

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

(From left) are dad Gordon Fiobotei, grad Ebiobowei, mom Caroline, niece Egiro, 6, aunt Helen Agedah, and brother Diseye celebrating graduation at Mountain View High.



'Driven by Fire and Determination' to Graduate

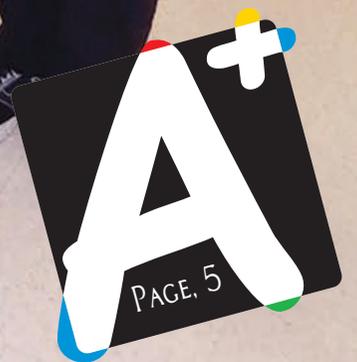
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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Kensington Senior Living is proud to support the Women's Alzheimer's Movement (WAM) and HFC as they host a FREE, virtual summit of top brain health experts and celebrities to learn ways to live a brain-healthy life in the fight against Alzheimer's disease



BRAIN IT ON

JUNE 24, 12 PM PDT / 3 PM EDT



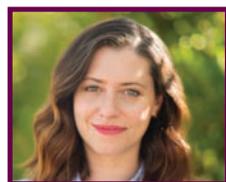
Brain It On

**Virtually on Thurs, June 24, 2021
3:00pm-4:30pm EDT**

Hosted by Maria Shriver of WAM & Lauren Miller Rogen of HFC



Maria Shriver, WAM



Lauren Miller Rogen, HFC

The Women's Alzheimer's Movement (WAM) and HFC, two of the nation's leading Alzheimer's and brain health-focused nonprofit organizations, are joining forces to bring together brain health experts and celebrity advocates to equip you with ways to live a brain-healthy life! This free-to-attend, 90-minute, virtual summit is for anyone interested in learning about the connection between Alzheimer's and brain health and how to sustain a journey of wellness. Join us for candid conversations, actionable steps and a few surprise guests.

At The Kensington, one of the ways we uphold our promise to love and care for your family as we do our own is by supporting progressive initiatives toward wellness for seniors, such as BRAIN IT ON. We provide a full spectrum of assisted living services, and caring for residents with memory impairment is one of our strengths. We offer different program levels that address the challenges unique to each phase of loss so that we can improve our residents' quality of life to the greatest extent possible. We include caregivers and family members in our efforts because after all, memory loss is a family affair. So please join us, along with devoted Alzheimer's prevention specialists and advocates, for information, encouragement and tips you can put to good use right away.

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NEWS

Herndon NJROTC Cadet Receives Herndon High School Faculty Award

Herndon High School held their graduation in person this year at the Jiffy Lube Live Amphitheatre. There were many awards and recognitions, including the presentation of the Faculty Medal to NJROTC Cadet Harol Jimenez. One student each year is selected by the Faculty for being the most outstanding student, citizen, and example for others to emulate. Cadet Harol Jimenez was awarded this medal by the Principal, Dr. Liz Noto. In her remarks, Dr. Noto stated "Harol Jimenez has been an outstanding student since he arrived at Herndon High 4 years ago. Frequently sought out by teachers and administrators to participate on boards, committees, and mentoring organizations. Harol has been a superb Cadet in NJROTC and is personally responsible for the retention and mentoring of countless young men who lack dedicated adults in their lives to guide them. Harol spoke with them in a way that few others could manage and convinced most to stay the course both in school and NJROTC. Many of his protégés will graduate and be successful, because of him and his exceptional mentoring skills.

Mature beyond his years, Harol Jimenez is frequently mistaken for a teacher or administrator because he is so articulate and carries himself with such confidence and pride.

This year, despite all the challenges, Harol has taken time out from work and school commitments so he could interact with freshmen cadets in NJROTC.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Dr. Liz Noto, Principal of Herndon High School, presents the Faculty Award to Cadet Harol Jimenez.

Harol is a model student and citizen who epitomizes Hornet PRIDE every day and in everything he does.

Herndon Historical Society Officers 1982.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HERNDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Herndon Historical Society Celebrates 50th Anniversary

The Herndon Historical Society celebrated its 50th anniversary at its annual meeting that was held on May 26. At the meeting the Society recounted how the Society came into being by a group of residents who organized in order to save the Herndon depot from being demolished in the late 1960s. That effort was largely organized by Richard Downer, a long-time Herndon resident and business owner. Once the Herndon Town Council voted to save the depot from demolition, the resident group formally incorporated, becoming the Herndon Historical Society in early 1971. The Society went on to establish the town's Depot Museum, and to engage in a wide variety of activities that

illustrate, preserve, showcase and educate about the town of Herndon's history.

At the annual meeting

Charlie Waddell, a former Board member who recently stepped down, was recognized. The Society also conducted a remembrance of Gary Rinker, a former Society member who was a Commander Herndon reenactor. Richard Downer, a charter member of the Society who served on the Board up until this year, was also given a special recognition. The highlight of the meeting was the showing of a video that Downer recorded several years ago in which he told the story of the origins of the Historical Society.

To learn more about the Herndon Historical Society, please go to:

www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory/ or www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org

Democrats Choose Northern Virginia Ticket

Primary voters select candidates with gender and racial diversity but lacking in regional balance.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

As election returns started rolling in from the Democratic primary Tuesday, Republicans started boasting about having the most diverse statewide ticket in Virginia history. Although Democrats nominated a candidate for lieutenant governor who describes herself as an “Afro Latina, Lebanese, Irish woman,” Republicans can boast they have a ticket that has candidates from Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, two parts of the state where voters will determine the winner of the next election.

“That would work if Republicans were not selling white supremacy and white nationalism,” said David Ramadan, a former Republican delegate who’s now at George Mason University’s Schar School. “Minorities are not going to vote for Republicans because of what they saw in the last 10 years.”

At the top of the ticket is former Gov. Terry McAuliffe of McLean, who’s trying to accomplish something that’s been done only once — return for a second term. Virginia is the only state in the country that prohibits its governor from running for reelection. The only other governor to be elected to a second non-consecutive term was Mills Godwin, who had one term as a Democrat in the 1960s and one term as a Republican in the 1970s.

McAuliffe is essentially running on a platform of extending the administration he handed off to Ralph Northam four years ago, although this time he would not be facing a hostile Republican-controlled General Assembly.

“Throughout his time as governor, Terry implemented bold initiatives to create good-paying jobs and expand economic opportunity across the commonwealth,” said New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, chairwoman of the Democratic Governors Association. “Now, as Virginia rebuilds following the pandemic, Terry will work as governor to create an economy that works for all Virginians and uplift those who have been hit the hardest.”

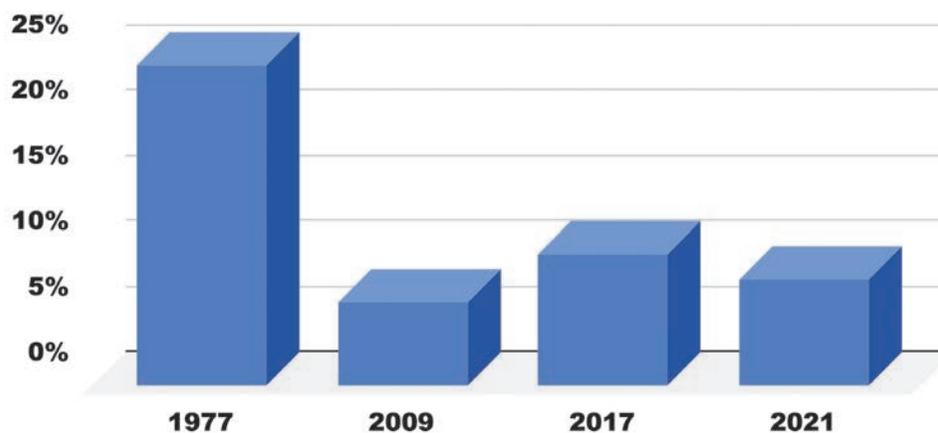
McAuliffe is a wealthy Northern Virginia businessman who will be facing another wealthy Northern Virginia businessman, Glenn Youngkin, who has already pumped \$12 million into his own campaign. McAuliffe supporters say his campaign will be about protecting access to health care, reducing gun violence, ensuring economic recovery and addressing climate change. After the former governor secured the nomination



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Democrats celebrate former Gov. Terry McAuliffe’s victory Tuesday night in McLean.

Turnout in Democratic Primaries



source: Virginia Department of Elections

Turnout in this year’s Democratic primary was higher than 2009, when Republican Bob McDonnell became governor. But it was lower than 2017, when Democrat Ralph Northam was elected governor.

Tuesday night, Youngkin called McAuliffe a “career politician who pretends to be a businessman.”

“Taking their enthusiasm for recycling to a new extreme, Democrats are offering Virginians two-thirds of their 2013 ticket, hoping voters will see it as new and improved,” said Senate Republican Leader Tommy Norment. “Virginians are a lot smarter than the Democrats think.”

DEMOCRATS HEAD INTO the fall election season with a ticket that features two seasoned statewide politicians and a newcomer who rose to power in the wave election of 2017. Ayala unseated former Del. Rich Anderson (R-51), who is now the chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia. Late in the campaign, Ayala broke her pledge to resist taking campaign cash from Dominion Energy and received \$100,000 from the utility monopoly that many Democrats say exerts too much control over Virginia politics.

“Hala Ayala made news in the last days of her campaign for being a liar,” said House Republican Leader Todd Gilbert. “Democrats continue to be saddled with internal fighting

over who should bankroll their campaigns.”

If elected, Ayala would be the first woman elected lieutenant governor and the first woman of color elected stateside in Virginia history. On the campaign trail, she often talks about her hardscrabble journey from working at a gas station for minimum wage while pregnant to developing a career in cybersecurity. She won with 38 percent of the vote in a crowded field that included the most diverse set of candidates ever assembled on a statewide ballot.

“Hala Ayala is closer to shattering one of the highest glass ceilings in Virginia elected office, which would be a triumph for the entire Latino community,” said Nathalie Rayes, president and CEO of the Latino Victory Fund. “As the state grapples with the disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Hala will work to root out these inequities by focusing on priority issues such as expanding access to affordable health care and creating an economy that works for all Virginians.”

ATTORNEY GENERAL Mark Herring was able to beat back a challenge from Del. Jay

PRIMARY FOR GOVERNOR

- ❖ Terry McAuliffe: 302,000 votes, 62 percent
- ❖ Jennifer Carroll Foy: 96,000 votes, 20 percent
- ❖ Jennifer McClellan: 56,000 votes, 12 percent
- ❖ Justin Fairfax: 17,000 votes, 4 percent
- ❖ Lee Carter: 13,000 votes, 3 percent

PRIMARY FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

- ❖ Hala Ayala: 176,000 votes, 38 percent
- ❖ Sam Rasoul: 114,000 votes, 24 percent
- ❖ Mark Levine: 53,000 votes, 11 percent
- ❖ Jennifer McClellan: 50,000 votes, 11 percent
- ❖ Sean Perryman: 38,000 votes, 8 percent
- ❖ Xavier Warren: 20,000 votes, 4 percent
- ❖ Elizabeth Guzman: 20,000 votes, 4 percent

PRIMARY FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

- ❖ Mark Herring: 268,000 votes, 57 percent
- ❖ Jay Jones: 206,000 votes, 43 percent

Jones (D-89), who is seen as a rising star in the party. Republicans have already signaled that they’ll be going after Herring for appearing in blackface when he was in college, although that issue didn’t seem to resonate with Democratic voters when Jones tried to use it as a wedge issue in the closing days of the primary campaign. Herring will be running against Del. Jason Miyares (R-82), a law-and-order conservative who says he’ll make sure the streets are safe and criminals are locked up.

“As violent crime rises, Virginia families need an attorney general who will stand up for crime victims and prioritize public safety,” said Peter Bisbee, executive director of the Republican Attorneys General Association. “Herring has been criticized for trying to cover up the illegal release of violent prisoners and failed to hold rapists and rioters accountable when local prosecutors wouldn’t do their job. Worst of all, Herring supported ending the notifications crime victims receive when their predator is released from prison.”

During his time as attorney general, Herring created a new Office of Civil Rights as well as a new conviction integrity unit and a new worker protection unit while also reorganizing the consumer protection section. He fought against the former president’s Muslim ban, and he opposed Republican gerrymandering in the United States Supreme Court. If elected a third term as attorney general, Herring says he’ll protect against Republican efforts to oppose access to healthcare, marriage equality and immigrant rights.

“The voters recognized Attorney General Mark Herring for his leadership over the last eight years as he has tackled hard issues — defending the Affordable Care Act, guaranteeing the right for all couples to marry, reforming criminal justice laws, ending police violence and fighting the NRA in their backyard,” said Sean Rankin, executive director of the Democratic Attorneys General Association. “DAGA is proud to support Attorney General Herring as he continues the work in Virginia on racial equity and civil rights, reproductive rights and guaranteeing economic justice for all Virginians as communities return to a more normal life after the pandemic.”

Collective Bargaining: A Step to 'One Fairfax'

BY LISA SALES



At age 20, I took on a job as a grocery-bagger. I balanced my work alongside my full-time college studies, caring for my father who was dying of cancer, while living with an abusive boyfriend, sadly my first serious relationship. Amidst all of the chaos and trauma associated with this period of my life, my job provided an outlet, a sense of stability, and gave me agency. This was because I had the protection of a union and the right to collectively bargain alongside my colleagues.

Although my career has since spanned a number of jobs across public and private sectors, it was this role at the grocery store that taught me early on the importance of listening to workers – and especially the voices of women. Women are the most marginalized of the marginalized. While we're over half the population, over a third of American women are heads of households with children, living in poverty. As a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault, and life-long fighter for women's rights, I know that there is a link between the lack of equality for women in the workplace and the violence perpetrated against us. Safe working conditions, fair pay, and strong benefits have cascading effects that extend far beyond the workplace.

I'm writing as an equality advocate and active Fairfax County community member in full support of collective bargaining for Fairfax County employees. I am urging the Board of Supervisors to pass an ordinance that empowers our essential workforce. This ordinance must give workers a real say in their wages, benefits, and working conditions. It should not create barriers for organizing. It should not create a two-class system by excluding so-called "non-merit" workers, like School Aged Child Care (SACC) providers who are majority women and make up an essential workforce caring for the future of Fairfax. Passing a meaningful and inclusive collective bargaining ordinance is a necessity if we want a Fairfax that supports women, people of color, people with disabilities, other marginalized communities, and all working families.

THE FIGHT FOR EQUITY is a global battle, but I'm a firm believer that all politics is local. I'm choosing to be an ally in this push for collective bargaining for county employees because I want to change future outcomes for women and the next generation here in Fairfax. We need to create conditions for women to be successful and to be lifted from poverty. Many county workers are mothers and care-providers, doing

it all, and we need to make sure they have what they need to thrive.

As an Economic Policy Institute study noted, a "promising way to address both gender-specific disparities and the broken link between all typical workers' pay and economy-wide productivity growth is through the resuscitation of collective bargaining." Providing better working conditions is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars that strengthens the social fabric of Fairfax. We can avoid the huge costs associated with high rates of attrition, retraining, and wellness issues. If we invest on the front end, we will not only get more productivity on the back end, our families and our communities will prosper.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING is inextricably tied to the fight for an equitable and compassionate "One Fairfax." To not provide meaningful and inclusive collective bargaining to our county workforce would be the antithesis of a "One Fairfax." Elected leaders should be strong champions for workers and legislate accordingly. Community members should rally behind the very workers that take care of us. We need to make the Commonwealth's counties number one for workers and not just businesses. We can start here.

Lisa Sales, Mount Vernon, equality advocate and Fairfax County community member.

The Lost Cause and the Big Lie

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



COMMENTARY

Events of the last several years have brought to the nation's attention the corrosiveness to our society of the Lost Cause movement to justify the South's position on the Civil War. With the defeat of the South, the freeing of the slaves, and Reconstruction to bring the Southern states back into the Union, the awfulness that the institution of slavery had been to the morals of owners and the health and welfare of enslaved people along with devastation and loss of life and property to defend it created a stench in our history that would not go away. Defenders of the Old South and its ways along with defenders of the Confederacy and its causes sprang into action through art, writings, and political action creating myths that asserted the rightness of the Southern way of living and its economic and political positions. Their efforts became known as the "Lost Cause," and the poisonous effects of their work still haunt us today.

They argued that slavery was good for the economy and for the enslaved. Former Confederate General Jubal Early who became head of the Southern Historical Society wrote, "The conditions of domestic slavery, as it existed in the South, had not only resulted in a great improvement in the moral and physical condition of the negro race, but had furnished a class of laborers as happy and contented as any in the world."

The most visible examples of the Lost Cause movement may have been the thousands of statues and memorials that were erected throughout the South to glorify the heroics of the Confederacy and that are now being dealt with for the false narrative they represent. The most impactful part of the Lost Cause movement may have been

the Jim Crow laws that segregated the races and supported white supremacy.

Only in recent years have the harsh realities brought about by the myths of the Lost Cause been recognized. Of great concern to me is that I see creeping into our society over the past several months a movement that I believe could rival the Lost Cause if it is left unchecked. That movement is the Big Lie that attempts to convince people that the last presidential election was stolen and that the results of the past election should be overturned. The votes of the election

have been counted and recounted, the challenges to the integrity of elections in many states have been heard and dismissed for lack of evidence of fraud, and yet there is a steady drum beat from supporters of the former president that he did not lose the election.

The divisiveness of the Lost Cause that has endured for so long based on a series of lies informs us that we as citizens must stand up against the Big Lie—call it out for what it is—and elected officials at all levels of government must stand up to show that we will not be misled by myths.

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This Summer Will Be a Balancing Act

Parents face a dilemma give much needed mental break vs. boosting skills.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As camps, swimming pools and simply spending time with friends were cancelled last summer and then followed by a tumultuous school year filled with uncertainty, parents are left to grapple with how to walk the fine line between catching up academically and tending to the overall well-being of their children. Students from preschool to high school might benefit from less focus on summer brain drain and more on brain breaks.

“[Students] are absolutely experiencing exhaustion and burnout from this school year during the pandemic,” said Dianne Galasso, LMSW, a mental health therapist with an online practice. “They have been pushed to their limits. In order to give your child an emotional and mental break, parents could try to lower expectations and really listen to what they are needing.”

Creating that balance requires creativity, said Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez, Director of Early Childhood Education Initiatives at Montgomery College, who suggests enrolling in activities that are designed to offer fun experiences while also adding a subtle element of academics such as summer reading or other programs. “There are activities that families do within the home and outside of it that can be turned into fun, intentional learning experiences at no cost,” said Pruneda-Hernandez. “Allowing a child to help with cooking ... [and] grocery shopping while having conversations about what they are doing not only promotes learning but can strengthen the relationship.”

“For older children, an activity like cooking with a simple recipe is a great way to learn fractions. Learning a new musical instrument cultivates creativity and improves memory,” said Lisa Turissini, Ed.D., Director of Marymount University’s School of Education. “High school students can always start researching colleges and creatively draft those college essays.

“Over the summer, children need time to reconnect with friends and to practice their social skills. Summer programs and camps provide an opportunity for kids to socialize, visit new places, explore and engage in activities that connect to academics. But parents can create these same experiences with their children over the summer by visiting parks, the zoo or other places of interest.”

While underscoring the need to maintain and develop writing skills, parents can do so in a way that is light-hearted and fun, said Brandon C.S. Wallace, Associate Professor, Montgomery College School of Education.

“Children may want to explore writing short stories or scripts for their favorite television show or YouTube



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIANNE GALASSO.

Therapist Dianne Galasso, pictured here with her grandchildren, says that many children are burnt out after the pandemic school year and supporting their emotional and mental wellbeing should be the priority this summer.

influencer, ensuring that whatever is written richly describes main characters, settings as well as uses vocabulary from the character’s typical speech patterns,” Wallace said. Additionally, many museums are opening or, at least, providing virtual tours; that may be an opportunity to either physically or virtually visit museums near and far.”

While enjoying unstructured free time children, Wallace warns parents to be mindful of excessive screen time. Developing and maintaining a schedule is one way to create a healthy balance between activities. “Have your child create a comic strip with paper and coloring supplies,” he said. “Think about helping your child write a letter and send it through snail mail to relatives that they may have not been able to see because of the pandemic.”

Not all students have academic deficiencies this summer. “Parents know their children best, but I would advise to not overly focus on learning lost,” said Turissini “Some students actually excelled academically during the pandemic. Many will quickly pick up what they’ve missed once things resume in the fall.”

“Over the summer, children need time to reconnect with friends and to practice their social skills.”

— Lisa Turissini, Ed.D.

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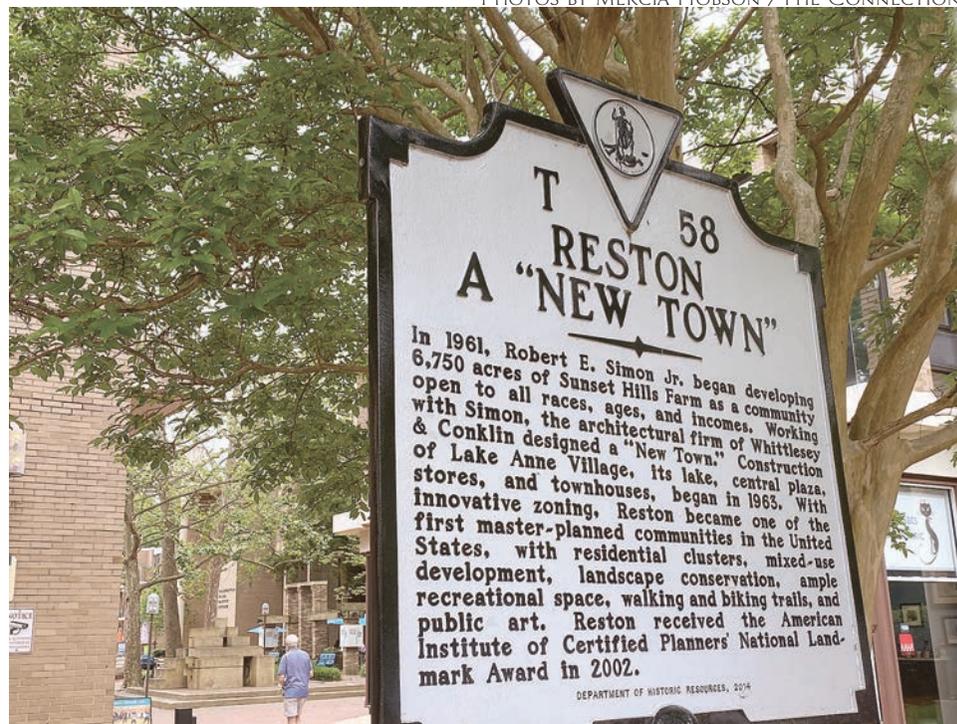
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(From left front) Following what was to be a casual conversation between a few condo owners of the Quayside condominiums at Lake Anne Plaza impacted by a second extended no hot water issue and Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill), George Hadjikyriakou, owner of Kalypso's Sports Tavern on Lake Anne Plaza talks with Matt Steverson, who lives at Quayside. The conversation with Alcorn turned to an unexpected group discussion between him and 27 people in attendance.



Sixty years old and aging with apparent costly repairs needed, Lake Anne Village Center buildings and infrastructures might benefit from a proposal in the works considered by Supervisor Walter Alcorn that might help with the financial burden Lake Anne Condominium owners are suffering trying to maintain the area.

No Hot Water Issue Returns for Some Lake Anne Plaza Condo Units

Supervisor Alcorn provides 3-point target plan, including revitalization.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Ongoing lack of hot water is an issue again for nearly all condominium owners at the 27-unit, mixed-use Quayside building located at Lake Anne Village Center in Reston. Frustrated condo owners fear another four-month struggle, similar to Quayside's first no hot water experience. That episode began with declining water temperatures in the fall of 2020 that reached recorded lows of 44 degrees by mid-February 2021. Residents like Robin Jordan crouched in their showers over pots of water warmed in the microwave to wash until the second of two new boilers was installed. The Connection reported on Feb. 14, 2021, that Jason Romano, President, LARCA (Lake Anne Reston Condominium Association), said, "As long as we have an interim solution in place that buys us time... We're not under the gun for implementing a rush job (to repair the leaking lines)."

Senzel Schaefer is a property owner at Quayside. She identifies as LARCA's 2019-2021 president. However, Romano, co-owner of Lake Anne Brew House in the Quayside building, said he is the elected LARCA President. Schaefer invited a handful of other dismayed condominium owners to discuss the matter in a casual, in-person conversation Thursday evening, May 27, with Fairfax County Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District). Word of the meeting spread. Instead of a small group of condominium owners, an unexpected twenty-six people showed up at Kalypso's Sports Tavern on Lake Anne Plaza, owned by George and Vicky Hadjikyriakou.

Romano did not attend the May 27 meet-



(From back to front) The 15-story Heron House condominium and Quayside condominium on Lake Anne Plaza in Reston. Both condominiums and others at Lake Anne Village Center (not pictured) J Building and Chimney House require repairs due to age.

ing with Alcorn. He controls the LARCA board meetings and is the contact person for Community Management Corporation, LARCA's property management services company. In-fighting within LARCA occurred up to and following its 2019 board election. A 2020 forensic analysis by Ernst & Young flagged concerns with LARCA's 2017-2019 financial practices and decision-making, and a Fairfax County Police investigation into a possible fraud case based on information presented to the Virginia Attorney General's office and the Fairfax County's

Commonwealth Attorney's office of possible wrong-doings mars LARCA.

ADDRESSING THOSE GATHERED for the May 27 meeting, Schaefer said, "I know everyone has had a lot of interest in talking to Supervisor Alcorn...Our issue [no hot water] has been dragging on, and solutions have come up that were recommended but not followed, George [Hadjikyriakou] being heavily involved in that process. It's come to a point where information is kind of being controlled from one angle or another..."

Transparency is key... That's been failing here in our community, and now with the division of things, it's gotten even further."

Matt Steverson lives at Quayside, Lake Anne Plaza. He is Project Manager at LeMay Erickson Willcox Architects, Member of the Reston Planning and Zoning Committee, and Lake Anne Covenants Committee member. Steverson said that as a historic preservationist and master planner, he appreciated how important Lake Anne Plaza was as a place of historic prominence. According to Steverson, the water problem at Quayside was not the first problem seen as the Plaza structures aged, and it certainly wouldn't be the last.

Steverson said that the Plaza was a significant planning and architectural achievement in Reston and Virginia. He wanted "this place to be preserved" but had concerns with the current management decisions for the Plaza. Steverson said, "I want it to be maintained as this awesome, vibrant, public space in Fairfax County, 50 years, 100 years from now."

However, Steverson said there was an imbalance between the 60-year-old buildings with their decreasing material lifespans and the cost burden of maintaining them falling solely on the Plaza property owners while being enjoyed as an asset by all in Fairfax County. "There is an imbalance between how the property is used and appreciated," he said. "To me... the big picture problem that we have right now is how can we work with the County or the state or the national government and come up with some creative ways to get the funding that we need to be able to maintain this place. And keep it as this extremely important piece of the architectural history [of Virginia, Reston, and Fairfax County]."

Hot Water Issue Boils at Lake Anne

FROM PAGE 6

A discussion between condo owners claimed LARCA had \$100,000 left in reserves, having spent approximately \$100,000 so far on two new boilers, installation, and ongoing repairs. The first boiler cost \$12,000, and it proved too small; the second, a more powerful boiler, cost \$35,000. But it cannot keep up with the hot water demand and resulting water loss leaking out of the underground, corroded pipes located under the concrete slab of the first-floor units.

In addition, the rate of water leaking out of the corroded pipes encased in the concrete floors of the first-floor units tripled since February's estimate of 300 gallons an hour to 900 gallons an hour, according to Stevison. "I have a major concern about discharging that amount of water per day to the ground underneath the building and what that theoretically can be doing to undermine the foundation." "This place could potentially collapse into the ground," said Schaefer.

Robin Jordan, co-owner of a Quayside condo, said her biggest concern is that LARCA did not develop a long-term solution af-

VIEWPOINTS



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION

George Hadjikyriakou, May 28:

"While we, the residents of Lake Anne who met with Mr. Alcorn Thursday afternoon were grateful that he took the time to meet with us and listen to our pressing problems, we were left rather disappointed that no suggestions or action plan for a solution to our hot water problem were offered by him at that time... The 30-day solution to replace the underground pipes was ignored by the three individuals making decisions as the LARCA Board of Directors. Instead, they favor a solution that will take many more months to implement before hot water can consistently flow throughout the building. Their reasoning is a mystery as the disruption to most ground floor businesses would range between 3 to 5 days. Although one unit, in the middle of the building, the Brewhouse, owned by one of the individuals making all the decisions without consulting us, would be impacted slightly more, close to 2 weeks. Could that be the reason we are still without consistent hot water?"

All units share common expenses based on their unit's square footage. Larger units have a higher percentage. We are paying for this project with reserve contributions that have already been collected. We don't expect this project to affect future assessments. This is an incredibly difficult situation for everyone affected. We wish there was a way to resolve this immediately, but a project of this scope takes time.



Buildings on Lake Anne Plaza in Reston require repairs due to age.

PHOTO BY
MERCIA HOBSON /
THE CONNECTION

ter the first run with no hot water. "So here we are, months into it, almost half a year, and we haven't even started," Jordan said.

Alcorn asked what the plans were to fix the problem this time. Stevison said the LARCA board decided on above-ground pipes. He said that would qualify as a major building system replacement, "a level



FILE PHOTO BY THE CONNECTION

Jason Romano, LARCA President, May 16:

"Our interim hot water heater has been supplying hot water to the building, although, recently, it's becoming more difficult for the hot water heater to keep up with the water leaks. The interim hot water heater is working, but more leaks to the original pipes have developed. The Board approved funding this project [and its] ... scope is the entire replacement of the domestic hot and cold water trunk lines. We will be abandoning the existing underground trunk lines and replacing them with an above-ground solution. We hired an engineering firm to produce the drawings for this project. We have just received the drawings. The work is already approved to be performed by Sage Water. They are currently reviewing the drawings and planning the work, including getting the project permitted. We expect Sage Water to begin work onsite on June 1. CMC has been coordinating with the engineering firm and contractors and will continue to provide status and oversight of this project."

two renovation," which would require documents for a permit that could take upwards of two months to process before starting any work. Stevison said, "If they do it without a permit, it is going to get shut down."

Alcorn said, "I've not been made aware that anything has been filed with land development services for a permit. I'm happy with my office doing whatever I can to accelerate the review."

ACCORDING TO ALCORN, given the current situation, the County is working on putting together an offer to condominium owners in LARCA to help with the financial burden they are suffering regarding infrastructure repair and replacement. Alcorn said, "We're focused on two things, primarily at least in this initial phase. One is the engineering situation. Obviously, the hot water is not working right now... The County is sending a structural engineer to identify all the critical infrastructure issues that have to be addressed...and frankly to come up with a cost estimate for what it's going to cost to fix. That's something that'll be shared with everybody that's going to be very helpful."

Alcorn said Lake Anne Plaza is on the National Register of Historic Places. He said, "I want to see this stay as it is, the buildings here." Alcorn said he explained to his fellow Supervisors that Lake Anne Plaza is the historic heart and cultural center of Reston, as far as he was concerned, so there was an interest for the County, the Commonwealth, and the nation. Once the County identified the problem(s), Alcorn said, "We would come forward with a proposal that, frankly, buys some of your property... maybe a parking lot or something like that, something that actually will facilitate revitalization. That's my interest; that's the County's interest in order to keep Lake Anne vital. And restructure LARCA... because this is not working."

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.

JUNE 2-31

Behold! The Beauty Art Exhibit. At Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. A free art exhibit by Ava and Richard Neff. About 40 pieces of fabric creations and oil paintings are free for the viewing. Come and share the joy of art.

FRIDAY/JUNE 18

Prep for Pride. 7-9 p.m. At 11424 Washington Plaza West, Reston. With a Show-tunes Sing-along at the Brew House – Dress to impress and sing out loud and proud.

SATURDAY/JUNE 19

Reston Pride Festival. At Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. While Reston Pride operates year-round to fulfill its mission, it is the host of the annual Reston Pride Festival, a single day community event held at Washington Plaza at Lake Anne in Reston. To accommodate this mission, Reston Pride is planning to hold a hybrid festival event offering both in-person activities as well as an online program to reach an even broader audience. Visit <https://www.restonpride.org/reston-pride-2021/>

SATURDAY/JUNE 19

Family Yard Sale. 8:30-12 p.m. At Reston Association, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Eighty families will be selling a variety of items, so this event is a great opportunity to find things for a new home or a college dorm. Sign up to have a booth or stop by to browse for great bargains. Booth space is two parking spaces. Tables are not provided. Space is limited. All sales are final. No refunds unless canceled due to rain. Register for booth space through your Webtrac account or contact Ashleigh@reston.org or call 703-435-6577 for more information. Cost is \$45/RA members, booth space, \$55/Non-members. Visit the website: <https://www.reston.org/>

SATURDAY/JUNE 26

Fill the Truck for WFCM. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church Parking Area. The Clifton Presbyterian Church Mission Committee encourages you, your friends, and your neighbors to help fill the back of Mark Reimers' truck with non-perishable food items to be taken to WFCM to assist those experiencing food insecurity in the area. You are welcome to leave donated items in the white coolers in front of church entrance before the event.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Oak Hill Elementary School, 3210 Kinross Circle, Herndon. Children who are age 5 by September 30, 2021 are eligible to enter kindergarten for the 2021-22 school year. You will need to register your child at the school he or she will attend. To confirm Oak Hill Elementary School serves your particular address, go to the FCPS website, www.fcps.edu and click on Registration.

You will see the boundary locator where you can type in your address and confirm which FCPS school you are zoned for. Registration packets are available online. Visit the Kindergarten Registration page on the FCPS website: www.fcps.edu/registration for steps to register your student. If you're within Oak Hill boundaries, contact Oak Hill ES registrar, Katherine Dillard, at KJDillard1@fcps.edu or by calling 703-467-3500 to schedule an appointment to register your child or if you have any questions.

Faculty Award winner Kunming Chen with Principal Joe Thompson.



(From left) are dad Solomon Tekola, sister Eden Solomon, grad Eve Solomon and mom Menbere Wija.

‘Driven by Fire and Determination’ to Graduate

Mountain View High celebrates Class of 2021.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

At the outset of Mountain View High’s graduation, last Wednesday, June 9, at Centreville High, Assistant Principal Catherine Stone noted it was the school’s 50th graduation ceremony. And she acknowledged the students’ many emotions, ranging from “pride, excitement, happiness relief and, perhaps, sadness.”

She told them, “You share a bond with the Mountain View family and share with past grads the traits of grit, perseverance, resilience and strength. And Mountain View teachers and staff, your extraordinary efforts have helped the students reach this day.”

Principal Joe Thompson said the Mountain View Foundation awarded more than \$31,000 in scholarships this semester. And, he added, “We deeply appreciate the opportunities they’ll provide to the students.” He then addressed the grads.

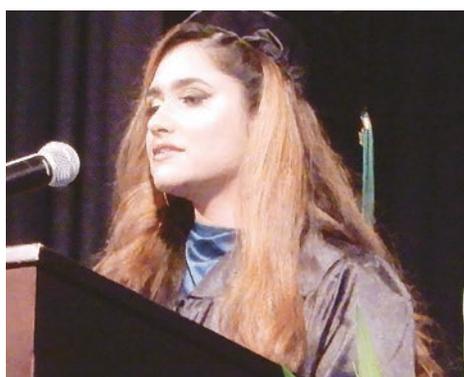
“As a graduating class, you’ve shown amazing desire and commitment,” he said. “Our Mountain View family believes you can succeed, and we’re proud and grateful to be part of this celebration. Mountain View challenged you to work for your diplomas – and you’ve earned them. They can’t be taken away, and you can say, ‘I did it.’” He next explained how the school’s motto, “Family, Love and Respect,” applied to them.

“You showed grit and determination in dealing with multiple, in-person and virtual courses,” said Thompson. “But we had confidence in you, and love gives you that confidence. I believe you’ll always remember the positives and how you overcame tremendous challenges and achieved success during one of the most tumultuous times in our nation’s history.

“Family, love and respect played a part in it. So when you encounter new life challenges, find the people you trust and have faith in you – these are your family.”

THOMPSON said the school’s diversity of cultures and religions is good because it taught the students to respect each other’s heritage.

“Students from 14 different schools and



Grad speaker Marwa Mohammadi

neighborhoods attend Mountain View; and our communities will grow because of your respect for each other,” he said. “Continue to use the skills you learned here – inclusion, citizenship and respect will serve you throughout your life. And never forget you’re important and valued and deserve success. Congratulations on all your successes today and those yet to come.”

Then came the student speakers – always the most heart-tugging part of any Mountain View graduation. That’s because the majority of the students are immigrants who’ve endured numerous hardships just to come to America and then to obtain an education. First at the podium was Marwa Mohammadi.

“I came from Afghanistan, where men took control over women’s lives,” she said. “Instead of shooting stars, there were bullets; the home was four walls and no running water. All these hardships ignited my passion to become an educated person so, in February 2017, when I was 18, my family and I emigrated to the U.S.”

Mohammadi wanted to go to school, but her age was a barrier. So instead, she endured long, freezing-cold hours working in a meatpacking factory. After two years, she decided to try to attend high school. She enrolled at Mountain View while holding down a job at Dulles Airport.

“I worked 16 hours, Saturdays and Sundays, getting up for work at 1 a.m. and then going to school at 8 a.m.,” she said. “These experiences and conflicts made me more determined to achieve an education. In Afghanistan, no one believes in a woman’s

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Zelda Odamtten, Personal Achievement Award winner, shares her story.

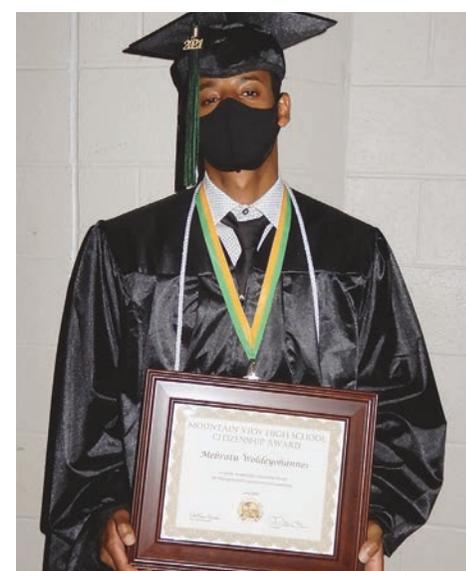
abilities. They think women are only for delivering babies, keeping house and cooking. I proved them wrong.

“Now, said Mohammadi, “I’ve been accepted to JMU and Virginia Tech. But I’m choosing to start my new life at GMU to pursue a degree in computer science. Thank you, and congratulations, Class of 2021.”

Speaking next was Zelda Odamtten. “Coming to the U.S. from Ghana was a long journey,” she said. “I attended Centreville High, but my life crashed down when I was kicked out of my house. I was 18 and didn’t know how to fend for myself – I cried myself to sleep. My grades dropped, and people told me I wasn’t worth it. I was on the verge of failing 11th grade, and I considered taking my own life.”

Her counselor told her about Mountain View and, once she visited there, said Odamtten, “I felt the spirit of love.” But when COVID-19 hit, she had to stay at Centreville, although virtually. Then last fall, she transferred to Mountain View, at last. However, she said, “I worked in a grocery store from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and was too exhausted to do any schoolwork.” But that roadblock didn’t derail her resolve to graduate.

“As I scanned groceries, I did schoolwork on my laptop,” said Odamtten. “I changed the narrative of my life, driven by a fire and determination to complete classes. It took me 35 minutes to reach my bus stop, but I was finally able to attend Mountain View – and I felt at home here. Despite the masks, people’s eyes were shining. I felt so much



Citizenship Award winner Mebratu Woldeyohannes

love, dedication and respect here. I felt like I was worth something.”

She’s now been accepted to Norfolk State University, where she’ll study psychology. “I’ve defied all odds,” Odamtten told her classmates. “Challenges are made to make you, not break you. Whatever you face, you can do it with hard work and dedication.”

SPECIAL AWARDS were presented to three deserving students chosen by the teachers. The winners were as follows:

❖ The Citizenship Award is given to a student who’s helped build a positive school community. This year’s recipient was Mebratu Woldeyohannes. In presenting it, math teacher Dylan Thomas described him as “the epitome of family, love and respect.”

❖ The Personal Achievement Award goes to a student who succeeded academically and personally, despite having adult responsibilities, such as a job or a child. The winner, Zelda Odamtten, was also an honor graduate and received a scholarship.

❖ The Faculty Award is given to the student achieving the greatest academic and personal success, despite significant obstacles. Math teacher Tina Akula presented this honor to Kunming Chen. “He came from China at age 15, not speaking English, yet earned a 3.97 GPA and graduated in only 2-1/2 years,” she said. “He’s always serving others, and his hard work will take him far.”

Food For Neighbors Recognizes Trinity Presbyterian Church

Food For Neighbors (FFN) celebrates the positive impact made by Trinity Presbyterian Church in Herndon. In addition to making financial contributions to FFN over the past several years, the local congregation generously provided FFN a home base when the nonprofit had to develop new food distribution procedures quickly as a result of the pandemic. This allowed FFN to continue its important work of fighting teen food insecurity without missing a beat.

“If Trinity hadn’t opened its doors to us, I don’t know what we would have done,” explained Karen Joseph, cofounder of Food For Neighbors. “Trinity leaders and members did so graciously and enthusiastically, and they started making a difference from the very moment schools closed in-person instruction.” Joseph continued, “We basically took over the church’s Fellowship Hall, which served as a home base for collecting, sorting, packing, storing, and distributing thousands of pounds of food.

Rev. Smith-Cobbs, Rev. Messman, and Ms. Patterson enjoyed meeting with Ms. Joseph and hearing her story. They greatly appreciate the importance of the history and mission of Food For Neighbors (FFN) as well as the power of mobilizing community members to make a difference.

Ms. Joseph presented Trinity’s copastors, Rev. Stephen Smith-Cobbs and Rev. Rebecca Messman, as well as Trinity’s Service and Mission Team Leader, Sonia Patterson, with a plaque celebrating the partnership.



COURTESY PHOTO

Food For Neighbors celebrates its partnership with Trinity Presbyterian Church in Herndon. Pictured, from left, are Sonia Patterson, Service and Mission Team Leader, Trinity Presbyterian Church; Rev. Stephen Smith-Cobbs, Copastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church; Karen Joseph, Cofounder, Food For Neighbors; and Rev. Rebecca Messman, Copastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church.

gry stomachs but also filled hearts with hope and gratitude on a deeper, spiritual level.”

Food For Neighbors (FFN) currently serves students in 23 schools in Fairfax and Loudoun counties. FFN welcomes partnerships with local businesses and organizations who want

to make a difference by providing monetary gifts as well as donations of food, hygiene products, and volunteer time. To learn more about becoming a partner, visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/partners/> or phone Renee Maxwell at 703-475-4933.

AREA ROUNDUPS

Meet New County Police Chief

Fairfax County’s Communities of Trust is hosting new Fairfax County Police Chief, Kevin Davis, at Centreville Baptist Church, Thursday, June 24, at 7 p.m. People may join in person – masks required – or online. RSVP for in-person at: <https://bit.ly/mtc0624> or Zoom: <https://bit.ly/mtczoom0624>.

Items Needed for WFCM’s Food Pantry

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) helps feed families in need in the local area, and the most-needed items in its food pantry this month are: Sugar (1-2 pounds), vegetable oil, pasta sauce and canned pasta, spaghetti sauce, mashed potatoes, canned pineapple, canned kidney and garbanzo beans (low salt preferred) and Jello. Also needed are toiletries including shampoo, conditioner, feminine pads, shaving cream, mouthwash, toilet paper, deodorant and baby wipes. For information on how to donate these items to WFCM’s food pantry in Chantilly, call 703-988-9656.

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Legals

ABC LICENSE

Auld Irish LLC trading as Ned Devine's Irish Bar & Restaurant, 2465 Centreville Rd, Fairfax County, Herndon, VA 20171. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine & Beverage on Premise and Mixed Beverage On Premise license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Gordon Masterson, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

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CALENDAR

FREE SUMMER CONCERTS IN RESTON

Reston Community Center is pleased to announce that free summer concerts will return to venues around Reston beginning in June. Lunchtime with the Arts at Mason – Thursdays in June, Reston Town Square Park. 12:30-1:30 p.m.
 Take a Break – Thursdays, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m., Lake Anne Plaza
 Summerbration Fab Fridays – 7 – 9 p.m., Reston Station
 Family Fun Entertainment Series – Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 10:45 a.m., Reston Town Square Park
 Sunday Art in the Park with the Shenandoah Conservatory – Sundays, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m., Reston Town Square Park

JUNE 18-20

Sully Annual Car Show Online. The annual Antique Car Show at Sully Historic Site will be online for a second year. The Fairfax County Park Authority and George Washington Chapter Inc. Model A Ford Club of America are teaming to bring you a weekend full of classic and antique cars online. From Friday, June 18, through Sunday, June 20, 2021, car club members will present photos of some of their proudest possessions and the stories behind them. Although the car show is not being held in person this year because of logistics stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, you can still treat your dad to a free Father's Day weekend full of classic car posts on the Park Authority's Instagram and Facebook pages. On Instagram, use #SullyCarShow.

This special weekend-long event is co-sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority and The Model A Ford Club of America. Sully Historic Site is located at 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly, Virginia. Call 703-437-1794.

GOLF CAMPS

Laurel Hill Golf Club and Twin Lakes Golf Course are offering weeklong summer camps taught by professionals from The Eisman Golf Academy. Junior golfers ages 8-14 will learn and improve on golf fundamentals in a fun environment. Class sizes are limited for personalized instruction and camp includes on-course play. Also included are swag bags, games and prizes. Camps take place at Twin Lakes on June 21-25, July 19-23, and Aug. 9-13, 2021. All camps run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. To register, visit the Junior Golf Fairfax website. Laurel Hill Golf Club is located at 8701 Laurel Hill Crest Drive in Lorton. Twin Lakes Golf Course is located at 6201 Union Mill Road in Clifton.

SATURDAY/JUNE 19

The Destruction of Slavery in the Civil War. 3 p.m. Via Zoom. When the Civil War began, African Americans wasted no time fleeing their enslavers and rushing to the Union lines. Their great struggle would end with the destruction of American slavery and the passage of the 13th Amendment. Scholar and

author Dr. Richard Bell will touch on these topics during his talk in honor of Juneteenth. This talk will be offered via Zoom. For more information, call Sully Historic Site at 703-437-1794. The talk is sponsored by the Sully Foundation Ltd. Visit: <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/juneteenth>.

SUNDAY/JUNE 20

Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park. 5 p.m. At McLean Central Park Gazebo
 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean.
 Sunday, June 20 -- Lucy Kalantari & the Jazz Cats.

TUESDAY/JUNE 22

"Duck Harbor" Web Series. 8 p.m. Episode Four. Sponsored by 1st Stage in Tysons Corner. Duck Harbor is a web series about a long-distance love in later life. The piece is brought to audiences through a creative series of short scenes in which the actors, just like the characters, are meeting for the first time. Audiences will get to experience the magic of the theater and the excitement of new love between these two lonely hearts reaching out from charming small towns on opposite sides of the country. Every week, each of the two actors, who live on opposite coasts, will be given only their half of the script and will experience the other side of the story with a sincere and genuine freshness, "on stage," in front of our audience. Performances will take place every Tuesday, now through August 17. Get your tickets today at www.1ststage.org.

SUMMERFEST AT TYSONS CORNER CENTER

Tysons Corner Center announced its line-up of this season's socially distant happenings. 'SummerFest 2021,' which kicked off this month and will run through October 2021, is filled with six months of activations and events, such as live music, art, fitness, festivals, and more.

Movie Nights, in partnership with AMC Theatre Tysons Corner

First Saturday, Monthly at Sundown
 Bingo Night - presented by DC Fray and Barrel and Bushel

Third Thursday Monthly, 6 - 8 p.m.

Art on the Plaza

Final Thursday, Monthly -- Join Tysons Corner Center, Barrel & Bushel, and AR Workshop for a monthly crafting event. Each event will feature seasonal art projects along with applicable retailer pop-ups and an extended happy hour.

The Plaza Live

Thursday-Sunday Weekly starting May 6; 4-7 p.m., Thursday & Friday;

2-7 p.m. Saturday & Sunday. Each week on The Plaza the center will welcome local musicians to perform as well as other live entertainment such as caricature and balloon artists, face painters, etc.

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Navigate This



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(All these times are approximate- or they're not. It depends. It's sort of an all hands on deck kind of thing. Everybody, everywhere has to be flexible. All of the following appointments/procedures have to be completed this day - or else. If not, it could adversely affect the timing and suitability of my treatment going forward. Not to exaggerate too much but, my life could be at risk if all of the following are not adhered to:)

Lab work at 9am-ish required for my every-four week-bone-strengthening shot. Nuclear medicine at 9:30 for the isotope injection for my 12:45 bone scan. After leaving Nuclear Medicine, I head to Radiology where I have a 10:30 am CT scan. When my scan is completed (it only takes a few minutes but generally speaking, they're not on time), I then go to the Infusion Center where I will get my every-four-week bone strengthening shot. (Again the shot itself and vitals only takes a few minutes, but again, the process can take up to 30 minutes depending on the activities of the oncology nurses and the pharmacy's availability to prepare the medicine and the printing of my usual and customary paperwork.) Next - and finally, I go back to Nuclear Medicine for my actual bone scan at 12:45. This scan will read the nuclear isotopes injected into my body at 9:30. The scan takes about 40 minutes as it crosses my body head to toe to assess the condition of my bones. (The condition of my bones is not great. Unfortunately, It's a side effect of my thyroid cancer medicine as well as the 11 previous years of miscellaneous chemotherapies.) When this last scan is completed, my medical day is done and I will then be free to go. I will likely get home at approximately 3 pm, seven hours after I left home.

This jam-packed day is a first and hopefully will be a last. On occasion, I have had a CT scan and a brain MRI on the same day (BOGO I jokingly refer to it), but never have I had medical madness (five separate appointments) as I will on June 24th, the consequences to my health notwithstanding. Hopefully, by the end of the week - before the weekend of worrying, I will have heard back from my oncologist and then we'll deal with the consequences of all these previous actions. The waiting is not a huge deal. I have been there and done that for 12 and half years going back to late February, 2009 when I was initially diagnosed.

However this is not "concierge care." Any one of these five appointments could be missed for any number of to-be-expected complications when medical care is scheduled. Emergencies, double-booked appointments, staff shortages and longer than anticipated appointments could all affect my day of semi-judgment. And if any one of these appointments/procedures doesn't occur as scheduled, my care/my life expectancy could be jeopardized. From experience I can tell you, when this cancer patient has experienced delays and rescheduled appointments due to lab work (low white blood count, high creatinine levels, high or low calcium, above-normal potassium and on occasion low magnesium), treatment is stopped until levels return to a more normal number. In the interim, after your treatment has been stopped, your life begins to pass by you as you (at least I did) think that a delay in treatment puts your survival at risk. I mean, if your treatment is stopped at all, how does that stop the cancer from damaging you worse than it already has? Whether a week or two delay really matters, no one can say for sure. However, for the patient, especially yours truly; despite the reassurances from medical staff, in my head anyway: IT REALLY MATTERED.

After receiving a "terminal" diagnosis in February, 2009, I just didn't feel I had any margin, life expectancy-wise, for error, missed appointments, rescheduled treatment, et cetera. I figured that the information about my health - and as a result, any subsequent change in that treatment, needed to be known in an extremely timely manner. And when it wasn't -or isn't, I feel my pain, if you what I mean? Nevertheless, there are no guarantees in the cancer-treatment world. One has to learn to go with the flow and hope that flow doesn't turn into a flood.

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

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Crowd present at the ceremony.



Leaders in the 13 jurisdictions of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission gather at the Remembrance Ceremony held June 9 for those lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Holding Dear: 2,364 Local Souls Lost to the Pandemic

Northern Virginia Regional Commission holds a Remembrance Ceremony.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On March 21, 2020, the Fairfax County Health Department reported its first death of a resident due to COVID-19. Four hundred and forty-six days later, on June 9, 2021, at the Fairfax County Government Center, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission held a solemn Remembrance Ceremony for those lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community leaders gathered to remember the 2,364 souls thus far and reflect on the pandemic's terrible toll on the region. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission is a consortium of 13 local governments representing more than 2.5 million residents.

"We come together to grieve... for all the lives that have been cut short. We mourn our mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents, children, friends, and neighbors," said P. David Tarter, Chairman, Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

Jeffrey McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors said, "Today... we're gathered specifically to honor those who we have sadly lost. Behind me, you will see 236 flags. Each flag represents ten people we lost to COVID-19 across our Northern Virginia region, totaling 2,364 people. This number, of course, isn't complete."

REGIONAL COOPERATION in fighting the pandemic had been critical, McKay said. He told those gathered they may have noticed when they came into the County Government Center that county flags remained at half-staff to honor those in the community who died and thank the first responders and frontline workers for the sacrifices they made.

"They have been relentless heroes throughout this pandemic. ... We hope to honor all of those who have died and who gave so much during this crisis through a permanent memorial that's in its very early stages of planning," McKay said. "We will never forget the real human toll of this pandemic, the people, the personalities that these flags behind me represent, and we will always honor those who we have sadly lost."



Chaplain Harry Chelpon, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, gives the Invocation.



P. David Tatter, Chairman Northern Virginia Regional Commission.



Jeffrey McKay, Chairman Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.



Kevin Davis, Chief, Fairfax County Police.



Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director, Fairfax Health District.

"The vaccine is the best tool available for ending the pandemic. ..."

— Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu,
Director, Fairfax Health District

Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director, Fairfax Health District said that as the community begins to heal and recover from the "unprecedented season of loss," people must do everything in their power to protect the most vulnerable who remain at risk for severe disease and death. "The vaccine is the best tool available for ending the pandemic. ... We haven't reached the level of immunity required to stop the COVID virus from circu-

lating in our community."

While many have been vaccinated, many others have not yet had access to the vaccine or decided to get vaccinated. "Children under 12 are not yet eligible. So, our work is far from over... We need everyone's participation, government, schools, businesses, nonprofits, faith leaders, and parents, to achieve the highest level of immunity within our community."

Fairfax County Chief of Police Kevin Davis spoke of a man he never met, Lawrence "Larry" Magni of Reston, who died on Aug. 25, 2020, from complications related to

COVID-19. Magni served in the challenging role as the Police Department's Resource Management Bureau Director of Facilities and Security.

"All the leaders of the police department that I spoke to asked me to tell you a little bit about Larry. And Larry's name and Larry's story are not unlike the ten names that each American flag behind me represents. His story is not uncommon, but it is worth telling." Magni was "beloved" by the Fairfax County Police Department family just as each of the 2,345 other individuals who died from COVID-19 complications was also beloved by those who knew them best.

Fairfax County Fire Chief John Butler compared his three weekly morning calls with "Dr. G," [Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director, Fairfax Health District] as a time of "global war."

"We've all lost loved ones and watched as our lives and lives of many other friends and family were turned upside down. Earlier this year, President Biden said to heal us, we must remember. Remember those we lost and those who are left behind. So today, we recognize the profound loss we've all suffered, and we remember. We remember those who are no longer with us," said Butler.

THE TRADITION of firefighters ringing a bell is symbolic and used to represent the end of an emergency and return to quarters. When a firefighter dies in the line of duty, the mournful toll of the bell announces the passing and shows great honor.

"Today, we adapt that symbolic ceremonial act in a slightly different way," said Butler.

One by one, Tarter called out the 13 jurisdictions, the bell ringing three times for each: "Arlington County, Fairfax County, Prince William County, Loudoun County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, Town of Dumfries, Town of Herndon, Town of Leesburg, Town of Vienna." Following, he said, "You'll now hear Amazing Grace from our bagpiper. This concludes our ceremony. Thank you, and let us always hold dear the many we have lost."

A video of the ceremony can be viewed on Chairman McKay's official Facebook page.