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Long-term McLean resident
and two-term Dranesville
District Supervisor (1988-91)
Lilla Richards, 81, died on
Sept. 22 of congestive
heart failure.

McLean Activist And County Leader Dies

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NEWS

McLean Activist and County Leader Dies

Lilla Richards served as County Supervisor, 1988-91.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Long-term McLean resident and two-term Dranesville District Supervisor (1988-91) Lilla McCutchen Richards, 81, died on Sept. 22 of congestive heart failure at The Jefferson, a retirement community in Arlington. Renowned for her activism, Richards joined the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors running as a Democrat in a close, contentious, three-way race in 1988. Richards defeated incumbent Nancy Falck (R) and challenger Robert Thoburn, winning 43 percent of the vote as a new-comer. She was re-elected for a second two-year term that ended Dec. 31, 1991, when the electorate turned on the slow-growth policies of the Democrats. Considered an authority on the County's zoning laws, Richards took on difficult land-use issues, challenging developers and supporting the slow-growth movement.

As a supervisor, Richards represented constituents in McLean, Tysons, Great Falls and Herndon and was a community leader. "She was refreshingly outspoken in her opinions and always followed her conscience," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey McKay. "While her service on the Board was short, her accomplishments continue to affect residents of McLean. The McLean Project for the Arts, established in 1962, spent many years looking for a permanent home. When she became Supervisor, Lilla worked with the MPA and the McLean Community Center. She forged the County's first public/private partnership. Today, MPA plays a huge role in McLean with three galleries and an art studio and offers classes to children and adults in the McLean Community Center," he said.

According to a story published by INSIDE, at the 25th anniversary of the Old Firehouse Teen Center in McLean in 2015, Richards said she considered the Center to be among her proudest achievements while in office. At that time, she recalled the Center's first hurdle was to ensure that the Board of Supervisors did not sell off the former home of the McLean Volunteer Fire Department. She opposed moving the Teen Center to McLean Community Center, saying it would be a mistake. "Teens want to be where the action is. They want to be near the McDonalds, the drugstores and the coffee," she is quoted as saying in the Connection. Today, the Old Firehouse Teen Center is operated by the McLean Community Center and offers programs for McLean teens as well as for seniors.

Richards loved McLean and made many lasting contributions that improved the community's quality of life. "She was an effective, no-nonsense leader who was always willing to take political risks to do what she believed was right," said Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville). "No matter what Lilla did for our community, she did it competently, unselfishly and with passion," he said.

With a grant from the McLean Community Foundation, which Richards helped establish, community leaders compiled her volumes of material into the Lilla



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lilla McCutchen Richards

"She was an effective, no-nonsense leader who was always willing to take political risks to do what she believed was right."

— Supervisor John Foust
(D-Dranesville)

la Richards Collection, an archived collection at Fairfax Library's Virginia Room with its catalog accessible from Dolley Madison Library in McLean.

Born in the District, Richards grew up in Arlington but had roots at the University of South Carolina. She spent her childhood summers on the university campus visiting her grandparents, Lilla Johnstone McCutchen and George McCutchen, an economics professor at the university. They lived in what is now known as the McCutchen House. Richards returned to the University of South Carolina in Columbia, where she received a degree in English and history in 1961. She became a writer and editor with the Economic Research Service. In 1984, Richards and her sisters established The James Malcolm McCutchen Electrical Engineering Scholarship to honor their father. It remains in place today in the College of Engineering and Computing.

Richards gave freely of her time to civic and community affairs in McLean and Fairfax County. She served as past president of the County Federation of Citizens Associations and member of the National Capitol Region Transportation Planning Board.

She is preceded in death by her former husband, Stanley I. Richards. The couple had no children. Richards will be buried later at Pleasant Grove Church in McLean.



The Alden's Drive-Thru Drama Presents Halloween-themed Play

The Alden Theatre at the McLean Community Center (MCC) is presenting its third and final fall performance of its popular, socially distanced theater program, Drive-Thru Drama in October. New York City-based company Recent Cutbacks was commissioned by The Alden to write the new show, "Objects in Mirror May Be SPOOKIER Than They Appear." The show will be presented over three weekends, from 6 p.m.-8:15 p.m., Friday-Sunday, Oct. 16-18, Oct. 23-25 and Oct. 30-Nov. 1. Tickets are \$20 per car/\$15 MCC tax district residents. The performances will be held in the parking lot of MCC at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

Every 100 years, the planets align in such a way that allows Spooky Scientists access to an alternate dimension. A century ago, physicist Dr. Doris B. Gool entered and has not been heard from again. Brave the portal this October and help a modern-day Spooky Scientist as you encounter werewolves, witches, zombies and more in the search for what really happened to Doris. A once-in-a-lifetime drive-thru adventure created by Recent Cutbacks ("Hold on To Your Butts," "KEVIN!!!!") writers Nick Abeel, Darian Dauchan, Kristin Parker and Natalie Rich. The story was developed by Kristin McCarthy Parker and Kyle Schaefer.

Danielle Van Hook, producer of Drive-Thru Drama at The Alden, said "It's been just a few months since we first had the idea of Drive-Thru Drama, and now we are on the verge of

opening our third production! In this process, we made it our goal to push the boundaries of this format and chose the NYC-based group Recent Cutbacks to write this show because we have been blown away by the way they use foley and props in their staged work. We knew they would be the right partner to imagine what a Halloween-inspired story in this unusual format could look like."

Drive-Thru Drama is a social-distance theater format that brings people together for live theater from the comfort of their own cars. Actors will perform one, cohesive story through short scenes across the MCC parking lot. Audience members will simply roll down their windows and drive the route from actor to actor. Earlier this year, The Alden also produced "Small Change" and "From the Ash Baxter Files: The Search for the Stolen Spyglass," both written by Andrew Scott Zimmer for the Drive-Thru Drama format.

The Alden is placing several safety precautions into place to adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions' COVID-19 guidelines, such as requiring the actors to wear personal protective equipment and setting up the route so that actors are positioned six feet away from the cars and passengers.

For tickets or more information visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711. For ADA accommodations, contact Patron Services Manager Evelyn Hill at evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 571-296-8385.



Fairfax County School Board 2020

PHOTO COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY

Life Hangs in the Box Checked

HR for County Schools tells staff to make a decision.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Tia Williams is an instructional assistant with diabetes and severe asthma at Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Choosing the box she checks Tuesday, Oct. 6, stating her intent whether to return to school for in-person learning or not, is an agonizing decision to make.. Williams comes from a family of people with diabetes and asthma. Six cousins and four uncles are dead from COVID. “I want to continue to work (and teach), but I also don’t want to bring (the) virus home to my family. When I talked to HR about my ADA application, they told me that I wasn’t approved because my principal said that none of the kids were going to be virtual, so I needed to return. I do not feel like I have a choice. It is either my health or my job.” Williams is one of 653 teachers and support staff who must decide whether to return to in-person work in the school system this October, take a leave of absence, or resign. She works with deaf and hard of hearing students.

Fairfax County School Board voted their approval at a September 22 Board Meeting to decouple school reopening plans from staffing decisions and bring small cohorts of students and their teachers to school sites for in-person instruction. The division’s Department of Human Resources, under the signature of Sean McDonald, Interim Assistant Superintendent, sent an email to those staff members on Sept. 30 asking their teaching intent.

THE COHORTS included career and technical education classes, preschool autism classes, English language learners and other special education students, such as deaf and hard of hearing students who Williams supports.

“These students represent 3.5 percent of the total student population and 653 teachers and other instructional staff... needed to provide instruction to these students,” said an FCPS spokesperson.

While the percentage appeared small, Becca Ferrick, President of the Association of Fairfax Professional Educators, said they were concerned for the future of FCPS. Based on the numbers FCPS shared, there were not enough employees prepared to return to in-person instruction to meet the staffing needs outlined. “By forcing the return, we may see that the issue becomes one of simply not having enough

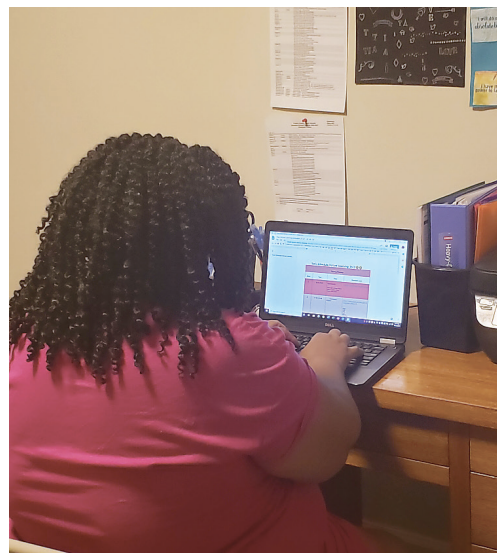


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Tia Williams, an instructional assistant at Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Woodson High School, must decide whether to return to school as in-person staff.

employees on the payroll anymore in order to meet those staffing needs...These employees will almost certainly be asked to ignore both scientific advice and their own ethical principles,” she said.

A copy of an email signed by McDonald dated Sept. 30 and obtained by the Connection read in part: “As we plan for student cohort groups to return for in-person learning, you have been identified as a staff member who works with one of the groups identified...There is a possibility based on student need that you will be asked to return to in-person instruction by your principal.” In closing, the correspondence said, “Submit your response no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, October 2.”

Human Resources provided a five-option plan to staff:

- Return to support in-person instruction,
- Submit an accommodation request under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),
- Take an unpaid Leave of Absence (LOA) for the school year’s balance if approved by the School Board,
- Access leave under the FFCRA for childcare reasons and then return to support in-person instruction and
- Resign or retire.

Upon learning of the email, Tina Williams, President, Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2401, said in a statement to union members: “I was shocked to find out the FCPS gave hundreds of staff less than 48 hours to make a decision... This isn’t a decision that can be made lightly since the district has not been transparent in its safety mechanisms, and the plans they have shown fall short of what

we need.” She urged members to mobilize and send a message to school board members, school leadership and Superintendent Scott Brabrand.

Tamara Derenak Kafax is the Lee District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board. She said, “The Board and I were unaware that the letter was sent. I became aware as I began receiving letters from concerned teachers. I have asked for an explanation from our Superintendent regarding the timeline...I will work with my colleagues, our Superintendent, and his team to ensure that future communication comes without surprises and is supportive of the caring culture that FCPS strives to maintain.”



FAIRFAX COUNTY

Sean McDonald, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

ACCORDING TO A SPOKESPERSON for FCPS, due to feedback from some staff members about the short timeframe to declare their intent on returning to school buildings, recipients of the initial communication received a second one on Thursday, Oct. 1. It extended the timeframe to respond to Tuesday, Oct. 6, at 4:30 p.m. In his second email to staff, McDonald said that the survey data would help inform the next steps needed for staffing. “Your response to the survey is not binding; however, your principal and/or HR will follow up with you regarding your intention,” he said.

Melanie Meren, Fairfax County School Board, Hunter Mill District said on Facebook, “FCPS has received over 2,000 staff requests for accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) – an 8,000 percent increase from last year. Meaning they seek to be on leave. Meaning they won’t be available to teach.”

A spokesperson for Fairfax County Public Schools said, “FCPS regrets anxiety felt by these staff members. This has been a tremendously difficult period, and our staff have all worked hard to remain connected to their students and schools. We realize the hardships and sacrifices made by our staff and sincerely empathize with them.”

Roza Qaradaghi is a Special Education Instructional Assistant at Westfield High School. “I just found that I’m pregnant. My doctor has advised against returning to in-person instruction given the ongoing pandemic. I need my wishes to be respected and to be given a virtual option.. My classes are going so well virtually I’m frankly confused why we have to return to in person instruction right now given the risks.”

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Local Media Connection LLC**

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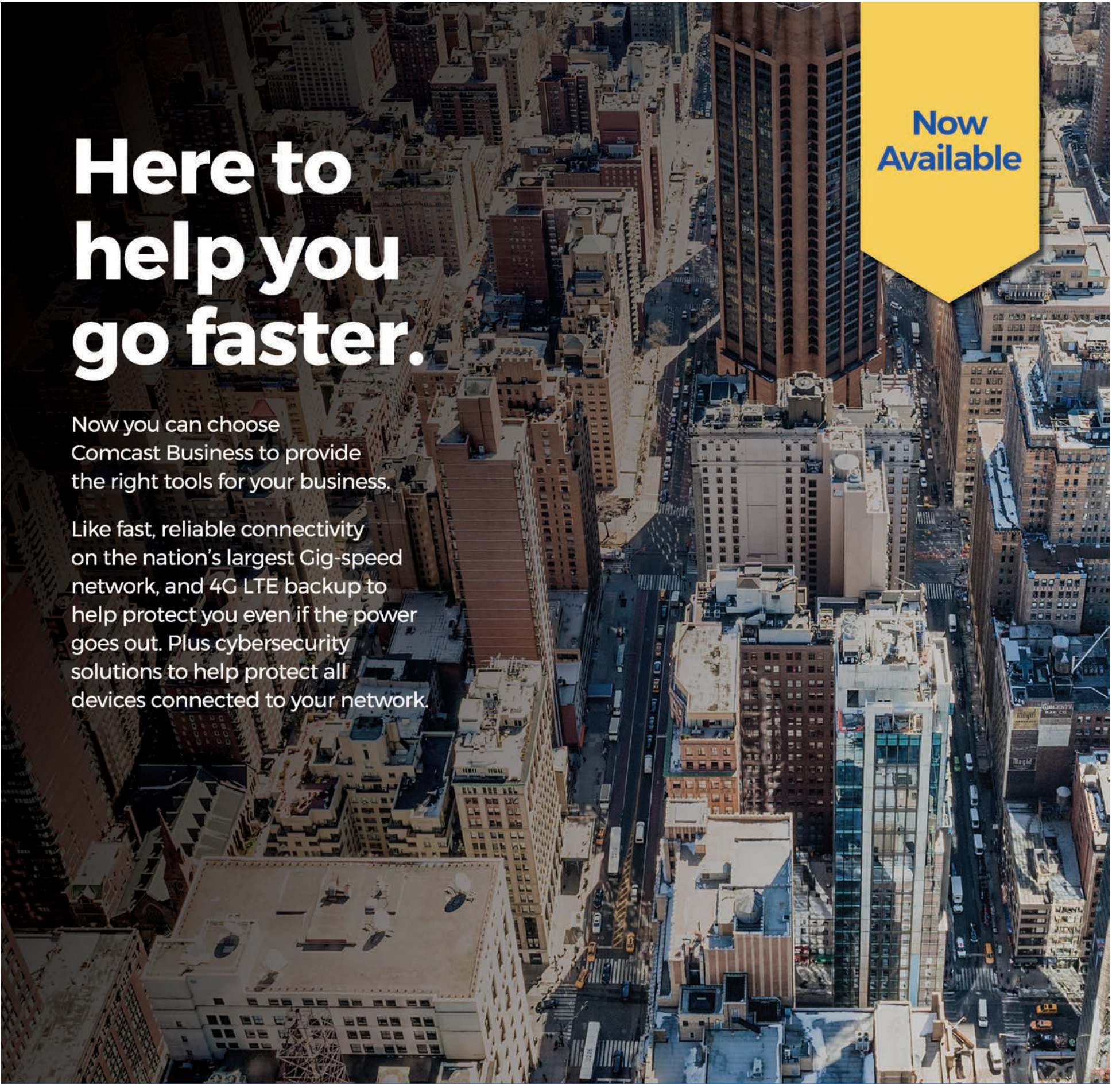
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WELLBEING

Creating a Spooky and Safe Halloween in the Age of COVID-19

Ideas for frightful revelry abound even amid coronavirus concerns.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Cartoon character Marshall from Paw Patrol will be searching for chocolate while a tiny pop star tracks down toys as Arlington mother and teacher Becky Beach and her family celebrate the spookiest day of the year. Forgoing trick-or-treating, she, her husband and young son will gather with other family members for a modified Halloween celebration.

"We are going to buy Halloween-themed party toys and candies for our children to hunt," said Beach. "It will be similar to an Easter egg hunt, but for Halloween. We are maintaining the joy by allowing our children to still wear their Halloween costumes, but we won't be going out."

Like other annual traditions, COVID-19 has transformed the way festive events are celebrated. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officials are encouraging revelers to err on the side of caution this season. As Halloween approaches, some parents are faced with a quandary: allowing children to engage in the frightful fun of the day without compromising safety.

"Some Halloween activities pose higher risk than others," said Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, MD, director, Fairfax County Health Department. "In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread."

The CDC has grouped activities into low-risk, moderate-risk and high-risk categories. The sugar-laden but beloved tradition of trick-or-treating is considered among the riskiest of ghoulish traditions while celebrations with family members are among the lowest.

There are parents who are comfortable with activities considered by the CDC to be moderate-risk, such as open-air, one-way, walk-through where appropriate mask use is enforced, like Markoff's Haunted Forest and Enchanted Forest at Calleva Farm in Potomac, says Dr. Bitu Nasser, MD. "Overall, the CDC guidelines make good sense. They are based on intelligent considerations broken down by how much you want to expose your children," she said. "The main takeaway is to not be in large crowds or crowded streets, as kids will inevitably remove masks. Going house to house and allowing people to hand out individual candies increases the risk of COVID exposure exponentially ... and should be avoided at all costs this year."

Creativity is the theme this season and traditions of holidays like Easter and Christmas are offering Halloween inspiration says Fairfax mother and blogger Alice Anderson. "We want to keep things as fun as possible for our kids so we are going all out on party



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICE ANDERSON

Alice Anderson and her family will wear costumes and celebrate Halloween with a family party due to COVID-19 safety concerns.

ideas this year," she said. "We usually go to a pumpkin farm with fun activities but have decided to make our own fun at home with that as well. Our kids are excited to help make decorations and get everything set up."

Starting new traditions and borrowing ideas from other holidays is the way that Alexandra Fung, a Mount Vernon mother, will deal with the disappointment that her children will feel when they aren't knocking on doors in anticipation of treats. "Egg hunts at Easter have long been a favorite activity at our house, so carrying the tradition over to Halloween has everyone excited, from our toddler to our teen," she said. "And, having it at night with flashlights, and the promise of some king-sized candy bars, makes it all the more fun for everyone."

From reading books filled with ghosts and goblins to creating a season-long calendar, reminiscent of those used for Advent, inspiration abounds, says psychologist Reena Patel. "Create a month of Halloween countdown," said "Why not? We do it for Christmas too. Make a countdown calendar and for each day and have a Halloween surprise, like a Halloween coloring sheet, candy corn puzzle, pencils, stickers. Anything small that represents and leads up to the big day."

"We have a bunch of activities planned for our party at home," added Anderson. "We are going to make decorations, play Halloween games, carve pumpkins, make a DIY (do-it-yourself) maze, eat yummy treats, and finish the night watching the new Scooby Doo movie. I think Halloween can be as fun as you

make it and our kids will be happy spending quality time together as a family."

While independence-seeking teens and tweens might not be wowed by Halloween candy hunts and spooky-themed cartoons at home, they can still enjoy a frightful evening while maintaining safety. "They should have small get-togethers at their friends' houses for Halloween," said Beach. "Check for fevers if inviting teens to your home for Halloween before admitting them in your home. Make sure your teen social distances themselves and wears a mask and/or gloves to keep safe."

Perspectives on Halloween safety vary, acknowledges Karen Aronian, Ed.D. "Some door-to-door trick-or-treating will still happen, but some neighborhoods are doing the same 'pod' [small group] approach with Halloween that they have done with schooling, by going out in safe pods of kids predetermined by parents," she said. "Homes that do decide to give out candy should mark their house with a sign that says, 'covid safe' meaning gloves, masks and social distancing will be observed."

"We are maintaining the joy by allowing our children to still wear their Halloween costumes, but we won't be going out."

— Becky Beach,
Arlington mother and teacher



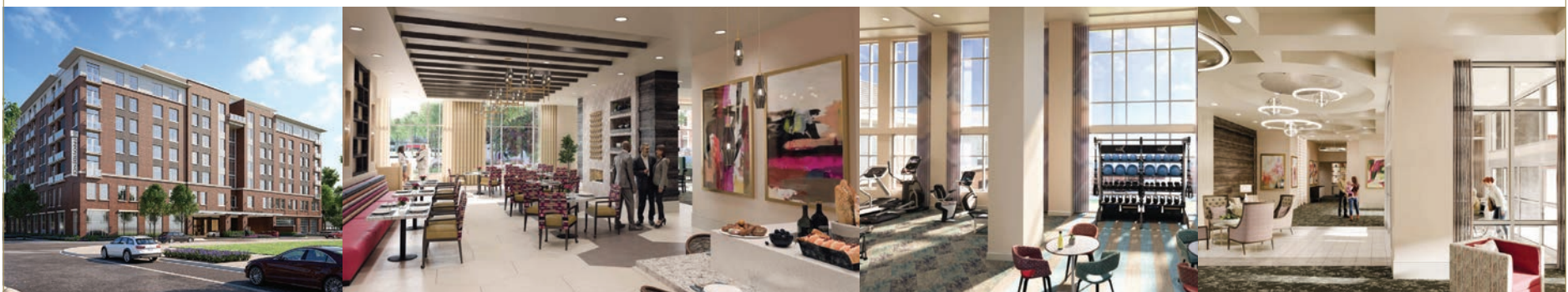
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NEWS



Volunteers help pack food for charities.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Helps Neighbors in Need

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Pastor, Fr. Matt Hillyard, OSFS started a new initiative at Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC) Parish in Vienna in September. Fr. Matt, with the help of OLGC Outreach Leaders, has come up with a unified vision to pursue a once-a-month OLGC Giving Outreach program that focuses on a singular cause each month during the calendar year. Each cause will be headed by coordinators and will be advertised parish-wide to encourage involvement by both church, school, and CCF. This plan is to promote fellowship and community service.

The goal is to conduct each drive on a single day each month (or weekend). The month's communications and liturgies will coordinate with the drive, the need, the mission, so that we are praying for the organizations and those that we are helping. During the month, we will showcase the organization - explain the mission and give a spiritual reflection on it. Someone may talk to the students at the school and CCF, so they are aware of what the organization is and how it affects those in need.

On weekend of Sept. 19 & 20, the Women of OLGC (WOLGC) organized its first-ever Drive-By Food Drive to collect non-perishable foods for the Committee for Helping Others (CHO) and Food for Others. CHO is a Vienna-based non-profit interfaith organization, which provides food, clothing, and furniture as well as emergency rent, utility, and medical assistance to people in need living in Vienna, Oakton, Dunn Loring, and Merrifield. CHO also has a December



Food ready for distribution.

Christmas Store to provide needy families with gifts and food cards for the holidays. Since March, CHO has distributed more than \$75,000 in food and emergency assistance and has worked with Fairfax County to distribute county coronavirus funds. Food for Others is the Fairfax County food bank and estimates that 70,000 people in Northern Virginia live in poverty, with 30 percent of them being children. Currently, Food for Others serves 2,600 local families each week with baskets of food. The bulk of this food comes through food drives.

This weekend the parish came together to fill ten vehicles including two trucks, two vans and six cars to get all the food, personal items and diapers that were delivered to both CHO and Food for Others on Monday morning. Both organizations needed help and they are beyond thrilled with everything OLGC donated, especially more than \$16,000 in cash, check and gift cards.

WOLGC president, Jane Heishman was thankful for all who made this drive incredibly successful and gave a special shout out to the OLGC Youth Ministry. The students were strong in number and strong physically, they loaded all the vehicles in about 30 minutes.

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Center programs and events are not being offered this year or have been adjusted to virtual online or in-person, socially distanced formats. Please check the Center's website for up-to-date information.

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McLean Community Center



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Here's What's Happening at MCC in October!

The Old Firehouse



Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night
Friday, Oct. 23, 7-9 p.m.
\$5 per family
Registration is required

The Old Firehouse



House of Terror and Family Trunk or Treat
Saturday, Oct. 24, 6-9 p.m.
\$2 per person
Registration is required

Wine Down the Fall



Virtual: McLean Uncorked
Sunday, Oct. 25, 5-6 p.m.
Free. Registration is required

Sponsored by The Alden



The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show
Wednesday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m.
Free. Registration is required

MCC Governing Board



Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, Oct. 28, 7:30 p.m.
All Governing Board meetings are open to the public

The Old Firehouse



Spooky Virtual Family Bingo
Friday, Oct. 30, 7 p.m.
\$5 per device
Registration is required



The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org

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NEWS

Local Scouts Honored Distinguished Citizen

Bob Korzeniewski has been selected as the 2020 Northwest Fairfax County Distinguished Citizen for his outstanding volunteer work and impact in the community. After a distinguished business career with SAIC, Network Solutions and VeriSign, Korzeniewski has devoted the last 12 years to leading and supporting non-profit causes in the Washington DC metropolitan area.



PHOTO BY CRAIG DUBISHAR

Bob Korzeniewski

The local Scouts BSA Powhatan District invites members of the local business community, Scouting parent or volunteer, or civic-minded citizen to join a special event on Oct. 28 in recognizing the contributions of Bob Korzeniewski – the 2020 Distinguished Citizen Honoree.

As the Executive Director of the Career Network Ministry (CNM) at McLean Bible Church, Korzeniewski and his all-volunteer team have supported tens of thousands of individuals during their job transitions. The Department of Labor has called CNM one of the finest

faith-based job clubs in the United States. Through the Korzeniewski Family Foundation, he and his wife Dandy actively support a group of impactful nonprofits in the areas of education and social services.

As a native of Salem, Massachusetts, Korzeniewski grew up working at the local Boys Club, coaching high school basketball and leading local youth programs. He is a long-time big brother in the Big Brother Big

Sister program, and participated briefly in the Scouting program, in addition to a host of other activities.

As a business leader, philanthropist, and distinguished citizen, Korzeniewski epitomizes the values of leadership and love of community that Scouting seeks to develop in our area's youth.

If you would like to help BSA celebrate Bob Korzeniewski's contributions to the community, and support local Scouting, you can join the event online or in-person.

For additional information visit www.ncacbsa.org/powhatangoodscout.



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CALENDAR

NOW THRU NOV. 1

Twilight Wagon Rides. 5:15 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Enjoy a journey through the forest and fields, taking in the changing fall colors. After your wagon ride, roast marshmallows and enjoy time by the light of a crackling campfire. These private family outings are being offered on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Nov 1, 2020. Tours begin at 5:15 p.m., and the cost is \$45 per family. Call 703-437-9101, or visit Frying Pan Farm Park.

NOW THRU DEC. 7

MCC Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt. Join your friends, family and community for McLean Community Center's Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt. This exciting fall virtual event allows for you and your team to compete against others and win prizes. This is the perfect event to stay local and have fun with your friends and family. The Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt is a game played on a smart phone in which teams complete 75 missions (or challenges) both indoors and outdoors. Missions include answering questions, taking specific photos or videos, finding a specific item, geocaching or completing specific tasks as given in a list provided by the Game Master. The scavenger hunt will take place in and around McLean and from your own home. Participants work in small teams of 4-10 players. Team captains must be 16 years old or older. Visit the website www.McLeancenter.org.

OCT. 4 TO NOV. 5

Haunted Wine Tours. 6:30 p.m.; 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. The Haunted Wine Tours are back for the fifth year in a row, in a new condensed version, so you can enjoy real ghost stories and award-winning wine all while staying safe. Due to the restrictive environment surrounding COVID, there are far less tickets available this year. Therefore priority access to tickets go to wine club members.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 7

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Free; registration is required. Join (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv show from the comfort of your couch! Register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UTPFallShows>. A Zoom link and password for the show will only be emailed to those who register for it. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

FRIDAY/OCT. 9

Birthday Bingo Bash. 5-6:30 p.m. Via Zoom. A Virtual Bingo Night for the whole community, in honor of Jacob Kulman's 6th Birthday. This event is a fundraiser for the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA). Cost: \$5 per card to play. Contact Dave Mohel at email: COTAFORandJ@gmail.com. Visit the website: <https://cota.org/campaigns/COTAFORandJ/events/Jacobs-Birthday-Bingo-Bash>

OCT. 9-18

Virtual Nature Center Walk or Run. Friends of Reston (FOR) announces its 17th annual run and walk fundraiser for the Walker Nature Center will begin Friday, October 9 and end on Sunday, October 18. This year's event is now the Virtual Nature Center Walk-or-Run, organized to allow for more participation of all ages and abilities. Runners and walkers can choose their selected route of 5K, or 10K, or just 1 mile, to complete the Virtual Nature Center Walk-or-Run at any time within the span of 10 days. Proceeds from registration fees, \$25 (13 years and older), and \$15 (12 years and younger), will support facility enhancements, programs and projects at the Walker Nature Center. Virtual Nature Center Walk-or-Run, direct link: <https://www.active.com/running/distance-running-virtual-events/virtual-nature-center-walk-or-run-2020?int=>

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

A Designer's View -- The Challenges That Face Designers Who Identify as Female. 2 p.m. Part of the Virtual Round Table Discussion Series at 1st Stage in Tysons. Free. In these forums, they'll talk and share questions and thoughts with artists, actors, designers, musicians and directors about experiences they have faced as professional artists. Artists participating include Debra Kim Sivigny, Bob Barlett, Ron OJ Parsons, José Carrasquillo, Thembi Duncan, and more. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Registration is available now at www.1ststage.org.

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

Fall Sights Aboard a Kayak. 8-10 a.m. At Lake Accotink, Springfield. Spend a Saturday morning soaking in the fall sights aboard a kayak at Lake Accotink Park. Get a new perspective on the autumn colors this year with a "Fall Foliage Kayak Expedition." The expedition will take you to the northern part of Lake Accotink to see glorious natural tunnels of orange, yellow and red leaves. This event is designed for participants age 13 to adult, and previous kayak experience is necessary. The cost is \$42 per person. Lake Accotink Park is located at 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield, Virginia. Call 703-569-3464.

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

"A Cockeyed Optimist: Songs that Make Me Smile." 7:30 p.m. At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Katherine Riddle's soaring rendition of "If I Loved You" was one of the highlights of 2017's "Rodgers and Hammerstein's Grand Night For Singing." An award-winning interpreter of Golden Age classics, Katherine returns to NextStop with a singular mission to offer the kind of familiar and beloved musical classics that have that unique ability to wrap around you like a warm blanket and make you smile. Visit www.nextstoptheatre.org/the-parking-lot-concerts.

SUNDAY/OCT. 11

Search for Salamanders. 1:30-3:30 p.m. At Riverbend Park, Great Falls. Help a naturalist with a forest salamander survey and search for salamanders in the streams. During the "Salamanders Undercover" program, learn about the secret lives of these important amphibians through hands-on discoveries. The program is designed for children age 7 to 12. The cost is \$10 per child. Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls, Virginia. Call 703-759-9018.

NIGHTMARE ALLEY

The Workhouse Arts Center announces that "Nightmare Alley" Haunted Drive-Thru is coming to Lorton for this year's Halloween season. "Nightmare Alley" is the first immersive drive-thru Halloween experience in the region. Zombies, swamp creatures, creepy clowns, and scary dolls are among 13 different scary scenes taking up residence on the Workhouse campus. These new campus inhabitants will scare and entertain visitors experiencing the attraction from the safety of their cars. There will be 13 nights of fright, starting on now through Saturday, Oct. 31. Fridays and Saturdays will run from 7-11 p.m. each weekend in October, and the three Sundays in the middle of the month (October 11, 18, and the 25) will run from 7-10 p.m. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/nightmare-alley/>

TUESDAY/OCT. 13

Birding on the Boat. 8 to 10 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Set sail on a two-hour tour and go "Birding on the Boat" at Burke Lake Park. This voyage gives you a closer look at some of the birds and animals that call the lake their home. Bring binoculars for a closer look and be sure to dress for the weather. The program is designed for participants age 8 to adult. The cost is \$15 per person. Children age 12 and younger must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-323-6600, or visit Burke Lake Park.

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An Update About Some Down Time



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I want to give you a blow-by-blow concerning my treatment switch over to thyroid cancer from lung cancer but the last two columns were written four weeks ago in the same week in expectation of a weekend away, so these observations will be new-ish in that they will be hot off the press, so to speak. Away with the kind of friends who are empathetic, sympathetic and who never make me feel pathetic in any of my struggles. In short, the best kind of friends. This is important because when one in the group goes above and beyond in the wrong direction, like heading from one's present cancer direction to a yet altogether new less desirable cancer direction: stable non small cell lung cancer stage 4 being treated with immunotherapy to stage 4 papillary thyroid cancer being treated with chemotherapy, is hardly a conversation that makes for fun even if I now have my own sort of "BOGO." And though the 'shopping 'buy' may be familiar, the cancer 'buy' is not nearly so familiar. Generally speaking a "BOBO offer is of interest, a cancer one not so much. In fact, it's not much of a bargain at all.

The worst of now being treated for papillary thyroid cancer is the array of side effects which are manifesting. They're not exactly debilitating, they're just one big nuisance broken into about eight different nuisances - and I will spare you the details. The net effect of all these side effects is that for the first time in approximately two years, and I feel extraordinarily lucky to be able to say this, once again I feel like I have cancer. And though it's unlikely it's simply side effects which are doing all the talking, rather than the cancer metastasizing, which it already has anyway since the thyroid cancer is now in the lungs, it's impossible not to consider the consequences. I mean cancer doesn't just travel around to make new friends and influence people. It sort of has a task: to damage and destroy. And I have to admit: feeling as if I didn't have cancer is much more preferred than how I feel now.

Nevertheless, it's not as if I feel at death's door (well, not the front door anyway). It's more a feeling of death being at the back door. Not a direct assault, mind you, more of an indirect one. And I'm sure they still count as much as all the others. Unfortunately, I fear an accumulation of these indirect assaults can cause as much cumulative damage as a direct hit. Ergo, I'm wondering if this rear-type assault/indirect-type hit is an indication of future/perhaps even present trouble? Moreover, I wonder if having to defend myself on two fronts (primary and secondary) will weaken the resistance. Because as many World War II movies as I've seen, the resistance rarely seemed to have enough supplies to carry out their mission.

Being in a new battle, even it involves familiar elements: blood pressure readings, EKGs, CT scans, lab and face-to-face appointments, doesn't totally regularize the experience. The reason being that this familiarity is breeding contempt because I have been there and done that. Yet, here here I am having to do it all over again and I find myself quoting Shakespeare or the Three Stooges: "something is rotten in Denmark."

Being a cancer patient is like being unable to send your legs out for a walk as Lt. Com. Henry Blake wanted to after a long period of surgery during a particularly high-casualty episode on the television series, M*A*S*H. And as a previously diagnosed as "terminal" cancer patient, neither can I disconnect from my mortality thoughts any more than Henry could exercise his legs. So what I'm left with is either bucking up or venting to friends and family. I'm lucky to have an outlet. I imagine it is much more difficult for those who don't.

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



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