

The Arlington Connection

Indigo Sanders, who lives in the neighborhood on 25th Street next to Missionhurst, has brought a homemade sign for Father John's 100th birthday parade on Sunday, Nov. 29.

CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Parishioners Parade Down the Coast for Father John's 100th

NEWS, PAGE 4

Left Behind, Sage Needs a Home

ARPEIS, PAGE 6

Yorktown Students to Put a Smile On Every Face At Doorways

HELPING, PAGE 3

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

FREE TREES AVAILABLE

Get a beautiful free tree through EcoAction Arlington's Tree Canopy Fund. These canopy trees are generally 2 inches in trunk width and 7 feet high and will be awarded for planting on private property. Apply online by Friday, Jan. 8. Applicants will be notified in advance and trees will be planted by a contractor in spring 2021. Learn more about the Tree Canopy Fund Program. Apply online: <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/tree-canopy-fund-application-spring-2021/>

NOW THRU DEC. 15

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DEC. 5 TO 13

Christmas trees are coming to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Arlington. The Christmas season is just around the corner, and once again St. Andrew's is ready to help you celebrate with a beautiful tree, fresh from Vermont. Sales begin on

the Friday of Thanksgiving weekend and continue through the next three weekends (while supplies last). Last year, they sold almost all the trees in the first two weekends, so don't delay. St. Andrew's is located at 4000 Lorcom Lane (at Military Road), Arlington. The sales schedule is as follows:

Saturday, December 5, 9:00 a.m. -

5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 6, 11:00 a.m. -

5:00 p.m.

❖ Saturday, December 12, 9:00 a.m. -

5:00 p.m.

❖ Sunday, December 13, 11:00 a.m. -

5:00 p.m.

❖ While supplies last. For more information, visit the website: <https://standrewsarlington.org/christmas-tree-sales/>.

FRIDAY/DEC. 11

From Virtual Camp to Victory Gardens, Virginia Cooperative Extension has been hard at work supporting our neighbors in Arlington and Alexandria during this tumultuous year. The public is invited to this year's Extension Showcase to learn more about its recent work in the community. This virtual event will take place on Friday, December 11, from 10-11 a.m. You can look forward to an interactive presentation highlighting Extension's response to COVID-19, a word from our volunteers, and time for a discussion among attendees. Register at: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/9285858585>

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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Children's & Teens' Connection 2020



During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

With high visibility, this is a great advertising opportunity for every industry, so give us a call about rates and ad sizes at 703-778-9431 or email advertising@connectionnewspapers.com.

THE CONNECTION Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC

Yorktown Students Organize Doorways Toy Drive

From Legos to Baby Alive dolls, a smile for every face.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Lauren Rosenthal is on a toy buying Zoom call with several friends the Wednesday before Thanksgiving trying to decide what toys to buy for 45 children at Doorways. It's a little complicated because the children range from babies to teenagers and she doesn't know any of them personally to know what they might like.

She and her friend, Lillian Keith, and several other Yorktown High School students had organized a backpack drive back in August to raise \$740 for 27 backpacks filled with school supplies. She said they had a pretty good idea what to put inside — folders, notebooks, colored pencils, “and they wanted cute designs.”

As Christmas approaches, the girls are turning their efforts to toys.

“We were looking to spread holiday spirit and collect gifts for children so we can guarantee a smile on everyone's face for Christmas,” Rosenthal says. She says, “We know Doorways has about an even split between boys and girls in the 6-10-year old range with the most needy children under seven.” She says Doorways has requested baby clothes for a small number of infants.

And most of the girls want dolls “and if they want the dolls to look like them, most of the children are African American and Latinos.” This year the children want Baby Alive dolls, which Keith says, “I've never heard of.” Sports equipment and Legos seem popular, too, as well as the old favorites like Thomas the Train and Tonka.

Due to coronavirus the girls thought they would be shopping on Amazon instead of picking out the toys in person—maybe easier, but not as much fun. But after a careful look at Target Black Friday prices, they discovered they could get much better deals and buy a lot more toys. So with careful planning they arranged a quick, socially distanced trip and filled up a trunkful.

Rosenthal says they have set a goal of raising \$1,400, which is enough to buy 45 children a gift of \$25 or more. Doorways plan to include a book with each gift. Rosenthal adds, “We want to be sure we are fair. We don't want to buy one kid a scooter and another

www.connectionnewspapers.com



Anna Bartlett (left) and Lauren Rosenthal, Yorktown High School students, on a buying spree at Target for children at Doorways.



Lauren Rosenthal (left) and Anna Bartlett, Yorktown High School students, fill a trunk full of toys for 45 children at Doorways this year.

a Lego set. We're somehow going to do the math and figure out how much to buy.”

Rosenthal knows from doing this before with the backpacks that it can be complicated. Keith says last time with the backpacks “We had to make three different purchases.” So this time they started off with a call to organize and toss around ideas and plan the flyers and then follow up calls.

The girls set up a Go Fund Me page about two weeks ago, and currently 25 donors have contributed \$1,250 out of the \$1,400 goal. “I know my parents and their

friends and our neighbors and extended family have been big supporters.” Rosenthal says, “It is amazing how quickly the money came in and how generous people were.” Keith says that some people have wanted to buy toys in person instead and have delivered toys to their homes, and they have a few things so far. “We try to get a lot of variety and choice.”

Keith says they chose Doorways because it is such a worthy organization and not as well known as some of the other groups in Arlington. Rosenthal says Doorways creates pathways out of homeless-



Lillian Keith (left) and Lauren Rosenthal, Yorktown High School students, organized a backpack drive for children at Doorways, then turned their efforts to a toy drive this Christmas.

ness, domestic violence and sexual assault leading to safe, stable and empowered lives.

“I didn't realize what Doorways did until I started looking at it and now I feel a part of it.”

100th Birthday for Father John van de Pear



Cars drive by slowly, shouting greetings to Father John on his 100th birthday.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Cars line up early in the lower parking lot of Missionhurst on N. 25th Street on Sunday, Nov. 29 for a surprise drive-by parade for Father John van de Paer's 100th birthday. In addition to members of the parish, guests are expected from Philadelphia where he served from 1952-1995.

Christina Pereira and her three children Francesca, Isabel and Alejandro are first in line with their Black Honda decorated with streamers and painted windows. Further along in line, Anne Leland has placed a Happy Birthday sign next to a Black Lives Matter sign on the side of her car. She explains, "Father John is very conscious of social justice, as passionate as a young person, and he served in an African-American parish in Philadelphia for many years."

A bench has been placed in front of the Promotion House. Father Tim Atkin places a soft quilt on the bench for the guest of honor who is expected to arrive at 1 p.m. No one is quite sure how they expect to get Father John to the surprise celebration.

"Well, he's not here yet," Father Tim says. But he explains, "We told him people want to see him, and he always comes out to see people. He's a real people person."

The sound of a siren is heard from the lower parking lot as an Arlington County Police Department vehicle leads the parade of cars up the hill. Father John is sitting on the bench beside Doris Rucker who has driven here from his former Philadelphia parish to be part of the festivities. They wave at each car as it slows down

to call birthday greetings. Some people hand birthday cards out the window. A red convertible slides by.

A small white poodle peers out of a front window and a young girl pops out of a sunroof. "Happy Birthday Father."

About 50 cars have driven by and people stop counting. "There's no end to this," he exclaims.

As the second police car signals the end of the parade, a parishioner comments from the crowd, "And the last shall be first."

This birthday has a lot of moving parts with a day of festivities. Father John received a blessing from the Pope during the morning mass. Tonight there will be a celebration on Zoom where a citation will be read from the City Council of Philadelphia. In Keystone the electronic board outside the Keystone Valley Fire Department reads, "Happy Birthday Father John — The People's Priest."

Father John joined Missionhurst-CICM in 1940 and made his first vows in 1941. He was ordained a priest in 1947 and arrived in the United States a year later. Father John's first assignment was first assistant pastor at St. Cyprian Church in Columbus, Ohio. He spent the remainder of his career at St. Charles Borromeo in Philadelphia where he retired in 1995. He has spent his retirement years in Arlington.

You can read more about Father John van de Paer in Monday's Philadelphia Inquirer <https://www.inquirer.com/news/father-john-van-de-paer-st-charles-borromeo-st-malachi-100-catholic-church-20201129.html?outputType=amp>



Father John van de Paer sits on a bench outside Solomon House at Missionhurst to greet well-wishers for his drive-by 100th birthday parade. Doris Rucker has driven from his former parish in Philadelphia to celebrate with him.



Christina Pereira is first in line following the police car in the drive-by parade for Father John van de Pear. Francesca, 13, Isabel, 11, and Alejandro, 7 are helping decorate their Black Honda.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

The
Arlington
Connection

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@ArlConnection

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ARpETS:

Sage They sold their house and left their dog behind. Seriously.

BY JOAN BRADY
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The garbage truck hauled all kinds of junk away, boxes were packed and furniture wrapped. There was so much activity. It was a little unnerving, but kind of exciting too. I mostly stayed on my bed, to be out of the way.

When the day finally came, everyone was smiling. I smiled too, wagging my tail in anticipation of an exciting new adventure. But when my family closed the door for the last time, I was still inside. That's when I realized they were leaving me behind.

I don't know how long I waited. But I was definitely hungry and thirsty. I was so relieved, when I heard the key turn in the lock again. For a few seconds I thought to myself, "It was a mistake. They hadn't meant to leave me."

But the people who entered weren't my family. And they seemed very surprised (and annoyed) to see me, just a silhouette in the darkness of their new home.

If I was a thinner, younger, smaller, cuter dog, then maybe this new family would have wanted me. But 40-plus pounds overweight and a dog of indeterminate age, there was no brotherly love for this Philly-born shepherd mix. They were quick to drop me off at a shelter, which is where the folks at Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation found me.

At the rescue kennel in Virginia, I heard the staff whispering. They said I was anxious. I felt their words wash over me as I lay in the corner in my kennel, not moving. Freaking out at the unknown. What was going to happen to me?

When my new foster family came to get me, I didn't want to get in the car. To be honest, hearing someone refer to me as a "hippo-sized" dog as they strained to lift me into the SUV, didn't help. When I got to my new house, I just lay there, mostly not moving for the first week.

But my foster mom, Claudia Salem, has lots of experience. She has fostered about 50 dogs and puppies before me. She and her kids have decided they like to foster older dogs best-- they totally get that older dogs have lots of love left to give. I'm very lucky they picked me.

Claudia knew that I just needed a little bit of time to decompress and start to feel secure here and she didn't make me feel bad when I didn't respond to attention from her and her kids right away. They have three dogs besides me. The dogs were very friendly and I could tell they like it here. That helped me to feel at home.

I've been here in Arlington for about three months now and boy-oh-boy are things different. I love spending time with the humans here as well as my four-legged foster sibs. Now when I lay around it's because I'm relaxing, not terrified. I'm a pretty chill gal overall.

Claudia estimates I've lost about 20 pounds. it's hard to know for sure, she doesn't have a dog scale at home. But I'm determined to keep losing. Now that I know life has a lot to offer, I want to live a long time. Claudia thinks I might be younger than my posted age of 13 or so. I definitely have the energy of a younger dog, now that I'm happy.

As for my secret to weight loss? Well I'm eating less for sure, that part I don't love. I'm also getting lots of exercise. I love taking walks and playing outside. But, I think the real secret is the calorie burning happy dance I do whenever my humans come through the front door.

I'd love to do my happy dance for you.

Sage is waiting for her forever family. If you are interested in adopting Sage, you can check her out on the Lost Dog and Cat Foundation website and/or www.connectionnewspapers.com



Sage: Happy and ready for her forever home.



Mourning the past. Fearing the unknown.



Out walking with Claudia Salem and the foster sibs.

email Claudia directly at: cssalem00@icloud.com

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

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



Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting

Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 6-8 p.m.

www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting

You are invited to participate in a virtual joint public meeting held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). According to Virginia Code, these organizations shall conduct a joint public meeting annually for the purposes of presenting to the public, and receiving public comments on, the transportation projects proposed and conducted by each entity in Planning District 8 (Northern Virginia).

The virtual meeting will begin with a brief presentation followed by a public comment period. During the presentation you can learn about various transportation initiatives, including:

- Virginia's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- VTrans Draft Mid-term Transportation Needs
- NVTA's FY2020-2025 Six Year Program; TransAction; COVID-19 analysis; and the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia
- NVTC's Commuter Choice program

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**.

Information for accessing and participating in the meeting will be posted at www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting. The team of VDOT, DRPT, OIPI, CTB, NVTA, NVTC and VRE representatives will make a presentation beginning at 6 p.m. highlighting their transportation programs and receive public comments about Virginia's transportation network for about an hour after the presentation.

Give your comments during the joint meeting after the presentation concludes or submit your written comments by **January 4, 2021** by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.



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THE CONNECTION

NEWSPAPERS

back to 2008
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<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

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Legals

Legals

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF KING WILLIAM

IN RE: ESTATE OF CHARLES ROBERT PARNELL, DECEASED

ORDER UP PUBLICATION

The object of this suit is to have the Estate of Charles Robert Parnell, Deceased, settled and paid out to all heirs.

It is ORDERED that Christine Royer appear at the above named Court and protect her interest she may have in this matter on or before December 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

It is hereby ORDERED that this Order be published once a week for four successive weeks in the Arlington Connection as her last known address was in Arlington, VA.

It is ORDERED that the Arlington Connection publish this Order for the time specified and send the Certificate of Publication and bill to Carl J. Witmeyer, II, Esquire at 9562 Kings Charter Drive, Suite 200, Ashland, VA 23005, to be paid by Peggy George, Administrator of the Estate.

It is ORDERED that the Clerk of this Court send a certified copy of this Order to Carl J. Witmeyer, II and to the Arlington Connection upon entry by this Court.

ENTER: 11/10/2020

B. Witmeyer, II
Judge

I ASK FOR THIS:

Carl J. Witmeyer, II
VSB # 15700
THE WITMEYER LAW FIRM, LLC
9562 Kings Charter Drive, Suite 200
Ashland, VA 23005
(804) 752-0130

Legals

ABC LICENSE

TERRONI LLC trading as NAPOLI SALUMERIA, 1301 S JOYCE ST, ARLINGTON, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA 22202. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a WINE & BEER ON & OFF PREMISES license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. ANTONIO FERRARO. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

CALENDAR

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**Let us know
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Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

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

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

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

55+ Programs are virtual or outdoors, following the Governor's Forward Virginia guidelines. You must have a 55+ Membership to attend (\$20 annual fee). Learn more at [parks.arlingtonva.us search 55+ member](https://parks.arlingtonva.us/search/55+member). To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747, option 3.

WiFi hotspots are available at a number of County locations. For a list, go to <http://topics.arlingtonva.us/wireless>. Users can then connect to the County's free wireless network by choosing "Arlington Wireless."

Virtual Programs: Nov. 30-Dec. 4
Wake and Make art activity for early birds, Monday, Nov. 30, 7 -8 a.m. Most materials needed can be found at home. Registration # 911301-16.

Virtual art class for individuals with disabilities, Monday, Nov. 30, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Use supplies found at home. Registration # 922020-C.

55+ Talk Show, Tuesday, Dec. 1, 12-1 p.m., get to know 55+ center directors and instructors. Registration # 912801-01.

Lee Book Club members discuss "In the Midst of Winter" by Isabel Allende, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Registration # 912402-02.

Holiday Travel Trivia game, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 11:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Registration # 912601-01.

Local history discussion, topic, Crystal City, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 1:30 – 2:45 p.m. Registration #912402-03.

Intergenerational Pen Pal with 55+ members exchanging letters with Honors English Club students, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 1-2 p.m.. Registration # 912300-01

Featured holiday programs for December. These and more are in found in our December 55+ Guide! To participate, you need to be a 55+ Member. Not a member? Learn more here <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/seniors-activities/office-senior-adult-programs-55-pass-registration/>

'Tis the season for warm gatherings, comradeship and celebration. Join us online for a live variety show! Hosted by the Office of 55+ Programs and the Senior Adult Council, this show will feature attractions you won't want to miss: holiday crafting with Jennifer Droblyen, performances by the Yorktown Theater and Choir Group, a healthy cooking demo from VCE's nutritionist Aisha Salazar plus entertainment by 55+ members and games – plus prizes for winners! Register here #912803-01 and tune in Fri., Dec. 18, 2 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 13, 3-4:30 p.m.
Quarantine Music Busters, a non-profit group of talented young musicians and vocalists committed to busting Covid-19 isolation, will perform a live, interactive ensemble of holiday music. Register here #912802-03.

Sunday, Dec. 20, 3-4:30 p.m.
Get in the holiday spirit for our virtual ugly

FROM PAGE 2
PLANS FOR CRYSTAL GATEWAY
County Board Approves Crystal Gateway Mixed-Use Development. The Arlington County Board approved JBG Smith's plan to develop Crystal Gateway, a nine-story office building with ground-floor retail, at 101 12th Street S. in Crystal City. Community benefits associ-

History enthusiasts focus on cultural, artistic, political events, Wed., Dec. 3, 1 -2:30 p.m. Registration # 912402-6.

It Takes a Village with executive director, Arlington Neighborhood Village, Wendy Zenker, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Registration # 912404-01.

Chat with artist and community arts programmer Jennifer Droblyen, Thursday, Dec. 4, 4 -5 p.m. Registration # 912301-04

Winter hibernation, learn about different ways animals go dormant, Thursday, Dec. 4, 6-7:30 p.m. Registration # 913400-02.

Wedgwood collectors show and tell, Friday, Dec. 4, 1 – 2:30 p.m. Meet Nancy Blaney and Sophie Guiney, Wedgwood Society, Washington, D.C. Registration # 912400-09.

Bid farewell to Lee 55+ Center, Friday, Dec. 4, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Share memories, renew "auld" acquaintances. Registration # 012899-01.

The Office of 55+ Programs has launched a YouTube Channel offering exercise videos, stories from Arlington Spellbinders, cooking demonstrations, technology tips, general presentations and more. Get to know the 55+ fitness instructors as they teach a diverse mix of exercise classes for all skill levels. In addition, 55+ staff members host a bi-monthly talk show called "55+ Live" with up-to-date 55+ programs and previews of entertainment, demonstrations, seminars, and other programs usually found in 55+ centers. In YouTube, enter in the search box, "55+ Virtual Programs, Arlington VA". Or go to parks.arlingtonva.us, find 55+ and Older programs and click on the YouTube icon. Questions or suggestions for videos and programs are welcome, email osap@arlingtonva.us.

sweater party as we celebrate National Ugly Sweater Day. Register here #912803-03.

Thursday, Dec. 31, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Ring in 2021 at our virtual New Year's Party. Enjoy games and entertainment while connecting with other 55+ members. Since we can't meet in person, make your favorite dish and we'll eat together. At the end of the party we'll toast the New Year! Must pre-register here #912803-02, by Friday, Dec. 11 to receive a free New Year Party Bag.

Challenge your brain with some holiday trivia and games. Explore seasonal recipes or take part in short story readings. Let's get in the holiday spirit!

Holiday Travel Trivia, Wed., Dec. 2, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Energy Master's Bingo, Thurs., Dec. 10, 10-11 a.m.

Holiday Jeopardy This...Is...Jeopardy!, Fri., Dec. 11, 2-3 p.m.

Favorite Holiday Recipes, Fri., Dec. 11, 4-5:30 p.m.

Short Story Reading, Mon., Dec. 14, 1-2:30 p.m.

Holiday Cooking with VCE, Thurs., Dec. 17, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Holiday Scavenger Hunt, Fri., Dec. 18, 6-8 p.m.

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A Bone To Pick



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I'm the most-stressed about it, but I am at least stressed about a bone scan I'm having this week. The reason being that thyroid cancer that's metastasized - which mine has, sometimes moves to the bones. And since I have some knee-hip discomfort, particularly when I get up from a seated position, my oncologist ordered this two-step diagnostic process: an injection of something followed a few hours later by the actual scan to assess the damage. Not that I want to look for trouble (since it has already found me) but it's important - though scary, to tell your oncologist about any new symptoms, especially, if this new symptom has persisted for more than a few weeks. Rather than be an idiot and not mention the problem, I mentioned it during our last phone call on Thursday the week before Thanksgiving and tomorrow, Monday, 10 days after the new fact, the bone scan will occur. I imagine I'll receive the results by the end of the week. Waiting for results all the time is another negative aspect of this disease. Very little happens while you wait, if you know what I mean?

I wouldn't say exactly that common sense has prevailed here. It really doesn't take a genius to call a doctor when you're experiencing some new and unusual pain. In fact, the first lesson of oncology 101 is to contact your oncologist if any new symptom presents. It might actually be serious. Moreover, you're never to presume anything. You are to let the doctor know and let him be the judge. Keep the self-diagnosing and self-medicating to a minimum, if at all. You don't know best. In fact, you hardly know at all.

Part of the occasional apprehension I've had in not sharing any new symptoms with my oncologist is fear. If I tell him about a new symptom, it might actually indicate a problem/complication with my disease/treatment. The illogic is: if I don't tell him, my overall medical situation can't get worse - which is obviously stupid, and not true. But since I'll never receive medical confirmation that my health situation has taken a turn, I can continue to delude myself. But my thought process - as a previously diagnosed "terminal" non small cell lung cancer patient stage IV, was just that. What I don't tell him won't hurt me. 'Hurt me' meaning leading to a premature death (I know, any death is premature). I realize even before writing this that it doesn't make any sense. As I have said on many occasions, I'll blame the cancer.

And why I'll blame the cancer is because more than the damage it does to your body, it is the damage (effect really) it has on your brain. In a subconscious kind of way, your brain is totally rewired. After receiving such a life-changing/potentially life-ending diagnosis, you begin to think differently about life. Your obligations change. Your priorities change. Your responsibilities change. Your perspective changes. As such, your answers to questions and preferences no longer seem to be coming from the same place as they were before your diagnosis. It's not so much physically as much as it is emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. You're almost an entirely new person. At a minimum, you definitely become a variation of the previous you. You might look the same, but you don't exactly act - or sound the same.

All your decisions become controlled by your disease, not literally, but made through the prism of your being a cancer patient. It's not that, if you're lucky, you need someone to prepare your meals/assist with your activities of daily living, but you do lose yourself in the disease with all the appointments, scans and treatments. And the worst part of it, none of it guarantees anything other than more appointments, scans and treatment. The bone scan I'm having is a perfect example. And unless I embrace the process, the stress and anxiety is likely to do as much damage as the cancer. Fortunately, I'm up to the challenge. Nevertheless, it's worrisome.

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

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