://vote.arlingtonva.us/>

EARLY VOTING is now open to all voters; here are times and locations in Arlington.

❖ Courthouse Plaza
2200 Clarendon Blvd. (Former Wells Fargo Space by Starbucks)
Sept. 18 – Oct. 31
M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Extra Hours:
Saturdays, Oct. 17, 24, 31 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
M-F Oct. 19 – Oct. 30 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

❖ Aurora Hills Community Center
735 18th St. S.
Oct. 17 – Oct. 31, M-F 2-7p
Saturdays, Oct. 17, 24, 31 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

❖ Langston-Brown Community Center
2121 N Culpeper St.
Oct. 17 – Oct. 31, M-F 2-7p
Saturdays, Oct. 17, 24, 31 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

❖ Madison Community Center
3829 N Stafford St
Oct. 17 – Oct. 31, M-F 2-7p
Saturdays, Oct. 17, 24, 31 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

❖ Walter Reed Community Center
2909 16th St S.
Oct. 17 – Oct. 31, M-F 2-7p
Saturdays, Oct. 17, 24, 31 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

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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

FROM PAGE 6
Mosaic, 9 a.m - 2 p.m. -- 2910 District Ave., Fairfax

DONATIONS

The Arlington Food Assistance Center seeks local gardeners and farmers willing to grow and donate fresh produce to the AFAC food pantry for local families in need as part of the Plot Against Hunger program. Each week, approximately 2,400 client families visit AFAC to pick up supplemental groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables are in high demand. AFAC will provide free vegetable seeds to those who pledge to donate produce from community or personal gardens. Visit <https://afac.org/plot-against-hunger> or contact puwen.lee@afac.org or 703-845-8486. Seeds are available now at AFAC, 2708 S. Nelson St., during regular business hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Saturdays 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Produce can also be donated at AFAC at the hours listed above or at:

- ❖ Arlington Courthouse Farmer's Market, Saturdays 8 a.m.-noon (look for the AFAC cooler near the Master Gardener information table).
- ❖ Rock Springs UCC Church, 5010 Little Falls Road, Sundays 9 a.m.-noon only. (Look for the donation bin on the Rock Spring Drive side of the church).

Pet Food Bank. AWLA is establishing a Pet Food Bank to serve qualifying residents of Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. In consideration of the effect financial obstacles have on a pet owner's ability to afford pet care, the AWLA

Pet Food Bank program's goal is to keep family pets out of shelters. If you are an Arlington County or City of Falls Church resident and are in need of assistance in feeding your pet, follow this link and fill out a pre-registration form. Visit goo.gl/forms/s2FuFdaYWdZm4t-Pw2.

GET MORE WITH SNAP

Arlington and Alexandria Farmers' Markets accept SNAP/EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) cards for purchases. SNAP/EBT customers can purchase farm fresh produce at local area farmers' markets and get matching bonus tokens to add to their purchases. Virginia Cooperative will be on-site at several local farmers' markets of Alexandria and Arlington to provide more information on SNAP and offer food tastings, prizes and more at the Arlington Farmers' Market, N. 14th and Courthouse Road (second Saturday of the month) and Columbia Pike Farmers' Market, 2820 Columbia Pike (third Sunday of the month).

SBA OFFERS

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to Virginia small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in the entire state of Virginia. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and

download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155. The deadline to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan is Dec. 21, 2020. For more information about Coronavirus, visit: [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.covid19.gov). For more information about available SBA resources and services, visit: [SBA.gov/coronavirus](https://www.sba.gov/coronavirus).

ONGOING

Online Salary Negotiation Workshop. AAUW (American Association of University Women) Work Smart is free online for anyone looking to learn how to negotiate a salary increase or promotion. Why is negotiation so important? AAUW's research on the gender pay gap shows that, one year out of college, women are already paid significantly less than men. Visit [salary.aauw.org](https://www.aauw.org). Create a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary certification program assists homeowners in restoring their home's natural habitat by providing information on sustainable gardening practices. These practices include

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Questions? E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

September Is National Preparedness Month

Seven Steps to Prepare in Arlington.

National Preparedness Month each September promotes family and community disaster planning now and throughout the year. As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no better time to get involved.

1. Be Informed

Sign up for emergency notifications at ArlingtonAlert.com. You can get alerts about severe weather, major road closures, and emergency incidents to your phone, email, home, or work with this free County service. Already subscribed? Log in and verify your information is up to date. Follow Ready Arlington on Twitter and Facebook.

2. Make a Plan

Discuss and practice your emergency plan with every family member — even children. Identify two meeting points for your family, one right outside your home and one in your community, such as a library, community center or place of worship. Text and use social media if you are able. Make sure your children know who is allowed to pick them up from school if there is an emergency. Establish how you will get in touch with your family if there is no phone service or Internet. Check the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the latest guidance on COVID-19.

3. Build a Kit

Collect the supplies you'll need ahead of time. Your kit should include enough water and nonperishable food per person for at least three days. This year make sure to include COVID-19 safety supplies like face coverings, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. Other items: a NOAA Weather Radio, flashlight, batteries, first aid supplies, a whistle, local maps, moist towelettes, garbage bags and ties, cash, games and kids' activities, and copies of your insurance cards, bank accounts, ID, and other important documents. Also consider whether you'll need medication, glasses or contacts, infant formula and diapers, or personal hygiene

items.

4. Establish Communication

Make sure you have key information easily accessible, including names and phone numbers of family members, friends, places (work, school, doctors), and services (power, gas, water, cable, etc.). Create an In Case of Emergency (ICE) contact card for each family member and identify an out-of-area contact person in case local phone calls aren't going through.

5. Plan for Evacuation

If you are told to evacuate, be prepared to do so. Staying in your home during a disaster puts you and first responders at risk. Designate a meeting spot in case you get separated from your family during evacuation. Take your emergency kit with you. If you have time, secure your home, close and lock all windows and doors, unplug appliances, and turn off utilities.

6. Prepare Your Pets

Don't forget to make an emergency plan for your pets. Get current ID tags on your pet's collar, make sure any microchip data is updated, and keep a recent picture with you. Create a go bag with medications, medical records, vaccination history, a leash or carrier, food and water, baggies, litter and cleaning supplies, and small toys. If you must shelter in place, plan to have a two-week supply of food and water on hand. Check to see if the Animal Welfare League of Arlington has opened its pet shelter.

7. Get Involved

Join the Community Emergency Response Team to help your community prepare for and respond to an emergency. Individuals are trained by professional responders to support Arlington emergency management and public safety agencies to assist the community before, during and after an emergency. Not ready for an ongoing volunteer commitment? Visit Volunteer Arlington for short-term opportunities.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

using native plants, removing invasive species, reducing use of pesticides and fertilizers, and creating space for native flora and fauna. Visit audubonva.org/audubon-at-home-1/ for more.

Naloxone (Narcan) can save the life of someone who is overdosing, if given in time. Anyone who assists a person in need is protected from liability by the Good Samaritan Law. Naloxone (Narcan) is available without a prescription for a fee at all pharmacies. Obtain it for free by attending a REVIVE! training. Contact Emily Siqveland at 703-228-0913 or esiqveland@arlingtonva.us or visit health.arlingtonva.us/opioid-awareness/ for available training sessions. The Chris Atwood Foundation also offers training to the public. Visit www.chrisatwoodfoundation.org/naloxone for details.

Monthly Memory Café. 1-3 p.m. at 7910 Andrus Road, Suite 6, Alexandria. The Memory Café, a social gathering for individuals living with memory loss and their families, will be held on the first Friday of every month. Registration is free and highly recommended to reserve spots, which are open on a first come first served basis. To reserve a spot, please call 571-210-5551 or email bdesai@seniorhelpers.com. Visit www.dementiacareconnections.com/memory-cafe or www.seniorhelpers.com/arlington-alexandria-va for more.

Walk-Fit. Ongoing Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Fashion Center at Pentagon City, Arlington.

Participants walk at their own pace in a safe and friendly environment. Group stretch and cool down led by Virginia Hospital Center staff at 9:15 a.m. Meet on the first level by Nordstrom. Call 703-558-6859.

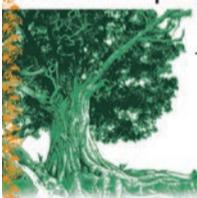
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Cancer For Dummies: Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I was telling my long-time friend, Rita, over the phone on Saturday afternoon, as a cancer patient - and I know this is going to sound ridiculous, short-sighted and stupid, I am not always forthcoming and honest when it comes to sharing new symptoms with my doctors, particularly my oncologist. Aside from the obvious discomfort neglecting a new problem would cause, not telling my doctors everything, all the time prevents me from learning - for a brief moment anyway, exactly what either of my two types of cancer are doing to me. Out of sight, though not totally out of mind provides a certain salve for what ails me. A mixed up version of what I don't know can't hurt me - which of course, it most definitely can.

Still, after 11 and 1/2 years of walking this walk, I can't always get the message through my thick head. I'd rather rationalize and/or self-diagnose or attribute the miscellaneous maladies (aches and pains) to older age than I've ever been or due to the fact that I'm overweight and out of shape. And though my friend Frank might think that I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in, the problem is that cancer has its own agenda and doesn't listen to anybody. Moreover, in my experience anyway, it seems to be able to affect one's judgment.

But how else, other than in a roundabout way, does one deal with such weighty issues such as life and death? Granted, I can see how I'm working against my own best/self-interest here when I neglect to mention something now which could harm my future defense (a sort of British Miranda-type warning). Unfortunately, that's another facet of cancer's insidious toll: common sense. Your perceptions and all are altered as you look at your life/choices through this prism of cancer. If you're honest and upfront about your symptoms, it could hasten your death by confirming your progression. If you're not it could definitely hasten your demise. (Cancer symptoms generally don't just disappear.) Either way, you're in cancer's grip. Extricating oneself is difficult. Fending off the demons is a full-time job. I'm not exactly Linda Blair from "The Exorcist," but occasionally, I do feel as if I'm possessed and unable to right my own wrongs.

You would think that eventually, one would be able to think outside their own box and realize that self-medicating/self-diagnosing and/or presuming one's age is the explanation for all the ifs, and or buts, concerning one's symptoms/health is akin to taking a long walk off a very short pier. It may suffice for the present, but the future is hardly there for the taking, if it's there at all. Realizing that fact has been difficult for me to assimilate. Part of my survival strategy, if one were even to call it that, has been to try and avoid any rabbit holes of emotional despair. My thought has been that I'd rather deal with it later than deal with it now, and since it will be bad enough later, I'm not going to subject myself to it now. Ill-advised? Probably. Recipe for success? I doubt it. But that's how I've mostly rolled since my "terminal" diagnosis in late February, 2009.

Well, better late than never. As I finally wake up and smell the coffee - which I never drink (smell the bacon would be a better example), closing my eyes to an impending disaster is hardly the stuff of dreams (more like nightmares). I imagine the stuff of dreams is more about admitting and facing adversity with your head on straight instead of facing it with your head on crooked. Pretending/hoping a problem/symptom doesn't matter/likely to go away on its own is not how proper health and hygiene works, especially not cancer. It has a well-earned reputation and one's prognosis would be better served by being proactive rather than reactive. Cancer waits for no man - or woman. It's on its own schedule. Come hell or high water.

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

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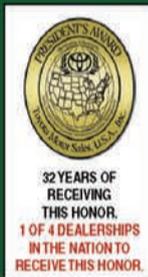
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