

CONNECTION

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Lake Braddock Bruins Win Season-opening Game

SPORTS, PAGE 9

Lake Braddock quarterback Billy Edwards #4 drops back for a pass during the game with Westfield: Bruins won a season-opening game, 26-7.



County's Budget Plan Faces 'Robust Conversations'

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NEWS

From the outside, the TSA building stands in a location that will benefit businesses surrounding the Springfield Town Center.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

TSA Is Filling Up in Southern Springfield

Access improvements are still to come for this Federal facility.

BY MIKE SALMON
 THE CONNECTION



Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk participates in the chamber's Zoom call.

As the winter winds down, the spring will bring new life into southern Springfield with the Transportation Security Administration completing their move into a nine-story, 625,000 square-foot building a few hundred yards from the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station.

The TSA relocation is combining five locations around the metro area into this one building, and when complete, this will be a boon to the businesses in this part of Springfield and Kingstowne.

"We'll be reaching out to the community to meet our food needs," said Peter M McVey, Director, of the TSA National Capital Region Consolidation and Relocation Project on a conference call sponsored by the Lee-Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce. The snowstorm blanketed the area the morning of the call, which was attended by 30 business leaders, elected officials and residents to hear about the latest developments with the new facility.

Currently there are 1,000 employees in the building, but that number will move up to 1,250 in the coming weeks, and top out at 3,100 when it is full. McVey narrated a slide show that showcased the facilities in the building, including security, offices, transportation and logistics for the government employees coming to Springfield. From the Metro station, there is a shuttle for federal employees only, and a walkway for others, as well as a six-level parking garage. The main entrance will be on the second floor where there is a secured entry facility, a coffee area and "Mission Hall," a museum-like place that tells the story of the TSA. There are some appliances that have not been delivered, and McVey said "we are still feeling the impacts of covid with appliance delivery," so for now, some rely on the vending machines.

Transportation is being pieced together, and right now, the building can only be accessed by a single road from Loisdale Road. Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) noted the importance of the Frontier Drive extension, which is a Virginia Department of Transportation project to extend Frontier Drive through the Metro station, by the TSA building, and eventually linking to Loisdale Road. "The Frontier Drive extension is the main improvement but it's not funded," he said, adding that officials on various levels are working on that.

Frontier Drive Project

According to VDOT, the \$140 million Frontier Drive project is currently in the preliminary design stage. VDOT describes the project as a four-lane divided roadway, which includes a combination of new construction and improvements to Springfield Center Drive and a new bridge over Long Branch, with on-road bicycle facilities, as well as a shared-use path on one side and a sidewalk on the other side. Braided ramps at the Frontier Drive and Franconia-Springfield Parkway interchange to improve access and eliminate weaving movements.

The project includes improvements to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station circulatory road and access to the Metro station parking structures, including three new bus bays and a direct connection from the transit center to eastbound Franconia-Springfield Parkway.

"I believe we'll be able to find money to get this done," Lusk said, noting that the Frontier Drive project is third in a row of road projects that are up for funding.

James Glenn, a nearby resident on the conference call, suggested a monorail from the station right into the TSA building as one improvement that could bring Metro riders to the office easily.

In the same area, Inova Health System plans to expand on recently acquired property adjacent to the current Inova HealthPlex – Franconia/Springfield.

Inova medical facilities is looking to build a hospital at Beulah Street and the Springfield-Franconia Parkway intersection, and Lusk looked at that project as another plus for this immediate area as a training and employment venue for residents.

In addition, Lusk is enthusiastic about renewing the effort to bring the FBI Headquarters to a parcel of land that is currently occupied by the General Services Administration. He's working on this with U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA).

"We think the new administration is going to be open to this," Lusk said.

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County's Budget Plan Faces 'Robust Conversations'

Focuses resources in targeted areas.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

“What a difference a year makes,” said Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill.

On Feb. 23, Hill presented his FY2022 Budget Plan to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The fiscal year will run from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

The FY2022 Advertised Budget is not a done deal; it is the county executive's recommendation. The final FY2022 Adopted Budget will happen May 4 after what Chairman Jeff McKay called “robust conversations with the community in order to prioritize funding.”

Hill's proposed plan builds on the County's success to utilize federal stimulus funds, most notably the \$200.2 million CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund.

“I THINK IT'S CLEAR that we won't be able to do everything we want to, just like our residents and businesses can't in these unprecedented times,” said Chairman McKay. “And obviously, we wish that we had better certainty about what the year ahead is going to look like, but clearly, nobody does... It's prudent for us to plan for this year to continue to be spry and to be able to pivot and respond to what's happening just as we



PHOTO BY FAIRFAX COUNTY

Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill

have done through this last year in a really successful way.”

Hill's recommendation includes reducing the Real Estate Tax rate by one cent, bringing the rate from \$1.15 to \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value. In Hill's Message to the Chairman and Board, he said, “I recognize that many of our homeowners may be struggling. ... Fairfax County's unemployment rate stands at 4.4 percent – far greater than the 1.9 percent we saw one year ago.”

According to Hill, with the proposed reduction in the Real Estate Tax rate, additional revenue available to the County for FY 2022 is \$42.23 million – an increase of only 1.51 percent over the current FY 2021 estimate.

How to Provide Input on the FY 2022 Budget ADVERTISED BUDGET PLAN

- To learn more about participating in the budget public hearings, call the Clerk to the Board's Office at (703) 324-3151 (TTY 711) or to access the form at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form
- The public can send written testimony or communicate with the Clerk's Office by email at: clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov.
- Residents can also provide testimony by phone or submit video testimony. In-person testimony will not be allowed if the Board meetings are held virtually.
- The entire FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan and the FY 2022-FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program are available online at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget

How to Provide Input on the FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan

Highlighting other Advertised Budget areas, it recommends a \$20 million unappropriated reserve for economic recovery.

It includes an overall increase for County and Schools of only 0.55 percent, excluding reserves.

The plan provides a \$14.13 million increase over FY2021 for School Operating, far short of the School Board's approved request on Feb. 18 of \$104.40 million additional.

No funding is allocated for employee pay increases in FY22.

While the Budget does not make broad investments in pre-COVID goals proposed last year, resources are recommended to focus on more targeted areas. According to Hill, they are “modest investments” in Board and community priorities, such as expanding funding for criminal justice programs and mental health and addiction treatment. Examples are public safety staffing,

Diversion First, opioid use prevention efforts, and environmental Initiatives. Previously approved initiatives, such as body-worn cameras and health department positions funded initially with stimulus funds, are proposed to include baseline funding. An increase of 109 positions is proposed primarily for the continuation of previous initiatives and new facilities.

Concurrent with the Budget's release, Hill made available a revised draft of the Countywide Strategic Plan at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan for consideration by the Board and our residents.

LOOKING AHEAD, the Board will advertise a tax rate at its March 9 meeting. Various district meetings will occur in February and March, and the Board will hold public hearings from April 13-15.

McKay said that for FY20 - 22, the County expected revenue loss

to approach \$300 million to the General Fund. He said that while appreciative of prior stimulus money and hoped additional stimulus money was on its way to the County, “hope is not really what you base a budget on; it's reality.”

Vice Chairman Penny Gross (D-Mason District) discussed non-residential real estate. The amount of empty office space increased to 18.5 million square feet out of 119.2 million square feet.

“It does tell me that we need to go gangbusters on our repurposing of vacant buildings,” Gross said.

Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) said that Fairfax County is one of the thousands of jurisdictions across the country that Congress members watch, which is why he appreciated the prudent proposal Hill released. “I think if we had a budget proposal that showed us with a lot of new spending initiatives or dramatic pay increases, it would have made our job more difficult as we're making the necessary case for additional federal support for state and local governments at this point.”

Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield) said he hoped to see a “flat tax bill,” especially given the pandemic. “I expect things, especially in the commercial real estate world, will probably get a lot worse next year. But this Budget still represents a 3.4 percent tax increase on our residents ... I believe we have a lot of work to do.”

Housing Values Increase and This Will Soon Be Felt in Tax Bills

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Despite the impact of job losses, deaths and sickness that swept over the nation over the last year, the housing values in Fairfax County have increased, and this will trickle down to the taxes paid by homeowners, including seniors that live on a fixed income.

The tax rate proposed by County Executive Bryan Hill is reduced from last year, but the average homeowner would still pay more because of increased home values. The Board of Supervisors won't advertise a tax rate until March 9.

According to the county, residential real estate assessments are up an average of 4.25 percent countywide and about 88 percent of homeowners saw an increase in their home's value. The county says these are market-driven increases or decreases to values. Only 4.4 percent saw a decrease in value, and as-

sessments are unchanged for the remaining 7.6 percent. This year the average assessment for all homes is \$607,752, compared to \$582,976 in 2020.

The southern part of Fairfax County saw the biggest assessment increases. Houses in Lee District went up the most at 6.32 percent followed by Braddock at 6.06 percent, and Mount Vernon at 5.29 percent. In the Sully District, values raised 4.6 percent, while in the Providence District there is a 3.91 percent increase, followed by a 3.67 percent increase in Hunter Mill, 2.53 percent in Dranesville and 5.3 percent in Mason.

THE ASSESSMENTS are based on the market value, and the county assesses all properties on an annual basis, using sales records as one way to determine a property's value. If the market is hot, the housing prices go up, and eventually the taxes paid go up. According to the county, an annual real estate assessment of all real estate property ensures that they are uniformly and fairly as-

sessing properties at their fair market value.

For example, the seniors that have paid off their mortgage will simply write a bigger check this summer when the county tax bill is due. Others who pay their county taxes as part of the escrow account will pay an increased monthly mortgage bill for 2022.

In Springfield, where the increase in housing values rose 4.89 percent, Supervisor Pat Herry is not satisfied with the taxpayers increase at this time. The advertised county budget increase for fiscal 2022 includes a 3.4 percent increase in the tax on homeowners. “This year's advertised budget continues to raise taxes on homeowners and is unsustainable,” Herry said in a release.

He shared ideas though on budget items. “Instead of focusing on the pandemic response and providing tax relief to our residents, this budget includes staffing new programs and facilities. We need to be doing what our residents are having to do and figure out ways to work within our means.”

Specifically, Herry said some reductions

in the school budget could be made, and four facilities that are planned could be delayed to save the money for now. These are the South County Police Station, the Scotts Run Fire Station, and new community centers in Lee and Sully Districts. “We can defer opening these,” Herry said. None of his proposed deferrals are in his district.

The county executive's proposed budget already provides less money for schools than the school board's budget calls for.

HOMEOWNERS can also contest their appraisals, possibly lowering the amount of the value of their homes, and therefore the amount of their tax bill. There are two levels of appeal, the county said. The first one is an administrative appeal to the Department of Tax Administration, and the second level is to the Board

SEE HOME ASSESSMENTS, PAGE 5

A Progressive State if We Can Keep It

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



COMMENTARY

To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin who when asked at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia what kind of government had been formed replied, "a republic if we can keep it!" As the General Assembly concluded the work of its annual session this past weekend the same kind of question could be posed as the changes in the Commonwealth's laws and governance have been so profound. The answer I believe is a progressive state measured not by southern standards but by comparison to all the other states. At the ballot box the state over the last several years has gone from red to purple to blue. All statewide elected officials are Democrats, and both houses of the General Assembly have been controlled by Democrats since the elections in 2019. Far more meaningful than the partisan labels of elected officials are the changes that have taken place in the laws of the Commonwealth.

In the regular and a special session of the General Assembly last year, historic legislation

was passed including ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and lifting of barriers to abortion. Jim Crow era laws were repealed, and the Virginia Values Act prohibiting discrimination in housing and employment was passed. Bills to reduce gun violence were passed as were bills to reduce the school to prison pipeline. Criminal justice and policing reform bills were passed. And more.

In the session that just ended, criminal justice reform continued. The death penalty was abolished, and criminal defendants and civil litigants were granted an automatic right to appeal that exists in every other state. My bill that ended excessive fines and prison time for petit larceny passed. Criminal records for many non-violent offenses will be expunged under a new law. And more. Details for both sessions are at <https://lis.virginia.gov>.

All of these changes along with record levels of funding for COVID-19 relief and pay raises for teachers, police and other essential workers have led to references about Virginia

being the leader among states in progressive legislation. The first ever woman Speaker of the House of Delegates Eileen Filler-Corn said that the House Democratic majority elected in 2019 "has kept its promise to protect families, keep Virginia healthy and rebuild our economy stronger."

As one who served during years when the news coming from Richmond was not so good, I am aware that these reforms passed with barely a majority of Democratic legislator votes and a rare and scant few of Republican legislator votes. Attention is already shifting to the fall when the governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general will be elected along with all 100 members of the House of Delegates. The progressive reforms will be on the ballot: do we build on them in the future or do we turn back the clock? Already a former governor, two Black women, and a self-avowed socialist are running for the Democratic nomination for governor and a self-proclaimed "Trump in high heels" and a staunch opponent of abortion rights are among those seeking the Republican nomination. There is likely to be a record number of candidates running for the House of Delegates. The voters in November will ultimately decide if we keep our progressive state!

Brain Injury Awareness: A Personal Story

BY KATY SCHNITGER



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

In 2007, my kids and I were at a fireworks show in Vienna that was so grand we were in awe of each burst. But then there was a misfire and a three-inch mortar shot through the crowd and exploded on us.

The force of the explosion turned buttons from my shorts into projectiles that were surgically removed from my left thigh.

I spent 12 days in the burn unit at Washington Hospital Center. I was released from the hospital to recover at home with a nurse. I cried a lot and didn't want to get out of bed, but my kids needed me.

I focused on taking care of my family. It soon became apparent that my own mental health and cognitive capabilities were suffering. I struggled to do things I used to do so easily as a stay at home mom. I could not manage our family's schedule, grocery shopping was impossible, and I could no longer do simple math. I was diagnosed with depression, but I knew I was struggling with more.

In December 2008, I met Dr. Gregory J. O'Shanick, President & Medical Director at the Center for Neurorehabilitation Services, PC in Richmond. After a 3-hour evaluation, he recognized that I had a blast Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). My feelings were validated that my symptoms were beyond depression. But what did having a TBI mean going forward?

I met with Dr. O'Shanick's team for physical and occupational therapy. I also discovered Brain Injury Services (BIS), a nonprofit based in Northern Virginia that serves adults and children with TBIs. BIS empowered me to feel whole again. I joined a monthly support group and did not feel so alone. I began public speaking with their Speakers Bureau. That gave me purpose, confidence and independence that opened the door to employment.

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. I share my story to help others who have experienced trauma to the brain to help them and their caregivers recognize some of the signs of a TBI. According to Dr. O'Shanick, common indications of a TBI are loss of balance, inability to track with the eyes, sensitivity to sound, and difficulty with executive functions. All of these challenges can lead to frustration, anxiety, and isolation. But know you are not alone. There is a community at BIS who see you and support your transition to live your best life.

Katy Schnitger is the Office Manager and Outreach Specialist at Brain Injury Services. Katy has been involved with BIS since 2010 as a client and as a volunteer with the Speaker's Bureau. She has been employed at Brain Injury Services since 2015. She has lived in Vienna, Virginia for over fifteen years.

'Unique Yard Sale' to Benefit Fairfax Salvation Army

The Fairfax Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary will hold a "Unique Yard Sale" Saturday, March 27, at the Fairfax Salvation Army Corps, 4915 Ox Road, Fairfax. Hours of sale are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. On sale will be new items from the canceled 2020 Silent Auction and other donated new and lightly used items, such as: housewares, handicrafts, Easter, Spring and Christmas items, ladies apparel, jewelry, children's items and much more. All proceeds raised will support several programs at the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army plays a vital role in the community by assisting those in need. Some of the projects the local Corps sponsors are: disaster relief in the form of food and clothing, backpacks with supplies to school age children, food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas, toys and gifts for families at Christmas and any other needs that arise.

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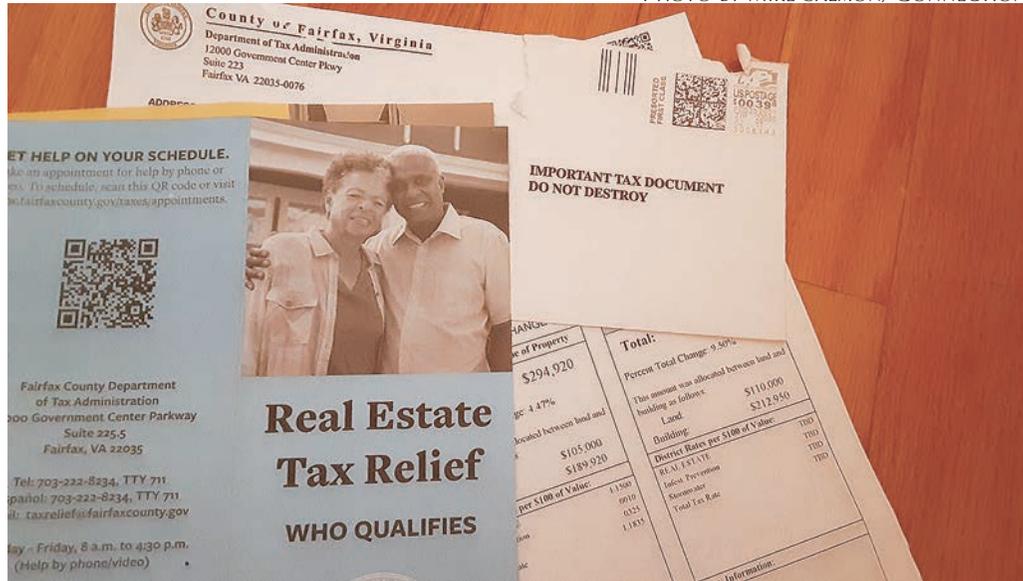
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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



Pieces of mail all homeowners around the county have received in the past weeks.

‘Winter in Fairfax City’ Blanket Campaign

The Winter in Fairfax City campaign launched Tuesday, March 2, Using CARES Act funds, Fairfax City’s Economic Development Authority has purchased blankets and is providing them to City restaurants at no cost. The idea is to promote outdoor dining by offering patrons the option to purchase a blanket to keep warm while dining outside.

Blankets will be available at 20 Fairfax City restaurants. When patrons buy a blanket for \$20, the participating restaurant will keep the proceeds and the customer will receive a free hot chocolate, coffee or tea. Then, when they return for another outdoor-dining experience there with their blanket, they’ll receive an additional, free, hot beverage.

This new initiative is a continuation of the Fairfax City Winter Preparedness Initiative Micro-Grant program’s goal of helping the City’s restaurants attract customers during the cooler months.

“The Winter in Fairfax City blanket campaign offers the community an opportunity to continue outdoor dining in a safe, creative, and comfortable way,” said Assistant Economic Development Director Danette Nguyen. “Fairfax City is committed to supporting the restaurants that make up a critically important part of our City’s fabric. We invite residents and visitors alike to dine out and support local, all winter long.”

The participating restaurants are: 29 Diner, Bellissimo, Cameron’s Coffee & Chocolates, Capital Ale House, Chubby Squirrel Brewing Co., Coyote Grille, Crazy Crab, Eastwind, Epicure Café, Foundation Coffee Roasters, Hamrock’s, High Side, Kim’s Pho Kitchen + Bar, Kiroran, Masala Wok, Ornerly Beer Co., Patriots Pub & Grill, PJ Skidoo’s, Red Hot & Blue, Señor Tequila’s,

For more information, go to fairfaxcityconnected.com/winterinfairfaxcity.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Home Assessments Increase

FROM PAGE 3

of Equalization, an independent body made up of residents of Fairfax County. In 2020, DTA received 493 administrative appeals and the BOE received 69 appeals.

Herrity did note that some of the seniors in his district have moved out because of the increased taxes. “Older adults are being taxed out of Fairfax County,”

Herrity said.

County residents can look for an opportunity to speak out on taxes over the next few weeks. There are public hearings about the county budget from April 13-15. A mark-up of the final budget draft is turned in on April 27 and the new budget comes out May 4.

To see where your real estate taxes are spent, visit the real estate calculator at:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/taxcalc/>

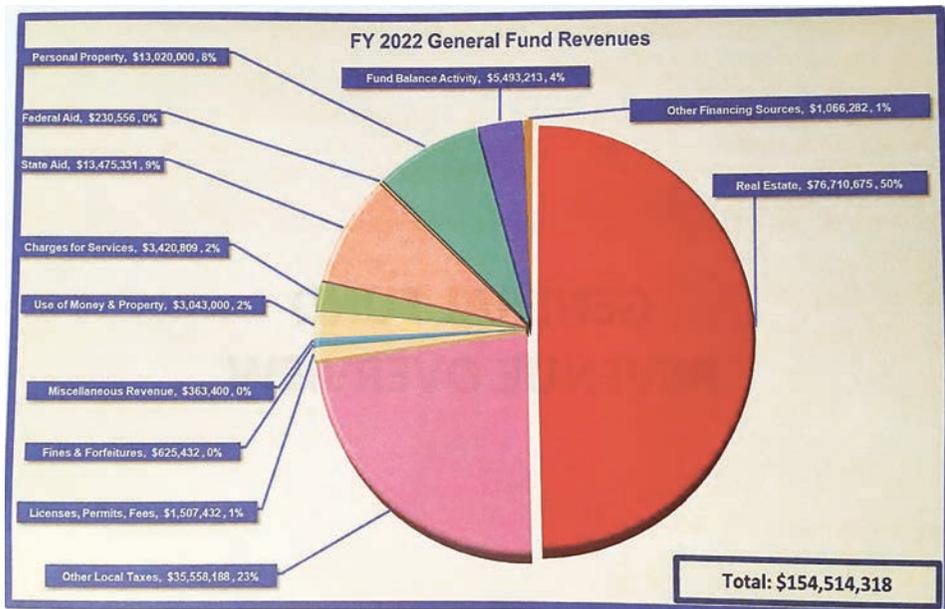
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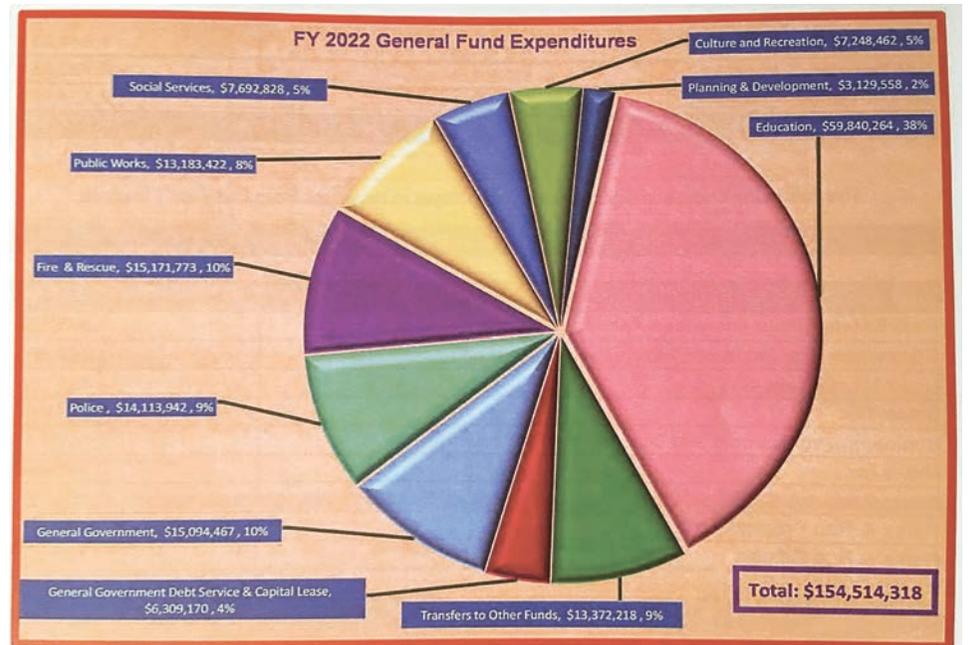
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- Northern Virginia Building Industry Association
- Apartment and Office Building Association
- Virginia Self Storage Association
- Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association
- And many more...





City of Fairfax FY 21 General Fund revenues.



City of Fairfax FY 21 General Fund expenditures.

'A Way for Us to Get Back on Track'

Fairfax City manager unveils proposed FY 22 budget.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City Manager Rob Stalzer unveiled his proposed City budget for FY 22 at last Tuesday's City Council meeting. But first, Mayor David Meyer addressed the residents watching the Feb. 23 presentation.

He stressed all the services the City provides across 6 square miles to Fairfax's 24,000 people to keep them safe and well-educated and also give them health services and public-works services. Knowing that, said Meyer, "It is remarkable – the high quality of services provided – for the reasonable amounts of tax resources we require."

He said it's possible because of "our people." He then commended all the City staff members, officials and department heads involved in preparing the budget. And he encouraged all Fairfax residents to be part of this document's public-hearing process, over the next couple months, before it's adopted on May 5.

"We've been working on the budget for six months," said Stalzer. "The FY 21 and FY 22 proposed amounts are very similar. We're looking at this budget as a way for us to get

back on track and do the things we deemed important when we adopted our last budget, pre-COVID – and before we had to reduce it by \$18 million because of it."

He proposes a modest, residential real-estate tax hike of \$0.005 – from the current \$1.075 per \$100 assessed valuation to \$1.08 – of which \$0.035 would support the City's Stormwater Fund. Still, because it would come on top of raised home assessments for calendar year 2021, the owner of an average home in Fairfax valued at \$541,554 would pay \$20/month more in real-estate taxes for an annual increase of \$235.

However, said Stalzer, "Our tax rate is the lowest, by far, of any of the cities and towns in Northern Virginia, when you look at the tax dollars per square mile. And the 3.5-cent stormwater fund tax rate is equivalent to approximately \$2.3 million dedicated to fund stormwater projects. The money is needed for improvements to our stormwater infrastructure."

He also recommends a 6-percent jump in the Wastewater Fund rate, and his budget would fully fund the City School Board's adopted FY 22 contract with Fairfax County Public Schools for \$53,480,000 – about \$2 million more than in FY 21.

THE PROPOSED CITY BUDGET includes pay raises for City employees – 3.5-percent merit increases, effective Jan. 1, 2022, plus market-rate salary adjustments of 2.3 percent. "We need to take care of the people who got us through COVID-19 and will be here to take us forward," explained Stalzer.

He said the budget focuses on the Council's goals of economic development and redevelopment – as well as quality transportation, neighborhoods and governance – while complying with fiscal policies, maintaining the City's AAA bond rating and delivering the services Fairfax residents have come to expect. However, although the City's tax base has increased, it lags behind the region's average, and nearly half of the \$154,514,318 General Fund budget is for non-discretionary expenses, such as schools, human services and debt repayment.

"Education is our biggest expense, just under 40 percent of the General Fund expenditures," said Stalzer. "Police and Fire are about 20 percent, and Public Works is just under 10 percent."

Real-estate taxes – 35 percent commercial and 65 percent residential – comprise 50 percent of General Fund revenues, but Stalzer said all the City's revenue sources are

important to offset its expenses. "We have a good mix of retail – especially grocery and hardware stores, and pharmacies – that have done well during the pandemic," he said. "But we want to do even better."

"The tax base grew 3.17 percent – about \$204 million," he continued. "But to do what we want to do for the City, we need it to grow by 6.6 to 7.9 percent a year – which will be a challenge."

STALZER said Fairfax did "a good and purposeful job with the CARES Act funds we received, and we got 100-percent reimbursement from FEMA for our COVID [response] activities." He also noted the ongoing interest in the City by developers wishing to build here, plus Fairfax's success in leveraging outside sources to help fund its transportation and other projects.

Among his proposed FY 22 General Fund expenditures is a \$1.5 million increase in salaries for existing and some new personnel. And Stalzer called the total \$8.7 million transfer to the CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) budget from this fund "a significant bump because the design of Sherwood/Willard begins in FY 22."

SEE CITY BUDGET, PAGE 10

Fairfax Restores Some FY 21 Budget Cuts

Concerned about a potential shortfall of nearly \$18 million in its FY 21 budget, the Fairfax City Council took decisive action during its Jan. 5 quarterly budget review. At the urging of City Manager Rob Stalzer, it slashed its capital and operating budgets and placed \$7.9 million of budgeted expenses on hold.

Now, though, Fairfax's financial picture has gotten brighter, and it's been able to restore some \$1.4 million of those previously frozen items into its current, General Fund expenditure budget. The Council

did so during its meeting last Tuesday, Feb. 23.

Factors contributing to the City's rosier-than-expected economic situation included additional meals-tax revenue coming from Fairfax's grocery stores, plus strong sales-tax revenue from both grocery and hardware stores, as well as a continued upward trend in the residential, real-estate market.

Indeed, according to Chief Financial Officer Dave Hodgkins, the City ended 2020 with a balanced budget and a slight surplus. And FY 2021 is currently projected to end

with a \$2.4 million surplus. So restoring the \$1.4 million in reserved expenditures to the current budget will still leave Fairfax with about a \$1 million surplus.

So Stalzer was able to return to the Council last week and request the reinstatement of \$1,462,500 of items in the FY 21 General Fund expenditure budget that had been held in reserve. Their categories and dollar amounts restored are as follows:

Hiring Freeze (\$225,000 restored of \$450,000 in reserve), Temporary Employees (\$175,000 of \$350,000 in reserve), Over-

time (\$287,500 of \$575,000 in reserve), Suspending Two Holidays (\$70,000 of \$70,000 in reserve), Furloughs/Layoffs (\$455,000 of \$455,000 in reserve) and Small Area Plans (\$250,000 of \$500,000 in reserve).

Following Stalzer's presentation, Councilwoman Janice Miller made a motion to approve his request and Councilman Jon Stehle seconded it. The Council then approved it unanimously.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Congregation Adat Reyim Welcomes New Rabbi

Rabbi Chana Leslie Glazer helps congregation grow despite pandemic.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Rabbi Chana Leslie Glazer is a collaborator. In July of 2020, the educator of all ages became the spiritual leader of Congregation Adat Reyim, located at 6500 Westbury Oaks Court in Springfield. Despite a pandemic and almost everything being virtual, Rabbi Glazer made her mark on the growing congregation, known for its diversity of Jewish practitioners and interfaith families.

"In the first few months of on-line services and programs, members often commented in the Zoom chat, 'We got the right rabbi,'" said congregant Eileen Kugler.

According to a press release, "Rabbi Glazer has kept a busy schedule of congregational and community events. Her thoughtful sermons during these difficult days have provided valuable insights, comforted us, and at times, encouraged us to live up to our Jewish values."

Rabbi Glazer maintains that before she arrived, Adat Reyim was already a participatory congregation. Her goal became for engage-

ment to be "meaningful and successful," but she was challenged because it is different for different people. Wanting to reach the diverse populations, Rabbi Glazer looked at prayer, education, and other activities through a different lens - the time of day, the vehicle, and the initiative.

For instance, Rabbi Glazer offers Jewish meditation on a weekday morning. It attracts a population different from other programs and events. Her Exploring Judaism class is on Sundays, composed of adults from various religious backgrounds and all ages. An ongoing book group about racism and anti-racism is held on weekday evenings. It sees a different group participating.

"The congregation already offered a variety of programs to its members when I got here, and my work so far has been to help broaden those offerings and to name what we are doing and help the community be proud of that because it is part of what makes this community great," Rabbi Glazer said.

She is also helping the congregation in its stated interest of thinking and acting to be more inclusive

of minorities and marginalized groups - who still isn't here at the table now, and why? According to Glazer, she asked herself how Adat Reyim could be even more inclusive. She wanted to "normalize different approaches and remove any judgment on how people con-

nect to different things in different ways."

"I have been a practicing Jew all my life but have never before felt as engaged in prayer as I have since Rabbi Glazer came to Congregation Adat Reyim. She has a way of introducing prayers and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rabbi Chana Leslie Glazer

leading with intention that helps me to connect with the words on the page and allows them to real-

SEE NEW RABBI, PAGE 10

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VIEWPOINTS

What do you think of the legalization of marijuana in Virginia?

VIEWPOINTS AND PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



"Personally, it's taking too long. The state could use the tax revenue, my son wouldn't have gotten busted, I could relax a bit,"

- JOE KLEMMER,
FAIRFAX, TOBACCONIST



"I would prefer decriminalization, we don't need to be taxing drugs."

-- STEVE GAGLIANO,
SPRINGFIELD, CONTRACTOR



"I think it's better because the penalties are too harsh, everywhere I go I smell it."

- ARMAND NAVARRO,
LORTON, COOK



"Go for it, people have their right and should be able to do what they want to do."

- SAM EVANS,
SPRINGFIELD

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Steel beam outlines of the new Lorton community center dwarf the old library (right rear)

Lofty Progress for Lorton Community Center

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Steel beams now rise high in the sky dwarfing the former Lorton Library on Richmond Highway. As we welcome Spring, construction of the new Lorton Library and Community Center, at the site of the existing facilities, has made noticeable progress and is about one year away from its projected completion in Spring 2022.

Camela Speer, of Mount Vernon District Supervisor's office, reports, "The Lorton Community Center and Library project is proceeding on schedule with no delays, setbacks or design changes. Phase 1a is complete and the interim park is open and actively being used. Steel framing continues at the Community Center building, and construction has started on the new Library addition."

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck shared, "It is very exciting to see our new community center and library literally rising from the ground! I am very pleased that we

are little over a year away from celebrating these great new community learning centers with our neighbors. I can imagine the sounds of cheers, running to roaming through the stacks, seeing people of all ages, abilities and interests coming together is an experience we should all be eagerly excited to be a part of. See you there next year!"

"It is very exciting to see our new community center and library literally rising from the ground! "

— Mount Vernon Supervisor
Dan Storck

The Lorton community broke ground in August 2020 for the multi-million dollar project that will combine a modernized and larger library with a new combination community and senior center. (See The Connection, Aug. 27, 2020)



Construction workers place beams using crane and lifts

CAPPIES REVIEW

'Jurassic Park' at Robinson

Robinson Secondary School presents 'Life Finds a Way.'

BY SUSAN WEINHARDT
JAMES MADISON HIGH SCHOOL

In a time where live theatre is just as rare as seeing a velociraptor roaming about, creativity and inspiration can be scarce, but not for Robinson Secondary School. Their production of Life Finds a Way was a fresh take on a world we know and love, Jurassic Park, and how it is relevant in 2021.

The structure of the play differed from the traditional act by act format in that they made it in two parts. In the first part, the CEO of Jurassic Park addressed the investors' board of InGen with an update on the reopening of the park after the escape of countless dinosaurs caused it to close for two months. The second section was from the perspective of a low-level employee at the park running an unofficial TikTok account for the park.

Despite how short this production was, it was incredibly detail oriented. Part one was satirical and humorously compared reopening Jurassic Park with reopening the US during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the second half showed the reality of the situation in the park. There was a brilliant contrast between the rich CEO who only cared about money and success and the sacrificed employee who needed the job to live but could care less about the park's reputation.

The performance started out with the CEO of the park, Dianna Soerre (Abigail Camp), who was all consumed with impressing the investors and making money, despite safety concerns with opening the park. Her character build-up was entertaining to watch because of her lack of empathy and unbothered attitude. Camp's physicality and the way she kept a straight face while there were constant velociraptor roars in the background elevated the satire.

In the second half of Life Finds a Way, the point of view switches to an employee at Jurassic Park and wrangler of the dinosaurs, Tracy Cerato (Katherine "KP" Porter), who seemed to be oblivious of most things around her. One of the best parts of this innovative story was the use of TikTok and all its classic features like comments and the green screen effect, which was a welcome addition to the



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Katherine "KP" Porter

To Watch

Life Finds a Way can be found in 2 episodes at:
https://youtu.be/porTgPo_x0A
<https://youtu.be/w8Jr9z9Hf5w>

pre-recorded storytelling. Porter used these features to her advantage, even though no one attended her live stream.

The set team (Brooke Hanser, Harry Glicklin, Katherine "KP" Porter) created different settings like Costco, the woods, and virtual backgrounds, which added an interesting touch and kept the video engaging. The editing throughout, from the clever camera cutoffs to the intro card for the InGen investor meeting, made for a simple but elevated final product. Also, the sound effects (Beau Baldassari) created velociraptor roars and gunshots that were placed perfectly and helped with the comedic timing.

Even though there was a small cast, this show had the same energy and humor, if not more, of a large show. The challenges of virtual theatre are ever present, but not as far as the dinosaur wranglers are concerned. Be sure to visit Jurassic Park in the middle of a deadly pandemic and remember that "keeping visitors safe is their number one priority!"

BULLETIN BOARD

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

NOW THRU APRIL 13

- Free Finance Classes. 7-8:15 p.m. Via Zoom. Sponsored by St. John's United Methodist Church, Springfield. Free Personal Finance Mgmt Classes, taught by accredited finance counselor. Classes deal with budgeting, credit/debt management, saving and investing, etc. These are individual classes taught once a week. Register at www.saintjohnsumc.org to receive Zoom link from the instructor.
- March 9 -- 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Developing Your Spending Plan (AKA the Budget)
- March 16 -- 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Take Control of Your Finances: Managing Credit/Debt
- March 23 -- 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Saving and Investing
- April 6 -- 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Investing for

Retirement
April 13 -- 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Tax Efficient Charitable Giving

UPDATES FROM BURKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Burke Historical Society speaker Kayleen Reusser has released a new book based on her interviews with WWII veterans, this one documenting the experiences of prisoners of war. Her interviewees include previous BHS speaker Jerry Wolf.
<https://kayleenreusser.com/>
In addition, you might enjoy Channel 16's program based on the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable-consumer/channel-16/history-commission-inventory-historic-sites>

Fairfax County Public Library has virtual programs for Black History Month: March 5 & 6, the International Conference on World War II will be presented as a free virtual program: <https://ww2conference.com/>

FACES OF FAIRFAX CITY LAUNCHED

Fairfax City's Economic Development Office has launched a photo and interview series: 'Faces of Fairfax City' to spotlight the city's business community. The series aims to provide an authentic look at the businesses that help create the city's unique character, charm, and sense of community. The series began

A Schedule Can Anchor Your Day

How creating a daily routine can ease anxiety during times of uncertainty.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Her days were overwhelmingly stressful. Holly Platt, a Bethesda mother of two, was preparing to sell her home and searching for a new one, homeschooling all while running her full time math tutoring business. She often ran late to appointments or missed them entirely. A friend suggested that she create a daily routine for herself that included blocking off specific time each day to complete tasks.

“Even morning, I pull up my daily calendar and enter yoga for 30 minutes, making and eating breakfast, and walking my dog Leo,” she said. “Covid has been hard for everyone, but I hear a lot of people saying now that they are scheduling a specific time for daily activities to force them into a routine.”

Platt is not alone in her strategy. Creating a routine – even for those who consider themselves to be whimsical and balk at the idea of strict scheduling -- can benefit from setting aside a specific time to complete at least one or two activities each day.

“Creating a daily routine is fundamental in developing a healthy relationship with one’s own needs,” said Jennifer Ha, Ph.D., Visiting Professor of Counseling at Marymount University. “Without this regular and intentional mindful attention, your mood and overall mental health can deteriorate, sometimes without one even realizing it.”

Part of protecting mental health is having a sense of stability. “As human beings we thrive with a degree of predictability and certainty,” added Diana Fuchs, Ph.D., a retired clinical psychologist based in Springfield. “We want to know that we have some control over our lives and what’s going on around us, especially when we have a major world pandemic that makes us feel as if the fabric of society is being unraveled.”

In fact, studies show that undertaking some activities on a schedule helps to reduce stress during negative life events, including one study found in the Occupational Therapy Journal of Research. “Daily routine gives us a sense of predictability, decreases anxiety related to uncertainty and provides a comfort that no matter how difficult the day might be, some things will be predictable and as we



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY PLATT

Creating a daily routine which includes walking her dog Leo has given Holly Platt a sense of order and peace.

prefer them,” said Dr. Gail Saltz, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the NY Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell School of Medicine. “This may be especially true for people that find change anxiety-producing and find transitions difficult.”

From improving sleep quality to pledging to drink more water each day, a routine can improve one’s overall wellbeing. “An exercise routine is healthy

physically, but also mentally by decreasing stress and improving mood,” said Saltz. “Having predictable work hours, separate from other hours, ... decreases ... likelihood of burn out.”

Though the end result might be similar for most people, creating a routine is a highly individualized process, said Fuchs. “It can be helpful to visualize our day by writing out our daily routine,” she said. “For example, ‘At 3pm I get to leave work and see my son. At 8pm, I get to snuggle up with a cup of tea and read a good book.’”

Treat a routine like a medical appointment that you schedule in advance and commit to keeping, suggest Fuchs. “No doubt most of us already have some form of routine when it comes to self-care, brushing teeth and taking a shower, for example,” she said. “Break down your day into smaller, manageable time frames. ‘Ultimately you want to construct a time frame that works best for you.’”

“Covid has been hard for everyone, but I hear a lot of people saying now that they are scheduling a specific time for daily activities to force them into a routine.”

— Holly Platt



PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Lake Braddock Bruins take the field before their game with the Westfield Bulldogs

Bruins Beat Bulldogs in Season-opening Game

Lake Braddock 26 Westfield 7.

The Westfield Bulldogs and the Lake Braddock Bruins battled it out in a cold rain in Burke on Feb. 26, in both teams’ first game of the season.

Lake Braddock would open scoring with a field goal, midway through the first quarter. Later Westfield would take the lead 7-3 after a 55 yard touchdown by Mikal Legall. The Bruins would add another

field goal to pull within a point, 7-6 in the 2nd quarter. Lake Braddock would hold the Bulldogs scoreless in the final 3 quarters, while scoring 3 touchdowns in the second half, including the second half kickoff by Dillon Corey. The Bruins final two touchdowns were scored by QB Billy Edwards and Elliot Meine to give the Bruins a 26-7 win.

Lake Braddock will play at Robinson on March 5. Westfield will host West Potomac on March 4.

— WILL PALENSCAR



Mikal Legall #28 scored Westfield’s lone touchdown



Westfield WR Alex Richards stiff arms a Lake Braddock defender

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East Wind Restaurant LLC trading as East Wind Restaurant, 10414 Main St, Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia 22030-3301. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Khoa Nguyen, Owner. 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.

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City Budget

FROM PAGE 6

The Sherwood Community Center expansion is a joint project with Fairfax County to rebuild the Willard Health Center and connect it to Sherwood. The City portion will include an additional 40,000 square feet or so for the community center, and \$3.9 million in CIP funds are budgeted in FY 22 for design and engineering work. Other CIP projects include Parks and Rec improvements, as well as transportation, school and Public Works projects.

The budget also contains a list of unfunded priorities, which City Council members may give more or less emphasis to, after future discussions, and may even decide to fund some of them. Next will come several budget work sessions, plus public hearings set for March 23 and April 20 and 27, before the budget is officially adopted on May 5.

New Rabbi

FROM PAGE 7

ly soak in," said Andrea Cate, past president and Chair of the Interior Rejuvenation Committee.

"Rabbi Glazer always welcomes our four-year-old son by name during online service and makes him feel included... It's lovely to know he still feels a connection to Adat Reyim while we're gathering online," said Sarah Berry, Adult Education Co-Chair.

Congregation Adat Reyim, which means a "Community of Friends" in Hebrew, is an independent synagogue on Springfield and Burke's border with an inclusive approach to Judaism.

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CALENDAR

MARCH 1-29

"Life in Historic Virginia." At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Part of the Park Authority's new series of "Field Trips for All" that are designed to supplement classroom and online lessons. Parks provide an experience not easily duplicated in the classroom, and these field trips offer parents a unique opportunity to provide their kids with real experiences while applying the concepts required in the Virginia Standards of Learning. This history program is designed for students in grades one through six. Life in Historic Virginia is offered on Mondays, March 1, 15, 22 and 29, 2021. The 45-minute programs at Sully Historic Site run at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and the cost is \$40 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

MARCH 1-13

The Show Must Go On. The McLean Art Society in collaboration with The McLean Project For The Arts is presenting a juried painting exhibition in the Atrium Gallery at The McLean Community Center. (1234 Ingleside Avenue in McLean, 703-790-0123). Original art work in a wide variety of subject matter and painting styles will be available for viewing and purchase.

MARCH 6-7

Franchise Show Chantilly. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. The community is invited to The Franchise Show at the Dulles Expo Center from March 6 - 7, 2021. Full-time and part-time business opportunities from every industry, at every investment level. Visit the website: <https://thebizex.net/dcvirginia-franchise-show-march-6-2021/>

SATURDAY/MARCH 6

Geocaching Workshop. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Learn to use hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) units to locate hidden treasure caches within the park. Once you master how to enter latitude and longitude coordinates into a GPS, follow the coordinates to find a hidden object, container or unique geological feature. Bring your own GPS; a limited number are available to borrow from the instructor at class. Cost is \$22 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/MARCH 7

Capital Harmonia's Virtual Women's Choral Festival. 4-5 p.m. Join virtually for the 6th Annual Women's Choral Festival. The festival honors Women's History Month and includes a performance of music written by women composers, interviews with composers Laura Farnell and Susan LaBarr and a conversation with our House of Ruth partner, Director of Development, Elizabeth Kiker. Enjoy the festival on either: YouTube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU2LgVhIF7C9_HbSxZca8JQ

Facebook Live www.Facebook.com/capital-harmonia.

TUESDAY/MARCH 9

Homeschool at the Pond. 3:30-5 p.m. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Hidden Pond will offer a series of classes geared toward meeting homeschool science requirements for students age 6 to 12. The "Homeschool at the Pond" program is based on Hidden Pond's popular Pohick Rangers series and meets every other week. The cost is \$65 per child. Call 703-451-9588; or visit Hidden Pond Nature Center.

MARCH 8 AND 13

Family Outdoor Exploration. Investigate topics, such as Stream Life, Pond Life, Historic Ice Cream, and much more. Once you register, staff from the park will reach out to you to plan the perfect outing for your family. The program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park runs from 10 to 11 a.m. on Monday, March 8, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 13, and from 3 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24, 2021. The cost is \$40 per family, and family members of all ages are welcome to attend. Call 703-631-0013.

SUNDAY/MARCH 14

Birding for Beginners. 9-10:30 a.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. During this program you will learn about birds at Lake Fairfax Park and gain some basic identification skills to help you get started on birding. The program begins with a bird identification discussion. The cost is \$12 per person. This program is designed for bird-lovers age 12 to adult, but children age 12 to 16 must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-471-5414.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Maple Syrup Boil Down. 11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. It's sugaring time at the mill, so bundle up, brave the weather and watch and learn as sap is boiled down into a sweet syrup over an open fire. While supplies last, sample some of this delicious syrup over cornbread baked with cornmeal ground at Colvin Run. Call 703-759-2771.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Fairfax Genealogical Society Spring Fair - "Power Up Your Family Research with DNA". Virtual meeting. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Genealogist Karen Stanbary will present this one-day program featuring tips and tools for using DNA data to aid your family research. Registration (\$50 for non-members; \$30 for members of FxGS) at <https://fxgs2021mar.eventbrite.com> or on the FxGS web page, www.fxgs.org/2021springfair. Details of the program and other FxGS activities on the web site, www.fxgs.org or by calling 703-644-8185.

AREA ROUNDUPS

Fairfax Church to Host Drive Thru Food Distribution

The Evangelism and Missionary Ministry of Greater Little Zion Baptist Church, Fairfax, will be hosting a Drive Thru Food Distribution that will be open to the public. The prepared boxes will be distributed on a first come first served basis while supplies last.

To ensure the health safety of volunteers, community and other recipients, we must adhere to the CDC guidelines. This will be a contactless operation and we ask that you please remain in your vehicle and open the trunk when it is your turn in line.

The distribution will take place on Saturday, March 20, 2021, 10 a.m.--noon, at Greater Little Zion Baptist Church (Sanctuary Parking Area), 10185 Zion Drive, Fairfax, VA 22032.

CONTACT: Call the Church Administration Office at 703-239-9111, if you need additional information.

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Back to Abnormal



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Well, those last two weeks were kind of fun (comparatively speaking), to the dozen or so previous weeks. 'Fun', when you're a cancer patient experiencing side effects from treatment, is a moderation, absence even of said effects. My recent two-week break from taking my thyroid cancer medication was due to those side effects. Mentioned in a previous column, I was having balance and dizziness issues. In short, I couldn't walk or drive - for that matter, in a straight line. After consulting with my oncologist who deferred to the oncology pharmacist who's been monitoring/adjusting my medication dosage, it was agreed that I should cease and desist until my symptoms subsided. As of this past Thursday, my symptoms had mostly disappeared so I have resumed my treatment, albeit at a lower dose. (This will be the second reduction in my dose since we've been trying to find the sweet spot where the tumors are stable and the side effects are manageable.)

Actually, these last two weeks of being side-effect free was more than just a break in the action. It was a revelation of sorts. The infirmity/muscle weakness I was having was not due to the older age I have become. It was the medication. During this past fortnight, I began to feel like myself again. I could get in and out of chairs without pacing myself. I could roll over in bed and pull up the covers without a fuss. And of course, I could walk and drive a straight line. It was wonderful. When one is in the midst of a cancer diagnosis/existence, any indication that your bodily functions are performing "within normal parameters," to quote Lt. Comm. Data from "Star Trek: Next Generation" is somewhere between reassuring and life affirming.

Generally speaking, we all know that cancer doesn't make its diagnoses big and strong. Realistically speaking, you're happy with normal. Conversely, when 'normal' isn't how you feel, it's hard to portend that death/disability is not fast-approaching. Moreover, it's an especially slippery slope when one has been given a "terminal" diagnosis originally and more recently had that diagnosis modified to include a second type of cancer: papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, to go along with my pre-existing non small lung cancer, also stage IV. One has to fight emotionally to keep from getting lost/going down that rabbit hole. Any good news/an unexpected positive reaction with your disease, like your mind and body returning to pre-cancer normalcy is about as good as it gets. So even though I'm back on the medicine, I feel empowered, upbeat, hopeful even. To that end/continuation of life, I am not going to worry yet that the reduced dose will allow my tumors to grow. I'm just not going to go there. What would be the point? I'll find out soon enough, a few days after my next CT scan in mid-March. Until then, I am going to bask in my semi return to glory.

Speaking of 'glory,' as a cancer patient, one has to grasp and hold on to anything of emotional, physical, psychological or spiritual value. In addition, what information you receive which is not particularly positive, in that it's premature/unproven/not corroborated by science, has to be compartmentalized. As with Jerry Seinfeld, you have to put it in the vault and almost throw away the key. Allowing negative possibilities or unpalatable scenarios to take root in your brain really does a disservice to your potential survival. Ever since I was diagnosed with a "terminal" form of cancer, I've tried not to put the cart in front of the horse, if you know what I mean? The diagnosis was bad enough on its own. I didn't need to make it worse by piling on. If and when my life becomes more challenging/more cancer centric than it is now, I'll deal with it. I don't need to bring it on any sooner than is absolutely necessary. I've had 12 years I wasn't expecting since receiving an initial "13 month to two" year prognosis. Twelve years later, I don't see any reason to change my approach.

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



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