

## Promoting 'America's Next Great City'

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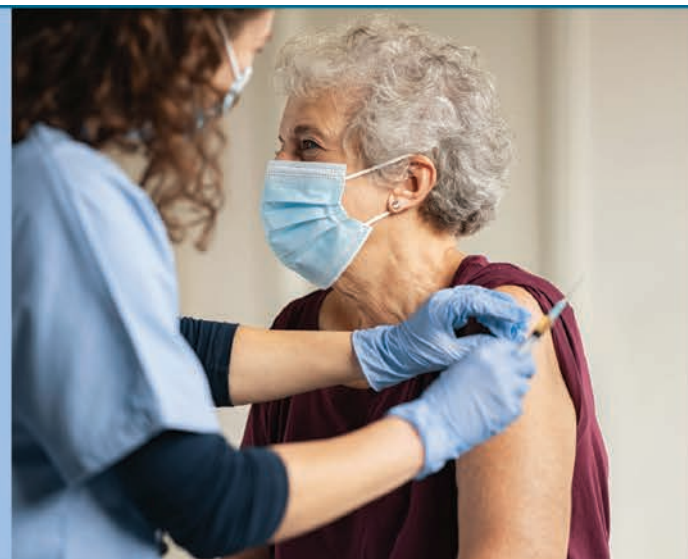
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## Questioning Racially-Biased Gang Database

**Activists: Residents can be entered into GangNet merely for living in neighborhoods where gang activity takes place.**

Part one of a two-part series.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith no recourse for review, a nebulous definition of gang membership led an activist, an immigration advocate, and a Virginia legislator to fight for change.

Kofi Annan, president of The Activated People, sent a letter to Jeffrey McKay, Chairman Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Rodney Lusk (D-Lee District), Chairman of the County Public Safety Committee, James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock District), Vice-Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, and Col. Edwin Roessler, County Chief of Police. Annan detailed concerns about individuals wrongly labeled gang members and nominated by law enforcement at Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) into the national database repository, GangNet, used by the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, and accessible to its FCPD officers as a participating jurisdiction in the Task Force. According to Annan, the criteria were “highly questionable and potentially discriminatory.”

“Residents can be entered into GangNet merely for living in neighborhoods where gang activity takes place or for their style of dress, and they may not even be notified that they were entered into the database. An officer’s observation about attire, tattoos, activity or affiliation can set a life-altering legal process in motion,” said Annan.

**GANG MEMBER** categorization, Annan said, is “part of a longstanding campaign to stigmatize black and brown communities and expedite deportation of members of the Latinx community.” According to Annan, the campaign encourages FCPD officers to engage in racial profiling. It reinforces racial bias against mostly Black and brown men.

Annan said that the criteria, with the exceptions of “self-admission” or “in-custody classification,” were highly subjective and created “opportunities for law enforcement to inadvertently or erroneously mislabel individuals as gang members and violate their Constitutional rights and the rights of those around them.”

According to the Department of Justice, Privacy Impact Assessment for GangNet, GangNet is an off the shelf system “in support of A.T.F.’s missions in reducing violent crime and protecting the public.” It contains identifying data on alleged gang members, including but not limited to the individual’s photos, street names, addresses, date of birth, phone numbers, known associates, uses of gang hand signs and symbols, and images of their tattoos. Information on individuals is based on suspected criminal involvement or as witnesses or victims in

criminal case investigations and law enforcement concerns.

The information gathered and added to the system is within the Privacy Act exemption scope for law enforcement records outlined in 5 U.S.C. 552a (j) (2). GangNet purges subjects from the database after five years of inactivity.

“The ‘gang member’ label that federal authorities rely on is not based on a court’s determination, and therefore, no due process applied,” Annan said. “There is also no current mechanism by which to challenge one’s placement in GangNet.”

Annan added that being identified as a gang member emboldened “federal agents to selectively carry out deportation procedures” and allowed prosecutors to call for “sentence enhancements.”

Annan urged the Board of Supervisors to prohibit FCPD participation in the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force until the Task Force “adopted more stringent criteria” and improved “transparency by expanding residents’ right to receive a notification” when they were nominated to be entered.

**“The ‘gang member’ label that federal authorities rely on is not based on a court’s determination, and therefore, no due process applied.”**

— Kofi Annan,  
president of The Activated People

“Anything less fails to uphold the principles of due process on which our immigration and criminal justice systems depend,” Annan said.

**ANNAN** did not hear back from the addressees named in his letter until Dec. 29. Chairman McKay emailed then, and two days later, on Dec. 31, Jay Lanham, Executive Director of the Gang Task Force, reached out. Annan provided copies of the correspondences.

McKay wrote that he confirmed with Chief Roessler “that the task force’s director (Jay Lanham) is working to suspend its use of GangNet.”

Lanham said, “I have suspended our use... We only have three senior detectives trained to use GangNet, and they have not used it for many years...The Task Force does not and has never maintained a Gang Database.”

Confused, Annan asked Lanham: “Wouldn’t GangNet be considered a gang



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**Falsely labeled gang affiliation can ultimately lead to a person being wrongly detained.**



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kofi Annan

database? ...Is there any other database besides GangNet that FCPD officers use to submit/nominate the names of individuals suspected of being involved in gangs?”

Lanham said GangNet was a database, operated and maintained by HIDTA (Baltimore/Washington High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) “which falls within the Department of Justice.” “HIDTA makes it available to agencies that wish to access it. Those wishing to access it must be trained and approved to make entries in the system.” Lanham said, “I do not have knowledge of which agencies have access to GangNet, nor am I aware of any agencies that maintain such databases.”

On Jan. 7, 2021, Annan said, “I am glad that the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force will formalize their practice of not using GangNet. I’m also proud that our County Police Department does not use this

flawed software.”

Supervisor Lusk echoed Annan’s statement. “I’m pleased that the Fairfax County Police Department does not currently use GangNet Software,” Lusk said.

Kelly White Senior is Program Director of the Detained Adult Program at Capital Area Immigrants’ Rights (CAIR) Coalition. White shared a copy of testimony by Jocelyn Cazares, Senior Attorney, Detained Adult Program (CAIR), to the Fairfax Delegation of the General Assembly Jan. 9, “In Support of Transparency in Policing: Overinclusion of People of Color in Gang Databases in Virginia.”

Cazares testified, “I regularly represent people who are detained by I.C.E. and are denied liberty or even credibility because of police over-inclusion in gang databases.” Cazares said “John,” a Fairfax County resident applied for asylum and while the application was pending, found “himself accused of gang membership in ways that still affect him today.”

According to Cazares’ testimony: “There was no evidence of John’s gang membership, yet the accusation of John’s gang activity was ultimately entered into evidence in John’s immigration case. John, therefore, found himself having to fight gang accusations with no basis.”

A copy of the interview transcript between “John” and CAIR, provided by White, “John” said he did not know he was in a gang database until arrested. “The first time was when I.C.E. arrested me... I learned from the local authorities and I.C.E. I didn’t realize, I was surprised.” Asked about the consequences “John” said, “Affects so much, and it is false information in that database.”

White said that according to the Center for Popular Democracy’s Access to Counsel Report, “Every year, nearly 4,000 people in Washington, D.C. metropolitan area courts, Arlington, Virginia, and Baltimore, Maryland, face deportation in civil immigration court without the assistance of a lawyer.”

**A PROPOSED BILL** relating to criminal street gang reporting; notice and process for contesting information into shared gang databases has reached the Virginia House of Delegates 2021 session for consideration.

On Tues. Jan. 11, Virginia House Delegate Kaye Kory (D-38) said, “I am the chief patron of legislation which eliminates the lack of transparency and due process in the criminal street gang database currently in use by law enforcement in Virginia. Names are entered into this database by law enforcement officers who have only an unverified ‘reasonable suspicion’ of an individual’s gang affiliation and without notifying the individual. This creates a database riddled with racial bias and inequities without the slightest opportunity for oversight or accountability, which can lead to selective actions by state and federal law enforcement against those in the database.”

# We Still Need Your Help

Thank you to hundreds who have supported us financially, and with warm words of encouragement.

BY MARY KIMM

In 2009, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and after a year-long journey of surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, I have been fine. Sometimes I will run into someone (well, I haven't actually been out to run into anyone since March) or talk to someone who will ask, "How are you?" with a tone of concern, and I realize they are wondering about my cancer. (Yes, I did go out for my mammogram. More than a decade cancer-free, thank you!).

2009 was also the onset of steep declines in newspaper advertising revenue, and that has been a pernicious and persistent problem.

Right now, when I hear that tone of concern (or something a little more ominous) with the "And how are the papers doing?" this person is asking about the GoFundMe, and whether we anticipate that we will survive the pandemic.

At the end of 2020, the Connection Newspapers shared a GoFundMe drive that would help all of our papers, including our flagship, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing since 1784, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Arlington Connection, Great Falls Connection, McLean-Vienna Connection, Centre View-Chantilly, Reston and Herndon Connection, and the Burke, Springfield, Fairfax, Fairfax Station, Clifton, Lorton Connection plus the Potomac Almanac.

We set a goal of \$50,000, and thanks to community support, in a month we have topped 50 percent of that. Thank you so much.

There is no deadline. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-americas-oldest-newspaper>

How did we get here (I keep asking myself)?

We are facing an existential threat in the combined crises of a long-running decline in newspaper advertising, plus the onset of the pandemic and the economic shutdown that has come with it. (Newspaper advertising revenue overall fell more than 60 percent from 2008 to 2018, well before the pandemic.)

In the first week of the shutdown in March, the drop in revenue for us, and everywhere, was breathtaking.

Fortunately, some long time advertisers have stayed the course and kept our revenues from moving actually to zero.

But many restaurants, retailers and others are also facing an economic crisis that could lead to extinction. We are not the only ones. Businesses, families and individuals floundered for months after early federal help, desperately in need of more help. Now we know more federal help is on the way, but is not here yet.

More than 160,000 businesses in the US closed just between March and August of last year due to the pandemic, and that number is

likely vastly underreported. While local newspapers were already suffering from advertising declines, the loss of thousands of local businesses as potential advertisers is a setback, and not just for The Connection. Event advertising, a mainstay, has disappeared.

Community support has come, through GoFundMe, and other means — many have mailed checks payable to their favorite newspaper, to 1606 King Street, Alexandria, Va. 22314, and others have purchased ads as a way to lend financial support. Words of encouragement and appreciation have also meant so much to all of us here.

So what is the plan? Our GoFundMe, as it continues to grow, will allow us to bridge the operational gaps between a deep valley and the arrival of the funds from the Paycheck Protection Program (through local banks). And that will give us time to grapple with the question of how to reinvent ourselves and create an organization and revenue stream that will sustain us. Our writers and others connected to us are full of ideas. I'm sure our readers, advertisers and supporters are also. Please let us know.

We are experts at cost-cutting, and that has been a painful, ongoing process.

Now we will embrace a combination of solutions, because just one source is unlikely to unravel the tough situation that we face.

More thoughts next week.

# Changing Images of Virginia

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



On the east side of Capitol Square near the Executive Mansion in Richmond is the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial featuring 16-year-old Barbara Johns who led the student walkout that resulted in a civil rights case before the Supreme Court as part of Brown v. Board of Education that found racially-segregated schools to be unconstitutional. With her on the memorial are statues of attorneys Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson who argued the case and representations of persons who faced repression throughout Virginia's racist history.

On the west end of Capitol Square, near where the new General Assembly office building is being constructed, is a lone statue of Harry F. Byrd—Senator, VA (1933–1965), Governor of Virginia (1926–1930), and Virginia State Senator (1924–1926).

Barbara Johns is about to receive an additional recognition as a civil rights pioneer. A sculpture of her will join a copy of the Houdon sculpture of George Washington in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol representing Virginia and replacing the one of Confederate General Robert E. Lee that has already been removed.

A resolution making its way through the cur-

rent session of the General Assembly directs that the Harry Byrd statue be removed. Byrd held political office for many years and dominated Virginia politics for nearly four decades as head of what was called the Byrd Organization that in any other state would be called the Byrd machine. He stayed in power through racist voter

suppression laws that were some of the most effective in keeping Black voters from the polls and kept Virginia with the lowest voter participation among the states. He was known for his fiscal conservatism as governor and senator, and Virginia remained near the bottom of the states in funding for public schools and health and social services programs while he and his machine controlled state government. While states moved towards racial desegregation of their schools, a Byrd-devised "massive resistance" ploy delayed school desegregation in Virginia by more than a decade amid about forty or more lawsuits. In the process, some public schools were closed, and some children stayed home for as many as five years because of Byrd's resistance.

As a teenager I worked "up on the mountain" from my home in Page County at Skyland Lodge on the Skyline Drive. As a room clerk I was told not to rent the best room we had until after 6 p.m. in case Senator Byrd wanted to come for the night. He was extended this courtesy for the

pivotal role he played in establishing the Shenandoah National Park. His biographer Professor Ronald L. Heinemann in Harry Byrd of Virginia (University of Virginia Press, 1996) pointed out that while as governor he modernized state government for the time, his conservative economic and social policies held the state back. He was a product of the Jim Crow era, and he could never get beyond it.

Barbara Johns as a young woman took a big risk standing up for what she knew was right. She played a pivotal role in Virginia moving from a civil rights back-water to the progressive state it is now becoming. She reflects the image I want our state to have!

## Let Us Know Your View

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

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# CONNECTION

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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.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 28

Encore Learning will host a Spring Course Preview of its classes on Thursday, Jan. 28 at 9 a.m. With 31 classes, including some old favorites and new additions, numerous special events and a variety of clubs, Encore Learning offers plenty of opportunities for people near and far to master interesting topics and socialize with others from the comfort of your couch. For an in-depth look at course offerings for the Spring 2021 semester, join them on Thursday, January 28 at 9:30 a.m. for our Spring Course Preview. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85231610450> Spring 2021 Registration begins Monday, February 1 at 10 a.m. and membership is required in order to register for classes. Visit [www.encorelearning.net](http://www.encorelearning.net).

## TUESDAY/FEB. 2

The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District will hold its Annual Seedling Sale starting on Tuesday, Feb. 2. The trees and shrubs are native to Virginia and are available at a low cost to Fairfax County residents. NVSWCD selected the seedlings with advice from the Fairfax County Urban Forestry Management Division and the Virginia Department of Forestry. This year, selected species will enhance the urban forestry understory and promote natives on smaller lots. Two packages are available: super shrubs and tiny trees, and space savers and bountiful berries. Packages are \$17 each. Go to

NVSWCD's Native Seedling Sale website to order and for pickup information. Call 703-324-1420.

## SEVEN CORNERS INTER-CHANGE MEETINGS

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation will hold two virtual meetings next month to seek public input on planned transportation improvements at the Seven Corners interchange and nearby roads. The meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 7 p.m., will be held in English. The meeting on Thursday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m., will be held in Spanish. The goals of the project include enhancing bicycle, pedestrian and transit access and connectivity, while enhancing traffic flow. FCDOT has identified the following improvements and is seeking input to determine the order in which they will be implemented:

- Create a four-way intersection at Leesburg Pike and Wilson Boulevard/Sleepy Hollow Road with redesigned crossing.
- Build a new "ring" road that connects Route 7 (on the side with the bus transfer station) to the intersection of Wilson Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard crossing over Route 50 with overpasses.
- Widen Route 50 to six lanes from the Arlington/Fairfax County line, westward, close to South Street.
- Build new ramps that connect Route 50 to the new "ring" road on each side of the new four-way intersection of Route 7/Wilson Boulevard/Sleepy Hollow Road.

Construct a new road that connects the Willston Multi-Cultural Center and Village Center to Route 7. Create better connected road network with redevelopment. Comments will be accepted during the meetings and via an online survey that will be available after Feb. 3. Stakeholders may also submit feedback to the project team: Online via red feedback form link at the bottom of the project webpage. In writing to: FCDOT, Attn: Seven Corners Study Feedback, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA 22033 By phone: 703-877-5673; TTY 711 For more information, visit the project webpage at: <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/transportation/study/seven-corners>, which also features a video introduction to the study and February meetings.

## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is accepting applications for college scholarships for the 2021 – 2022 school year. Eligible students include high school seniors, undergraduates, and graduate students in Northern Virginia. Community Foundation manages 12 scholarships and administers the funds for 18 other scholarships that support Northern Virginia students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. The applications for scholarships are due by 5 p.m. on April 2, 2021. To learn more about each scholarship opportunity and to apply visit: [cfnova.org/grants-and-scholarships](http://cfnova.org/grants-and-scholarships).

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Springfield Chamber of Commerce  
Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance  
Prince William Chamber of Commerce  
Northern Virginia Building Industry Association  
Apartment and Office Building Association  
Virginia Self Storage Association  
Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association  
And many more...





# Promoting 'America's Next Great City'

**Tysons rental market grows with pandemic: Large apartments, pricing popular in suburban location.**

By Mike Salmon  
The Connection

**T**he Tysons Corner area has been recognized recently for their apartment availability, signaling another area where the rapidly growing suburb is becoming the place to live for the professionals in Northern Virginia.

In a RENTCafe blog, they cited the Yardi Matrix Data that found Tysons as the tenth most active U.S. suburb in apartment construction in recent years. Tysons has 2,562 new apartments in seven buildings, RENTCafe said. That is partially attributed to the pandemic, finding that the apartments in Tysons had a new-found appeal for renters because they offer an abundance of space, larger apartments and homes, and often lower rents than big cities, the blog said. These apartments may be more attractive for those that work from home, as many are doing this year. The number one spot was Frisco, Texas, a Dallas metro area suburb where several others in the top 20 were located as well.

These locations are close to a major city, but the apartments are not in the city, so that's part of the attraction, they said. One study by Harvard University that RENTCafe referenced, said rentals are up, even though there are historically low interest rates for buyers and continued strength in many economic sectors. "For many, the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic has worsened affordability challenges," the Harvard study said. Breaking a lease may have short term difficulties but foreclosing on a house has heavier implications.

COVID-19 slowed apartment demand in expensive, high-density urban areas where vacancy rates jumped 3.0 percentage points in 2020. In contrast, rental supply and demand in suburban areas were in balance, lifting the vacancy rate by just 0.2 percentage point.

Tysons has had a lot of positive change in the last 10 years, including the addition of the Silver Line Metro stations and the toll lane options on I-495 and I-66. According to Sanziana Bona, a research analyst and a real estate writer for RENTCafe, Tysons is one of the fastest-growing cities in Fairfax County, gaining more than 7,000 residents in the last decade which she attributes to the strong local economy, the proximity to the metro area's main job hub and the relatively short commuting distance to D.C. "Not very far from the vibrant city life, Tysons has seen a significant transformation in terms of development, making it even more a fringe region, where suburbs intertwine with urban areas," she said.

It is also being called "America's Next Great City," and the glass-dominated skyline accented the transportation options, new housing and branding efforts. For one, it's now known as "Tysons," and not "Tysons Corner," although some of the road signs have not been updated.

The "Tysons Partnership," has helped the area's identity by implementing the values and goals of the Comprehensive Plan for Tysons, the partnership said. The vision for the future Tysons is a place of greater density, a rich and vibrant mix of uses, more pedestrian and transit friendly, and sustainable in design and function.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

**Tysons has had a lot of positive change in the last 10 years, including the addition of the Silver Line Metro stations and the toll lane options on I-495 and I-66.**

**"Not very far from the vibrant city life, Tysons has seen a significant transformation in terms of development, making it even more a fringe region, where suburbs intertwine with urban areas."**

**— Sanziana Bona,  
a research analyst and a real estate writer**

On Dec. 1, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to nominate the Tysons Partnership to receive \$1 million in additional economic opportunity funds.

The funds will help the nonprofit continue wayfinding, business and event promotion, and other initiatives designed to support the growth of Tysons in accordance with the Tysons Comprehensive Plan.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHEPHERD'S CENTER

**Pictured presenting Shepherd's Center's Certificate of Appreciation plaque to Sherry Maggio, co-owner of Skorprios Maggio's Greek Family Restaurant, is Erin O'Reilly, left, Operations/Volunteer Manager for Shepherd's Center.**

## Shepherd's Center Honors Skorprios, Café Renaissance

Recently, Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC) expressed appreciation to Skorprios Maggio's Greek Family Restaurant owners, Chris and Sherry Maggio, and Café Renaissance owners, Saeed and Soraya Abtahi for their participation in preparing holiday meals for lonely and isolated seniors in the Northern Fairfax County region. SC's Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Sherry Maggio, co-owner of Skorprios Maggio's Greek Family Restaurant and Saeed Abtahi owner of Café Renaissance. In all, forty-one meals were prepared and delivered to clients in the Oakton, Fairfax, Vienna, Reston and Herndon areas for Shepherd's Center.

"Our newly initiated Hol-

iday Meal Delivery Program has been so well received. This program is our way of bringing a bit of cheer into the lives of some of our clients that would otherwise have no outside contact this holiday season. Helping to lessen isolation and the resulting depression is the impetus for all that we do at the Shepherd's Center. Our vision is Creating a World Without Loneliness," said Jayne Young, Interim Executive Director, Shepherd's Center

To volunteer, donate or learn more about how you can help, or how we can help you, visit [www.scov.org](http://www.scov.org) or, contact the office at 703-281-0538, [office@scov.org](mailto:office@scov.org). Shepherd's Center is currently in need of volunteer drivers and Development Committee members.



**Pictured at Shepherd's Center's Certificate of Appreciation presentation are, from right, Saeed Abtahi, owner Café Renaissance and Jayne Young, Interim Executive Director for Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC).**



## Girl Scouts Hold Pets Food, Toys Drive

In early December, seventh Grade Girl Scout Troop 51046, began a project supporting Wolf Trap Animal Rescue (WTAR) with help from local pet shop, Great Dogs of Great Falls (GDGF).

This project-of-the-month's purpose was to help animal rescues and pet stores care for animals through these difficult times by collecting pet supply donations such as pet food or toys.

The troop worked together virtually to complete the plan. The first step was to communicate with any interested animal rescues, completed by members Alexia K and Maria R, who emailed and cold-called potential partners. To spread the word and convince more people to donate, other girls like Sahasra R, Ashlynn C, and Ella Z focused on spreading the idea by creating posters and flyers.

On Dec. 19, the date set for accepting donations, Micah C, Sahasra R, Ashlynn C, Alexia K, and Maria R worked shifts in front of Great Dogs of Great Falls accepting the flood of donations that came pouring in.

Troop 51046's project successfully ended with two full SUVs worth of pet supply donations. All the proceeds were dropped off at WTAR, and most of the supplies were purchased at GDGF.

The head of Great Dogs of Great Falls reported that she was thrilled with the increased patronage at her shop and to see such an abundance of collected supplies. Moreover, after receiving the donations, Paola Gutierrez of Wolf Trap Animal Rescue stated, "We are still getting lots of puppies in covid, it's really hard to take care of the animals during these times, but this will help us get through."



Maria R, Micah C, Ashlynn C, Alexia K, and Sahasra R.

## The First Shots to Knock Out COVID-19

### Fellowship Square's Seniors inoculated.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Lake Anne Fellowship House residents Steve McAvoy, 71, and Jin Liu, 84, of Reston were among the first of seven hundred anxious older adults at one of the three senior affordable housing communities operated by Fellowship House in Reston and Woodbridge who were inoculated last week against COVID-19. Vaccinations began Jan. 18.

"We are so happy and appreciate this so much," said Jin Liu of Reston, who lives with his wife, Geeta. "There are long waits, long lines, and it is so cold outside."

Following many weeks of planning with health departments and local pharmacies, Fellowship Square began bringing the vaccines directly to residents' doors.

"With an average age of 78, Fellowship Square residents are in the high-risk category for COVID," said Christy Zeitz, CEO of Fellowship Square. "Working with Walgreens and CVS teams, (we) are thrilled to be able to bring the vaccine to our residents' doorsteps."

A spokesperson for Fellowship Square said that the follow-up doses are scheduled. The mobile vaccine clinics will return to deliver the doses in



PHOTO BY FELLOWSHIP HOUSE  
Lake Anne Fellowship House resident Steve McAvoy, 71, receives his long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine from a mobile health team with CVS pharmacy.

the same door-to-door fashion. "Thank you for coming to our home to get us the vaccine," said Vajihah Rohani, 85, of Reston.

On the same day Fellowship Square seniors began receiving the vaccination, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University, the U.S. surpassed 400,000 total Covid-19 deaths, with a quarter of those coming over the previous 36 days.



Ashlynn C, Maria R and Alexia K.

PHOTOS  
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# Sorority Sisters Celebrate Vice President Kamala Harris

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**W**earing their sorority's signature strand of pearls and clothing in shades of pink and green, Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority members, Martha Coleman and Shirley Dickerson Taylor were filled with awe and jubilation as they watched their sorority sister and fellow Historically Black College and University (HBCU) alum Kamala Harris, sworn in as Vice President of the United States.

Both women are decades-long members of the sorority and are now part of the Zeta Chi Omega Chapter, which is made up of women from Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax counties. Local members supported Harris' election and say their emotions include pride and optimism, for older members as well as younger.

"As someone who participated in the Civil Rights movement of the 60s, I get emotional just thinking about this huge accomplishment and how far we as a people have come," said Coleman, who has been a member for 53 years. "The idea that a woman of color, who attended an HBCU, and who was raised by a single parent is now our Vice President is mind boggling."

"I was overcome with joy and happiness to witness this historical day," added Taylor, who has been a member for 63 years. "The tears flowed as I watched Soror Kamala take the oath and become the Vice President of the United States."

"I witnessed something that I never thought I would witness in my lifetime, said 68-year old Linder Gibson who lives in Montgomery County. "I was overwhelmed. "This lets me know that my little granddaughter can grow up and become anything she wants to be, even President."

Those who joined AKA at Howard University felt a special connection.

"She has been an inspiration for many, said Linda Elaine Newman, who has been an active member for 43 years. "I was doubly proud because I am also a graduate of Howard University. Her positive accomplishments have given good recognition to HBCUs and our beloved sisterhood."

"From the standpoint of being a black and Asian woman it was a monumental moment," added Patricia Wallace, who has been a member for 55 years. It was astounding since, in both these cultures, women were deemed to be on the bottom rung, thought of as property and second-class citizens. Now the glass ceiling has broken."

The Arlington/Alexandria chapter has been in existence for more than 60 years. "Tears of joy flowed down my face as I watched the first woman, the first woman of color and my sorority sister take the oath of office for the Vice President of the United States of America," said Robin McCoy, who is a 40-year member and serves as the chapter's president.

Many felt a sense of optimism about the possibilities that would be conveyed to the young women and girls



PHOTO BY ROBIN MCCOY  
**Robin McCoy, is a 40-year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and serves as the chapter's president.**



PHOTO BY TIA SMITH  
**Tia Smith wore pink and green on election day to celebrate Vice-President Harris' victory. Both women are members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority**



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA  
**"Golden" members of the Arlington/Alexandria chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, who joined the sorority before and during the Civil Rights Movement, shed tears of joy as the witnessed the historic swearing-in of Vice President Kamala Harris.**

in their families.

"The swearing in of my soror Kamala Harris filled me with sadness, joy and delight," said Margarette Peterson, who was initiated in 1959. "Joy came to my heart to know that my granddaughter would continue to grow up in a better world. ... I was filled with sadness because it has taken so long for a black woman with outstanding qualifications to be recognized. I dried my tears and took a picture ... proudly in my Golden Soror tee shirt."

"I thought of my 10-year-old granddaughter's future in a country that has elected the first woman as Vice President, who happens to be Black, who happens to have been shaped by our founders at Howard Uni-

versity, and who happens to have been the recipient of the unflinching support from women all over America," said Tia Johnson. "My granddaughter's future was looking brighter. Vice President Harris' election provides the answer that all things are possible."

The Arlington/Alexandria chapter includes older members that range in age from 60 to 90. Many thanked a higher power for the victory.

"I was overcome with a flood of emotions and ... a tremendous feeling of gratitude that God allowed me to live long enough to witness this historic moment: the first woman, the first Black, the first Asian American, the first HBCU graduate and the first AKA to become Vice President of the United States of America, a heartbeat away from the most powerful office in the world," said Lula McLain Hicks who was initiated in 1968. "In that moment, Vice President Harris represented every member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and our 113 years of service to humankind."

Wanda Smith, who joined the sorority 42 years ago, said the swearing-in underscored the lyrics of the official hymn of AKA: "By merit and culture we strive and we do things that are worthwhile. And with a smile we help each other for we know there's no other like our sisterhood," she said. "Yes, I cried and thanked God."

For Aretha Marable Cunningham who was initiated in 1973, the ceremony offered optimism. "I feel extreme joy, relief, excitement, and hope for our country, the United States of America."

## 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 Jan. 15 – Jan. 21, 2021.*

### INCIDENTS

Between Nov. 1 at 12:01 a.m. and Jan. 19 at 12:01 a.m.

A social worker reported possible financial exploitation of a resident.

Fraud -- 400 Block MacArthur Avenue, NE

Between Jan. 7 at 12 p.m. and Jan. 20 at 6:08 p.m.

A citizen reported that she sent money for a dog that was for sale. When she arrived at the residence to pick up the dog, she found it was a scam.

Assault -- Patrick Henry Library

101 Maple Avenue, East  
Jan. 13, 3:29 p.m.

An employee reported that a man entered the library, which is closed to the public. When he advised the man the library was closed, the man began cursing at him and flipped over a table that struck the employee. The man then left the library in a vehicle.

Assault -- 200 Block Locust Street, SE

Jan. 13, 10 p.m.

A resident was complaining of back pain after reporting that her roommate pushed her to the ground during an argument. Rescue responded and assessed the resident, but she refused further treatment. The resident was advised of the warrant process if she wished to pursue charges.

Suspicious Event -- DeSale Street, SW

Jan. 14, 10:35 p.m.

At 4:10 p.m., a resident reported an incident to an officer that had occurred earlier in the day. The resident advised that he observed three men walking around his neighbor's house and looking in the windows. The neighbor confronted the men, and they stated they were looking for a traitor, and then walked away.

Vandalism -- 130 Cherry Street, SE

Jan. 15 between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m.

A Town employee reported profanity written on the turf portion of the ball field.

Found Property -- Meadow Lane Park

400 Courthouse Road, SW  
Jan. 15, 1 p.m.

A citizen found a case containing property at the tennis courts.

Found Property -- 100 Block Maple Avenue, East

Jan. 16, 10:45 a.m.

A citizen reported a backpack that was left inside the bus stop shelter.

Civil Dispute -- 200 Block Old Courthouse Road, NE

Jan. 16, 1:15 p.m.

A tenant reported several issues she is having with her landlord.

Assault -- 200 Block Locust Street, SE

Jan. 16, 5:48 p.m.

A resident reported that she was assaulted by her roommate. The resident was advised of the warrant process should she wish to pursue charges.

Vehicle Tampering -- 2600 Block Niblick Drive, SE

Between Jan. 17 at 10 a.m. and Jan. 18 at 7:36 a.m.

A resident reported that someone rummaged through their two unlocked vehicles. Nothing appeared to have been taken.

Lost Property -- 300 Block Glyndon Street, NE

Jan. 17 between 11:04 a.m. and 6 p.m.

A resident reported that she lost her wallet.

Vandalism -- DeSale Street, SW

Jan. 17 1 p.m.

A resident reported they saw someone spray-paint the word "traitor" on the asphalt roadway in front of his neighbor's house. This investigation is continuing.

Fraud -- 400 Block Park Street, SE

Jan. 17, 1:50 p.m.

A resident reported that someone made fraudulent purchases on one of her credit accounts. She was also advised that someone used her personal information in an attempt to open credit accounts.

Emotionally Disturbed Person -- 200 Block Locust Street, SE

Jan. 17, 6:28 p.m.

Officers responded to speak to a woman who was upset and stated she wanted to hurt herself. Mental Health employees were summoned and spoke to the woman. The woman was provided with information for resources that are available to her.

Civil Dispute -- 100 Block Center Street, South

Jan. 18, 12:34 p.m.

A resident reported an issue she is having with her siblings moving various belongings in the house.

Vandalism -- DeSale Street, SW

Jan. 18, 7:52 p.m.

Someone used spray chalk to write "traitor" on the roadway in front of a residence.



# McLean, Langley High Boundaries to Change

Next public hearing on Jan. 28, School Board vote on Feb. 4.

By Mercia Hobson  
The Connection

The Fairfax County School Board held a hybrid regular meeting on Jan. 21. Jeffrey K. Platenberg, assistant superintendent, Facilities and Transportation Services, brought forward a new informational business item, a review of the McLean HS Boundary Adjustment Process.

“The purpose of the McLean High School Boundary Study and the recommended boundary adjustments is really to provide the capacity relief to McLean High School by using the available capacity of Langley High School. The study also includes the middle schools to provide continuity in the school feeder pattern from elementary onto middle and high schools, and any change made,” Platenberg said.

According to Platenberg, FCPS recommended that the School Board approve a boundary adjustment of a portion of the Spring Hill Elementary School split feeder area to feed from Longfellow Middle School (2000 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church) and McLean High School to Cooper Middle School (977 Balls Hill Road, McLean) and Langley High School. Any approved boundary adjustment would not change the elementary school boundary.

Platenberg’s presentation focused on the four options developed and provided at the Boundary Study Community Meeting held on Dec. 7.

❖ Option A considered reassigning students in the Colvin Run Elementary School split feeder area and a portion of Westbriar Elementary School.

❖ Option B considered reassigning students in the Colvin Run Elementary School split feeder area, a portion of the Spring Hill Elementary School split feeder area and a Westbriar Elementary School portion.

❖ Option C considered reassigning students in the Spring Hill Elementary School split feeder area.

❖ Option D was no change.

**THE PRESENTATION** noted that during the Dec. 7 meeting, the community reviewed the options, and staff continued to collect comments via email. Concerns about development in Tysons, split feeders, and the schools’ socioeconomic diversity were the major feedback themes. Given the accurate



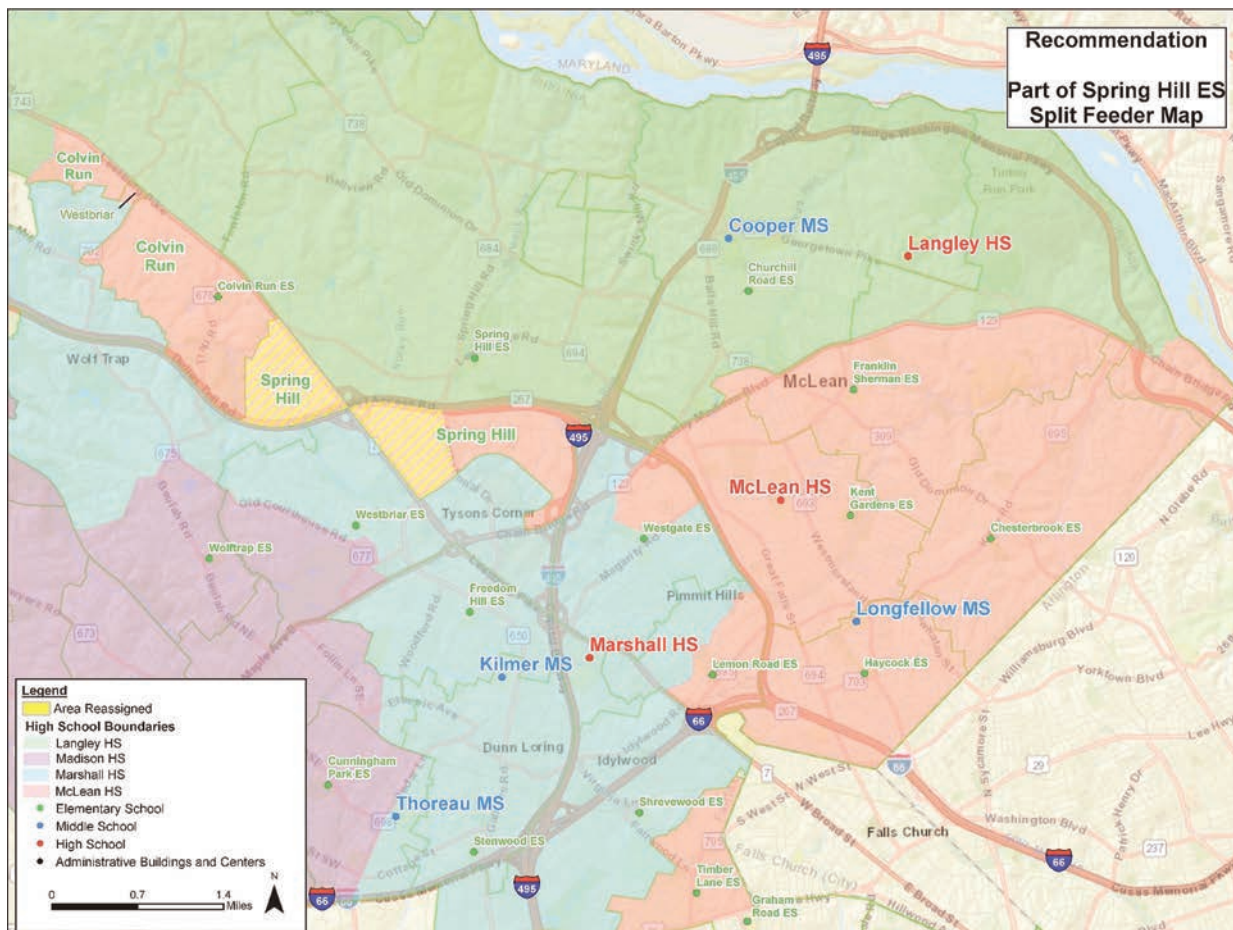
Eileen Tholen, Dranesville District Fairfax County School Board Member



Jeffrey K. Platenberg, assistant superintendent, Facilities and Transportation Services Fairfax County Public Schools

“The purpose of the McLean High School Boundary Study and the recommended boundary adjustments is really to provide the capacity relief to McLean High School by using the available capacity of Langley High School.”

— Jeffrey K. Platenberg, assistant superintendent



The area in yellow shows the FCPS’ recommended proposed boundary adjustment areas to be reassigned.

culated information, FCPS revised Option C as their recommendation. The suggested model addressed community feedback and concerns on existing housing and population growth and planned development. It allowed continued monitoring of growth at McLean HS and Langley HS.

Platenberg acknowledged the final numbers would vary, as shown on the slide presentation. Enrollment estimates did not address phasing, commonly referred to as “grandfathering.” Also, student adjustments were estimates that used SY 2019-20 numbers. These numbers would vary.

FCPS estimated that 159 students would be reassigned from McLean HS to Langley HS and 73 students reassigned from Longfellow MS to Cooper MS.

According to Policy 8130.7 Section XI. Phasing of Adjustments: “When possible, adjustments under this policy shall be implemented through attrition and phasing. The

School Board may approve a grade-by-grade phase-in of adjustments for students beginning with the incoming class at the middle or high school levels, when feasible. The School Board may adopt other phasing plans as appropriate to the individual boundary study. Parents of rising sixth (or fifth) graders, eighth graders, and twelfth graders affected by a boundary change may, at the discretion of the School Board, be provided the option of having their students remain in the school they attended prior to the change.”

Platenberg said that the next steps in the McLean/Langley Boundary Study are a School Board Meeting-Public Hearing on Thursday, Jan. 28, to obtain additional public comment and a School Board Meeting the next week, on Feb. 4, when the School Board is scheduled for a vote on the boundary adjustment.

**THE AFFECTED SCHOOLS** feed into the FCSB’s Dranesville magisterial district rep-

resented by Elaine Tholen. She said, “We have a public hearing next week, and then a vote on how we will move forward with the boundary adjustment on Feb. 4. I encourage all of you to be part of this process... I’m committed to continue listening to you.”

Tholen said she was aware of the community feedback urging to keep numbers balanced moving forward with any uncertainties after COVID and area development. She understood the community’s request that the School Board not inadvertently overload Cooper MS and yet still provide some relief to McLean HS and Longfellow MS as well as attempt to reduce the impact to two different split feeders, “keeping students together through their elementary school pyramid up to high school.”

Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Fairfax County School Board Member At-Large, said she thought the community would be well served regardless of the final decision, “because all of these schools in Fairfax County are great schools.” “But the importance of the process is really valuable for transparency and community input,” Sizemore Heizer said.



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News

# Friends of Reston Introduce New Executive Director

**K**ia Cole-Hines of Reston has been tapped as the new Executive Director of Friends of Reston (FOR), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization for Reston Association (RA). According to FOR's president Carol Nahorniak, the strong ties Cole-Hines has to the community make "a great match for the organization".

"This position will further allow me to have a hand in preserving and enhancing the community where I live, work, and play," Cole-Hines said.

"I am extremely pleased that Kia has accepted the offer to be the next Friends of Reston Executive Director, said Reston Association CEO Hank Lynch. "I am certain she will be tremendously successful with this new leadership challenge. The Friends of Reston's mission is to support RA with charitable, educational, and scientific activities. As both the FOR Executive Director and RA's Business Engagement and Sales Manager, Kia will be able to increase awareness of philanthropic opportunities that support projects like Reston Camps scholarships, swimming and tennis for children and various



MERCIA HOBSON/  
THE CONNECTION  
**Kia Cole-Hines**

**"This position will further allow me to have a hand in preserving and enhancing the community where I live, work, and play."**

— Kia Cole-Hines

environmental and nature activities that benefit the Reston community."

Cole-Hines replaced Katie Shaw who is leaving the position after 16 years. "We were understandably disappointed to hear that she would be stepping aside," said Nahorniak. Shaw will continue her management of Walk-er Nature Center, operated by RA.

— MERCIA HOBSON

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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



# 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.

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

Red Wolves in Virginia. 6:30-7:30 p.m. On-line. Join the Sierra Club Great Falls Group for a free online event to learn about proposals to reintroduce critically endangered red wolves to Virginia. RSVP for link: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001kYP6AAM>

## 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](http://www.oldfirehouse.org) or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 30

FACETS's Free Magic Show. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. FACETS will hosts a virtual free, family-friendly event that features a special performance by celebrity magician Joel Meyers. FACETS' Magic of Community event raises awareness and funds to combat poverty and homelessness in Fairfax County. The online event is free but donations are encouraged. Also during the event, several FACETS' clients will be sharing their courageous stories about homelessness and efforts to overcome it. Attendees will be inspired as they renew their commitment to a Fairfax County where everyone has a place to call home. Register at <http://facetscares.org/register-for-facets-virtual-magic-show-event/>

## SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Ye Olde Tavern. 4-5 p.m. Virtual. Chase away the pandemic Winter blues and raise a glass and a song to health and happiness in "Ye Olde Tavern." Musical hosts Jennifer Cutting and Steve Winick, along with song leaders from the Washington Revels community, for rousing tunes and toasts to warm your heart. Cost is \$20. Visit the website: <https://revelsdc.org/2021/jan31-winter-pub-sing/>

## SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Winter Stream Life. 1-2 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Explore Walney Creek with a naturalist to meet some of the small creek critters (macroinvertebrates) that call it home. Learn why so many different types of macroinvertebrates are active in winter streams. Your naturalist will demonstrate winter collecting, and you can help pick, sort and learn to identify these magnificent critters. This program is designed for participants age 8 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-631-0013.

## MONDAY/FEB. 1

Making Rope. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Journey back to the 1800s at Sully Historic Site and experience the challenges people once faced in making a rope sturdy enough for their needs. Make a piece of

rope from plants found on the property at Sully and take it home to compare with today's ropes. The cost is \$30 per family. Social distancing and face coverings are required. Call 703-437-1794.

## FEB. 1-13

Mardi Gras at the Workhouse. In-Person on Saturday, Feb. 13., 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center is thrilled to present its first-ever Mardi Gras celebration. Join them for two weeks of family-friendly events that will engage, inspire, teach and make you laugh. This mini festival will include: Online workshops on festive mask making; Online Mixology sessions; Online demonstrations on how to make floats or yard decorations; In-person glass bead demonstrations; In-person cooking classes; Parade on the Workhouse Campus; and Drive In Comedy Shows.

## TUESDAY/FEB. 2

Romance Scams. 12 p.m. Virtual event. Join AARP for a virtual webinar on Romance Scams. In a 30-minute webinar, they'll discuss the red flags to be on the lookout for anyone engaging in online relationships. Visit the website: <https://aarp.cvent.com/romancescams>

## SATURDAY & MONDAY, FEB. 6 & 8

"The University of Wonder & Imagination." 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12 p.m., 12:30 p.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 5 p.m. The University of Wonder & Imagination is now enrolling students of all ages and magical abilities...and there's a place with your name on it! Assemble with your fellow students and journey to the most unusual of universities, where the mysterious Professor Bamberg will send you off to interact with the liveliest of lecturers, choose your subjects of study, enter themed rooms (such as Math, Science, and Art!) and encounter all kinds of problems and puzzles, unlocking your magical powers as you go. The decisions made by you during the event will shape your unique experience. Purchase tickets \$15/\$10 MCC district residents.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Worst Spy Ever. 2-3:30 p.m. Cold War Museum (100 % virtual). Most damaging spy ever? Robert Hanssen. Learn why from the Historian of the FBI. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ultimate-betrayal-robert-hanssen-people-he-got-killed-and-the-lessons-tickets-123410242357>.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Monte Carlo Night. 6-8 p.m. Virtual event. Join in a two-hour Virtual Social on Saturday, Feb. 13, 6-8 p.m. Create your own Paint and Pour vase or heart-shaped cutting board. Cost is \$40. Visit the website: <https://www.jlnv.org/montecarlonight/>

## SUNDAY/FEB. 21

The Alden in McLean has created a series of family friendly, live virtual theatrical events for families to experience together. The Winter Series performances are: Doktor Kaboom! "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Sunday, Feb 21, and Monday, Feb. 22, 4 p.m. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). "Look Out! Science is Coming!"

"The Joshua Show." Saturday, March, 13, 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). Joshua Holden is a modern-day Mr. Rogers with hipster appeal!

To purchase tickets, visit: [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org) or contact Patron Services Manager Evelyn Hill at [evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 571-296-8385.

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## Reoriented



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Or to quote my high school baseball coach: "Reoriented." A cancer diagnosis, especially a "terminal" one, can cause that. However, what I'm addressing this week is money: what to do with what you have when you didn't expect you'd still have it. And by 'have it,' I mean you're still alive and you still have some control over what to do with it.

What this previous paragraph questions is what to do with the money you've accumulated your whole life after you've outlived your original prognosis, which for my non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, was "13 months to two years." The timer began in late February, 2009. I was aged 54 and nearly a half. My widowed mother had just died the previous December after reaching her 86th birthday. My father had died almost exactly two years earlier, at the age 87. Given my parent's at death, I figured/planned on living into my mid-eighties. That all changed when Team Lourie met the oncologist who has now been treating me going on about 12 years.

All my life, pre-cancer and post-cancer, I've paid attention to money: working for it, saving it, spending it and financially-planning it. As I became older, my needs expanded and so too did the sum of money I needed: college, car, wedding, house and then retirement. Now at age 66, 42 as a husband and 12 as a cancer survivor, the future has unexpectedly, given my prognosis, become my present.

During the early years of my diagnosis, I didn't really know how to spend the money I had saved: on the here and now because I was diagnosed as terminal and saw no future in depriving myself or to simply continue living my life spending/saving money as I always had. I chose the former because to me choosing the latter would have been giving into my cancer diagnosis.

Well, almost 12 years have passed since late Feb., 2009. Much has happened. None more significantly as has been my re-diagnosis to papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV, from the previous non small lung cancer, also stage IV. Though my particular type of thyroid cancer is terminal (the sole effective medication has a three-year-ish effective window than there's nothing available), I do have less of a lung cancer diagnosis hanging over my bank account. And yet, the money issue has raised its ugly dilemma once again. Rather than living with death occurring at any time, I now have a bit of a timeline: three years, but with an indeterminate one to follow. Before I had a definite that turned into a maybe. Now I have a maybe that's sort of turned into a definite. As such, once again, do I spend like I'm dying or spend/save like I'm living? The further complication is I'm basically retired and now having to make decisions which have been a lifetime in the making that for many of those years didn't have to factor in cancer and an adjusted, shall we say, life expectancy. It's challenging to determine how much money you're going to need when you can't predict the future. I mean, I'm living proof.

Being the baby of the baby - of the family, I'm pretty much the end of the line dating back approximately 150 years to Russia. And since we have no children, there's no one to pick up my slack. I can't run out of money because I'm responsible for my own slack. I can't presume that I won't outlive my resources any more than I can predict my cancer-affected demise. A demise and a quality of life that could be enhanced if I were to spend a bit of the money I do have, mindful always of the consequences however.

I realize, more than most, that there's no time like the present. Nevertheless, I still want to believe I have a future. After all, it's worked (kept me alive) for nearly 12 years. Perhaps I still have another 12 left to live. If so, I'm going to try and treat myself a bit more often this time. I don't see any future in depriving myself.

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





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