

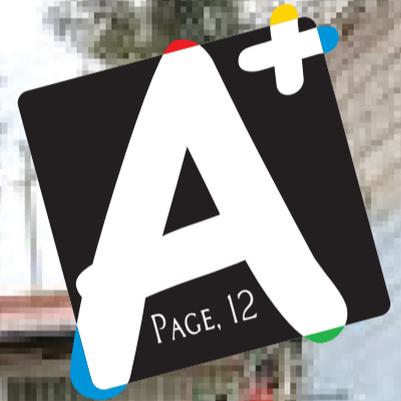
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# CONNECTION McLean and Oakton Vienna

## McLean Filmmake Presents 'The Other Side'

NEWS, PAGE 10



McLean filmmaker Josh Leong with a 17-year old orphan boy Abel, whose life story inspired a short film on the Ethiopian orphan crisis, premiering online on Nov. 20.

**Matrix, Sunlight Discussed at Public Safety Committee**  
NEWS, PAGE 3

**Veterans Day Observed with Caution**  
NEWS, PAGE 8

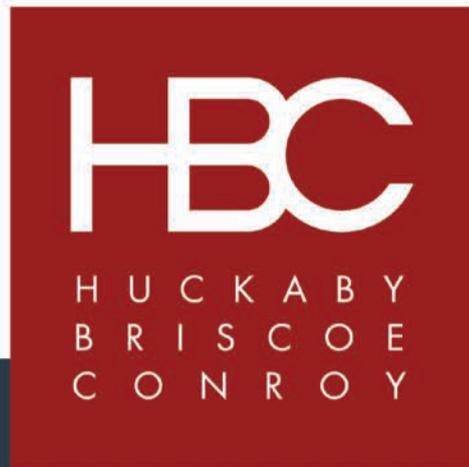
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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

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# NEWS

## Matrix, Sunlight Discussed at Public Safety Committee

Community, advocacy groups and police give more than 2,500 suggestions on police reform; Governor signs reform bills from special session.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

Police reform includes improving morale for police officers. “I’ve met with hundreds of Fairfax County police officers in recent months, in group settings and individually,” said Public Safety Chairman Rodney Lusk (Lee), “and to a person they have told me morale within the police department is the lowest that it has ever been.”

“This is a public safety issue that must be addressed in order to ensure that our officers are performing at the highest level possible, and that we are retaining the highly skilled law enforcement professionals that we have invested so much time and resources in training,” said Lusk.

“I’m glad to see that here, formally, as you know,” said Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield). “We’re already a little late.”

On Tuesday, Oct. 27, Lusk announced a Community Input Matrix, a database of 32-pages of policy suggestions from residents, advocacy groups and law enforcement on the topic of police reform. These are suggestions from the community and groups, not official positions of the Board of Supervisors.

Lusk received and sorted more than 2,500 submissions over the last three months.

At the Board’s Public Safety Committee meeting he shared the suggestions he has received with the greatest frequency and items the Board of Supervisors could address in the near term.

**ACCURACY AND ACCESS** to public safety data was highlighted, including the need for FCPD to ensure its technology vendor has the capability to meet current needs, including gathering ethnic and demographic data.

James Walkinshaw (Braddock) said immediate release of data is critical. “Sunlight is the best disinfectant,” he said. “My view on data is to put the data out there and let people discuss it.”

Some advocates suggested the quarterly release of arrest and use of force data rather than waiting for annual reports issued by police.

“It’s important for all of us to know that both sets [total arrests and arrests of Fairfax residents] show disproportionate numbers,” with Black and Latino people overrepresented, said Walkinshaw. “That doesn’t mean that all of our police officers are racists; the world isn’t quite that simple. But it does mean that there are structures in our society, including here in Fairfax County, that push us towards a justice system that is disproportionate and unequal.”

**SOME SUGGESTIONS** came from the Fairfax County Police Civilian Review Panel.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

“I’ve met with hundreds of Fairfax County police officers in recent months, in group settings and individually, and to a person they have told me morale within the police department is the lowest that it has ever been.”

— Public Safety Chairman Rodney Lusk (Lee)



“There are structures in our society, including here in Fairfax County, that push us towards a justice system that is disproportionate and unequal.”

— James Walkinshaw (Braddock)

Newly passed legislation at the state level could allow the Board of Supervisors to give new authority to the Civilian Review Panel, including investigative power. Lusk said the Board could also authorize hiring of an Executive Director for the review panel.

“We have a pretty big grouping and a serious number of requests and recommendations that have come in, so the idea here is to figure out how do we start to disaggregate them and take steps to act on them,” said Lusk. “We’re going to have to make a decision pretty much on each of them and will have some sort of response.”

Some matrix items will be referred to existing working groups to report back to the Public Safety Committee, for example the Body Camera Working Group and the Chief’s Data Working Group.

Included are some of the other near term possibilities:

- ❖ Consider and discuss implementation of state legislation related to the decertification of law enforcement officers who have been terminated or resigned for misconduct.

- ❖ Review training, recruitment and retention standards

- ❖ Accelerate the expansion of crisis intervention training for first responders.

- ❖ Build upon existing department efforts to expand cultural sensitivity and implicit bias training.

- ❖ Review entry level pay and benefits standards that may be affecting recruitment.

- ❖ Conduct a joint review with the School Board of student diversion programs to address inequities.

- ❖ Direct staff to undertake a review and update of the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** Chairman Jeff McKay called the Matrix “a parking lot of ideas” that, in the future, “must be adjudicated by this Board based on data, input, conversation, and each of these would have to be acted on in some form.”

“Some of these will go off to other committees, some will go through this committee, but none of them will go anywhere before they come to the full Board for adoption,” said McKay.

View the draft “matrix” of community suggestions here: <https://www.fairfaxcount>

[ty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/police-reform/police-reform-suggestions.pdf](https://www.fairfaxcountty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/police-reform/police-reform-suggestions.pdf)

**AT THE STATE LEVEL**, Gov. Ralph Northam signed new laws on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2020, including House Bill 5055 and Senate Bill 5035, which empower localities to create civilian law enforcement review boards. These new laws also permit civilian review boards the authority to issue subpoenas and make binding disciplinary decisions. Northam signed Senate Bill 5014, which mandates the creation of minimum crisis intervention training standards and requires law enforcement officers complete crisis intervention training.

Senate Bill 5030, omnibus police reform legislation, incorporates a number of critical reform measures passed by the House of Delegates including:

House Bill 5099 prohibits law enforcement officers from seeking or executing no-knock search warrants, making Virginia the third state to do so.

House Bill 5069 limits the circumstances in which law enforcement officers can use neck restraints.

House Bill 5029 requires law enforcement officers to intervene when they witness another officer engaging or attempting to engage in the use of excessive force.

House Bill 5049 reduces the militarization of police by prohibiting law enforcement from obtaining or using specified equipment, including grenades, weaponized aircraft, and high caliber firearms.

House Bill 5109 creates statewide minimum training standards for law enforcement officers, including training on awareness of racism, the potential for biased profiling, and de-escalation techniques.

House Bill 5104 mandates law enforcement agencies and jails request the prior employment and disciplinary history of new hires.

House Bill 5108 expands and diversifies the Criminal Justice Services Board, ensuring that the perspectives of social justice leaders, people of color, and mental health providers are represented in the state’s criminal justice policymaking.

House Bill 5051 strengthens the process by which law enforcement officers can be decertified and allows the Criminal Justice Services Board to initiate decertification proceedings.

House Bill 5045 makes it a Class 6 felony for law enforcement officers to “carnally know” an arrestee or detainee.

Governor Northam also signed Senate Bill 5018 which allows individuals serving a sentence for certain felony offenses who are terminally ill to petition the Parole Board for conditional release; and amended House Bill 5148 and Senate Bill 5034 which allow for increased earned sentencing credits. The Governor proposed a six-month delay to give the Department of Corrections sufficient time to implement this program.

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**VIENNA POLICE HIGHLIGHTS**

*The following summary contains various incidents of general interest as well as vehicular crashes handled by the Town of Vienna Police Department from Nov. 6 – Nov. 12, 2020.*

**INCIDENTS**

**Suspicious Event --** 9000 Block Counsellor Drive, NW, Between Aug. 28, 10 a.m. and Nov. 10, 12 p.m. A resident reported that several checks he deposited inside a USPS mailbox did not make it to their destination. He was referred to the Postal Inspector's Office for investigation.

**Petit Larceny --** 1100 Block Ware Street, SW, Between Oct. 16 at 12 p.m. and Oct. 31 at 12 p.m. A resident reported that someone entered his unlocked sheds and stole three pairs of snow skis, an air compressor, a Sawzall, a shovel, and a scooter.

**Fraud --** 100 Block Saint Andrews Drive, NE, Oct. 19, 12 p.m. A resident reported that a check that an insurance company had mailed him never arrived. After calling the insurance company, they advised that the check was mailed and that someone had altered the check and deposited on their bank account.

**Destruction of Property --** Bonaroti, 428 Maple Avenue, East, Oct. 24, 10:40 p.m. A citizen reported that a person had purposely damaged the hood of his vehicle.

**Vehicle Tampering--** 500 Block Park Street, NE, Between Oct. 26 at 12 p.m. and Oct. 28 at 12 p.m. A resident reported that someone entered her unlocked vehicle, rummaged through it, and stole her wallet from her purse.

**Suspicious Event --** 400 Block MacArthur Avenue, NE, Oct. 29, 12 p.m.

A citizen reported that they sent money on-line to an individual for the purchase of a dog. The citizen drove from Iowa to pick up the dog and found that they had been scammed.

**Petit Larceny --** 200 Block Walnut Lane, NW, Between Oct. 31, 5 p.m. and Nov. 1, 8:30 a.m. A resident reported that a political sign was taken from her yard.

**Animal Case --** 1400 Block Desale Street, SW, Nov. 1, 12 p.m. A citizen was bit by a dog at a party in a house located in the Town of Vienna. The dog owner was contacted and advised of the 10 day quarantine period.

**Petit Larceny --** 100 Block Casmar Street, SE Between Nov. 2, 10 p.m. and Nov. 3, 9 a.m. A resident reported that several political signs were taken from his yard.

**Animal Case --** 600 Block Truman Circle, SW, Nov. 3, 3 p.m. The Fairfax County Health Department reported that a woman was grooming a dog at the dog's residence when the animal bit her. The dog's

owner was advised of the quarantine procedure.

**Domestic Dispute --** Nov. 5, 9:13 a.m. A resident reported on-going issues with her estranged husband. The resident was advised of the process to obtain an Emergency Protective Order.

**Domestic Dispute --** Frederick Street, SW, Nov. 5, 8:12 p.m. An officer responded to a verbal dispute between a resident and her husband.

**Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle --** 100 Block Shepherdson Lane, NE,

Nov. 5, 9 p.m. A resident reported that her adult son became angry, damaged property in their home, then took her vehicle without permission. There was an active warrant on file with our department for a previous incident involving her son. The resident did not wish to pursue additional charges against her son. The resident was advised to notify the police when her son returned home.

**Suspicious Event--** 600 Block Upham Place, NW, Nov. 5, 10:27 p.m. A resident heard a noise outside of his neighbor's carport. He then observed a man near the bushes lining the neighbor's driveway. The man entered a dark-colored vehicle and left the area southbound on Lawyers Road. Officers checked the neighbor's home and vehicles and found no signs of damage or attempted entry.

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# Time for Being Thankful

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



COMMENTARY

Next week is the formal day set aside for thanksgiving. For many that means food, and I love the foods associated with the holiday of Thanksgiving. It is a time of generosity as many people and groups make sure that everyone has something to eat at least on that day. For others the meaning of Thanksgiving may be the sales that come with unique bargains that are offered on "Black Friday" although I do not know how those sales will be accommodated during a pandemic. Certainly the crowds pressed against the front doors of stores about to open would not be safe nor would the rush to the best bargains be a good idea.

Some believe that the first Thanksgiving occurred on December 4, 1619, when Captain John Woodlief and 35 Englishmen landed at what is now known as Berkeley Plantation. They immediately fell to their knees as the charter under which they were sailing required

giving thanks to the good Lord for their safe passage from what had been a rough voyage and for the thousands of acres of pristine lands on which they were going to settle. There was no mention of the indigenous people who had occupied the land for as many as 15,000 years before their arrival. More than a year later at Plymouth Settlement a festival occurred that included settlers and indigenous people in what is more often referred to as the first Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving as a holiday on the fourth Thursday of November dates to a proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on October 3, 1863. Even in the midst of a civil war, Lincoln reminded the Nation of "the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies" under the "providence of Almighty God." Lincoln found that "a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity" had not "arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship" and "the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of

years with large increase in freedom...the gracious gifts of the Most High God."

The spirit of Lincoln should be with us as we celebrate Thanksgiving this year. Our institutions of government have been tested over the last nearly four years as seldom before. The voters have largely dispersed those who showed little respect for our values and traditions. It will soon be less painful to read the morning newspaper or to listen to the evening news. There will be fewer times of looking at social media with disbelief at the actions of our national leaders. We will have lively debates as we always do in our democratic republic, but those debates can lead to greater freedoms from inequalities, hunger and health threats.

The pandemic is testing our patience as few other events in our lives have, but we can remind ourselves and others that face masks, social distancing, and no crowds will help to preserve our health as well as that of others. And we can remind ourselves and others that the blessings we ultimately enjoy are not simply of our own making but are as Lincoln reminded us "the gracious gifts of the Most High God"—by whatever name we may call that spirit!

Enjoy your Thanksgiving next week!

# School Building Closed? Try a Park

BY PAUL GILBERT  
NOVA PARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Families across Northern Virginia are challenged with online education. This is the most challenging for elementary school children with shorter attention spans.

For those parents looking for additional resources to help their young learners, your regional park may have some of the answers. Even during a pandemic, in-person learning can happen, particularly when that learning is taking place outside, with masks and socially distanced. That is exactly the formula that is being used at Potomac Overlook Regional Park in Arlington with their Schoolyard Explorers Series.

Schoolyard Explorers is a program of in-person classes taught by a naturalist that ties in with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). There are two one-hour sessions on each subject and appropriate for each grade:

- Weather – designed for 1st graders
- Forces and Motion – designed for 2nd graders
- Ecosystems – designed for 3rd graders
- Water – designed for 4th and 5th graders

This is a great way to supplement online learning with some in-person instruction in a fun park setting that reinforces the materials covered in the state curriculum for science.

"I have participated in several of the Schoolyard Explorers classes at Potomac Overlook with my 1st grader," remarked Arlington mother, Mary Sanders. "The topics and content of the programs are a great supplement to his distance learning, and the classes offer a fantastic opportunity to get outside and away from screens," she continued.



Paul Gilbert

PHOTO COURTESY OF NOVA PARKS

The Carlyle House in Alexandria recently had a program for 3rd – 6th graders called "Discoveries through Trash," which introduced children to archeology.

For those wanting a fully online or hybrid experience, the NOVAparks.com web site has a new interactive virtual tour of Aldie Mill. This innovative and interactive tool uses the 200-year-old mill to

teach both history and science. There are three educational experiences available: Simple Machines, History of Aldie Mill, and Eyewitness to the Civil War. After exploring this information-rich site, you can tour the mill in person on the weekends and see where it all happened.

The remarkable historic resources of our region provide many opportunities to learn for people of all ages. Carlyle House in Alexandria, Balls Bluff Battlefield in Leesburg, or Mt. Defiance Battlefield in Middleburg all offer a variety of tours on the weekends. Bring your face mask and hand sanitizer and explore a part of our areas that is new to you. You can find information on the schedule and registration information on the NOVAparks.com web site.

While fun and recreation is the first thing most people think about parks, they are also places of learning. With schools online and children struggling to learn, getting outdoor and learning is a win-win for everyone.

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A small group from McLean and Great Falls comes together informally at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial for Veterans Day 2020.



During an unofficial Veterans Day ceremony 2020 at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, executive officer of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, president Andy Wilson, reads the invocation while another officer, vice president Dr. John "Sandy" Pidgeon, closes his eyes in prayer. Nancy Wilson stands beside her husband, Andy.

# Veterans Day Observed with Caution

**Cancellation of formal celebration could not stop informal ceremony in Great Falls.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**A** dozen or so hardy souls quietly gathered in the drenching rain at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month to pay tribute to America's veterans in an unofficial ceremony. Even though the Great Falls Freedom Memorial website announced, "Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Veterans Day Ceremony will not be held," the printed words did not stop them. According to Andy Wilson, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial and a retired Army Ranger officer, he and his wife Nancy told a few friends they would meet informally regardless of the rain. "From there, it was word of mouth," he said.

So, it happened that one hundred and two years after hostilities on the Western Front of World War I ceased on Nov. 11, 1918, a small group, mostly adults from Great Falls and McLean, according to Wilson, returned to the memorial plaza despite the pandemic. The memorial's monument of local glacial rock and its granite curb, inscribed with words such as courage, patience and love, principles held by those who give of themselves for liberty and freedom, had been installed three years after 9-11.

It was a place of comfort and pride even though the citizens stood alone under umbrellas for a home-spun ceremony to commemorate Veterans Day 2020 and teach the young. There was no crowd of a hundred; no Langley High School Madrigals singing patriotic songs; no U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard Detachment presenting the color.

"We are meeting to honor veterans past



**Indian American business consultant Puneet Ahluwalia of McLean, running for the Republican nomination for Lt. Governor of Virginia, stands beside Janet Tysse of McLean at the informal Veterans Day Ceremony 2020 at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial.**

and present for their service," said vice president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, retired Lt. Commander Dr. John "Sandy" Pidgeon, who served as a Navy SEAL. "If everybody pushes their umbrellas together, we can have a canopy," he suggested.

**ANDY WILSON**, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial and retired Army Ranger, delivered the invocation. Wilson said he found it on the internet and thought it very interesting. "On the heels of a heated Presidential race, this is a day to unite, to remember and pray, to show our gratitude for so many who have fought for our country...Thank you for reminding us that there's incredible love and sacrifice displayed, when one is willing to stand strong, and fight for freedom."

Wilson said they typically hold three official events each year at the memori-



**Nancy Wilson of Great Falls shares a few remarks during the grassroots Veterans Day 2020 ceremony at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. Executive officers of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, (far left) vice president Dr. John "Sandy" Pidgeon, retired Lt. Commander Navy SEAL and president Andy Wilson, retired Army Ranger officer listen. The Wilsons' grandchildren, Samuel Cassidy, 4, and Austin Wilson, 3 1/2, play at their grandparents' feet.**

al, Memorial Day Observance, a 9-11 Remembrance and Veterans Day Ceremony. Covid-19 forced all canceled in 2020. Asking veterans to raise their hands to be recognized, Wilson thanked them for their service and said, "I'm very happy a lot of you are out here. Bless you."

Pidgeon asked if anyone had family members who served, in what branches, and when. Wilson added, "That's why this Memorial is here. To keep that memory alive... for this community." Janet Tysse of McLean said, "My brother served in Vietnam, Army, helicopter pilot." "My father served in World War II, Army," said Rosie Oakley of McLean. "My father was in World War II, Army Air



**Rosie Oakley of McLean attends the informal Veterans Day Ceremony 2020 at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial.**

Corps," said Bill Denk of Great Falls.

With no invited key-note speaker, Wilson took on the role. He shared the story of an American hero of World War I, Sgt. Alvin York, who almost single-handedly captured 132 German troops. He returned home a hero, and when World War II broke out, he helped convince America it must fight again. Quoting York, Wilson said, "Liberty and freedom and democracy are so very precious that you do not fight to win them once and then stop. Liberty and freedom and democracy are prizes awarded only to those people who fight to win them and then keep fighting eternally to hold them."

**ENDING THE CEREMONY**, Pidgeon prayed, "(God) you know every veteran by name, you know their deeds, you know their hard work, you know their privations in the field, and you know their perseverance in the face of fear...Please draw each one closer to you today as we listen and rejoice in their lives." To view the story of the memorial, visit <https://youtu.be/8SmYgirs45Y>.



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# McLean Filmmaker Presents 'The Other Side'

A short film inspired by a true story, raising awareness for the Ethiopian orphan crisis.

In 2018, 20-year old filmmaker Josh Leong of McLean traveled to Ethiopia on a mission trip with McLean Bible Church. During his time in the country, he created a documentary series on Ethiopia's abandoned children crisis with Olivia Fournier, another DMV peer. Due to poverty, HIV, chronic illness, and lack of female empowerment programs, there are 5 million vulnerable children in Ethiopia ranging from infancy to 18 years of age. Hundreds of private orphanages have closed due to lack of funding, resulting in millions of vulnerable children often living their entire lives on the streets.

DURING HIS STAY in a boys orphanage, Leong befriended a 17-year old orphan boy named Abel. He learned that Abel would have to leave the orphanage when he turned 18, leaving his younger brother behind. Deeply touched by Abel's story, Leong returned to the US and began his freshman



The Other Side is premiering online Nov. 20.

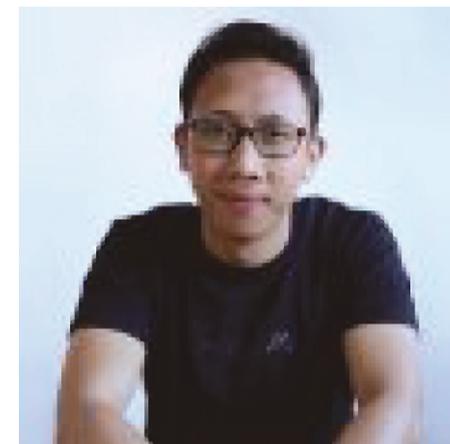
year at the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. In February 2019, he decided to write a film about Abel's life. Alongside first-year classmates including Sofia Bara (producer) and Tom Ingwersen (cinematographer), Leong and team spent the next six months in pre-production for "The Other Side, a narrative short inspired by Abel's true story - all while 7000 miles away.

In early May, Ethan Herisse officially signed onto the project. Herisse was starring in "When They See Us," an Emmy-winning Netflix series directed by Ava DuVernay, set to release on May 31. Herisse was also nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the NAACP Image Awards, alongside Mahershala Ali and Idris Elba. His involvement ultimately paved the way for casting

Wayna, a Grammy-nominated Ethiopian recording artist - also based in the DMV.

In July 2019, a small student crew from the US travelled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to film for 14 days. Collaborating with local Ethiopian cast and crew, including Ethiopian producer Bemnet Yemesgen, the team filmed in the same orphanages Leong visited in 2018 and even reunited with Abel again. The crew also worked alongside NGOs including DC-based Orphan Care Ethiopia and Great Commission Ministries, who work to support orphanages in the country. Returning from Ethiopia, the crew collaborated with Oscar-winning post production studio, The Mill, and Upper West Sound. The film was also co-scored by Sam Gryzwa and Gavin Brivik, composer of the Netflix series, "Living Undocumented," from producer Selena Gomez.

THE OTHER SIDE seeks to raise awareness for Ethiopia's abandoned children crisis through



Josh Leong, Director & Writer

## The Other Side

Premiering online Nov. 20. Details on social media and at: [www.theothersideshortfilm.com](http://www.theothersideshortfilm.com)  
 Official Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/445092137/129d295b4d> Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/theothersidefilm2020/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/theothersidefilm2020> Josh Leong: <https://www.joshleongstudios.com>

narrative film, and the team is currently seeking partners for the development of a feature-length version of the film. The film has reached the eyes of Ethiopian Ambassador Fitsum Arega, as well as the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington DC. The nation's capital is actually the second largest Ethiopian city in the world (by population), behind Addis Ababa.

The film has been accepted into 10 major festivals (4 Academy Award®-Qualifying), winning Best Short at the Greenwich International Festival. "The Other Side" enjoyed an NYC Premiere at the Urbanworld Film Festival and an LA Premiere at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, in partnership with HBO and WarnerMedia. The film was also included at the 2020 Cannes Film Festival Court Metrage.



McLean filmmaker Josh Leong with a 17-year old orphan boy Abel, whose life story inspired a short film on the Ethiopian orphan crisis, premiering online on Nov. 20.

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# PEOPLE

## McLean High Student Wins Voice Competition, Advances to Division Finals

Tracy Waagner, a senior at McLean High School, will represent Virginia in the Division Finals of the Music Teachers National Association Southern Division Senior Vocal Competition. Waagner earned this opportunity after winning the MTNA Virginia state-wide competition, singing classical art song repertoire in English, German, French, and Italian. The winner of the Southern Division competition will compete in the National Finals which will be a video round this year in mid-January.

Waagner, a soprano, has studied classical voice for five years with Peggy McNulty. Waagner has enjoyed opportunities to hone her craft at summer intensive programs for vocal performance at The Washington National Opera's Opera Institute, Interlochen Center for the Arts, and University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music. Locally, Waagner has performed with Choralis as a High School Singing Scholar.

At McLean High School, Waagner studies Theatre Tech and is Wig Master and Hair Designer for TheatreMcLean. She has served as Wig and Hair Stylist for the Sterling Playmakers Community Theatre. A longtime dancer at Perfect Pointe Music & Dance, she is rehearsing a tap solo "Bli Blip" with choreographer Philip Baraoidan.

Music Teachers National Association is a nonprofit organization comprised of 20,000 independent and collegiate music teachers committed to advancing the value of music study and music making to society and to supporting the professionalism of music teachers. Founded in 1876, Music Teachers National Association is the oldest professional music association in the United States.



PHOTO BY MARION MEAKEM PHOTOGRAPHY

**Tracy Waagner, McLean High School senior, wins the Virginia MTNA Senior Voice Competition.**

To receive more information about the MTNA National Competitions, including competition rules and applications please contact MTNA national headquarters at (888) 512-5278, [mtnanet@mtna.org](mailto:mtnanet@mtna.org) or visit the website at [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org).

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### NOV. 16 TO DEC. 9

Light Up McLean Holiday Decorating Contest. Registration is free; the competition is limited to the first 15 registered households. The Old Firehouse is holding a new competition for tax district residents. This is your opportunity to show off your home in all its holiday splendor. Think your holiday decorations are the best? Enter the competition and prove it. The judging period begins Sunday, Dec. 20 and ends Sunday, Jan. 3. Your neighbors will vote for the top two winners in the following categories:

**Best Overall:** Exceptionally attractive, unique and complete design with that utilizes space and resources well.

**Most Creative/Original:** Exceptional use of creative ideas and lots of originality evident in design.

**Best Holiday Theme:** Eye-catching decorations that clearly communicate a fully-conceptualized theme.

Questions? Contact Andrew Carter at [andrew.carter@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:andrew.carter@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call the Old Firehouse at 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

### NOW THRU NOV. 30

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Media and More. You'll be able to pick up your purchases in the Great Falls Village Centre ... among other options. Things are a little different this year. Instead of the self-guided physical tour visits throughout Great Falls, guests can venture into artists' creative spaces without climbing into their cars. Visit [www.greatfallsstudios.com](http://www.greatfallsstudios.com).

### VIENNA LAUNCHES 'SHOP & STROLL' CAMPAIGN

The Town of Vienna announced the launch of a new campaign to encourage visitors to explore the town's diverse shopping centers. The initiative titled Vienna Shop & Stroll will take place on Saturdays now through December. Each month, designated shopping centers will host safe and socially distant seasonal activities and in-store promotions for all to enjoy. Locals and visitors can get to know business owners and learn more about the history of each shopping center. Visit [ViennaVA.gov/shopandstroll](http://ViennaVA.gov/shopandstroll).  
Schedule: Select Saturdays 12-4 p.m.  
November 21 -- JadesShopping Center + Vienna Plaza;  
November 28 -- Small Biz Saturday on Church Street and surrounding streets off Church;  
December 5 -- Village Green;  
December 12 -- Glyndon Plaza.

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## Public Meetings

### Funding the Right Transportation Projects

You are invited to share comments on transportation projects that have been recommended for funding in the FY2021-2026 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Additionally, pursuant to §33.2-202, comments will be accepted for new projects valued in excess of \$25 million. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will consider your comments as it develops the FY2021-2026 Six-Year Improvement Program. The program allocates public funds to highway, road, bridge, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation projects. All federally eligible projects in the SYIP will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to document how Virginia will obligate its federal funds. Meeting materials were made available on Nov. 13, 2020 and continue to be at <http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/fallmeetings/default.asp>. The public is able to provide feedback on the FY2021-2026 Six-Year Improvement Program Update at the virtual fall meeting on Nov. 24, 2020, which is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. and will be conducted using electronic communications in accordance with Item 4-0.01.g. of Chapter 1289 (2020 Acts of Assembly), as the COVID-19 emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble in a single location. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operation of the CTB and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties and responsibilities. All board members will be participating remotely. The public may view the meeting via live stream by clicking the "View stream" button at the following link: [http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/public\\_meetings/live\\_stream/default.asp](http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/public_meetings/live_stream/default.asp). There will be opportunity for public comment. When announced, public comment can be made by calling 470-285-4495, followed by PIN 392 182 855#. Callers will be placed on hold until others in queue ahead of them have had the opportunity to speak. In the event there is an interruption in the meeting broadcast, call 804-729-6495. The public is invited to share feedback on transportation projects that have been recommended for funding through participation in this virtual public meeting or by submitting comments through the online form, by email, or by posted mail by Dec. 3, 2020. For information on roads and highways projects: Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov, or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation, 1401 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219 or online form found at <http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/fallmeetings/default.asp>. For information on rail and public transportation projects: DRPTPR@drpt.virginia.gov, Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on these policies or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-2730 or the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-4440 (TTY users call 711).

**Fairfax Water**

**NOTICE OF WATER RATES AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**

December 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

At 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2020, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA. The meeting will also be available online for remote attendance. For more information, visit [fairfaxwater.org/meeting-schedule](http://fairfaxwater.org/meeting-schedule).

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2021, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,320 to \$4,400†.
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$18,030 to \$19,610.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,370 to \$1,430†.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$14.40 to \$14.85†.
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.20 to \$3.33 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.85 to \$3.90.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$49 to \$50.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and the Peak Use Charge.
- A decrease in the Overhead Charge for Labor from 104% to 102%.
- An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$39 to \$40.

†Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8" residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$196 million budget for calendar year 2021\*. Water sales are expected to provide \$168.9 million and the remaining \$27.1 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

-- \$1,000s --		
Category	2020	2021
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$59,083	\$61,352
Power and Utilities	10,730	10,815
Chemicals	7,869	7,928
Purchased Water	5,014	8,364
Supplies and Materials	5,507	5,784
Insurance	1,230	1,100
Fuel	535	700
Postage	586	620
Contractual Services	13,779	14,102
Professional Services	1,336	1,298
Other	2,296	2,452
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>107,965</b>	<b>114,515</b>
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(10,313)	(10,763)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$97,652</b>	<b>\$103,752</b>

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$42,358,365
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$38,409,000

\* Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes can be viewed on our website at [fairfaxwater.org/rates](http://fairfaxwater.org/rates).

Those wishing to speak at this hearing (in person or remotely) or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Karen Barnette at 703-289-6029. Interested parties may submit written comments to [PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org) or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water  
Public Hearing Comments  
8570 Executive Park Avenue  
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

# Addressing the Demands of Virtual University Classrooms

## Marymount psychology professor offers solution to distance learning obstacles.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

For some students and professors, the loss of in-person contact has disrupted higher education and the experiences that often accompany it.

"I have found that distance learning is riddled with challenges," said senior Sophia Jaimes, a psychology major at Marymount University. "Personally, I am very much a student who learns best when I am in a learning environment with a teacher who I can ask immediate questions to. When I have to use Zoom I find myself often being distracted or, at times, feeling awkward to talk on Zoom since I may not know my peers."

As Marymount and other universities and colleges prepare for all-remote learning after Thanksgiving, students and professors are pondering the ways in which academics will be affected. Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Marymount, has written a paper that addresses some of the problems that her colleagues and students might be experiencing in the uncharted territory of virtual campuses.

"Colleges and universities are faced with the need to adapt and evolve without a script," said Linda Gulyn, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington. "Hundreds of experienced and highly regarded professors feel like clunky beginners as they redesign and deliver their courses online."

Some professors put undue expectations on students, says Jaimes. "An issue that I have seen recently is where professors and teachers voiced their demands that students have their cameras on during class," she said. "However many students have voiced that they may be uncomfortable doing so and that having cameras on during class is violating their privacy. Professors have said that if students don't respond to their questions, in addition to not having their cameras on, they will kick the student out of the Zoom call."

Dealing with such an obstacle requires mutual trust and awareness, suggests Gulyn. "It's easy to feel suspicious of our students, and I'm pretty sure they can feel the same way," she said. "Pay attention to such messages, because we want our students to feel welcome, accepted and appreciated."

The sudden expectation that one be technologically savvy can cause instructional challenges, particularly in classes where visuals are essential, says Alice E. Petillo,



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

**Marymount University will suspend all in-person classes after the Thanksgiving break, says University spokesman Nick Munson.**

Ph.D., professor of mathematics and Marymount University. "For one session my students could hear me but not see the visuals," she said. "I was not able to hear them as they tried to let me know. Once I realized there was an issue, I apologized and let them know I would post a video recap after class."

Accepting that the current level of distance learning requires an unprecedented set of skills can help quell angst around new expectations, Gulyn advises. "Model poise, problem-solving and self-regulation skills for students to succeed in the workplace," she said. "When I goofed-up my class technology for the 20th time, I gratefully received a solution from one of my freshmen."

While college students might not need parental supervision in the way that an elementary or middle school student does, they can face challenges that are equally as

daunting. "I think our students are finding it difficult because they are often juggling a lot of other concerns and commitments at the same time as our classes," said Brian P. Flanagan, Ph.D., professor of theology and religious study at Marymount. "Many of my students are watching other siblings or helping them learn while they themselves are in class."

As a result of distance learning, some students are facing new concerns about a lack of necessary resources. "[They] are struggling with access to technology and the internet," said Michael Mills, Ph.D., Vice President, E-Learning, Innovation and Teaching Excellence at Montgomery College. "While the college has done an exceptional job meeting these needs in terms of financial and technological support, the issues are real for our students."

SEE VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS, PAGE 14

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**-Werner Heisenberg**

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Questions? E-mail [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9431



## NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

### Capstone Donates Giant Food Gift Cards to Vienna Elementary Families

David Braun, the Founder & CEO of Capstone, presenting \$1,875 of Giant Food gift cards to John Carmichael, Principal of Vienna Elementary School. Capstone employees raised \$1,875 to support families in Vienna Elementary who need assistance with food. Capstone Strategic is a mergers and acquisitions firm that is based out of Vienna. This is one of Capstone's initiatives to commemorate 25 years of being in business.



## Addressing the Demands of Virtual University Classrooms

FROM PAGE 12

The quality of instruction delivered by video conferencing platforms is not always equal to that of in-person classes. "I, along with many other friends, have discussed this and feel as though the education we are receiving is below what we could be getting," said Jaimes. "I do want to emphasize, however, that this feeling isn't due to the professors ability to teach, but the stress from having to learn online only without any real connection to your professors or peers."

Such challenges can be addressed through collaboration, says Gulyn. "Pull groups of students together to brainstorm about staying satisfied at our colleges [and] listen to them," she said. "Along the way, they can initiate critical friendships and loving relationships all while taking care to stay healthy."

Instruction by video conference has had some unexpected advantages, notes Flanagan. "I've been really impressed by how committed many of my students have been this semester to their own learning in the face of so many challenges,"

he said. "Another silver lining is that we've been able to invite colleagues and experts from around the country and world to join us in our [virtual] classroom in a way that was harder to imagine before the pandemic."

Distance learning offers the flexibility of location from which classes can be attended. "Some of my students are able to be more engaged because they don't have to spend time commuting, said Petillo. "My virtual attendance this semester appears to be higher than my typical face-to-face attendance in previous semesters."

Instructors have been forced to gain new skills as a result of distance learning, says Petillo. "I have had to learn new presentation and teaching skills in a compressed time frame," she said. "I am growing in confidence and ability with teaching online. There is more of a personal connection with the class than I had expected."

"I think when we return to our in-person classrooms, we'll both appreciate how much we were able to do online, but also some of the advantages and joys of learning together in person," added Flanagan.

# CALENDAR

## NOW THRU NOV. 23

Operation Christmas Child. More than 4,000 locations will now offer a curbside drop-off option for the Samaritan's Purse project, Operation Christmas Child. Volunteers are preparing to collect shoebox gifts during National Collection Week, Nov. 16 – 23. Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering shoebox gifts—filled with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys—to children worldwide for more than two decades. For the nearest drop-off location, visit [samaritanpurse.org/occ](http://samaritanpurse.org/occ) and clicking on “drop-off locations”.

## NOW THRU THE HOLIDAYS

Santa at Springfield Town Center. Santa and his reindeer will be arriving at Springfield Town Center on Nov. 6 to kick-off the holiday season. In an effort to create touchless experiences and accommodate varying levels of visitor comfort, Santa will be available at Springfield Town Center via numerous experiences and offerings: Picture with Santa; Virtual Experience; Family Pet Photos on Mondays; Family Photos and Visits with Santa. Reservations are required for all Santa and photo offerings.

## NOW THRU DEC. 6

Nature's Palette. At The Loft Gallery of Occoquan, 313 Mill Street, Occoquan. Featuring work by Patricia Hafkemeyer and wood artist, George Jones III. Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, Noon-5 p.m. Artist's Reception: See Facebook Live Reception on Saturday, November 7 at 3:30 p.m. at <https://www.facebook.com/loftgalleryoccoquan>

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 18

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Join us for (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv shows from the comfort of your couch! You can register for one show or as many as you like, but you need to register at least two hours in advance of a show to see it. A Zoom link and password for the show will only be emailed to participants. Visit the website, [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org).

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 18

Nuts About Felting. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Register for the “Nuts About Felting” program at Sully Historic Site and learn to create acorns using the wet felt technique. No needles are involved in this technique, and you'll take home three or four felted acorns that will never spoil. Cost is \$30 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

## FRIDAY/NOV. 20

Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night. 7-9 p.m. Gather the whole family around the computer or tablet and get ready for some socially distant trivia. Prizes for winning teams. \$5 per

family; preregistration is required. Visit the website, [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org).

## SATURDAY/NOV. 21

Scotch Whisky Tasting. At 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Colvin Run Mill hosts a “Scotch Whisky Tasting” on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2020. Enjoy a sampling of fine Scottish single malts from different whisky-producing regions. Budding connoisseurs will learn about the ancient history of Scotch whisky and the fine art of making and tasting it. Delicious Scottish accompaniments will be served as you assess the unique characteristics of the water of life of the Highlands. This program runs from 3 to 5 p.m. The cost is \$45 per person, and participants must be age 21 or older. Call 703-759-2771.

## SATURDAY/NOV. 21

Snack and Paint. 1-3 p.m. At The Old Firehouse, McLean. Snack and Paint is an instructor-led painting class. This event is great if your teen has been painting for years or has never painted before. Painting is a great way to express your creativity! Snack and Paint gives your teen an opportunity to socialize safely. Participants will be painting a fall-themed picture. Visit [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org).

## SATURDAY/NOV. 21

Mystery Authors Extravaganza. 1-2:30 p.m. Reston Regional Library Zoom. Come to this Zoom event and hear authors from the Chesapeake Chapter of Sisters in Crime present their 2020 novels and short stories. See attachment below for a list of participating authors. Books are available for purchase through Scrawl Books. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/7216614>.

## SATURDAY/NOV. 21

Vogue: Return to the 90s. The Congressional Chorus will premiere its very first, full-length virtual concert, Vogue: Return to the 90s, available to stream on YouTube channel beginning Saturday, November 21 at 8 p.m. In a 30-minute virtual cabaret of song and dance, the Congressional Chorus revisits the energetic decade that brought us Madonna's iconic “Vogue,” and other hits such as “Circle of Life” and “River of Dreams,” and more. Visit the Website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-concert-congressional-chorus-presents-vogue-return-to-the-90s-tickets-128428512137>

## SUNDAY/NOV. 22

Trout Fishing in America. 3 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, CenterStage, Reston. Cost is \$10 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston. This Grammy-nominated music act returns to Reston to entertain audiences of all ages. Part of the Professional Touring Artist Series. Visit the website [www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas).

## Cornerstones Thanksgiving Food Drive and Gifts for Kids Drive Need Volunteer Support

### DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION SITE

St. John Neumann Catholic Church  
11900 Lawyers Road, Reston VA 20191

### FOOD DISTRIBUTORS

Thursday, Nov. 19 from 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Friday, Nov. 20 from 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Transporters will meet at St. John Neumann Catholic Church to help load boxes of donated food into our truck and then caravan to local neighborhoods to deliver boxes. All volunteers should wear comfortable, weather appropriate clothing and masks. Volunteers will be lifting and carrying numerous boxes. Please note: this effort may not take the full allotted time.

### FOOD BOX PACKERS

Thursday, Nov. 19 and Friday, Nov. 20 from 10 a.m. - 12 noon

Food Box Packers are needed at St. John Neumann Catholic Church to pack boxes of Thanksgiving Food for distribution.

### GENERAL VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Saturday, Nov. 21 from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. (multiple shifts)

Volunteers are needed to help direct parking lot traffic, deliver food boxes to shut-in residents, load vehicles with food boxes, and assist with sorting leftover boxes of food at St. John Neumann Catholic Church and satellite community locations at Cedar Ridge Apartments, Crescent Apartments, Stonegate Village Apartments, and the Westglade Apartments in Reston.

To volunteer, please contact Susan Alger, Director of Volunteer and Community Engagement at [susan.alger@cornerstonesva.org](mailto:susan.alger@cornerstonesva.org) or call 571-323-1383.

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## I'm Here to Report



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As my brother, Richard, has often said: “If the oncologist is happy then I’m happy.” Let me update that sentiment slightly: If the endocrinologist is happy then I’m happy.” And so we should all be happy. Yesterday, I had my post CT scan telephone appointment with my endocrinologist to discuss the previous day’s lab work and the two days previous scan. She was “very encouraged.” “News,” as I told her, “with which I can live.” And more than just the words she spoke, it’s the manner in which she spoke them. Her tone was positive, uplifting; she was very pleased. I could almost see her smiling. After hearing it all, she didn’t need to tell me to have a nice weekend. I was well on my way. Oddly enough, I have learned to take good news in stride. It’s the bad news that has a tendency to knock me off my gait.

Prior to this Friday morning call, I had received, electronically, as I usually do, the automated releases of both my lab work and the radiologist’s report. Having been down this road for nearly 12 years now, I am not unaware of discouraging results. The words I read and the numbers I see always tell a story. And even though I’m somewhat experienced, the interpretation and meaning of it all doesn’t automatically jump out at me. Oh sure, I’m familiar enough and certainly know what lab results (levels) generally speaking are problematic (creatinine and bilirubin particularly). But there’s so much more that I don’t know. Moreover, there is no real breakdown-type summary to clarify beyond all my reasonable doubts as to what is happening in/to my body. I’m sort of left to my own devices. Devices which have proven to be unreliable - and certainly ones not very educated on the matter at hand. If this were about baseball, I wouldn’t be clueless at all. But it’s cancer and science and medicine; all the subjects I know very little about.

Released automatically, I receive the same document that the doctors do. That means what I’m reading is the actual report, written by a doctor for a doctor. The report is full of medical jargon. And though there are “impressions,” provided as well as an organ-by-organ characterization, until I speak with one of my doctors and have them review the report with me, I’m never quite sure if what I think I understand is wishful thinking or whether my worst nightmare is happening during the day.

As a result, there are lots of words and medical assessments that are lost on me. It’s not like reading a baseball box score when I know what everything means and its significance. Sure, there are many familiar words, but there are more that are not. Obviously “no new sites of metastatic disease I can understand and appreciate, literally. But “aortic atherosclerotic calcification” and intrathoracic and axillary lymphadenopathy” I don’t. Understand them? I can barely pronounce them, let alone spell them. And as much information is provided in these reports, I feel as if I need a scorecard to identify all the players and determine what it all means.

Now when I have that follow-up phone call with the endocrinologist/oncologist, the report is explained. However, the explanations are not chapter and verse, they are more like sentence and paragraph. They’re short and hopefully, as it was time, sweet. Of course, I could ask more questions but as the comedian Dennis Miller once joked on the radio: “I don’t care how the popcorn is popped, I just want it to pop.” So too am I less concerned with the popping (details). I want to know if I’m going to live or die. Unfortunately, the reports - and the conversations don’t really offer a glimpse into the future as much as they attempt to clarify the present - which apparently is as good as it is likely to get. If 11 years - and nine months as a cancer patient has taught me anything, it has taught me to be grateful for any good news, however indeterminate.

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



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