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# Great Falls CONNECTION

(From left) Jeanne LeFevre and David Weisman, residents at 11124 Corobon Lane, adjacent to 11118 Corobon Lane, the construction site, Bill Denk, Co-chair GFCFA Environment & Park Committee and Jennifer Falcone, Chair GFCFA Land Use & Zoning Committee gather on the edge of Corobon Lane in Great Falls that overlooks the residential construction.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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## PEOPLE



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Meghann Mullarkey, a 16-year-old from Herndon.

## Herndon Dancer Wins Irish Dance Competition

Five dancers from the McGrath Morgan Academy of Irish Dance brought home first place trophies from the Irish Dance Teachers Association of North America (IDTANA) Southern Region Oireachtas, held in Orlando the first week of December. The 2020 SRO champions from McGrath Morgan Academy are:

❖ Ciara Foley, U8 Girls Champion; Gabby Brown, U9 Girls Champion; Aisling Reynolds, U12 Girls Champion; Meghann Mullarkey, U16 Girls Champion, and Sophia Rankin, U17 Girls Champion

Meghann Mullarkey, a 16-year-old from Herndon, joined McGrath Morgan in March, just as in-person classes were transitioning to virtual Zoom sessions.

"My goal this year was to be on the podium, so I was shocked

when I exceeded my own expectations," she said. "With new teachers, learning choreography from videos, months of physical therapy, and dancing in my basement during Zoom classes, I didn't know whether I would be able to reach my goals ... I saw the pandemic as an opportunity to work harder than I ever had before so I could improve my dancing. When they announced me as the winner, my only thought was that all the hard work leading up to this moment had paid off."

*McGrath Morgan Academy of Irish Dance, <http://mcgrathirishdance.com/> 1057 West Broad Street, Suite 218, Falls Church, 703-772-1236, [adrcg@mcgrathirishdance.com](mailto:adrcg@mcgrathirishdance.com)*

## Assistance League to Use Grant Funds to Provide Grocery Gift Cards for Local Families

Assistance League of Northern Virginia has received a grant from No Child Goes Hungry, a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating childhood hunger. No Child Goes Hungry connects charitable organizations that work to reduce food insecurity on a local level with donors who want to help eliminate childhood hunger. Assistance League will use the funds to purchase grocery store gift cards for families of students at Pine Spring Elementary School, in Falls Church. It is one of the six elementary schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties and Alexandria that was receiving the charity's Weekend Food for Kids food bags each month. The bags contained enough kid-friendly food for 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches. When schools closed in the spring, the nonprofit suspended that program, and instead, began providing grocery store gift cards to the families of those students. The grant from No Child Goes Hungry will allow the chapter to continue providing grocery store gift cards at a time when so many have been severely affected financially by the pandemic.

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# NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF GFCA

An example of “a land disturbance violation at Rivermont” in Great Falls, according to GFCA’s image dated 10/20/2019.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

(From left) Jeanne LeFevre and David Weisman, residents at 11124 Corobon Lane, adjacent to 11118 Corobon Lane, the construction site, Bill Denk, Co-chair GFCA Environment & Park Committee and Jennifer Falcone, Chair GFCA Land Use & Zoning Committee gather on the edge of Corobon Lane in Great Falls that overlooks the residential construction.

## Great Falls Citizens Voice Environmental Concerns

### GFCA submits documents to County’s Environmental Quality Advisory Council 2021.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Board and leadership.”

Members of Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) believe development pressure and environmental concerns are no longer balanced, shifting away from recognizing the importance of environmental protection.

Jennifer Falcone is Chair of the GFCA Land Use & Zoning Committee. On behalf of GFCA, she submitted two documents to the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) for consideration during their Annual Public Comment Meeting on Jan. 13, 2021. The purpose of the electronic meeting was to solicit views on the state of the environment and identify environmental issues of concern applicable to Fairfax County.

In Falcone’s two and a half-page written testimony to Stella Koch, Chair of EQAC, dated Jan. 8, and her Executive Summary, read aloud by staff during the meeting, Falcone addressed three critical environmental stewardship concerns in Great Falls, stormwater management, preservation of the County’s tree canopy, and light pollution.

Falcone said in the letter to Koch: “The approval of future residential development within the County requires stricter oversight and a sharper focus to be placed on environmental issues by Fairfax County officials and appropriate increases in budget...We hope that EQAC’s voice will be heard clearly.”

According to an email by Peter Falcone, GFCA Communications, the issues GFCA conveyed to EQAC were typically identified during the year through “the work of GFCA’s Committees, investigations of complaints received from citizens bearing on environmental problems and arising out of initiatives suggested by members of its Executive

ON BEHALF OF GFCA, Jennifer Falcone first discussed development and stormwater management in her letter to Koch. According to Falcone, GFCA observed that the current system fails to meet the community’s needs and the County’s objectives. She advised EQAC to petition the Board of Supervisors to bolster current stormwater management policies, regulation, and oversight. She said that GFCA documented instances of failure in its community directly involved with land development. Storm water is water from rain or snow melt that does not soak into the ground.

“We have observed evidence of pollution of neighboring lakes, streams and erosion of soils and land beyond the areas of development...This lack of effective stormwater management is compounded by (the) impact it has on the Potomac River Basin and, by extension, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed...There is concern that “grandfathered” projects (some approved as far back as 2006, in accordance with state mandate) will go forward with stormwater management standards that do not meet or even approach the current level of performance. This grandfathering even applies to state-funded projects such as the relocation of the Colvin Run stream along Route 7, allowing the Commonwealth of Virginia to avoid the more stringent policies enacted a few years ago,” said Falcone.

Falcone advocated for stricter state administrative law changes to the Virginia stormwater management regulations, including “eliminating or reducing the period for which grandfathering of site plan approvals of any land-disturbing activities may be permitted.” “We urge EQAC to advocate for such changes,” she said.

Secondly, Falcone focused on Great Fall’s



PHOTO COURTESY OF GFCA

Impact of clay soil dumped at 11120 Corobon Lane in Great Falls.

disappearing tree canopy and preservation. She said while adopted land development practices follow “clear cutting of parcels and re-landscaping consistent with County land disturbance policies,” developers remove mature trees to provide a more significant landmass for development. She noted GFCA has documented instances where developers, contrary to County-approved plans, clear-cut sites destroying wildlife habitats and causing erosion.

“The Council is urged to recommend strengthening County oversight and inspection of this aspect of land development,” she said.

Finally, Falcone reviewed light pollution. In a two-fold action, she urged EQAC’s support to adopt the languishing 2020 Dark Sky Preserve Ordinance to surround the County’s Observatory in Great Falls. She noted that development is being proposed within the half-mile circumference of the observatory state law establishes for such a preserve.

FALCONE also brought attention to the need for the County to revisit outdoor lighting restrictions due to non-compliance and to reduce instances of light trespass and glare associated with new development. She said, “Even with the implementation of dark-sky compliant fixtures, neighbors (of new developments) report glare from these more intensive light sources.”

Falcone petitioned EQAC to advocate for resource increases to the staffing of field inspection and enforcement of outdoor lighting restrictions.

“With the adoption and implementation of more energy efficient LED lighting consistent with County rules, there is growing concern that this technological advancement has not resolved the issues of light pollution, rather it has produced a dilemma that appears beyond the effective enforcement and oversight by County officials due, partly, to inadequacies of inspector resources,” Falcone said.

A link to the Jan. 13 meeting should be available by Thursday, Jan. 21, according to the County spokesperson. EQAC’s next meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021, at 7:15 p.m.

On Jan. 16, a group of concerned citizens and members of GFCA gathered on Corobon Lane in Great Falls. They were there to discuss an apparent “clear-cutting site” with residential construction in progress, located in what Bill Denk, Co-chair GFCA Environment & Park Committee, said was a “Resource Protection Area.” Denk said that four and five rear-axle dump trucks went by his nearby home 60 to 80 times a day for six weeks. He followed the trucks and found them spreading fill dirt to build up the project area at 11118 Corobon Lane. According to the residents adjacent to the site, Jeanne LeFevre and David Weisman at 11124 Corobon Lane, storm water from the building site began flowing onto their property. “It cost us money, thousands of dollars,” to add drainage, he said. According to Jennifer Falcone, Nichols Run and Jefferson Branch Resource Area flow to the Potomac River.

# An Inauguration to Remember

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



COMMENTARY

Like most people, I will not be attending any inaugural events this year because of the pandemic restrictions and threats of civil disturbances. The event today does bring back wonderful memories of the first and only inauguration I ever attended. It was on January 20, 1961. In 1960 I had graduated from high school and had not gone to college because of doubts as to whether I could be successful. Instead, I was attending a short-term vocational program in Washington, D.C. and living in a single room in a boarding house just a half dozen blocks from the White House. Even then I had an intense interest in politics and followed the Kennedy-Nixon campaigns and debates intensely. I loved the candidate and then President-elect John F. Kennedy as did millions of others. I was not about to miss the opportunity to go to his inauguration when I was living so close by.

On the day before the inauguration, temperatures dropped to 20 degrees and eight inches of snow fell. I got up early Inauguration Day and literally put on all the clothing I owned and started a trek to the US Capitol on foot. Workers directed by the Army Corp of Engineers had been working throughout the night to haul away as much of the snow as possible from Capitol grounds and Pennsylvania Avenue. The military had brought in flame throwers to melt some of the snow and ice. More than a thousand cars that had been stranded in the area had to be removed.

At the Capitol I was able to position myself on the edge of a wall that allowed me to see the inauguration over those who had tickets and were seated at the Capitol. My plan to film the event with my brother's 8 mm camera did not happen because the cold kept the camera from running a few minutes after I brought it

out from under my coat. Certainly there was security, but nothing like we are seeing leading up to this inauguration. I felt free to move about except for the area that had been blocked off for special invited guests.

The speech given by our new president still brings tears to my eyes. His words, "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country," inspired me to public service.

We have been through four years that have been tragic for our democracy. I believe we are all better informed about threats to our system of government. The Biden-Harris team is well suited to restore hope and confidence in our government. Honesty and decency will become a new norm for the executive branch. Attention to the COVID-19 crisis will be focused, coordinated and intense. Respect for others will dominate our society except for a small minority that will slink away into the background. Equity will be the new standard by which we measure our economy. All this can happen if we truly believe it and dedicate ourselves to making it happen. We can have another inauguration to remember!



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY.GOV

Community service projects honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during Reston Community Center's 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration held Jan. 16-18.

## Reston Celebrates Dr. King's Day

In cooperation with supporters, Reston Community Center (RCC) pivoted amidst the coronavirus pandemic to present for the 36th year, the Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration.

The three-day event held Jan. 16-18, honored, celebrated and continued the legacy of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. On Saturday, individuals gathered for small, socially distanced community service projects. They sorted items from The Closet, made bag lunches for the Embry Rucker

Community Shelter, and cleaned litter from paths around RCC Hunters Woods.

Events continued with Saturday's special online performance by the Reston Community Orchestra, Sunday's live performance at CentreStage with an audience capacity of 30 percent featuring Akua Allrich and the Tribe, and additional community service projects on Monday.

— MERCIA HOBSON

## Blood Donations Needed

Since 1970, blood donors have been recognized in the month of January during National Blood Donor Month. This January, the blood supply is critically low for nearly all blood types. If you have Type O, Type A or Type B blood, make an appointment to donate in the next few days to help boost the blood supply and ensure there is an adequate supply for our community in case of accidents and emergencies. There is no substitute for blood when a patient needs a lifesaving transfusion. All donors will receive an exclusive mug as a thank you for their donation.

Appointments are required, and all donors must wear a mask.

"Donating blood saves lives. Your gift of time makes a difference to patients in our community. Join us this January and each time you are eligible to help heal patients and give them a second chance to create lasting memories with their loved ones. Everyday heroes are blood donors and for that we are grateful," says Heather Wade, Manager of Donor Recruitment at Inova Blood Donor Services.

Sign up at: [inovablood.org/nbdm2021](http://inovablood.org/nbdm2021)

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# Suffragist Memorial Construction Makes Progress

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Those visiting Occoquan Regional Park, Lorton, can see progress toward completion of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial. Replica White House gates, statuary, pavement and the main sign marker are now visible upon reaching the area opposite the park's main event building. When completed, tentatively this Spring, the memorial, with statuary and garden, will honor suffragists and their success in gaining women's right to vote in 1917.

The peaceful actions of those women stand in stark contrast to the unsuccessful violent actions of those who sought to disrupt the certification of votes of the Electoral College at the Capital last week. Says Patricia Wirth, Executive Di-

rector/CEO of the Turning Point Memorial Association, "Suffragists engaged in peaceful demonstrations, and never perpetrated violence, although they did have violence perpetrated against them." They were often referred to as "silent sentinels" for their peaceful, quiet demonstrations in the capital city. The Memorial site stands near where several suffragists were jailed and force fed after their arrest for holding banners containing messages promoting voting rights on the sidewalk outside the White House.

Citizens reacted negatively after hearing of the poor treatment of suffragists in the Lorton jail, a reaction which helped the suffragist cause.

For donations, and more memorial and historical information, readers are directed to [www.suffragistmemorial.org](http://www.suffragistmemorial.org).



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Replicas of the White House gates and fence form the entrance to the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial.



Site of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial under construction with expected completion in Spring 2021.



New mural at Loyal Companion on Maple Avenue.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Pandemic Layoff Spurs Artist to Paint Window Mural

After the pandemic forced Pet Valu to close in Alexandria this month, the employees looked elsewhere for a job, but the Pet Valu manager was hired by Loyal Companion pet supply store in Vienna. They needed a mural for their plate glass window, so the new manager sought out her former employee Cynthia Salmon, another displaced employee from the Alexandria shop who is also an art student at VCU. Cynthia brought in some paints and an idea, and now the Loyal Companion has a new look to greet the shoppers on Maple Avenue.

— MIKE SALMON

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

## EXPANDED COVID VACCINATIONS

Governor Northam announced this week that Virginia is preparing to expand vaccination eligibility to 65+ and individuals age 16-64 with a high-risk medical condition or disability. The Health Department will begin registering individuals in these new groups, on Monday, January 18. However, it will take some time to get through this group. Vaccine supply is limited and the ability to vaccinate is dependent on the amount of supply they are provided from the state.

Key data points:

Currently Virginia in its entirety receives about 110,000 doses of vaccine a week.

168,000 residents in the Fairfax Health District are considered to be within phase 1b.

Last week, the Fairfax County Health Department had vaccinated 15,980 people since Christmas. This does not include vaccinations administered by Inova or at long-term care facilities.

In addition, they are working with Inova Health System to vaccinate frontline essential workers and 40,000 public and private school staff and teachers.

## JAN. 21 TO MARCH 11 (THURSDAYS)

Virtual Adventures in Learning Winter Semester. A Program of the Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Offering Tai Chi; Health & Wellness; Arts & Entertainment/Travel; World Affairs: Past & Present. Sample classes: Adult Vaccines; Broadway Musicals 1970 - 1999; Energy Policy Outlook for the New Administration. For list of full class schedule, visit [www.scov.org/ail](http://www.scov.org/ail)

Tuition for 8 week course: \$45 Accepting Mail-in registrations/Call-in registrations from Phone/Mail-In Registration: 1/4/21-1/19/21. Call SC office at 703-281-0538 or mail to Shepherd's Center, 541 Marshall Rd. SW, Vienna, VA 22180.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 23

With the start of the new year, many people have made resolutions to improve their health. Be Fit McLean, a virtual health and wellness fair produced by the McLean Community Center (MCC), can help them meet resolution goals by providing health-enhancing information. Be Fit McLean, a live, virtual health fair event, will be held from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 23. Admission is free; however, registration is required. To register or for more information, visit [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org).

## SUNDAY/JAN. 24

An "En-Lightning" Experience. 2 p.m. Online. Paul Aurand was struck by lightning in July of 1998. Struggling with the aftereffects, Paul was regressed back to rediscover the unconditional love and oneness that led to a deep personal transformation. Cost is \$15. Visit the website: <https://isgo.iands.org/webinar/nova-presents-an-en-lightning-experience/>



## Canada Geese Over the Area

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Canada geese form an iconic V flight over Huntsman Lake in Springfield.

### CALENDAR

#### NOW TO FEB. 7

"Winter's Tales." Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax. Winter can be many things--quiet, simple, elegant, cold, dark and hopeful. Winter's shadows are long and its daylight is precious. It is a season of white and blue, of cold and fire, of hibernation and regeneration. In "Winter's Tales" at the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, the gallery's artists demonstrate in a variety of mediums how they respond to the coldest and darkest time of the year. The exhibit features beautiful paintings, fine art photography, ceramics, exquisite jewelry and fabric art.

#### FRIDAY/JAN. 22

Family Outdoor Exploration. 1-2 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Get your family into the great outdoors with a personalized program led by a naturalist or historian at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. The "Family Outdoor Exploration" program lets you choose your own exploration. Investigate topics, such as Stream Life, Pond Life, Historic Ice Cream and much more. Once you register, the park will reach out to you to plan your personalized family outing. The cost is \$40 per family for a group of up to nine people age 4 to adult. Call 703-631-0013.

#### FRIDAY/JAN. 22

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. Vladislav Yeliseyev, a noted watercolorist, will be the demonstrating artist at the Meeting of the McLean Art Society. The business meeting will begin at 10 a.m. to be followed at 11 a.m.-noon by the art presentation. It will all be conducted on Zoom and is open to the public. Those interested in being included need to contact Ray Goodrow, M.A.S. President at raygoodrow@aol.com. Mr. Yeliseyev is a Masters level graduate of the Moscow Institute of Architecture. He has paintings listed in the Portfolio of Plein Air Magazine and his award winning paintings feature warm light and a warm color palette. His work includes cityscapes and landscapes in impressionistic style.

#### SUNDAY/JAN. 24

Amazing Max Family Show. 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. Max has stepped onto a virtual stage to perform perhaps his most incredible feat ever: Getting kids truly excited about learning something and—in the process—showing them how to believe in themselves. Max has an incredible ability to connect with both children and adults alike and even in a virtual stage, he is still somehow just as captivating as he is on The Alden's stage. \$15/\$10 MCC district residents (this fee is per device)

#### SUNDAY/JAN. 24

Journey with Pianos. 7 p.m. Online. Hear piano traditions from around the world performed by Jacqueline Schwab (Ken Burn's "Civil War"). Hoyle Osborne plays everything from ragtime to South American folk music. Online. Register at fsgw.org (The Folklore Society of Greater Washington).

#### MONDAY/JAN. 25

Unmeltable Snowman Workshop. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. It's always sad to watch a snowman melt away, so discover how you can create a four-season snowman that will still be with you when summer arrives. Sully Historic Site is hosting a series of "Unmeltable Snowman" workshops for families on three Mondays in January – Jan. 4, Jan. 11 and Jan. 25, 2021. At the workshop, you will learn to use a felting process to make an unmeltable snowperson and decorate it with style. Keep your creation through winter, spring, summer and fall. This program is suitable for participants age 5 to adult and is being offered on the hour from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The workshop is designed for a family of up to four people, and the cost is \$20 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

#### FRIDAY/JAN. 29

Family Fun Trivia Night. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. Gather the whole family around the computer or tablet and get ready for some socially distant trivia. Prizes for winning teams. To register for Old Firehouse events, visit: www.oldfirehouse.org or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

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## Cancer and Covid ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... don't exactly go together like milk and cookies. Rather they go together like snow and ice. One or the other is bad enough, but together they become even worse. And unfortunately I have one, and am constantly worried/mindful of the other. Moreover, since covid is kind of a pulmonary issue, those of us who have cancer in the lungs, where we're already compromised, need to contract a virus like this like Washington, DC needs a "wintry mix" in the forecast.

In the course of my ongoing papillary thyroid cancer protocol, recently I spoke with an oncology pharmacist (who knew?). When he asked me, during our regular monthly phone call if I was experiencing any new symptoms, I was honest and said "Yes, shortness of breath." He noted my response and subsequently completed our call, as per usual. Not 10 minutes later, he called back. He had just spoken with my oncologist who he advised said that I should go to Urgent Care immediately. "Excuse me? What do I tell the doctor? Will my oncologist have spoken to them/expressed his concern/coordinated my care?" "No," I was told. "Just tell them your symptoms." Having had a negative covid test the week before Christmas, and have pretty much been at home ever since, I didn't believe I had the virus. But considering how little I know about such matters, I went with the medical flow and made an Urgent Care appointment for 2 pm that same day.

What I learned later that day after three hours in Urgent Care after an examination, lab work and chest X-Ray was the true reason why my oncologist wanted me not to wait for care: bloods clots which could lead to a pulmonary embolism (clots moving through the bloodstream and ending up in the lungs) where they could burst, so to speak, and cause a sudden death. So the concern wasn't covid, it was more sinister: immediate death if left unresolved. Little did I know, thankfully. Otherwise, I might have been a bit more anxious.

Luckily, my lab work was normal, my chest X-Ray was clear, and I had no corroborating symptoms: my legs weren't swollen and I had no chest pain. Nothing was mentioned about covid. Even though that was my presumption for the urgency, apparently, that was not my oncologist's concern. By 5 pm, with no new symptoms to report, I was released on my own recognizance. If I experienced any shortness of breath, I was encouraged to call. I was prescribed an inhaler - like those used by asthmatics, with the proper medicine and advised not to hesitate using it should the need arise. I was given approximately 30 doses, I was told.

I then went to the pharmacy to pick up my parking gift. After a 30 minute or so wait, my name was called and I went up the window to collect my goodies. Now I was free to go. Within 45 minutes I was home. No fuss, no muss, as it turned out. My follow up appointment with my oncologist is next Tuesday (as I write this on Sunday) which also happens is my next scheduled video visit, previously scheduled to discuss the results of the previous week's CT Scan and brain/abdomen MRI which amazingly, miraculously continue to show shrinkage of the thyroid tumors located in my lungs (you know, my pre-existing comorbidity). And of course this comorbidity is the reason I'm extremely cautious and occasionally even proactive because to not would be incredibly stupid and irresponsible.

Now, if I could only figure out how to lock and load this inhaler, I might actually be able to reduce the stress and discomfort when I become short of breath. But knowing now that my symptoms were not covid-related, nor as I learned later that day, blood-clot-oriented, I can breathe easier before, during and after I'm short of breath, if you know what I mean?

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



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