

Mayans Helping Mayans in Arlington

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Buy Supplies, Make 50 Bagged Meals for Homeless Program

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Alejandro Santiago, a friend of Victor Lopez's, hands out shields, masks, and other equipment to protect from Covid-19 transmission, as well as a few canned goods.

SENIOR
LIVING

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Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Transports 50 Cats

Rescue mission helps overwhelmed Texas shelters seeing a surge of surrendered pets; dogs have come to AWLA too.

On Saturday, March 13, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) brought in 50 cats from eight individual animal shelters in Texas, still recovering from the devastating February

snowstorms and subsequent power outages. Many of these Texas facilities are now experiencing a surge of surrendered pets, and by transporting animals who were already in these shelters to Virginia, these organizations can better address



It was rewarding for volunteers to see the cats in their condos at the AWLA, kittens playing with toys, many cats just reaching out for pets and attention.

the continued need for care and assist even more homeless animals.

"We received a request from the Human Animal Support Services (HASS) national network asking if shelters were able to take in homeless animals, to make room for Texas shelters to care for the influx of animals they were seeing," said AWLA Executive Director Stella Hanly. "We knew the plans were still coming together, but we also knew we had to help."

In addition to facilitating the transport, the AWLA served as a local hub to connect many of the cats with shelters and rescues in the region. Twenty of the cats, ranging from 6 months to 5 years old, stayed at the AWLA, where they will undergo general and veterinary evaluation before being made available for adoption. The remaining 30 cats have gone to other local shelters and rescues, including the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, Loudoun County Animal Services, Four Paws Rescue and Helping Homeless Felines.

The biggest hurdle was making sure a vehicle could safely transport that many cats. While the

SEE ANIMAL WELFARE, PAGE 9



On Saturday, March 13, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) brought in 50 cats from eight individual animal shelters in Texas.

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Mayans Help Mayans Get Through Covid in Arlington

As indigenous people, Mayans face hurdles as they fight to preserve their culture.

BY EDEN BROWN
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

There was a line of about 30 women, ranging from 20 to 40, with dark hair plaited down their backs and expressions that showed they were used to waiting. They were in line to get help from their own community, people of meager resources with enough to support others with less, as the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic surged. If you tried speaking Spanish to some of them, you would be told gently by one of the staff distributing canned goods and gift cards, “They don’t speak any Spanish. They’re Mayan.”

Mayan people? Wasn’t that an ancient civilization that died out in South America long ago? The Mayans were a great civilization, with incredible feats in building pyramids in the jungle and early mathematics.

Juanita Cabrera Lopez, stood at the head of the line in a “corte,” the brightly colored skirt of the Mayan region where she is from, Mam, holding her clipboard with names of residents of the Gates of

Ballston who needed help. Many of them had lost jobs. Their children were no longer in school. The “safety net” wasn’t something they understood. Cabrera Lopez is executive director of the Mayan League, an organization devoted to this ancient culture.

There are about 6-10 million Mayans in countries like Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico. They have fought to preserve their culture, including the 30-odd Mayan languages they speak, even though the pressure has been intense to make Spanish their first language. The racism indigenous people experience in Guatemala is one of the reasons they immigrate to the U.S. Several hundred thousand Guatemalan Maya, up to as many as half a million, have emigrated from Guatemala to the United States.

One of the forces driving this community of neighbors helping neighbors is Victor Lopez. A “Mam” Maya from Eastern Guatemala, he arrived in the US in 1999. His is a classic immigrant story, with a Mayan twist. “One of my acquaintances from the same town in Guatemala told me, ‘The best thing



Jacynthia, 5, standing with her mother, who is not working because of Covid-19. Many of the residents of the Gates of Ballston are fast food restaurant workers or housekeepers who have been laid off.

to do in this country is to go and learn English.”

His friend took him to the community center at the Gates of Ball-

ston in Buckingham, where Connie Freeman was the director. “They had a meeting every Friday to help people in the community. There

were other people from the same town in Guatemala and we raised money — more than 10,000 US

SEE MAYANS HELP, PAGE 6



Juanita, in her brightly colored “Corte,” checks names on her list of those who had applied for aid and been accepted.

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

Homeless Bagged Meal Program Begins Again April 1

Residents invited to buy supplies for and make 50 bagged meals.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Get your neighbors or family together, purchase your supply of brown paper lunch bags and look for weekly sales on deli meats and cheese. The A-SPAN Homeless Bagged Meal Program (HBMP) will be back in operation on April 1.

When Covid-19 hit in March 2020, HBMP was suspended. Before the pandemic, A-SPAN had 4,000 volunteers putting in 15,000 volunteer hours to serve 50,000 meals a year. Scott Miller, senior director of development, says March 13, 2020, A-SPAN staff started teleworking and they put Plan B in place. “The kitchen put restrictions on outside food coming in, and the homeless bag meal program was suspended.”

The homeless bagged meal program became a completely staff-driven effort. Instead of serving bagged meals and hot dinners which had been prepared by volunteers for delivery to several lo-



Chef Glen Jahnsen assembles fresh hamburgers, potatoes, broccoli and cauliflower donated by La Cocina through the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization to the Homeless Meal Program during the pandemic shutdown.

cations, the homeless clients were redirected to the Homeless Services Center at 2020A 14th Street N. This was a short walk or bike ride from St George’s Episcopal Church or Clarendon where the meals had been handed out in the past. The meals were switched to single to-go containers prepared by the homeless bagged meal program chef and staff.

Miller explains that during this time the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization stepped in to partner with La Cocina restaurant to deliver really nice hot meals every Wednesday for the homeless bagged meal program. “Our food budget was so stretched and our volunteer base gone.” He says food expenses skyrocketed, and a lot of faith-based organizations continued to support A-SPAN by translating dollars into food.”

Now with the partial opening of volunteer opportunities, safety protocols will allow acceptance of donated bagged meals and prepared meals starting April 1. At present only A-SPAN staff will be

allowed to serve onsite but volunteer opportunities will return as safety protocols allow.

For this “purchase and prepare” program, volunteers sign up for a slot on the website and purchase enough food to prepare 50 bagged meals. Directions for each brown paper bag: two sandwiches (no pork), two snack items (one savory and one sweet), one piece of soft fruit and a water or fruit juice beverage. Once the food has been prepared, it should be delivered to the Homeless Services Center between 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily.

Porter Lesiv, the new A-SPAN Administrative Coordinator and the go-to person for everything volunteer-related, says the new process for volunteering was posted March 18 and she already had a handful of responses. “People were so excited to be back volunteering again.” For more information about the program contact plesiv@a-span.org.

The bagged meal program be-
SEE HOMELESS, PAGE 6

Hard to Overstate Accomplishments

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

The General Assembly officially adjourned “sine die” on Monday, March 1, wrapping up a high-pressure session which caps one of the most progressive, accomplishment-filled two year legislative cycles in Virginia’s history. It is hard to overstate what the new majorities in Virginia have accomplished, and how much more work is needed to create a fair, safe, and successful Commonwealth for all. This year I passed five bills, which are headed to the Governor’s desk, and one Constitutional Amendment, which will need to pass again next year before being approved by the voters. These include:

❖ SB1215 - Statutory Penalties for Unlawful Evictions.

In order to address the stunning number of illegal evictions which occurred during COVID-19, I worked with the Virginia Poverty Law Center and Delegate Sally Hudson to pass this bill to allow tenants to receive damages after an illegal eviction. The bill expedites the timeline in which hearings to remedy illegal evictions are heard, and allows for tenants to receive 4 months rent or \$5,000, whichever is greater as well as reasonable attorney’s fees.

❖ SB1309 - Flood Water Assistance Funding.

At the request of the City of Al-

exandria, I passed a bill to allow localities to use their local flood water assistance for short-term, stop-gap projects to protect neighborhoods and homes from inland flooding, provided that the projects are in alignment with the localities long-term flood mitigation plan.

❖ SB1178 - Repealing the Genetic Counseling “Conscience Clause.”

At the request of a constituent, the ACLU, and NARAL Virginia, I introduced this bill to repeal a medically unnecessary and potentially harmful barrier to patient-centered-care for those seeking genetic counseling.

❖ SB1381 - Banning Guns in State Buildings and Capitol Square.

Working with Moms Demand Action, I passed a bill to codify a current state policy to ban firearms in state buildings and expand the ban to Richmond’s Capitol Square.

❖ SB1406 - Legalizing Adult Cannabis Use in 2024.

Eliminates penalties for personal possession of marijuana for those 21 and older in 2024 (it is currently a \$25 fine under legislation I passed last year), creates a regulated adult-use market for cannabis centered on building wealth for those damaged by the prohibition, expunges certain criminal records for the possession of marijuana,



Ebbin

❖ SJR270 - Same Gender Marriage Ban Repeal.

Repeals the now inoperable ban on same sex marriage in the Virginia Constitution and replaces it with an affirmative right to marry regardless of gender. The amendment must be passed again next year and then by the voters in order to go into effect.

Democrats passed additional legislation critical to moving Virginia forward, including:

SB1197, Locke, establishes the housing opportunity tax credit, which will help more low-income families obtain and maintain stable housing.

SB1387, Boysko/Lopez, requires higher education institutions to consider undocumented immigrants who qualify for in-state tuition to similarly qualify for any available financial aid and other educational benefits.

HB2040, Hudson, strengthens protections for persons receiving unemployment benefits.

SB1469, Barker/Herring, creates the Opioid Abatement Authority, which will be in charge of

distributing funds received from lawsuit settlements, court orders, and other agreements to communities affected by the opioid crisis.

SB1165, Surovell/Mullin, abolishes the death penalty.

SB1261, Edwards, provides more judges on the Court of Appeals so Virginians can exercise their constitutional right to a speedy trial, as well as providing all cases with an appellate process.

HB1992, Murphy, removes the ability for convicted domestic abusers to own or purchase firearms for 3 years after conviction.

SJ272, Locke/Herring, restores voting rights to persons convicted of a felony once their sentence has been completed. The resolution will need to pass the 2022 General Assembly, then will head to a voter referendum.

SB1252, McPike, ends new coal tax credits on January 1, 2022.

HB1965, Bagby, establishes low emission and zero emission standards for vehicles starting in model year 2025. All this work, and so much more was accomplished in a hectic six weeks. This year has been exceptionally challenging for everyone, with so many long-established inequities laid bare, and novel strains on our government and society. Even in this climate, we made bold strides forward, and will continue to listen to those we serve to do better, and root out those issues still yet uncovered and unaddressed in our Commonwealth.

We Still Need Your Help

We all need community newspapers; community newspapers need your help.

You need local newspapers. Local newspapers still need your help.

We at the Gazette Packet/Local Media Connection are so grateful for the more than 500 people who have pitched in more than \$42,000 to get us this far. It has made all the difference. Some people have mailed in checks. Many more people have helped by sharing our appeal, by telling us why our efforts matter to them. You send a letter to the editor here: www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-americas-oldest-newspaper>

A year later, Covid continues to be the most compelling, most local issue that we face.

Here at the Connection, Covid has posed an existential threat to continue the community service that has been ongoing since 1784 with the Alexandria Gazette Packet.

Every family has faced unprecedented disruption between schools being closed and the advent of

distance learning; work is remote, except for those people who must go out to jobs and the risks that entails. Every business has been challenged; many have closed; some have been mortally wounded. Thousands of local people have died, with tens of thousands having been ill with Covid. We have produced dozens of stories about struggles of food insecurity,

learning to “pivot,” obituaries, how to get vaccinated and beyond. We bring you details about covid, testing and vaccination with a local and personal view. Recent column: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/johnson-and-johnson-jab-lubber-run-arlington-count/>

An election critical to Virginia is SEE WE STILL NEED, PAGE 5

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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Beyer Highlights American Rescue Plan Benefits

Earlier this month, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) voted to pass the landmark American Rescue Plan and send it to President Biden's desk for signature. Today Beyer highlighted the legislation's infusion of resources for Virginia families and communities.

"This pandemic and the historic economic crisis it caused inflicted untold hardship, but help is on the way," said Beyer. "On the day we passed it, I said my vote for the American Rescue Plan was the most consequential vote I had ever cast. Now people are beginning to see why we pushed so hard to get a big, ambitious relief bill through Congress. The pain and suffering of this pandemic have not been

evenly distributed, and the American Rescue Plan will get aid to those who need it most as quickly as possible. The assistance in this bill is going to be huge for communities in Northern Virginia, the whole Commonwealth, and across the country."

The pandemic and economic crisis have had a severe impact on Virginia:

Since the pandemic began, more than 595,000 Virginians have been infected with COVID-19 and more than 10,000 have died;

The unemployment rate in Virginia is 5.3%, up from 2.5% before the pandemic, with 300,000 fewer



Beyer

Virginians employed 503,000 adults – 9% of all adults in the state – report not having enough food to eat, including 308,000 adults living with children. 15% of all Virginia adults living with children report that the

children in their household do not have enough to eat.

An estimated 267,000 Virginia renters or 14% of renters are not caught up on rent.

An estimated 1,929,000 adults – 31% of all adults across the Commonwealth – report having difficulty covering normal household expenses.

President Biden's American Res-

cue Plan will save lives and livelihoods with targeted state and local relief for Virginia families, communities, and small businesses:

\$4.431 billion in fiscal relief for the Commonwealth of Virginia;

\$2.913 billion in local fiscal relief to local governments, including an estimated

\$59.38 million for Alexandria

\$45.93 million for Arlington

\$13.28 million for Falls Church

\$222.56 million for Fairfax County

More than \$2.187 billion in relief for Virginia K-12 schools;

Economic impact payments of up to \$1,400 per person for more than 5,118,900 Virginia adults and 1,884,700 children. This is 82 percent of all adults in the state and

81 percent of all children in the state.

Additional relief of up to \$1,600 per child through the Child Tax Credit to the families of 1,591,000 children, lifting 85,000 Virginia children out of poverty;

Additional relief of up to nearly \$1,000 through the Earned Income Tax Credit to 419,000 childless Virginia workers, including many on the frontline; and

Marketplace health insurance premiums that are \$1,503 lower per month for a 60-year old Virginia couple earning \$75,000 per year.

Beyer serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means, which drafted portions of the American Rescue Plan's legislative text.

We Still Need Your Help

FROM PAGE 4

coming up this fall. Do you know that the Democratic primary is June 8? That Republicans choose their candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and some delegates at a May 8 convention? If you think

state elections don't matter, we'll try to convince you how important they are between now and then. Recent story on the race for Governor: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/mcauliffe-picks-support-alexandria/>

Perhaps you are more concerned about schools, teachers, students and holding elected officials accountable for your children's education, teacher safety and returning to the classroom. Recent story on schools: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/03/-person-and-home-class-one-community-reston/>

— MARY KIMM

A few other recent stories that you might find of interest:

❖ Honoring Women on Front Lines of Pandemic <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/honoring-women-front-lines-pandemic/>

❖ Alexandria Republicans Expect Candidates to Declare Soon <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/15/alexandria-republicans-expect-candidates-declare-s/>

SEE WE STILL NEED, PAGE 6

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LIFE'S
JOURNEY



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Mayans Help Mayans Get Through Covid in Arlington

FROM PAGE 3

dollars! And we used it to buy an ambulance to send back home. After that, we raised money for a Red Cross building back home. And that is how I met John Sutton," he says reverently.

Sutton invited Lopez to a meeting at the church, Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, and they gave Victor the job of getting signatures in Buckingham to get the ART (Arlington Transit) bus to come to Buckingham. They succeeded in getting this crucial piece of infrastructure so those living in affordable housing could also have transit to jobs. Lopez said he found it very satisfying to work with others in the community. As he improved his English, Lopez was also able to start doing landscaping, and Sutton was one of the first to hire him to garden for him, even letting him use part of his yard for a garden where Lopez grows Guatemalan plants not available in the local market.

With his first real job, Lopez had to beg his prospective employer, "Just try me one night. Don't even pay me. If you don't want to hire



Alejandro Santiago, a friend of Victor Lopez's, hands out shields, masks, and other equipment to protect from Covid-19 transmission, as well as a few canned goods.

me, that's okay." They hired him and he moved up through the ranks to eventually start his own company.

John Sutton describes Victor Lopez with a certain amount of awe: "He is a man who is 'a true Christian,' who reaches out to those less fortunate than he and helps."

Victor Lopez, in the process of checking in on a weekly basis with the Immigration office on Prosperity Avenue, met a lot of Mayan women who had a much harder time than he had ever had. They had crossed the border, couldn't speak English or Spanish, and took the jobs no one else wanted to do.

They inspired him. He became known in the community as someone who could help. He started organizing aid more intensely, calling on Cabrera Lopez to help him get the aid to the people in Buckingham. Cabrera Lopez had to be persuaded: she already had a lot of Mayans in Langley Park that needed help, and "could only spare enough for 20 women." Victor Lopez eventually got her to agree to help sixty. Or as Lopez said, with a little chagrin, "maybe 61." Just as he had finalized the list a woman approached him and said, "Mister, please put my name on your list

because I have no food, no money, and I am a mother of one child." Victor Lopez gave her a gift card from his own funds.

"Juanita knows where to knock on doors," Lopez said. "Nonprofits and native American organizations have also given help given the Mayans are native people." For this effort at the Gates of Ballston, the Lakota people, who were making masks for native peoples all over the country, donated masks to their fellow native Americans and the local Piscataway tribes donated PPE and hand sanitizers. It is not a lot of help, because the group doesn't have much, but it was enough to brighten this group of hard-working women and keep them safer from the pandemic.

The Gates of Ballston Community Center is at 4108 4th Street North, Arlington, VA 22203. Although there is no specific donation link for Victor's efforts, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington is trying to set up a donation site for local Maya people in need. To learn more about the Mayan League see www.mayan-league.org

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

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 MARCH 31

The Arlington Lions' Club's Citrus Direct-to-You Fundraising is winding-down but still open for ordering online thru March 31 along with maple products with shipping direct to customers. Order online citrus at nwarlionscitrus.fwffb.net; maple products at www.purintonmaple.com. Maple promo code "nwarlions" at check out. Call 703-528-1130 or text 703-772-3784.

FRIDAY/MARCH 26

Preparing Your Garden for the Seventeen-Year Cicadas. 10 – 11:30 a.m. Online. What is the big deal about cicadas? Join Extension Agent Kirsten Conrad to discuss the impending emergence of Brood X of the 17-Year Cicadas. The Great Eastern Brood's three species of cicadas will emerge from their long underground life cycle stage between mid-May and late June. We will talk about their life cycle and how to protect plants from their feeding and egg laying activities. Free. RSVP at <https://mgvnv.org/events/> to receive link to participate.

MARINE CORPS MARATHON REGISTRATION OPENED

The Marine Corps Marathon Orga-

nization (MCMO) announced that registration for the 46th Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) opened to the public on Wednesday, March 10. The 2021 MCM Weekend is currently scheduled as a virtual event with runners from across the country participating in the MCM, MCM50K or MCM10K from October 1 through November 11. Ambitious runners can once again sign up for the Semper Fidelis Challenge, a two-event challenge including either the Historic Half or the Devil Dog Double in May 2021 and the MCM or the MC-M50K in October 2021. Runners may also pursue the Trifecta, a unique opportunity to participate in and complete all three MCM Weekend distances within the designated timeframe.

Virtual entries for the MCM and MC-M50K are \$55 plus a processing fee and are available to runners ages 14-and-older at www.marinemarathon.com.

DONATIONS

The Arlington Food Assistance Center seeks local gardeners and farmers willing to grow and donate fresh produce to the AFAC food pantry for local families in need as part of the Plot Against Hunger program. Each week, approximately 2,400 client families visit AFAC to pick up supplemental groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables are in high demand. AFAC will provide free vegetable seeds to those who pledge to donate produce from community or personal gardens. Visit <https://afac.org/plot-against-hunger> or contact puwen.lee@afac.

org or 703-845-8486. Seeds are available now at AFAC, 2708 S. Nelson St., during regular business hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Saturdays 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Produce can also be donated at AFAC at the hours listed above or at:

- ❖ Arlington Courthouse Farmer's Market, Saturdays 8 a.m.-noon (look for the AFAC cooler near the Master Gardener information table).
- ❖ Rock Springs UCC Church, 5010 Little Falls Road, Sundays 9 a.m.-noon only. (Look for the donation bin on the Rock Spring Drive side of the church).

Pet Food Bank. AWLA is establishing a Pet Food Bank to serve qualifying residents of Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. In consideration of the effect financial obstacles have on a pet owner's ability to afford pet care, the AWLA Pet Food Bank program's goal is to keep family pets out of shelters. If you are an Arlington County or City of Falls Church resident and are in need of assistance in feeding your pet, follow this link and fill out a pre-registration form. Visit goo.gl/forms/s2FuFdaYwDZm4tPw2.

GET MORE WITH SNAP

Arlington and Alexandria Farmers' Markets accept SNAP/EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) cards for purchases. SNAP/EBT custom-

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We Still Need Your Help

FROM PAGE 5

❖ Go Green, Go Native: Mow less, mow high, grow more, choose nature.

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/15/go-green-go-native/>

❖ Fairfax County Planning Commission Recommends Denial of Flag Limitations <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/fairfax-county-planning-commission-recommends-denial/>

❖ Commentary: Step into Nature for Improved Health <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/opinion-commentary-step-nature-improved-health/>

❖ Should Lee District Be Renamed? <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/conversation-started-rename-lee-district-fairfax-c/>

❖ Faith Ringgold Monographic Exhibition to Open at Glenstone in Potomac <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/faith-ringgold-monographic-exhibition-open-glenstone/>

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/faith-ringgold-monographic-exhibition-open-glenstone/>

❖ Who Is Getting Vaccinated in Montgomery County? <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/who-getting-vaccinated-montgomery-county/>

❖ Supervisors Foust and Alcorn on Years 1 and 2: COVID-19

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/10/fairfax-county-supervisors-foust-and-alcorn-years-1-and-2-covid-19/>

❖ Vice President Harris Visits Fibre Space in Alexandria <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/06/vice-president-harris-visits-fibre-space-alexandria/>

❖ Wellbeing: A Schedule Can Anchor Your Day

How creating a daily routine can ease anxiety during times of uncertainty <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/04/wellbeing-schedule-can-anchor-your-day/>

Homeless Bagged Meal

FROM PAGE 3

gan in 1988 when Lori Rinker, an Arlington resident, saw the food challenges in Arlington and started serving food to the homeless with her neighbors.

After a while they could see there was a bigger challenge, and A-SPAN was born.

Today A-SPAN has grown to in-

clude a Homeless Services Center, which offers sleeping arrangements for over 80 people per night (55 shelter beds, five medical respite beds, and 25 additional beds from November – March during hypothermia season), provides three meals daily, showers, laundry facilities, and access to case managers and medical services.

SENIOR LIVING

Style After Retirement

Great fashion sense is possible at any stage.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

At 78, Winifred Rosenberg has always been known for her impeccable style and taste. An extensive collection of designer shoes, particularly stilettos, were items around which the Potomac senior's wardrobe was built. That changed when she developed an Achilles tendon disorder and needed surgery.

"She was told that she was going to lose her ability to walk, but after some very significant surgeries is able to continue walking and maintain her sense of autonomy," said Joseph Rothstein, a private fashion and personal style strategist, who added Rosenberg to his clientele. "She felt grateful, but the type of shoes she wore needed to become sturdier. She had always been so stylish."

Rosenberg cringed at the idea of sensible shoes, so she tasked Rothstein with creating a wardrobe that would allow her to maintain her sense of fashion while not damaging her feet.

"I told her that we needed to turn the issue into something exciting. I knew right then that the limited range of footwear that her foot surgeon told her that she could wear would be mission critical to developing her new look," said Rothstein. "What I did was start with the shoes and build the rest of her wardrobe around a new assortment of footwear."

The tools that Rothstein used to redefine his client's style are applicable to other seniors, he says. "When we are ready to face the music that our bodies have changed, or that we have physical changes that require adjustments to our clothing, it can impact our personal style."

Part of that transition is a style adjustment, and that begins with a few wardrobe staples, suggests William Allen, Professor in the Fashion Design & Merchandising program at Marymount University. "I advise both women and men to buy a few basic pieces that can be dressed up or dressed down," he said. "Keep existing pieces or buy a few new classic pieces of clothing. Purchase 10 to 15 pieces that you can mix and match and build a wardrobe around. Look for simple, clean lines in neutral colors like tan, black and gray."

"Add classic accessories like watches, handbags and jewelry to add interest," Allen continued. "These should be items that never go out of style. You can dress them up with accessories so they don't become boring."

Fashion adventure, tempered by sophistication and maturity, is what design consultant Michelle Vaughn of Chantilly encourages for her clients. "Don't be afraid to take risks and try some of the new trends," she said. "Trends are not just for the 25 and under crowd but can be flattering on many different age groups."

Take chances with color, especially as seasons change, added stylist Elizabeth Hoenscheid of Top it Off, in Alexandria. "For spring and summer, it's all



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOP IT OFF

Elizabeth Hoenscheid of Top it Off, in Alexandria recommends clothing with generous cuts that can be layered over slim cut pants or trousers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOP IT OFF

Build a wardrobe with classic pieces that are on trend but not trendy.

about fun pieces to add a pop of color and print to white jeans or capris."

Retirement does not have to mean giving up on style, says Vaughn. "The need to dress up might change and personal style might change as one ages," she said. "But be sure to invest in higher quality items even if that means purchasing fewer items. They last longer and you will not need to replace them as often."

From undergarments to pants, clothes should fit properly advises Vaughn "Make sure your garments have a perfect fit and are properly altered to fit your body type," she said. "Undergarments should give clean lines."

When feeling unsure about shopping for clothes, Vaughn suggests developing a support system. "Shop with someone you trust and whose style you admire," she said. "Find a sales associate, friend, family member or hire a personal stylist

who will be honest with you and show you things that work best on you."

"As people get older, they want to be more comfortable," said Allen. "You can be comfortable every day and still be well-dressed and look pulled together."

"As people get older, they want to be more comfortable. You can be comfortable every day and still be well-dressed and look pulled together."

— William Allen,
Marymount professor

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Seeing Double

Alexandria delegate is one of four House members whose name will be on the ballot twice.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The ballot for the Democratic primary in June might cause you to do a double take.

Del. Mark Levine (D-45) will be on the ballot twice, once running for reelection against primary challenger Elizabeth Bennett-Parker and then again against seven other candidates for lieutenant governor. Levine and three other House members will be doing double duty, asking voters to reject their primary opponents for seats they would vacate if they win stateside office. It's a tricky balancing act caused by an unprecedented situation that will require nuanced messaging to voters.

"When a candidate runs for two offices at the same time, they're sending two messages: I want something better than what I have and I'm not sure I'm going to be able I'm going to get it," said Stephen Farnsworth, political science professor at the University of Mary Washington. "I suppose a politician can say, 'I'm so good you can vote for me twice.' But I'm not sure many voters are going to receive that message all that enthusiastically."

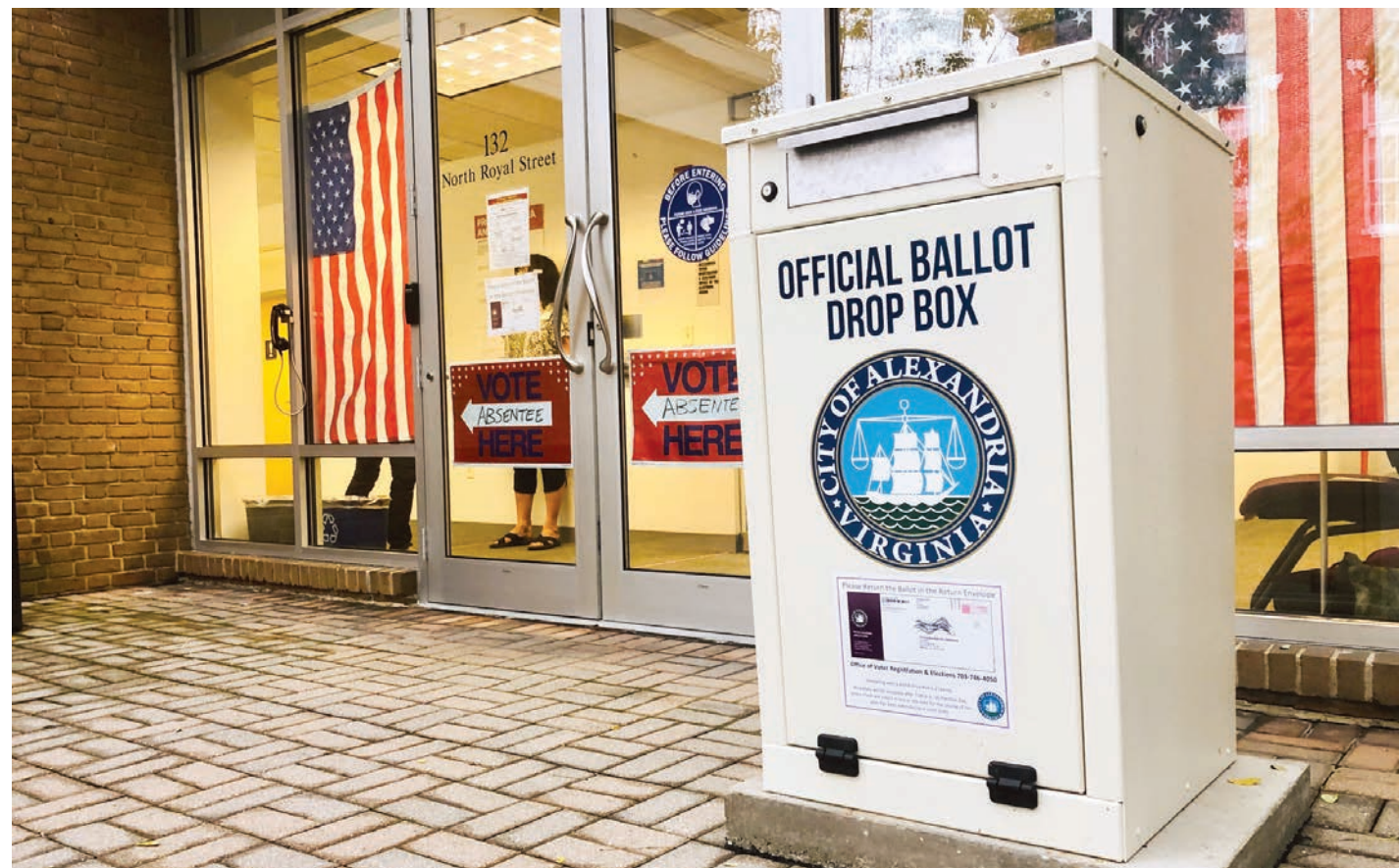
Levine is not alone. In the race for lieutenant governor, Del. Elizabeth Guzman (D-31) has three opponents in the primary for the House seat she would leave if elected lieutenant governor. Del. Lee Carter (D-50) has two primary opponents for the House district he would be resigning from if elected governor. And Del. Jay Jones (D-89) has a primary opponent to keep the seat he would leave if elected attorney general. All four of these House incumbents will need to figure out how to sell themselves to voters twice for two different seats.

"These candidates are on the progressive end of the Democratic umbrella," said Quentin Kidd, a political science professor at Christopher Newport University. "In a very safe Democratic district, the risk they would run in a primary is someone on their left challenging them. But if they're far enough left themselves, it's probably a safe risk."

THE DUAL CAMPAIGN is a rarity in Virginia politics. Normally House members move over to the Senate before they attempt a statewide campaign. The current generation of House Democrats is particularly ambitious though, especially after unseating the Republican majority and seizing control of the General Assembly last year. Perhaps more importantly, though, the House incumbents who filed for statewide office in June were planning for a separate House primary in August, which is what happened 10 years ago during the last

"I plan to win both races and then resign the delegate seat with plenty of time to have a special election before the next General Assembly."

— Del. Mark Levine (D-45)



The Democratic primary on June 8 will include elections for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, House of Delegates and City Council.

redistricting cycle.

"It's not what I planned. But I think I've been a damn good delegate, and I think my constituents agree," said Levine. "I plan to win both seats and then resign the delegate seat with plenty of time to have a special election before the next General Assembly session."

The Census data used to draw new districts for the House of Delegates was supposed to arrive by the end of March, providing for enough time for the new Redistricting Commission to draw new maps before an August primary. But delays caused by the pandemic have pushed the data delivery to the end of September, just a few weeks before the November general election. That compressed timeline forced all the House candidates running for statewide office into an unanticipated situation of appearing twice on the same ballot in June.

"This district deserves someone who is fully focused on them," said Bennett-Parker in a written statement. "I've been serving the residents of the 45th district on City Council and on regional bodies, and I want to keep serving them as delegate."

APPEARING TWICE on the same ballot is not unprecedented in American politics. Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman ran for

reelection to his Senate seat while simultaneously running for vice president in 2000. Here in Virginia, Republican Del. Glenn Davis (R-84) was able to hold on to his House seat while running an unsuccessful campaign for lieutenant governor in 2017, although he did not face a primary opponent in that House election so his name did not appear on the ballot twice. Political strategists say the dynamics of waging a two-front political campaign are a nightmare.

"It's a very dangerous situation for them, which is why people haven't done it in the past. I'm not sure that anybody would have done it this year if they had known what the rules were at the start," said Democratic strategist Ben Tribbett. "Who wants to be asked to prom to be the second choice?"

Some House members have solved the problem by focusing on the statewide race and giving up their existing seat. Former Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy (D-2) resigned from her

House seat to focus on her campaign for governor, and Del. Hala Ayala (D-51) is not seeking reelection so she can focus on her campaign for lieutenant governor. Del. Sam Rasoul (D-11) lucked out by not having a primary opponent for his House seat so far,



Elizabeth Bennett-Parker



Mark Levine

which means his name won't appear twice on the ballot twice because of his campaign for lieutenant governor. For those House incumbents who are now forced into a difficult situation, some strategists say the best strategy may be to localize the argument.

"If I were Mark Levine, I would say to voters that it would be good for Alexandria for me to become lieutenant governor," said Trevor Southerland, former executive director of the House Democratic Caucus. "But if I don't win that primary, it would also be good for Alexandria to still have my seniority in the House."

Republicans have chosen against conducting a statewide primary, opting instead for a remote-voting convention on May 8 with three dozen polling locations across the state. As for the rest of the Democratic primary ballot, so far no candidates have stepped forward to challenge the incumbent mayor or the incumbent commonwealth's attorney.

So those races will not appear on the ballot. Sean Casey is the only Democratic candidate to announce for sheriff so far, so that race won't be on the ballot either unless another Democratic candidate emerges before the March 25 deadline.

"This district deserves someone who is fully focused on them."

— Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker



"We also knew we had to help," said AWLA Executive Director Stella Hanly.

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Transports 50 Cats

FROM PAGE 2

AWLA owns several vehicles for day-to-day shelter use, none is equipped with fixed cages for that many animals. Luckily, one AWLA volunteer, a retired naval engineer, had the solution, and in a matter of days, he created a removable rig that could be placed in one of the AWLA's vans that could accommodate travel crates for up to 50 cats. Two additional AWLA volunteers offered up their time to make the 14-hour round trip drive to Tennessee, where they would meet with a HASS representative to pick up the traveling cats.

"This mission was quite the venture from the start," said Katie DeMent, AWLA's Director of Operations and liaison for this effort. "In less than two weeks, we'd connected with Texas shelter liaison, worked with other local shelters and rescues to determine who could take in cats, found volunteers ready to take on this long-haul drive and outfitted our van so we'll also be able to use it to help even more animals in the future. We asked a lot of our team, but

they all worked together so that we'll be able to help these Texas facilities and all of these homeless cats."

To see the cats brought to the AWLA and learn how to meet them, either virtually or in-person, visit AlexandriaAnimals.org/Adopt.

After the return trip of more than seven hours, transport volunteer Kerin Ord said, "Seeing cats in their condos at the AWLA, kittens playing with toys, many cats just reaching out for pats and attention ... They seemed to realize that all was good from here on, and with the resilience of animals, had quickly gotten over their long journey."

Along with transporting these 50 cats on March 13, the AWLA also took in 40 dogs of varying ages and breeds, working with True & Faithful Rescue Mission to assist under-resourced shelters in Florida and Texas. Like the 20 cats, these dogs will also be made available for adoption once they undergo medical and behavioral assessments.



20 cats, ranging from 6 months to 5 years old, stayed at the AWLA, where they will undergo evaluation before being made available for adoption; 30 cats have gone to other local shelters and rescues, including the Animal Welfare League of Arlington.

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FROM PAGE 6

ers can purchase farm fresh produce at local area farmers' markets and get matching bonus tokens to add to their purchases. Virginia Cooperative will be on-site at several local farmers' markets of Alexandria and Arlington to provide more information on SNAP and offer food tastings, prizes and more at the Arlington Farmers' Market, N. 14th and Courthouse Road (second Saturday of the month) and Columbia Pike Farmers' Market, 2820 Columbia Pike (third Sunday of the month).

ONGOING

Online Salary Negotiation Workshop. AAUW (American Association of University Women) Work Smart is free online for anyone looking to learn how to negotiate a salary increase or promotion. Why is negotiation so important? AAUW's research on the gender pay gap shows that, one year out of college, women are already paid significantly less than men. Visit salary.aauw.org.

Create a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary certification program assists homeowners in restoring their home's natural habitat by providing information on

sustainable gardening practices. These practices include using native plants, removing invasive species, reducing use of pesticides and fertilizers, and creating space for native flora and fauna. Visit audubonva.org/audubon-at-home-1/ for more.

Naloxone (Narcan) can save the life of someone who is overdosing, if given in time. Anyone who assists a person in need is protected from liability by the Good Samaritan Law. Naloxone (Narcan) is available without a prescription for a fee at all pharmacies. Obtain it for free by attending a REVIVE! training. Contact Emily Siqveland at 703-228-0913 or esiqveland@arlingtonva.us or visit arlingtonva.us/opioid-awareness/ for available training sessions. The Chris Atwood Foundation also offers training to the public. Visit www.chrisatwoodfoundation.org/naloxone for details.

Monthly Memory Café. 1-3 p.m. at 7910 Andrus Road, Suite 6, Alexandria. The Memory Café, a social gathering for individuals living with memory loss and their families, will be held on the first Friday of every month. Registration is free and highly recommended to reserve spots, which are open on a first come first served basis. To reserve a spot, please call 571-210-5551 or email bdesai@seniorhelpers.com. Visit www.dementiacare-connections.com/memory-cafe or

www.seniorhelpers.com/arlington-alexandria-va for more. Walk-Fit. Ongoing Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Fashion Center at Pentagon City, Arlington. Participants walk at their own pace in a safe and friendly environment. Group stretch and cool down led by Virginia Hospital Center staff at 9:15 a.m. Meet on the first level by Nordstrom. Call 703-558-6859.

Arlington County, in partnership with the Human Rights Commission's Equality Task Force, has launched a web page with resources for the LGBTQ community. The new webpage compiles LGBTQ resources on a variety of topics, including homelessness and housing, domestic violence and sexual assault, and health. There are also topics specifically for teens and youth — such as scholarship opportunities and school clubs — as well as ones targeted at seniors and older adults, such as SAGE. Visit topics.arlingtonva.us/lgbtq-resources.

Aging Matters. 2-3 p.m. Tuesdays on WERA 96.7 LP FM on Arlington's community radio station. Each week host Cheryl Beversdorf interviews individuals with expertise about a broad array of aging related

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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FROM PAGE 9

topics affecting the lives of older adults and their loved ones. Visit www.facebook.com/agingmatterswera to listen to programs.

Volunteer Bike Repair Night. First Tuesday of the month, 6-9 p.m. at Phoenix Bikes, Barcroft Park, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive. Volunteers gather to refurbish bikes, sort parts or help with essential tasks. No experience necessary.

Public Financial Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline. On Tuesday, Nov. 15, the Arlington County launched a new public hotline that offers a confidential and secure way to report suspected incidents of financial fraud, waste and abuse. Anyone can submit a complaint to the hotline at 1-866-565-9206 or at arlingtonva.ethicaladvocate.com. The hotline website is available in English and Spanish. Phone calls can be taken in many languages.

Created by the Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE) in partnership with the Arlington Public Library, the nation's First Energy Lending Library made its debut on Earth Day. Meant to resolve energy issues in the Arlington community, efficiency tools such thermal imaging cameras, energy meters and books play a vital role in achieving a "greener" home. Open Sun-Sat 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 1015 N. Quincy St. Visit library.arlingtonva.us/locations/central-library or call 703-228-5990.

Arlington Rotary Club Lunches. Thursdays, 12 - 1:30 p.m. at the Marriott Residence Inn at Courthouse, 1401 N. Adams St., Arlington, VA. Organization brings together political and business leaders for humanitarian services. Eat and listen to guest speakers on various topics of interest. Admission is \$20 for non-members. Visit <https://arlingtonrotaryclub.org/>

Job Seeking Help. 5-9 p.m. at Columbia Pike Branch Library, 816 S. Walter Reed Drive. Receive job-related help from the staff and volunteers with applications. Free, but requires registration. Visit www.arlingtonva.libcal.com.

The Jewish Council for the Aging has launched a new initiative called Tech Tuesday. Windows 7, Windows 8, Excel, iPad and iPhone, Email, photos, and social media will be covered in these classes held at 1750 Crystal Drive Shops, Suite 1638B Crystal Square Arcade. Visit www.accessjca.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center offers "Meditations for a Meaningful Life" for the general public Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at St. George's Episcopal Church, 915 N. Oakland St., Arlington. Gen Kelsang Varahi, an American Buddhist nun, leads teachings and guided meditations on life. \$10 (\$5 unemployed, full-time students, 65 and older). Visit <http://meditation-dc.org/arlington/> for more.

Arlington PFLAG Community Group. 7:30-9 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, PFLAG promotes the equality and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and their families. Meets at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Boulevard. Contact arlingtonpflag@gmail.com for more or go to www.pflagdc.org

Helmets Toastmasters meet Thursdays, 7:30-8:45 a.m. at Pentagon

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Paint along with community arts programmers, copy famous artworks, Thursday, Mar. 25, 10 a.m. Registration # 913301-15.

Trailblazing women who lived in the Ball-Sellers House, now a museum operated by the Arlington Historical Society, Thursday, Mar. 25, 1:30 p.m. Presented by Museum director Annette Benbow. Registration # 913400-12.

Chat with an artist about techniques, materials, creative expression, Thursday, Mar. 25, 4 p.m. Facilitated by Jennifer Droblyen. Registration # 913301-19.

Sudoku puzzle games for beginners and pros, Thursday, Mar. 25, 2 p.m. Registration # 913601-01.

Line dance in the park, easy for beginners, Friday, Mar. 26, 10 a.m., Virginia Highlands Park, 1600 S. Hayes Street. Registration # 913701-02.

Aurora Hills Fast Forwards walking group, two to three mile loop, some hills, Friday, Mar. 26, 9 a.m. Registration # 913201-03.

Digital escape room, virtual adventure, series of puzzles to solve, find clues, Friday, Mar. 26, 1 p.m. Registration # 913601-08.

Name that Tune game, fun for all, Friday, Mar. 26, 3 p.m. Registration # 913601-13.

Art of the American Soldier, insider's view of military history, presented by Renee Klish,

former art curator, U.S. Army Center for Military History, Monday, Mar. 29, 1:30 p.m. Registration # 913302-07.

Monday morning meet-up with fellow 55+ members, Monday, Mar. 29, 10 a.m. Registration # 913801-11.

Work on needlecraft projects with other 55+ members, Monday, Mar. 29, 10 a.m. Registration # 913703-05.

Tai Chi in the Park, practice with experienced volunteers, Monday, Mar. 29, 10 a.m. Registration # 913105-04.

Yarn creations, join other craft-minded individuals to share ideas and fellowship, Tuesday, Mar. 30, 1 p.m. Registration # 913703-16.

Arlington County resources and services for seniors, Wednesday, Mar. 31, 1 p.m. Presented by Helen King, Aging and Disability Services. Registration # 913400-07.

Afternoon hang-out, learn from others how best to deal with quarantine living, Thursday, Apr. 1, 3:30 p.m. Registration # 913801-21.

Meatless Mondays, discuss eating less meat and more vegetables once a week, Thursday, Apr. 1, 1 p.m. Registration # 913501-04.

Travel trivia games, Thursday, Apr. 1, 11 a.m. Registration # 913601.

Drumming Circle, opportunity for self expression, increase mental concentration, reduce stress, Thursday, Apr. 1, 1:30 p.m., High View Parks, 1945 S. Dinwiddie Street. Registration # 913702-03.

Armchair travel, explore a volcano in a Hawaiian park, Friday, Apr. 2, 3 p.m. Registration # 913402-30.

Line dance in the park, easy for beginners, no partner needed, Friday, Apr. 2, 10 a.m., Virginia Highlands Park, 1600 Hayes Street. Registration # 913701-03.

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FROM PAGE 10

Library and Conference Center. Toastmasters is an international organization that helps everyone speak, think, lead and listen better. Contact Carl Sabath carl.e.sabath.civ@mail.mil or 703-695-2804 or Elizabeth Femrite elizabeth.m.femrite.civ@mail.mil or 571-256-8674.

Donations Needed. Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, 2700 South 19th St., is seeking to replenish its food pantry. Particularly needed are rice (large bags appreciated, the pantry will rebag), dry beans, canned vegetables, soup, small jars of peanut butter, small jars of jelly, pasta and pasta sauce. Donations are collected during Mass each Sunday. Visit www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org for more.

Soil Testing. Virginia Cooperative Extension is offering soil testing services to analyze soil and determine what is needed to condition soil for plantings. The routine soil test is all one normally needs for a fertility evaluation. Recommendations generated usually within three working days of receipt. Pick up soil sampling box at the Virginia Cooperative Extension Arlington office, 3308 S. Stafford St., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Send filled soil sample box with form and fee to the Virginia Tech Lab for analysis. Fees vary, visit www.soiltest.vt.edu/Files.

Alzheimer's Association Support Group has meetings on the third Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. at Carlin Springs Health Pavilion, 601 S. Carlin Springs Road and also the first and third Thursday at 10 a.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 4000 Lorcom Lane. They are open to people with Alzheimer's, their caregivers, family members and friends. Free. Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 703-359-4440 or 800-272-3900 before attending

a group for the first time to verify meeting information, obtain directions or other information about the group. A complete list of all groups in the National Capital Area region can be found at www.alz.org/nca.

Pentagon Legacy Toastmasters meet Tuesdays 5:15-6:30 p.m. in the Pentagon Main Cafeteria/food court, left of Dunkin' Donuts. Toastmasters is an international organization that helps people speak, think, lead and listen better. Call 703-695-2604 www.toastmasters.org.

The Friends of the Planetarium has relaunched its official website. Visit www.friendsofheplanetarium.org to find up-to-date show times, a schedule of future events, information about Friends of the Planetarium membership, astronomy news and events, the history of the David M. Brown Planetarium, a link to the Friends' store, and more.

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority announces that cyclists and pedestrians will now have access to the W&OD Trail beyond normal daylight hours. The new W&OD Trail hours are from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., from Shirlington in Arlington County, to the western town limit of Herndon in Fairfax County.

Gentle Pilates. Saturdays at 9 and 11:15 a.m. A non-traditional mat Pilates class with modifications to suit all abilities. Learn proper form, strengthen core muscles and improve posture. \$78. Virginia Hospital Center, 1701 N. George Mason Drive.

The Chain Bridge Small Dog Meetup group supports the creation of a new off-leash play area for small dogs near Chain Bridge. To move this project forward, there is a requirement to demonstrate that small dog owners will utilize this park. Visit www.meetup.com/Chain-Bridge-Small-Dogs or contact chainbridgesmalldogs@gmail.com.

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Time Will Tell



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Ordinarily I'd be writing this column this weekend - after this week's events. Events, and I use that term loosely, that will either sustain my good fortune - or change it for the worse. What I'm referring to are results from my bi-monthly/quarterly diagnostic scans. This week I'll be CT-scanned from the pelvis to the neck and will have had my bones' scanned as well. The associated lab work and blood pressure check required pale in comparison to the significance of the findings from these two scans. Scan results which will tell me how I feel, a day or two later when I will receive electronically the radiologist's assessment/interpretation of the scans. But since I'll be out of town, with limited computer access and only a "stupid" phone (no internet capability), not a smart phone to use, I'll be left to my own devices - literally, until I return home Sunday afternoon.

Since I'll likely not receive any results before we leave on Friday, and moreover, not have the time to write a column this coming weekend (last weekend when the paper publishes on the 24th), I am minding my own business six days earlier than usual in hopes that what I don't know now won't hurt me later. And given that I take my avocation/column writing seriously, rather than reprint an old column, I am writing a new/current column in advance to continue to lead you regular readers down my garden's path.

The path to which I refer hopefully will be a path of least resistance that will enable me to assimilate all my forthcoming medical data into some coherent assessment of where I am, healthwise. Will I be able to maintain my status quo: 10 MG of levinia or will I have to change protocols and no longer stay on the horse that brung me? I have to hope I can continue on at my present pace because the 14 MG and 24 MG doses each had unpleasant side effects which lead to the reductions in the first place. And to complicate the dose possibilities, each of the higher doses lead to stable/some shrinkage on the CT scan and a significant reduction as well in my cancer markers, down from 200 to 4. This will be my first scan since I've taken the smaller dose. To say I'm somewhat invested in the outcome of this week's scans would be the understatement of the universe.

Unfortunately, none of this information will likely have been emailed to me - at home before we leave town, and I'll not have time and place to write a column this weekend while out of town. Therefore, I am submitting this column, written six days ahead of my typical deadline, with the best of intentions. In effect, today becomes just another day ("the daze of my life") of a person undergoing treatment for an incurable form of cancer; that type being papillary thyroid cancer stage IV versus the original/indisputable diagnosis: non small cell lung cancer, stage IV.

It will definitely be awkward knowing that diagnostic information about my health/presumptive welfare is in an inbox waiting for my log-in information. It's hardly ideal, but as a long-time cancer survivor, I have been here before and have done that. I'm not thrilled about being away when my life might possibly be hanging in the balance. I guess that's what cell phones are for: reaching out and sort of touching someone. If my doctors really need to talk with me, they are welcome to call. You can be sure my phone will be fully charged and with me at all times. After all, it might be good news, too. I mean, stranger things have happened: being diagnosed with "terminal" lung cancer after never having smoked cigarettes. Granted, upwards of 25% of new lung cancer cases are never-smokers, but still, with no history of cancer in my family and never having been a smoker, I kind of figured I had a fighting chance to avoid this disease. I guess my reward is 12+ years after my initial "13 month to two year" prognosis, I'm still alive and writing.

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



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