

# The Arlington Connection

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## AR PETS



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

Johanna Pichlkostner Isani with adopted canines Lexie and Paxton and puppy foster Bri.

# Cuter by the Dozens 25 Dogs and Counting

BY JOAN BRADY  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

I couldn't wait to vault from my parents' house into college. Full disclosure, my college was less than 75 miles from my childhood home and about a 12 minute drive from two sets of aunts and uncles. So first step toward independence, sure. But a huge step, not so much.

Never would I have moved to a foreign country without my family at 18. But that's exactly what Johanna Pichlkostner Isani did, leaving her small town in Germany for an adventure as an au pair in Northern Virginia.

I can only imagine what it was like for Johanna (pronounced Yo-hanna) to arrive here amidst the 1976 bicentennial celebrations. Her first day was filled with parades. And her first night was punctuated by loud and colorful fireworks. "What a welcome to the country," she told me.

Truly settling in meant turning the English grammar and spelling she had learned in school, into fluid conversation. TV became a tool to improve her skills, but she says it was definitely not a fast process. Johanna quickly came to appreciate the perfect placement of Northern Virginia with its short distances from the ocean, mountains, cities and countryside. And she loved having access to so many wonderful museums. Northern Virginia became home and ultimately she settled and raised her family in Alexandria; three sons, a couple of cats and a dog.

We were introduced by a mutual friend who couldn't say enough about Johanna's impact on the success of the 25 foster dogs for whom Johanna's home has been a

much-needed way station.

Johanna grew up with a dog and cat, as well as two "boy" hamsters who had a litter. Then another. Then another. And over time, there wasn't a kid in her neighborhood who didn't have one of the Pichlkostner hamsters. Perhaps this was early preparation for the fostering and dog placement that she does so successfully now.

Over the years, Johanna adopted two dogs from the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation (LDCRF) and so it made sense for her to look there when she decided she wanted to explore opportunities to get involved with animal rescue. A volunteer since 2019, Johanna could not be happier with her choice to become part of the LDCRF family, "By joining LDCRF I found a welcoming organization with an awesome group of people, all focused on doing good for the animals in their care."

Johanna and I have been emailing back and forth for more than a month now. And when I see her email address pop up in my inbox, I fix myself a cup of coffee and imagine there is no pandemic and we are sitting across the table at a local coffee shop as I read about her many fosters.

As a rescue beagle pet-mom, I was especially touched to learn Barney's story, which has been edited for length and clarity.

"I took in Barney the beagle in June of last year. This scared boy would scamper to the very back of his kennel when anyone came to see him. [After he came home with me,] the first few days he kept his distance, giving me a wide berth when coming in or going out to the backyard. [He would] give

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# Yorktown High Holds School-wide Assembly Honoring Black History

Ask yourself how you may have contributed to racism and do better, students say.

BY EDEN BROWN  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

**M**argarite Gooden told the group of over 1200 Yorktown High School students at an assembly Feb. 26 that as one of two Black students in her class at Yorktown, she was called a “jungle bunny” — among other things — by her classmates. She was integrating a school 59 years ago in her own neighborhood that had not allowed Black students to attend. She was so harassed in her math class, several boys had to be taken out of the classroom to allow her to remain. Tia Alfred and Ben Moody Jr. also attended Yorktown as it slowly integrated, and told similar stories of being Black in a mostly white school.

Students saw, in a video about housing segregation in Arlington, newspaper advertisements from the 1950s designed to lure white residents of Washington, D.C. to safe Arlington neighborhoods with fresh air and “nice white neighbors.” Many property deeds excluded people of African heritage from purchasing homes.

But the biggest emotional impact for Hannah Knittig, a senior who had been an organizer of the assembly, came when recent students of color at Yorktown said they could relate to the stories of being Black at Yorktown. It was all too real to them in the year 2021, 50 years later.

The mandatory school-wide assembly on Feb. 26 this year was partly the result of a Restorative Justice Conference held at YHS last June after the incident of a racially insensitive banner. At the conference, students demanded more attention be paid to racism at Yorktown. See <http://connection-archives.com/PDF/2021/031021/Arlington.pdf> page 9.

Dr. Kevin Clark, Yorktown’s new principal, and Shari Benites, the school’s Coordinator of Equity and Excellence, Director of the Center for Leadership and Public Service, and Coordinator of Restorative Practices, collaborated with the John M. Langston Citizen’s Association and several student leaders from Sister Circle and Minority Men United to plan the assembly. Their stated objectives were that



Yorktown High School.



The panelists were Yorktown alumni from the 70’s onward, and one current senior, Rylei Porter.



Donté Allen, a Yorktown senior, introduced the Housing Alliance video at the school wide assembly.

students and staff would learn an overview of the history of housing segregation in Arlington, connect to the history of segregation through personal stories, and reflect on the legacy of housing segregation in Arlington.

The panel of previous and current Yorktown students spoke openly about their struggles — Gooden, Alfred, and Moody, along with Rylei Porter, a current senior, and Galilee Ambellu who graduated last year. The assembly was mandatory. More than 1,260 students confirmed their presence with exit interviews; 80% said the “video was interesting and informative” and 85.1% said the “panel discussion was interesting and

informative.” In the open-ended comment section, the vast majority of student responses were positive and appreciative of learning this history which most said they had never learned.

Some comments were racist.

Hannah Knittig, who had been active in marshalling support for the Black Lives Matter movement and who did a video on Yorktown’s effort to move beyond its reputation as a mostly white high school, helped moderate the assembly. About 50 students and staff asked questions, according to Knittig. She added that seeing the questions that were asked was super helpful — because it drove home the different levels of “awareness”

in the school population. One student asked, “Why do we even need to have an assembly about this?” and another asked, “What advice can you give for white people, so they can do better?”

“I was thrilled to see our administration work hard to make this happen and I think it was a fantastic step in the right direction and a success. There is definitely more work to be done. The lack of awareness in the Yorktown community was evident in the anonymous questions that were submitted during the assembly. Several people criticized the importance of the event saying ‘racism isn’t as big of a deal anymore.’ Others mentioned their frustration over our school’s

“discriminatory” minority achievement programs. There were even blatantly racist statements that referenced commonly-used stereotypes about Black people.”

But the comments demonstrated that a problem remains. “This is what black and other non-white students have been saying for decades.”

Benites added, “This conference is absolutely one small piece of our work. I am so heartened we were able to do this. We have never been able to have a school-wide assembly for [Black History Month]. They have always been offered to whichever teachers want to sign up to bring their classes. I think the assembly would have happened even without the RJ Conference because of Dr. Clark’s leadership. This assembly was focused on our local history and the experience of these alumni, but we are doing other things to address the broader issues. I am also heartened that we are finally openly naming racism, anti-blackness, hate, etc. for what it is. In the past I have been frustrated by the unwillingness to address these issues head on and honestly, usually because of fear.”

**ONE OUTCOME** of the conference was a list of the questions posed by students. “There were some questions about what non-POC [Person of Color] folks can do and that will be addressed in the Q&A document we are preparing,” said Benites. “Our messaging is that white people need to seek out ways to learn the history, dismantle their biases, etc. without expecting People of Color to do this for them. Having said that, we will provide continued opportunities for our community to have discussions. Dr. Clark is the first principal I have worked with who does not hesitate to have these often difficult conversations. We don’t always get it right, but we have to try, learn and try again,” said Benites. “On a side note, Wilma Jones, who is part of the Langston civic group and wrote a book about Halls Hill, provided copies of her book to Sister Circle and came to one of our meetings to talk with the young ladies. We are working with some history teachers to have her do the same in their classes. Students really expressed

SEE YORKTOWN, PAGE 5



# Manoukian Brothers Oriental Rugs Nears 100 Year Anniversary

“Live from the Rug Shop” features local performers.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

A stack of 3x10 foot runners lines one of the walls at Manoukian Brothers Oriental Rugs on Columbia Pike. Mikael Manoukian, currently managing the three-generational business, says these are the most popular today along with the 6x9 and 8x10. He says people move around a lot and don't like to carry a big rug around with them. “This one is a stylized Afghan rug with a geometry design.”

A deep red 10x17 foot rug with blue accents is spread out on the floor in the middle of the room. “I just picked this up yesterday for deep cleaning and repair. It is a Persian Sarouk; it's like the Rolls Royce of rugs.” Manoukian explains Persian rugs have their own nomenclature depending on location, like wine. This particular rug is 95 years old and was purchased on Black Friday in 1929, the day after the stock market crashed so this rug has value both as an heirloom and as history itself.

Mikael says last March when COVID-19 hit they closed down the store for three weeks. But he says they have a small manageable staff of three including his mother, Dona, who is in charge of administration, and Hernan who has been their master weaver and repairman for 30 years. So they decided they could safely open up with curbside service outside.

“We pick up rugs outside people's houses or roll them up and put them outside the store.” He said they haven't had a slow year on the service side. “I think it depends on the vitality of the customer base. Sometimes today's customers are children of people who were our customers in 1960.”

Mikael says he thinks their customers haven't lost their jobs and are working at home. “They aren't spending their money on vacation. They look at their house all day, and getting their rug cleaned is one thing they can do to fix up.” But he adds that their customer base is older and “we want to be super careful and respectful.”

Manoukian Brothers Oriental Rugs was established on Washington Circle in 1922 when Manouk Manoukian opened his first store after fleeing Turkey with three brothers. They joined to create Manoukian Brothers Rugs.

For decades the four brothers brought hand knotted rugs from the New York rug importers to the local area where their customers browsed and bargained over strong coffee and lengthy negotiations. Manoukian Rugs is the oldest oriental rug store in the Washington area and moved to Columbia Pike in 2018 when they lost their long time lease on Washington Circle. Today the store carries 600 rugs, all hand knotted and from Middle Eastern countries with a few from China. “They last a long time.”

Mikael says his father, Manouk, was the son of the youngest brother to start the business. Manouk juggled his job as a civil engineer for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Agency with helping run the



A recent Live from the Rug Shop performance to celebrate the Persian new year.



Mikael Manoukian stands in front of the carpet which becomes a stage for the online Live From the Rug Store performances.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE CONNECTION

Original Manoukian Rugs in 1922 located at Washington Circle in Washington D.C.



PHOTO BY EMIL A. PRESS SLIDE COLLECTION, HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON D.C.

business and eventually took over. For over 20 years Manouk and his wife streamlined the business processes to transition the business from old systems to new ones.

Mikael says his father is 87 now and at home. “It's been tough on him. He's been doing this since he was a kid. He was a trader and he knew rugs and pistachios. Much was expected of him generationally, more than of me I think.”

Since Mikael has moved into managing the business, he has concentrated on updating the technology, creating an email list and designing a website. Like his father, Mikael balances his own career as a video producer for the arts with managing the carpet business. He explains, “I figured out when

I wasn't making ends meet as a performer that I needed to find a sustainable income.” So he turned to doing video for the arts.

Mikael's interest in the arts has spilled over to “Live From the Rug Shop,” a series of concerts live streamed from the Columbia Pike building and focused on performers in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Last month they celebrated the Persian New Year with Central Asian Dance by Nomad Dancers and belly dance by Raqs El Hob. He says “you can do bellydancers in a small space like we have here but you couldn't do ballet.”

Mikael promotes the artists through PayPal with an opportunity for those tuning in to contribute to the artist if they wish. “I'm trying to keep it as diverse as I can.” He would



Mikael Manoukian, current manager of the three-generational business, shows one of the popular 3x10 runners at today's store on Columbia Pike.

like to try bluegrass and has outreach to a mariachi band. Artists who have appeared since the concerts began in September include a mix of traditional Afro Caribbean music, two cellos and a local favorite, Rick Franklin, who takes us on a Blues journey.

Mikael adds that looking ahead in April he has scheduled the rock blues Dave Kline band for April 18, local singer songwriter Domenic Cicala on April 19 and classical guitarist Cristian Perez & Friends for April 20.

Mikael says, “It is an attempt to help get artists back in the game and lift up the spirits of everybody.” Concerts can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/RugShopConcerts>.



# Yorktown Principal, Equity Counselor, And Students Encourage Open Dialogue

FROM PAGE 3

interest in learning about this history because it is so connected to their lives, where they live, and not just an abstract lesson.”

Jones has advocated in the past for the history of segregation and discrimination to be taught in Arlington schools.

One of the panelists, a recent graduate of YHS who attends university, Galilee Ambellu, was awed by the courage the volunteer panelists showed to speak in front of 2,000 people about their difficult experiences at Yorktown.

“I hold my fellow panelists in high regard. All were incredibly vulnerable during the assembly and I appreciate their bravery. Although I believe racism should be openly addressed, I am hesitant to attend events like these since they contribute to the desensitization of Black trauma. The panelists’ experiences in Arlington County were simultaneously heartbreaking and unsurprising because of racism’s prevalence in America. Despite my hesitancy, I agreed to be a panelist in an attempt to provide solace for any student who may have experienced microaggressions at Yorktown.”

People of color being tired of having to educate the rest of the country is not unusual in Arlington. In Challenging Racism discussions this year, several Black women noted they were getting tired of educating white people about their pain. “It’s the oppressed being asked to help the oppressors,” is a theme heard increasingly as speak-

ing honestly about racism becomes more common. Ambellu said: “Instead, I would ask white people to self-examine, where have I contributed to this and how can I make it better?”

One of the hopes of the organizers of events like the assembly is that students who have not given a lot of thought to racism and its impact on their fellow students will begin to understand how it remains difficult to negotiate a path through Yorktown when you aren’t white. Some Black students feel they can’t showcase their blackness, “because you could be perceived as too black, or too ‘real.’”

“I chose to speak out on the matters that impact my race (racism, discrimination, misogyny, etc) but I want to challenge Yorktown and non-Black people to do better. I want people to ask themselves: ‘What are your practical steps to fostering a more inclusive environment? How are you actively educating yourself? Are there methods of cultural appropriation that you are contributing to; if so, how can you change? Why do you want to do better: for selfish ambition or to foster a more inviting environment?’”

Hannah Knittig said as a white student she witnesses racism at Yorktown. “Whether it’s a teacher ostracizing their Black student in a conversation about the Civil War, a student being shamed for wearing their natural hair, or a group of students treating racist micro-aggressions like jokes, race-based discrimination is still very present at

Yorktown.” Knitting continued, “It is promising to see the action that has been taken in the last year, but it is still not enough. And in my opinion, It should not have taken a racially insensitive banner controversy and this summer’s surge in the Black Lives Matter movement to stir these changes. But I do think Yorktown’s new Equity Team and Social Emotional Learning Committee have made some difference. Especially after this assembly, I think there is an increasing awareness surrounding racial insensitivity. Moving forward, I think we need to rely less on BIPOC students and alumni to educate white students and staff. Instead, I believe we should focus on what the administration can do to finally answer the outcry for restorative justice. Many before me have called for an updated curriculum. Our textbooks often ignore the contributions of people of color and that needs to change. And as many have pointed out, we should not be learning about

black historical figures only during Black History Month. We should be reading more books by authors of color. And I believe our teachers need more sensitivity training. There continue to be examples of staff making racially insensitive remarks and ignoring discrimination in the classroom. I acknowledge how difficult these demands may be to meet. But they’re necessary to make Yorktown a safer and more inclusive environment. Assemblies and committees are a great start, but we need real action.”

Benites agrees. “We formed an Equity Team in August with staff, students and parents. We are participating in the No Place for Hate initiative, and all students participated in an ‘Introduction to Equity’ lesson the week before Easter during Patriot Period that had them thinking about the difference between equality and equity and what it looks like in our community. I offered a restorative circle after the insurrection at the Capitol on [Jan.] 6, and after the shooting

in Georgia; while these were not well-attended, I am hoping as students and staff get more experience and knowledge of Restorative Practices, these healing circles are better attended.”

To see the video on housing in Arlington, see: <https://www.allianceforhousingolutions.org/blog/uncovering-the-history-of-race-and-housing-in-arlington>

To see Hannah Knittig’s video on the efforts of students at YHS to highlight the BLM movement, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luS7MVeaFuo>

And to see one of the suggested websites for what people can do to address racism in the community, see: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/system-of-white-supremacy-and-white-privilege> or see [www.challengingracism.org](http://www.challengingracism.org), a local group exploring racism together.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### NOW THRU APRIL 11

Eternal Sundown. At Long Bridge Park Esplanade, Long Bridge Park, Arlington. The National Landscaping Business Improvement District’s “Turn Up the Love” campaign continues with its next outdoor installation – Eternal Sundown – a 140 fluorescent light, multicolor activation that resembles a sun setting. Artist Mads Vegas in collaboration with the Light Art Collective, created the powerful, large scale installation from reused fluorescent tubes that were originally part of the COP15 climate summit in Copenhagen in 2009.

### WEDNESDAY/APRIL 14

Biophilia in Your Community. 6:30-8 p.m. Via Zoom. Join in a conver-

sation about our food, gardening, communities, and creating sustainable landscapes with Carolyn Quinn, founder of Dug In Farms, and Jeanette Ankoma-Sey, Adjunct Faculty

of the Sustainable Landscapes Masters Program at George Washington University. Cost is \$15. Visit the website:

<https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/get-involved/events/>

### FRIDAY/APRIL 16

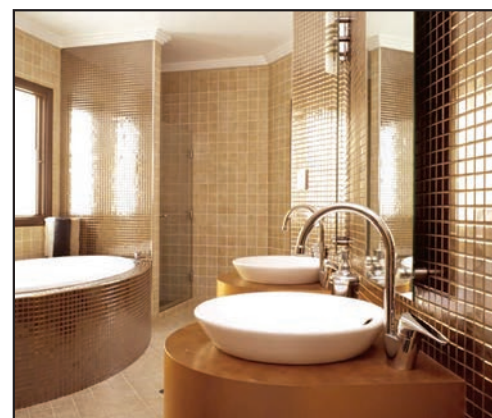
Native Plants for Wet Conditions. 10-11:30 a.m. Online. Homeowners often wonder which plants will be best suited to the soil conditions in their landscapes. In this class, Extension Master Gardener Elaine Mills will describe the factors that lead to wet conditions in a garden and the adaptations plants have made to do well in moist sites, tolerate intermittent flooding, or grow in standing water. She will

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# Cuter by the Dozens 25 Dogs and Counting

FROM PAGE 2

me his famous side eye and bolt if I tried to come too close. He was in a pretty bad condition with inflamed skin, patches of fur missing, fur that felt oily and sticky when touched, some dead ticks still falling off him and giving off a terrible smell – just a mess.

I was surprised by how quickly he was ok with me sitting next to him and giving him a chest rub and how fast he became comfortable just being in the living room with the other dogs and myself. He was with me for 6 months and made daily progress... After a few months he would snuggle on my shoulder and wait for me to tuck him in with a blanket at night... This boy went through numerous medical appointments and procedures and was such a trouper, accepting all treatments, medications and cones he had to wear. He could teach many lessons about overcoming fears, accepting challenges and just going with the flow, happily doing his own thing and finding joy in small things (getting the cone off for a bit and rolling in the grass, lazing in the sun or by the big window). His adjustment, progress, resilience and attitude surprised me on a regular basis.

Since he was so terrified by new people, I was really worried about finding his family. [But then] his forever family, where he was supposed to be, was found."

"Barney was in bad shape when Johanna swooped in and became an angel in his life," says adoptive mom Margaret Moral. "We are uncertain what he experienced in his past but it was traumatic enough for him to be extremely skittish and terrified. We knew immediately that we would have to work to win this poor boy's trust and affection the way Johanna had undoubtedly done. She was upfront and honest about Barney's medical history and anxieties and we were up for the challenge. We still communicate with her 4+ months after his adoption and send pictures and videos. It is because of her that this sweet beagle has a new lease on life. To say that we are grateful for her is an understatement."

Every foster has a story and this particular one is ongoing. I was lucky enough to get to meet Indy. She never came over to me. But seemed to accept me as a new



PHOTOS BY JOAN BRADY

It took a long lens to get close to Indy. Dazzle, in the background, alternated between hiding behind the other canines and the trees for most of my visit.



To the fosters she takes in, Johanna Pichlkostner Isani is a true super hero.

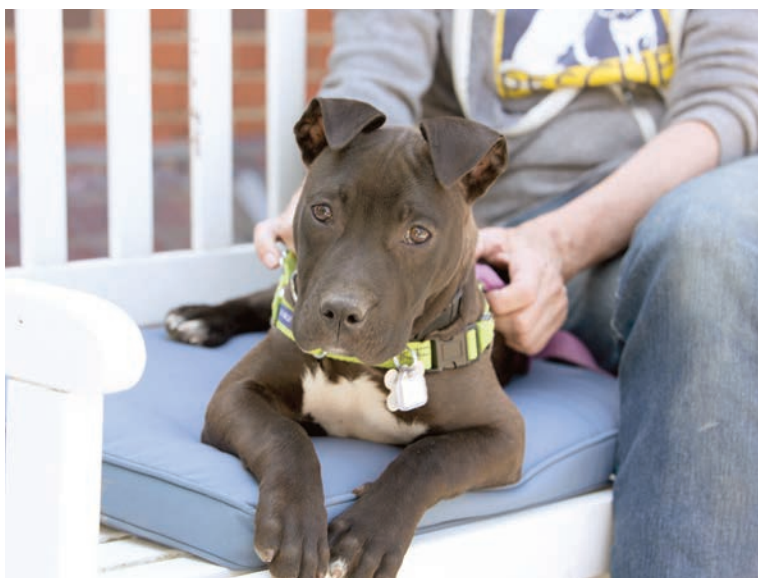
friend who could share her yard, as long as I stayed on my side. Indy is not yet ready for adoption, but Johanna has high hopes that she will eventually get there. Indy's story too has been edited for length and clarity.

"Indy arrived [at the rescue] in June. ...There were only a few people who could go in her kennel and quietly sit with her, as she was terrified. I took her home in January, transporting her in a crate and carrying her into the backyard in the crate. It was amazing to watch how gentle [my other dogs] Lexie and Paxton were in their approach

to her, giving her time to slowly come out of the crate and carefully check out the yard. I had her on a long leash so I was able to bring her into the house where a big kennel was set up for her. She went in it immediately, but by the end of that first day she was on a pillow in front of the crate watching us, and the next day she stayed in the living room with the other dogs on



Indy has come a long, long way.



Bri will be available for adoption in the next few weeks.

her dog bed.

Every time I got up to move or walked through the room she bolted out of the way and never totally relaxed when sleeping, always keeping an eye open and reacting to every noise or movement. By the end of January she actually slept while in the living room with us ... After 6 weeks she accepted ear rubs from me and a week later started asking to be pet by barking at me until I put my book down and pet her. I do have to continue to be sitting or crouched down. This spunky girl is working so hard on overcoming her fears and while we still have quite a way to go and have regular set-backs, I am so proud of how far she has come with a calm approach and consistency in a safe setting that lets her make the choice of what is ok and what she cannot do yet."

For a while now, it's been just Johanna's two adopted dogs: Lexie and Paxton and two fosters; the aforementioned Indy as well as Dazzle, who has a long way to go to feel comfortable around Johanna and the other dogs. Johanna is hopeful that over time, Dazzle's previous life will fade and the new happy memories they are creating together will help him overcome his dark thoughts and fears.

Johanna was quick to step up recently when months old little Bri needed a short-term place to stay. Bri is Johanna's 25th foster. It's been a while since she's had a puppy at home and she had definitely forgotten about the boundless energy, middle of the night bathroom trips and sharp teeth that enjoy chewing on fingers and shoelaces alike. But Bri is sweeter than sweet and is doing nicely in Johanna's

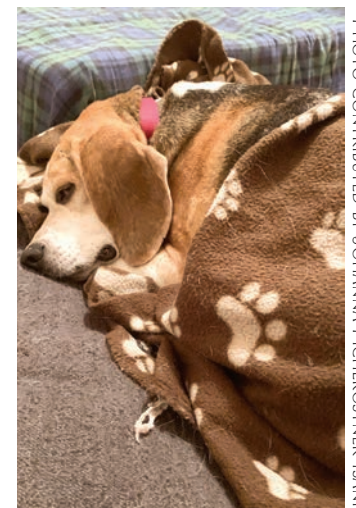


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY JOHANNA PICHLKOSTNER ISANI

Barney the beagle after his evening tuck-in as a foster with Johanna.

household. If you are looking to adopt a little cutie, the simply adorable Bri will be available for adoption in the coming weeks. You can watch for her on the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation website. <https://www.lostdogrescue.org/>

The party of five definitely keeps Johanna on her toes. And she clearly loves every minute of her time as a foster pet parent.

"[Being a canine foster parent] is such a rewarding experience for me, taking in a scared or stressed dog or one recovering from an illness and providing a safe and quiet place. Watching the change that happens when they realize they are safe and slowly begin to trust, realizing that a hand reaching out is to pet and give belly rubs and treats... It is a different experience every day, providing daily joy, laughter as well as stress relief."

You can check out opportunities to foster and adopt on the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation website. <https://www.lostdogrescue.org/>

And, here are a few additional local rescue organizations who might be able to help you find your perfect match:

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria  
alexandriaanimals.org  
Animal Welfare League of Arlington  
awla.org  
Homeward Trails  
homewardtrails.org  
PetConnect Rescue  
petconnectrescue.org  
Wolf Trap Animal Rescue  
<https://www.wtarescue.com/>

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

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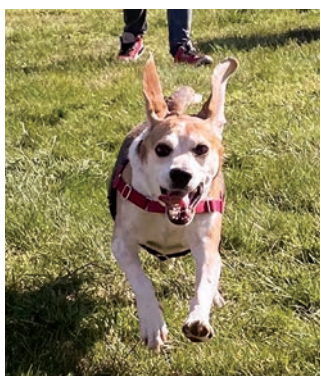


PHOTO COURTESY OF MARGARET MORAL

Barney loving his new life.



# BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 5

introduce native trees, shrubs, perennials, ferns, grasses, and rushes that have been found to thrive in these conditions, explain the benefits they provide to wildlife, and offer tips for growing and maintaining them. Free. RSVP at <https://mgmv.org/events/> to receive link to participate.

## ABC STORE OPENS IN PENTAGON CITY

Arlington County residents in the Pentagon City area will have a new retail outlet for purchasing distilled spirits, mixers and Virginia wine. On April 6, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) will open a new store at 1301 S. Joyce St., Suite D12, in the Pentagon Row shopping center.

## WORK FOR THE PARK CORPS

Work alongside Arlington's natural resource professionals in forestry, wildlife management, education and habitat restoration. This Park Corps program is open to teens ages 16-18 to get real work done, all while having fun outside, building job skills and making connections with other students. Sessions run June 21-25 and August 2-6 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Better still – participants receive a \$200 stipend upon successful completion of the program! Apply online by April 30. Visit the website: <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/parks-corps-application/>

## 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](mailto: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/s2FuFdaYwDZm4t-Pw2](https://goo.gl/forms/s2FuFdaYwDZm4t-Pw2).

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**Senior Living**, fourth week of every month.

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ARLINGTON CONNECTION ❖ APRIL 7-13, 2021 ❖ 7





PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, center, holds up the signed legislation known as “G3” March 29 at the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. The program will provide tuition-free community college to low- and middle-income students who pursue jobs in high-demand fields.

## ‘Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back’

### Northam signs tuition-free community college initiative at NOVA.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE CONNECTION

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam visited the Alexandria campus of Northern Virginia Community

College March 29 to sign the “Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back” initiative that will provide tuition-free community college to low- and middle-income students who pursue jobs in high-demand fields.

“This wouldn’t have happened without a tremendous amount of teamwork,” Northam said. “The business community has been a large part of this as well knowing that we need to train a large workforce.

This is a win-win. It’s a win for our community colleges, our businesses and for the Commonwealth.”

Known as G3, House Bill 2204, carried by Speaker of the House of Delegates Eileen Filler-Corn, and Senate Bill 1405, carried by Senator Majority Leader Richard Saslaw, establishes a program that

includes \$36 million to cover tuition, fees and books and provide wraparound support for eligible students at the Commonwealth’s two-year public institutions, including Northern Virginia Community College.

“Building an equitable and inclusive economy is more important than ever as we emerge from the pandemic,” Northam said. “The G3 program will connect thousands of Virginians with the skills, training and resources they need to secure jobs in high-demand fields and support themselves and their families — all without being forced to shoulder mountains of student

receive student-support incentive grants on a semester basis. These grants will be in an amount up to \$900 per semester and up to \$450 per summer term.

“For NOVA, G3 puts a college degree that leads to a meaningful career within reach of the full diversity of the Commonwealth,” said Dr. Anne M. Kress, president of NOVA Community College. “An investment in community college students is an investment in Virginia, one that will help families find economic security while helping the state achieve economic growth.”

Northam’s tuition-free community college initiative targets key industries, including health care, information technology and computer science, manufacturing and skilled trades, public safety and early childhood education.

“The Governor’s G3 initiative will make earning the necessary skills to fully participate in our 21st century economy affordable for more Virginians,” said Glenn Dubois, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System. “Virginia’s 23 community colleges are ready to help students prepare for and succeed in the high-demand jobs of today and tomorrow.”

For more information about how to enroll in the G3 program, individuals should contact their local community college.

**“The G3 program will connect thousands of Virginians with the skills, training and resources they need to secure jobs in high-demand fields.”**

— Governor Ralph Northam

debt.”

The G3 program is one of the first in the nation to provide wrap-around financial assistance to help students at the lowest income levels with expenses such as food, transportation and childcare. Students who qualify for a full federal Pell grant and enroll full-time will



Peter Buttigieg, U.S. Secretary of Transportation talks with U.S. Rep. Don Beyer in Alexandria on Tuesday, March 30

## Transformative Rail Agreement

On Tuesday, March 30, Governor Ralph Northam announced the Commonwealth finalized agreements with Amtrak, CSX, and Virginia Railway Express, launching a \$3.7 billion investment to expand and improve passenger, commuter, and freight rail in Virginia and create a vital connection in America’s national rail network between the Northeast and Southeast corridors. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg joined the event at Alexandria’s Amtrak/Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station, highlighting the American Rescue Plan recently passed by Congress, which includes \$1.7 billion to get Amtrak employees back to work, restore daily long-distance service, and help states cover lost revenue in state-supported routes. It also includes critical funding for transit and rail networks.

“Northern Virginia is at the crossroads of the Mid-Atlantic

rail network, where the existing Long Bridge is the only rail bridge connecting Virginia to Washington, D.C., creating a choke point for rail traffic between the Southeast and Northeast,” said U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-8). “I worked with a coalition of my colleagues in Congress to authorize and fund a new Long Bridge, an effort that also helped the Commonwealth secure access to the federal land needed for construction of the new Long Bridge. This project is estimated to bring nearly \$6 billion annually in benefits to the region by 2040 and is a key component of Transforming Rail in Virginia.” The partnering agreements support the construction of a \$1.9 billion bridge over the Potomac River dedicated to passenger rail, acquisition of 386 miles of railroad right-of-way and 223 miles of track from CSX, and an investment of more than \$1 billion in additional infrastructure improvements by the Commonwealth.

### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

#### GET MORE WITH SNAP

Arlington and Alexandria Farmers’ Markets accept SNAP/EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) cards for purchases. SNAP/EBT customers 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,

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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# Green Summer

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

Alexandria delegation works with the governor to legalize marijuana on July 1.

Marijuana possession arrest and conviction rates are higher for Black Virginians

The local legislative delegation is at the center of an effort poised to legalize weed this summer, years ahead of an agreement that was struck behind closed doors at the end of the General Assembly session in February.

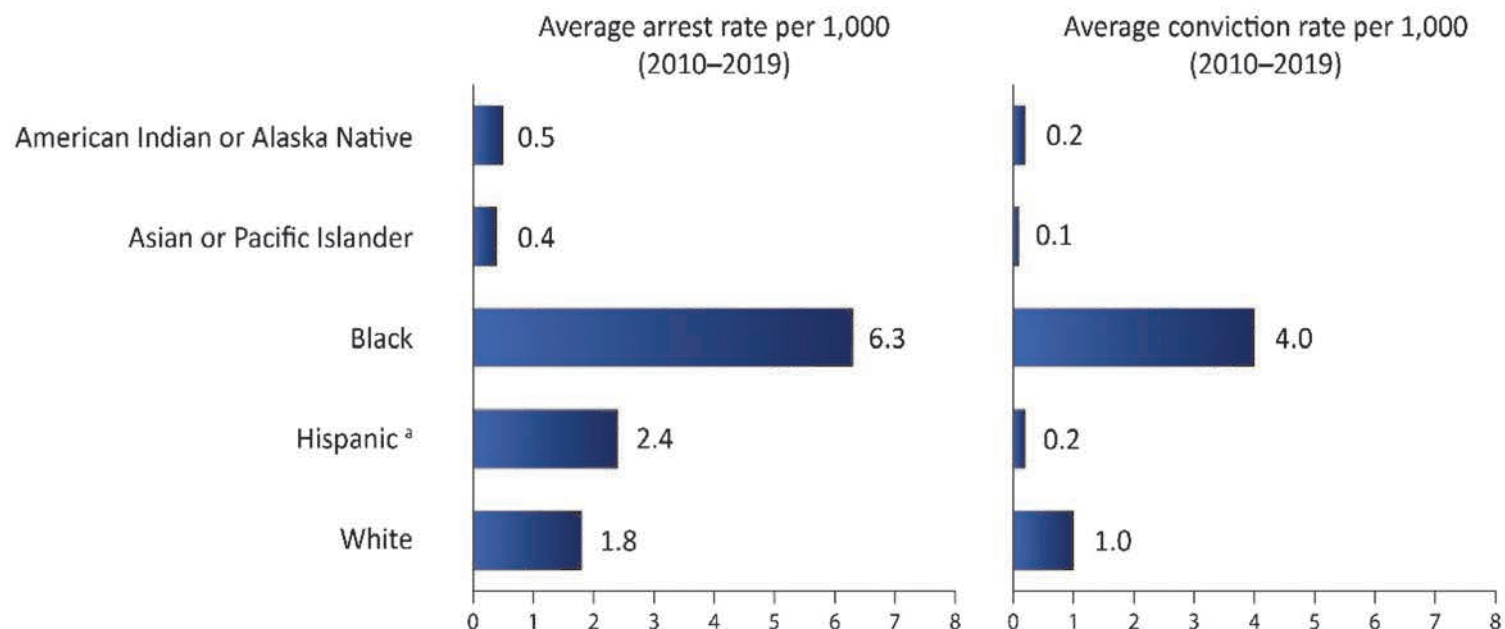
This week, Gov. Ralph Northam issued amendments to legislation introduced by House Majority Leader Charniele Herring (D-46) of Alexandria and state Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30) that would have legalized marijuana on New Year's Day 2024. After receiving tremendous pressure from an unprecedented lobbying campaign, the governor changed his position and amended the legislation to legalize pot on July 1 of this year.

"It really is an extraordinary victory," said Jenn Michelle Pedini, executive director of Virginia NORML. "We're really thrilled to see that Governor Northam agrees with NORML and with Virginians that legalization ought to take effect on July first of this year."

When the General Assembly session began, the governor called for the date of legalization to be tied to the date commercial sales could begin. Northam originally wanted the Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to regulate marijuana when sales begin in 2023. But lawmakers rejected that idea and instead created the Cannabis Control Authority, which pushed the start of commercial sales back to 2024. Senators wanted to separate the date of legalization from the date of commercial sales, but they were outnumbered during the closed-door conference committee discussions.

"Thankfully people have evolved and come to the Senate position, which we're happy to see," said Ebbin. "I think you're going to see a bipartisan recognition that the prohibition on cannabis has failed and if we're going to legalize it we might as well just get that done and eliminate all penalties for possessing a small amount of marijuana."

During the conference committee negotiations, which happened in secret and were not open to the public, senators pressed for a re-enactment clause that would force lawmakers to reconsider the legislation again next year. House



SOURCE: JLARC staff analysis using arrest data from the Virginia State Police and conviction data from the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Virginia Supreme Court.

members didn't like the reenactment clause, but they ended up agreeing to it if the Senate agreed to delay legalization until 2024 to allow for time to stand up the Cannabis Control Authority. Now the governor's amendments are forging a new compromise, moving up the date of legalization while also allowing people to grow marijuana plants in their home as of July 1.

"If you're going to legalize simple possession, you also have to have a legal way to obtain it," said Herring. "Unfortunately, the Senate put a reenactment clause on the regulatory part of the bill so there was no way for us to speed up the process so we could have retail."

**NOW LAWMAKERS** will be considering a new compromise, one crafted by the governor and his staff behind closed doors at the Executive Mansion. The version lawmakers will be voting on when they reconvene on April 7 would legalize possession of marijuana this summer while also allowing for people to grow marijuana plants at home. That solves the problem of le-



Charniele Herring

galizing a product that was unavailable through legal channels. Meanwhile, lawmakers will still need to reenact all the language standing up the new Cannabis Control Authority, a massive undertaking that includes social-equity licenses and vertical integration allowing companies to grow a product it also sells.

"Our commonwealth is committed to legalizing marijuana in an equitable way," said Northam in a written statement after issuing his amendments. "Virginia will become the 15th state to legalize marijuana, and these changes will ensure we do it with a focus on public safety, public health and social justice."

Now members of the General Assembly will have the final say. During their April 7 session, they'll get an up or down vote on the amendments. Either they approve them or reject them, and they won't have an

opportunity to make amendments or disrupt the careful second negotiation that the governor craft-



Adam Ebbin

support, although the margins are a little tighter in the Senate. At least one Democratic senator has already announced his opposition.

"People smoke marijuana to get high," said Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), who says he remains opposed to creating a new legal industry for marijuana. "The purpose of smoking it is to create an altered mental state, and once you legalize it people will be able to use it pretty much any time they want."

Other Senate Democrats disagree, even some of the more conservative members that might have otherwise raised objections. Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25) said he would have preferred the final version of the bill to have a statewide referendum, allowing voters to weigh in on whether they want to move forward with legalizing marijuana. But even though the amended version of the legislation does not have a referendum, he says he'll support legalizing marijuana this summer.

"I expect it to pass," said Deeds. "The thing that cost us the bipartisan majority and cost us one Democratic vote is when we took the referendum out. The referen-

dum is still out, so it's going to be a close vote."

**THE WILD CARD** in the Senate is Sen. Joe Morrissey (D-16). He's pressing senators to withhold their votes legalizing marijuana until the governor agrees to call a special session on eliminating mandatory minimum sentences. Lawmakers were close to an agreement on eliminating mandatory minimums, but the effort fell apart at the last minute. Advocates for criminal justice reform say the failure to take action on mandatory minimums was a major setback, and now Morrissey wants to use the vote on marijuana as leverage to force a special session of mandatory minimums.

"I have the greatest opportunity to get it done when I couple them together," said Morrissey. "We're talking about a \$25 fine for marijuana versus mandatory minimums that cause people to go to prison for decades and destroy not just the defendant's life but generations."

The governor's press release includes quotes from two Republicans, Sen. Jill Vogel (R-27) and Sen. Richard Stuart (R-28). Some viewed that as an indication that the governor has already lined up all the votes he needs in the Senate.

But Morrissey says he's hoping to persuade his colleagues that the vote on marijuana is an opportunity to force consideration of a major criminal-justice reform.

"We'll see if they've got the votes," said Morrissey.

**"It really is an extraordinary victory."**

— Jenn Michelle Pedini, executive director of Virginia NORML

**"Our commonwealth is committed to legalizing marijuana in an equitable way."**

— Gov. Ralph Northam



FROM PAGE 8

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/](http://audubonva.org/audubon-at-home-1/) for more.

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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](mailto:bdesai@seniorhelpers.com). Visit [www.dementiacareconnections.com/memory-cafe](http://www.dementiacareconnections.com/memory-cafe) or [www.seniorhelpers.com/arlington-alexandria-va](http://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 web-page 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 [arlingtonva.us/lgbtq-resources](http://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 topics affecting the lives of older adults and their loved ones. Visit [www.facebook.com/agingmatterswera](http://www.facebook.com/agingmatterswera) to listen to programs.

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](http://www.arlingtonva.libcal.com).

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# SENIOR LIVING

## Estate Planning During Pandemic

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith the nation sadly surpassing 500,000 Covid related deaths, morality is much more on the mind of many. Yet this year's wills survey, conducted annually by a caregivers foundation, shows that while the Covid-19 pandemic increased people's desire to get a will, most have not taken action.

Why is early estate planning important? There is common agreement that it's best to get ahead of deathbed planning. There are many terrible stories of the sick in hospital beds attempting to tell loved ones where money, accounts, insurance and other financial information could be found in order to carry on without them. And although those without family or with limited assets might be tempted to forego a plan, estate plans have value for everyone.

If a will or trust is not available to follow a decedent's wishes, then state law determines the distribution of assets, which may not align with the person's desire or family situation. Further, having a medical directive relieves uncertainty during times of difficult health situations or in the event of incapacitation.

What is the process at death? Probate is the court supervised process of "proving and recording" a will and transferring assets. Transfers follow a will or state law. Probate also is required when there is solely-held property or other assets without a "pay upon death" designee. Wills use an executor, supervised by the court, to administer the transfer of assets.

Without a will the estate also could remain in court longer, with associated higher court costs, even with a small estate.

A trust can be an alternative or complement to a will, which might allow the estate to avoid the probate court process. In a trust, a trustee, designated by the 'trustor' (trust creator,) stands in to make decisions related to assets in the trust to benefit a third party beneficiary.

Why do people delay making an estate plan?

David L. Whiting, principal attorney for the Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon, says there are several reasons. "First, mortality is an uncomfortable topic; as is thinking about what a child or other loved one will have. Second, the rules are complicated and can seem overwhelming. It is easier to push deci-



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

**Prepare, notarize, and witness basic estate documents for faster, less costly completion of your final wishes**



PHOTO BY COLLEEN DANNER  
**Attorney David Whiting, of Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon**

sions to the end. And third, some feel a plan is unnecessary if there are no children or there are not a lot of assets." Some worry about the expense of document preparation.

Is it difficult to form an estate plan, during the pandemic? Professionals who provide estate planning services are often working from home these days; attorneys, accountants, and financial planners. Most may work on-line with fees ranging from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. The Virginia State Bar Association

provides an on-line attorney referral service as a starting point for finding those practicing estate planning.

For those who feel comfortable with a 'do-it-yourself' approach, there are several on-line services and apps which might be less expensive, such as FreeWill, Willing, Nolo, LegalZoom, and RocketLawyer. They typically provide templates and instructions, or basic flat fee services at lower cost; from no fee, to with-fees at \$39 - \$329 per document. Bear in mind that discount services and apps are basic, when your actual needs may be more complex.

Whiting warns against trading short term gain for long term loss by not getting professional help; even though it's hard to set money aside for something which may not be needed for decades to come. He suggests shopping around

for an attorney with whose fees and practice you can feel comfortable. He says, "Since you will be talking about very personal situations, trust and a comfort level are critical. It's important to confront difficult questions and difficult planning issues while you are still at your best."

**"It's important to confront difficult questions and difficult planning issues while you are still at your best."**

— Attorney David Whiting, of Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon

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## Being Driven Only Slightly Crazy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So this is what it's like to be out of the house and driving around: mask on, surgical gloves in the console, hand sanitizer in the glove box; not so different than before my than before my two covid-19 vaccinations. Today, Sunday, April 4, is my "day of liberation," as I've heard it called, the day two weeks after your final shot when the vaccine is supposed to reach its peak effectiveness. Not that I anticipate acting/living any differently than I have for the past 12 months, nevertheless; the shackles feel like they're off a little bit. I can now go out and about and be less fearful for my life.

Still, I'm not going to throw caution to the wind. Considering I'm a 66-year-old man with cancer, the definition of "comorbidity," which places a covid-19 target squarely on my back, front actually given the location of my chest/lungs, I am unlikely to ever unmask. And underlying that "comorbidity," is that my oncologist thinks that I have non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, and my endocrinologist thinks I have papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV; two for the price of one, you might say. As a result of this dual diagnosis, I tend to envision my future with lingering trepidation. Ergo, I don't see myself footloose and fancy free anytime soon. Presumably, my doctors talk with each other about my "unique" two-cancer status, but I wouldn't know, would I? As the Brits often question the end of their sentences.

I know that I can email them anytime I want though, but the covid-19 norm is that we see each other on video, not in person. And not that I'm overly concerned, but a face-to-face appointment, one that occurs while we're in the same examining room, might one day save my life. In addition, one other day, I'd love to have a Team Loure meeting with both my doctors present in the same examining room at the same time which would allow me to be my own judge and jury to determine a prudent way forward.

Though this kind of meeting would alter my "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy (since in the 12-plus years since my diagnosis, we've never had a group-think like this) still; to quote my late father, the idea has merit." And even though my father died in early December, 2006, I still hear his parental advisories and invoke them at most every turn, especially when I recycle his jokes. Most notably: "You're very seldom wrong, but this time, you're right." If I heard that once in my life, I've heard it a thousand times, maybe literally.

Thankfully I, along with my brother Richard, inherited our father's sense of humor and positive attitude. Whenever I've contemplated a change in my treatment, whether because of a blip on my radar, or an anomaly in one of my diagnostic scans, generally speaking, I've viewed it all as just another cancer-treatment step that has to be taken. No big deal. And diagnosis to date, fortunately, I've taken more steps forward than backward even with my primary cancer being changed recently to thyroid from lung. For clarity in the midst of this turnabout (which I'm not exactly sure is fair play), I remember asking my oncologist what type of cancer I had now, after being diagnosed originally with non small cell lung cancer in Feb., 2009. He said I still have lung cancer, but I also have thyroid cancer (lucky me). When I followed up by asking him which is better to have, he unequivocally said thyroid cancer which is the only cancer for which I am currently being treated. The immunotherapy that I had been taking to fight the lung cancer has been stopped for almost a year. As far as my current treatment indicates, I have thyroid cancer (though both cancers are stage IV and are considered "terminal").

In a "Three Stooges" episode entitled "Restless Knights," Curly was asked how he wanted to die: "to be burned at the stake or have his head chopped off." Curly replied: "I'd rather be burned at the stake." His explanation: "a hot steak is better than a cold chop." All cancers/protocols considered, I'd rather be diagnosed with thyroid cancer, so long as there are no covid-19 complications.

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





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