

Great Falls CONNECTION

Honoring Service Members Killed in Kabul

News, Page 5



Helen Toolan of Herndon, former military spouse and one of the founders of Semper Fi & America's Fund.

Crisis in Afghanistan Comes Home

News, Page 3

POSTAL CUSTOMER
ECR WSS
ATTENTION POSTMASTER:
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
REQUESTED IN HOME 9-2-21

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EASTON, MD
PERMIT #322



Independent Living at VHRC is open to U.S. Military officers and their families and GS-14 level and above government personnel from ALL federal agencies. All other levels of care in our community are open to everyone.



Call us today! 703-536-4344

Schedule an appointment or a tour of our community!

vinsonhall.org • (703) 536-4344 • 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, VA 22101

Back to School

If your child is entering 7th grade they must have the **Meningitis, HPV, and Tdap** vaccines in order to enroll. Talk to your doctor and vaccinate them now!

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
vdh.virginia.gov/backtoschool/

**Same Company, Same Employees,
Same Great Value - Now Celebrating 20 Years!**

TWO POOR TEACHERS

Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling



- Electrical (ELE)
- Gas Fitting (GFC)
- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVA)
- Plumbing (PLB)
- Residential Building (RBC)

Fully Insured & Class A Licensed
Since 1999



Free Estimates 703-999-2928

Check if your contractor is licensed at the state level
<http://www.DPOR.virginia.gov>

Visit our website: www.twopoorteachers.com

The annual Newcomers and Community Guides for each of our 8 communities with inside facts on what makes each community special, their secret places, the real power players, how to get involved and more.

Including the history, schools, parks, libraries, local people, elected officials, county/city offices, how decisions are made and other vital community information.

THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online
Alexandria Gazette Packet
Mount Vernon Gazette
POTOMAC ALMANAC

**Publishes:
Sep 29, 2021**

**For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or Email
sales@connectionnewspapers.com**

2021-2022 NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

Perfect Advertising Opportunity for:
 Hospitals | Healthcare | Wellbeing | New Homes |
 Realtors | Schools | Malls | Shopping Centers |
 Professional Services | And Much More

Crisis in Afghanistan Reverberates Locally

Afghan Americans speak out.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The United States and other countries have welcomed more than 150,000 Afghans and their families since the emergency evacuations began in mid-August. Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, fell to the Taliban on Aug. 15 after withdrawal of most of the United States forces. The U.S. and other nations offered refuge to many Afghans who aided them during the last twenty years.

Afghan interpreters and translators who worked directly with the U.S. Armed Forces or under the Chief of Mission authority at U.S. Embassy Kabul applied to the U.S. for humanitarian visas known as a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) for themselves and their family members.

With events rapidly unfolding and the U.S. racing to complete withdrawal, Three local Afghan Americans, twenty years apart in ages, share their perspectives on the troop withdrawal, rescue operation, and humanitarian crisis.

SENZEL SCHAEFER of Reston escaped Tehran, Iran, at age 5 when her family rushed to the airport in 1979. The family was in Tehran for her father's job, a city editor of the Tehran Journal, where he was printing anti-Khomeini articles. The Soviet-Afghan war began in 1979 also.

The family arrived in New York with two suitcases.

Because Schaefer speaks Farsi and Pashto, she spent these last two weeks volunteering for a company with 150 employees in Afghanistan trying to get out.

"Little did I know what I was getting into. These people are trapped in Afghanistan today," said Schaefer. "They call me day and night. They're pleading; they're crying; they're fearful. And so, between my work, my children, and my life, I've spent the better part of six, seven hours a day emailing and messaging them through WhatsApp or talking to them on the phone, trying to calm them down. I have nothing to offer them. They have no way out of the country. You have to understand [it is] 150 people (employees). And an average family of five or six people." Schaefer added that President Biden said the evacuations wouldn't stop after the withdrawal, but she questioned how that would look.

"You cannot wrap your head around the impact of a decision that hits 38 million Afghans but also millions of people around the world that were involved in this so-called War on Terror for 20 years. I think 750,000 Americans [military] filed in and out of Afghanistan on tour. It's the biggest of anything of that nature in our country's history," Schaefer said.

Schaefer hoped for the women of Afghanistan. WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Dor Niaz stands outside the family-operated restaurant in Great Falls.

istan to have found their voices through education and employment. Now she worries about potentially half of the country's population to be shut down.

Schaefer said Afghans who settle in this area are prepared to help new arrivals. She told of the outpouring of the local community, including an attorney who is helping process the refugee paperwork.

Of Americans, she says: "We're in a state of shock because our government does things that we don't agree with; it gets us into these situations, and we are left to pick up the pieces. ... The level of pain that reverberates through all of America is immense.

"We cannot be ungrateful to this host country that took us in. ... I have lived a great life because of that."

DOR NIAZ, Great Falls restaurant owner, left Afghan alone in 1984 at age 17; later he was able to bring family members, including his parents, to join him in the United States.

"As for myself, my family, and my kids, we feel responsible," said Niaz. "Because America, if it takes the risk to bring them over, ... then it's our time to back it up."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Senzel Schaefer, Afghan American, and her daughters, pack 100 small backpacks, each with a workbook, markers, and a set of clothes and socks for Afghan refugees. Later, the girls wrote letters to enclose.

"My heart, I'm crying to those people, those moms, and dads [left behind]. You grab your kids, your wife, and if you are lucky, you get out; your parents you are leaving behind. ... There is no welfare system. How will the elderly get on? They are being kicked out on the street. This is the fabric of a country that has been destroyed," Niaz said, with tears.

Niaz will donate, he will volunteer to serve as a translator. He will tell the refugees who have arrived in the United States that they are "in the land of opportunity. ...

How to Help

The local resettlement agencies for the Northern Virginia area are:

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

<https://www.cdda.net/need-help/immigrants-and-refugees/migration-and-refugee-services/>

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES

https://lssnca.org/take_action/afghan-allies.html

ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

<https://www.ecdcus.org/>

Because Fairfax County has a sizable Afghan population, it is anticipated that many refugees will eventually resettle here.

There is nothing like it. It will take time for you to understand it. It's not easy, but you have to be able to adjust and be flexible."

Niaz said the terrorists who killed 13 United States Servicemembers, at least 160 Afghans, and injured many more, "are the scum of the earth. They need to be dealt with."

"America leaves on Tuesday...then you will see the killing fields...When you kill one, the second one is just like a moth you kill. No problem ... God says when you kill one human being, you are killing the entire family," Niaz said.

AUROZO NIAZ is 21 years old and lives in Vienna, an Afghan American born in the United States and daughter of Dor Niaz.

"The past two weeks, I have been in touch with the whole Afghan diaspora. We're trying to support each other at this time, mentally, emotionally; whatever we can do for one another because we are suffering abroad as we are, domestically. We have been trying our best to come together and get donations and organize the donations ... cash, and materials so that they go directly into the hands of the refugees," Aurozo Niaz said.

She described Go Fund Me solicitations, collections of money for apartment rentals, furnishings, hygiene kits, clothes, and school supplies for the children. Aurozo Niaz said that A-1 Carpet Service in Chantilly coordinated a drop-off site, and trucks were assisting. "We have 20 to 30 people at a time unloading full on.

We organized these donations," said Aurozo Niaz. "We want to contribute as much as we can because these people coming here are our family ... It's a collective culture."

Aurozo Niaz added that pain, loss, and grief are a permanent part of the Afghan identity. "We're in constant mourning. I ache for my country that I will never have the chance to visit ... step on the soil of my roots. I ache for the children of Afghanistan who have known nothing but war; for the

Record Setting Times

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN"
PLUM



COMMENTARY

Not intending to repeat a column I wrote a few weeks ago, but it is hot outside! That column focused on the findings of experts with the Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine (VASEM) with data mainly about Coastal Virginia but with an explanation that what happens in the coastal region has repercussions across the state. The report is now online where you can read about sea-level rise, more frequent and intense weather-related events, and more variability in seasonal temperature. http://www.vasem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/VASEM_VirginiasCoastalAreasReport_FINAL.pdf.

As soon as I had turned in my column for publication, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its most recent report that verified its past findings on climate change, but with a great sense of urgency as to how rapidly changes are occurring. They termed climate change as "widespread, rapid and intensifying." <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>

As though we did not have enough evidence

already, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued its State of the Climate in 2020 with more than 530 scientists around the world verifying what we have been hearing from others. <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/reporting-state-climate-2020>.

Greenhouse gases are the highest on record. Global surface temperature as well as upper atmospheric temperature and sea surface temperatures are at record or near-record highs. July was earth's hottest month on record. The Arctic and Antarctica are warming and losing record levels of ice. Crazy weather patterns are occurring around the world.

These are not the kind of records we want to set as part of the upward trends that virtually all scientists are reporting. Reversing the trends for which all experts seem to agree is of great urgency; the task at hand will not be done easily or quickly, but we must get started. Ultimately action must occur on an international level. In the meantime, we must act at the national level by ensuring that our infrastructure improvements, about which there has been much

congressional debate, be done in earth-friendly ways that help to curtail climate change.

Incentives and tax breaks to businesses and industries must have requirements for environmental action that will contribute to greenhouse emissions reductions.

The Clean Energy Act passed in Virginia is a major step in the right direction. The law requires new measures to promote energy efficiency, sets a schedule for closing old fossil fuel power plants, and requires electricity to come from 100 percent renewable sources such as solar or wind. Energy companies must pay penalties for not meeting their targets. Construction is underway in the Atlantic Ocean 27 miles offshore from Virginia Beach on what will be the nation's largest wind farm. When completed by Dominion Energy the wind farm will provide zero-emissions electricity to 660,000 homes. Solar farms are sprouting up across the Commonwealth as consumers and businesses are installing small solar farms until larger ones are constructed.

I know you did not ask for or expect two columns so close together on the subject of weather, but the threat to life as we know it is real and closer than we may have thought. Let's continue to do our part in our personal ways to be kind to Mother Earth, and let's ensure that our leaders do the same.

Detailing Relief in Dollars

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

On Monday Aug. 2, the Virginian-General Assembly convened in Richmond for a Special Session to allocate federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and appoint judges to fill eight vacancies on the Virginia Court of Appeals. The judicial slots were created by legislation passed earlier in the year to create an automatic right to appeal and proportionately increase the number of jurists to meet the heightened case load. For the first time since COVID hit Virginia, the House and Senate have returned to their respective chambers in the Capitol. Due to close quarters, our desks are surrounded by plexiglass to prevent possible transmission of the increasingly common COVID-19 Delta variant.

Unlike previous special sessions, the Senate and House agreed to limit legislative action to a single bill which allocates \$3.2 billion of the \$4.3 billion in ARPA funds, and makes several emergency policy changes through budget language. Federal guidance limits the General Assembly to spending these funds to respond to COVID-19 and its economic impacts, providing increased pay to workers essential to responding to the pandemic, and investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. While we are focused on these critical issues, some of my Republican colleagues had different ideas, filing amendments to the budget which would have banned "critical race theory" (a legal theory examined in some law schools) in public schools, and blocking common sense protections for transgender students. I am glad my motion to

rule these amendments not "germane" to the budget bill was sustained and we were able to move forward with a budget focused on the needs of Virginians.

Under that guidance, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee leadership gathered input from members over the last month to share with Governor Northam before the Governor finalized his proposed spending plan. I was happy to see \$50 million in funding for the Alexandria's Combined Sewer Overflow remediation project included, which will reduce the cost burden on ratepayers.

As parents, students, and educators prepare to return for a fully in-person school year, their safety and ability to learn best is top-of-mind to all of us. A key way to improve the long-term safety of our students and staff is to ensure that schools have high quality ventilation and HVAC systems. That is why the General Assembly allocated \$250 million to repair and improve these systems in elementary and secondary schools. This funding will require a local dollar-for-dollar match, yielding a \$500 million investment. The upgrades are estimated to cover 80% of all needed HVAC repair and replacement capital projects in Virginia schools, modernizing our education infrastructure across the Commonwealth.

During the pandemic, mental health issues and addiction have become drastically more prevalent, leading to devastating impacts on families and overburdening our psychiatric hospitals to the point that, in mid-July, state facilities were forced to stop admitting new patients. The final budget bill provides the necessary funding to staff up and open more admis-

sion slots in these critical facilities, and makes a massive, \$485 million downpayment on improvements to our mental health and substance abuse treatment programs in Virginia. Righting the trajectory for these services will create a brighter future. In concert with improvements to mental health services, the General Assembly invested an additional \$354 million in public health including facility infrastructure improvements and modernization of our public health technology to ensure that Virginians can receive high-quality services.

To continue to improve public safety, we also allocated close to \$93 million for anti-violence initiatives, including \$75 million to increase state police and state supported sworn officers of sheriffs' departments salaries to competitive levels, \$13.2 million for support services for victims of crime including sexual and domestic violence, \$4 million to improve mental-health training for law enforcement to implement the new "Marcus Alert" system which requires mental health professionals respond with police officers that are called to deal with a person in crisis, and \$5 million in gun violence prevention programs.

The social distancing we have practiced over the past year has, in many cases, only been possible because of affordable access to reliable internet — from online school, to work, to accessing e-books from the library, to telehealth services, the internet has been a lifeline for many. However, for many Virginians, access to broadband is still out of reach. But that will change with the passage of this budget bill. The

SEE EBBIN, PAGE 11

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Community Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Contributing Writer
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Salome Howard-Gaibler
Display Advertising
703-415-5394
salome@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



Great Falls Dinner Honors Service Members Killed in Kabul

Semper Fi & America's Fund financial support extends to translators and interpreters for resettlement.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Bob Nelson Sr. and the Bob Nelson Real Estate team held a special Military Appreciation Monday Dinner at The Old Brogue in Great Falls, Va., on Monday, Aug. 30, with two seatings.

Funds raised through donations will go to Semper Fi and America's Fund. The nonprofit is dedicated to various programs to assist wounded veterans in all branches of the United States Armed Forces.

"My purpose for choosing this organization is in recognition of the eleven Marines, one Soldier and one Seamen who lost their lives on Thursday in Afghanistan," said Nelson. He wanted to honor these service members and all the others who had lost their lives or been injured in America's longest war.

Helen Toolan of Herndon, former military spouse and one of the founders of Semper Fi & America's Fund, attended the dinner. Since the organization's founding 17 years ago, it has provided financial assistance to over 26,000 U.S. service members and their families.

"We are continuing our efforts to financially assist those who need us, whether wounded, ill or injured, and we help their families as well during COVID," said Toolan. "It is not a one and done."

Toolan said there are at least 17 service members who were wounded in the Afghanistan attack that they know of, and the organization will be assisting their families as well.

"In the meantime, we began a program [Afghan Interpreters Welcome Fund] to help interpreters and translators who have been attached to our service members throughout the years get settled where they are positioned worldwide," Toolan said.

"You had our backs, now we have yours," states the organization's website.

CAITLYN DRAFFEN is a former Marine who served at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. She knew two of the Marines who died in the attack outside of the Kabul airport on Thursday, serving their fellow countrymen as well as America's allies in Afghanistan.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

From back right, Bob Nelson, founder of the Military Appreciation Monthly Dinner, Caitlyn Draffen, former Marine who served at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, and Helen Toolan of Herndon, former military spouse and one of the founders of Semper Fi & America's Fund.

"I thought it was a wonderful idea to come down here to see the support everyone is bringing.

"I knew Marine Corp Staff Sergeant Darin Taylor Hoover of Utah," Draffen said, recalling her time in San Diego. "He was a mentor to a couple of my other Marine brothers."

Draffen also knew Marine Corp Sergeant Johanny Rosario-Pichardo. "During battalion PT in the mornings, she always had a smile on her face. ... Both Marines were amazing people to be around," said Draffen.

Visit <https://semperfund.org/donate/> to donate.





It's why I'm here.

Kyle Knight Ins Agcy Inc
 Kyle Knight, Agent
 11736 Bowman Green Drive
 Reston, VA 20190

ACROSS FROM RESTON TOWN CTR.
 WWW.KYLEKNIGHT.ORG
 703-435-2300

Your home and car are more than just things. They're where you make your memories – and they deserve the right protection. I get it. It's why I'm here.

LET'S TALK TODAY.

 **State Farm®**

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
 State Farm Fire and Casualty Company
 Bloomington, IL

Inside or out...



...Tech Painting's got you covered!



Serving:
 VA
 DC
 MD
 OBX

703-684-7702
www.techpainting.com



Arlington

Labor Day Weekend Art Festival

September 4th - 5th Sat./Sun. 10am - 5pm

**Outdoors on N. Highland St. & Washington Blvd.
 in the Clarendon District in Arlington, VA**



Howard Alan Events
ArtFestival.com
561-746-6615



LUIS GONZALEZ

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VDOT



Pedestrian underpass at Colvin Run Mill Park for enhanced park access- Connect Route 7: Route 7 Corridor Improvements



Pedestrian underpass at Colvin Run Mill Park

Pedestrian underpass at Colvin Run Mill Park under construction.

Improvements Progress Along and Under Route 7

Intersection realigned; pedestrian tunnel work continues.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

The Virginia Department of Transportation design-build team of Shirley Contracting Company, LLC and Dewberry continue widening almost seven miles of Route 7 from four to six lanes between Jarrett Valley Drive and Reston Avenue. There are also substantial intersection improvements along the corridor. In recent weeks, crews worked not only along Route 7 but also underneath it.

“There are some very exciting things happening with our Route 7 Corridor Improvements Project,” said VDOT spokesperson Kathleen Leonard on Aug. 27.

Supervisor John Foust agrees.

“In addition to expanding capacity for vehicular travel, the Route 7 project will add significant pedestrian and bike infrastructure throughout the corridor, including seven miles of 10-foot-wide mixed-use trails on both sides of the road,” Foust said on Aug. 27. One of the visions of the corridor improvements when ground was broken in 2019 was a multi-modal community with pedestrian and bicycling upgrades to connect Route 7 area with other trails.

“The new pedestrian underpass underneath Route 7 at Colvin Run Mill is underway. This will connect the north and south sides of the park, enhancing safe pedestrian

access to natural resources on the south side of Route 7,” said Leonard.

According to Foust, the tunnel will provide a safe trail connection for walkers, bikers, and equestrians who want to access the parks and trails on both sides of the road. “There are great trails and parks on both sides of Route 7 at Colvin Run, but given the speed and volume of traffic, crossing can present safety concerns,” he said.

Leonard shared a couple of items of interest about the pedestrian underpass. “[It] is located approximately 900 feet west of Carpers Farm Way and will be 180 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 10 feet high. It will be paved and include lighting inside. ...The exterior portals will have an ashlar stone finish.” Ashlar is masonry made of large stones worked until all faces are squared.

According to the VDOT website and Leonard,

Utterback Store Road in Great Falls was closed for a short time in mid-August. Crews reconstructed “the intersection alignment” at VA-7 W, Great Falls, and Utterback Store Road. They relocated the angle of approach at the intersection by approximately 150 feet west of the existing location. Lane shifts along westbound Route 7 in the vicinity of Utterback Store Road occurred as part of the realignment work.

With steady progress forward, Leonard said VDOT is expecting some traffic shifts this fall on westbound Route 7 from Lewinsville Road to Lyons Street and Lyons Street and Forestville Drive. “That will put drivers on new asphalt,” she said.

Federal, state, Fairfax County, and Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVT) funds financed the approximately \$313.9 million project slated to be finished by mid-2024, according to VDOT.

Detectives Investigate Fatal Crash on Dolley Madison Boulevard

A 31-year-old man died following a crash that occurred just prior to 2 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 29, near the intersection of Dolley Madison Boulevard at Waverly Way. Detectives from the FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit have preliminarily determined Curtis Mathia Rustin IV, of McLean, was the driver and lone occupant of a 2005 Nissan Altima. Rustin was traveling northbound on Dolley Madison Boulevard when he lost control of his vehicle near the intersection of Waverly Way, according to police reports. The vehicle left the roadway and crashed into two trees. Fire and rescue personnel pronounced Rustin IV dead at the scene.

Detectives believe speed may have been a factor of the crash and continue to investigate to determine if alcohol was also a factor. At this time, there is nothing to indicate any other vehicles were involved in the crash.

Anyone with information about this crash is

asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

This is the 8th non-pedestrian related fatality in the County to date in 2021.

FCPD Calls for Service

Date Covered: 8/20/2021 – 8/26/2021

Total Calls for Service: 8,781

Total Domestic Related Calls for Service: 218

Total Persons Experiencing Mental Health Crisis Calls for Service: 359

Total Crash Calls for Service: 614

MCLEAN DISTRICT STATION:

ROBBERY: 8600 block of Westwood Center Drive, 8/24/21, 5:27 a.m. The victim agreed to meet an acquaintance in a hotel room. After a dispute, a man entered the room, displayed a knife and took property. No injuries were reported.

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.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 11

Sept. 11 Remembrance Ceremony. 9 a.m. At Great Falls Freedom Memorial, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls lost six residents to the attacks on September 11. The ceremony will honor them and all who sacrificed on that day and in its aftermath. The event will include a color guard, patriotic songs, remarks by retired Army three-star general Robert Wood who was present at the Pentagon on 9/11, and a candle-lighting for each of the September 11 victims from Great Falls. The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. The ceremony is open to all. Ample parking is available in the library parking lot. In case of rain, the ceremony will move to the library meeting room. Limited seating will be provided. Attendees

are encouraged to bring portable chairs.

SEPT. 14, 28

Great Falls resident and expert on native plant gardening Meghan McGinty, Ph.D., will be offering five free clinics in September and October at Freedom Memorial in Great Falls from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Following are the dates: September 14 and 28 October 5, 19, and 26. If interested, please register at CultivateNature@gmail.com. The clinics will be held rain or shine, except for extreme weather. They will be casual, question-driven sessions. Meghan is a botanist with a Ph.D. in Ecology and Environmental Biology from Columbia University. In 2013, she and her husband purchased a five acre property in

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR

WOLF TRAP PERFORMANCES

At Wolf Trap Farm Park
September 3 -- Broadway in the Park
September 14 -- Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit
with special guest Waxahatchee
September 22 -- Indigo Girls with special guest
Ani DiFranco
Visit www.wolftrap.org for tickets. By phone at
877.WOLFTRAP

NOW THRU SEPT. 5

"An Act of God." At NextStop Theatre Company
in Herndon, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon.
The season opens with "An Act of God," a
funny comedy in which God, along with his
two "wingmen," answer some of the most
pressing questions that have plagued man-
kind since Creation. By David Javerbaum and
directed by Tuyet Pham. Season subscriptions
are available by calling the NextStop Box
Office at 703-481-5930x0 or by visiting www.nextstoptheatre.org.

SEPT. 1

SPARC Grand Opening. 12-2 p.m. At The Church
of the Good Shepherd United Methodist,
2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. SPARC, a
non-profit that provides day programs for
adults with disabilities, will celebrate the
opening of its new administrative office in Vi-
enna with festivities that include a ribbon-cut-
ting ceremony followed by a talent show at
1 p.m. The Sept. 1 festivities will include
networking and vendor tables from noon to
12:30 p.m., followed by the ribbon-cutting
ceremony and remarks from SPARC Executive
Director Debi Alexander, Good Shepherd Pas-
tor Eric Song and Fairfax Board of Supervisors
John Faust, Walter Alcorn and Dalia Palchek.
The talent show begins at 1 p.m. The Greater
Reston Chamber of Commerce and the SPARC
Advocates Advisory Council, made up entirely
of club members, support the event.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 3

Friday Night Live. 6:30 p.m. At Herndon Town
Green, Herndon. Popular free outdoor concert
series returns to regular performances. This
will be the 27th season for the concert series
which is produced by the Herndon Chamber
of Commerce.

Schedule

Sept 3 -- Shake the Room;
Sept 10 -- Keaton + 8 Track Jones;
Sept 17 -- The Reflex;
Sept 24 -- Screaming Mönkeys.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 3

Broadway in the Park. 8 p.m. At Wolf Trap
Farm Park. Presented by Signature Theatre
and Wolf Trap. Celebrate the return of live
musical theater with a joyous evening of
Broadway's greatest hits under the stars.
Starring Broadway's Renée Elise Goldsber-
ry (Hamilton, The Color Purple) and Brian
Stokes Mitchell (Ragtime, Man of La Mancha)
and a cast of Signature favorites, enjoy tunes
such as "Don't Rain on My Parade," "I Am
What I Am," "The Schuyler Sisters," "You'll
Never Walk Alone" and so much more. Visit
<https://www.sigtheatre.org/events/202122/broadway-in-the-park/>

SEPT. 3-30

Transitions to Abstractions -- Five Painters.
Exhibition at the Great Falls Library, Large
Meeting Room, 9830 Georgetown Pike. Great
Falls. A collective of local painters show their
work at the Great Falls Library. The show
features a group of experienced artists who
began working in more abstract painting after
exploring other mediums and styles. Featured
artists include two sculptors and an architect.
We are a part of the Great Falls Studios group.

SEPT. 4-5

Middle Eastern Food Festival. 11-8 p.m. Saturday
and 12:30-5 p.m. Sunday. Holy Transfigura-
tion Melkite Greek-Catholic Church will host
its 28th annual Eastern Food Festival, at 8501
Lewinsville Road, McLean. Guests can expect
to enjoy the following traditional favorites:
Hummus; Baba Ghannouj; Spinach Pies and
Meat pies; Mujaddara (rice with lentils); and



The Indigo Girls will appear at Wolf Trap
on Sept. 22, 2021.

the following sandwiches: Falafel; Kafta;
Chicken Shish Kebab; Chicken Shawarma
and Beef Shawarma. A variety of homemade
Middle Eastern pastries also will be served.
In years past, the festival featured children's
games and a petting zoo, along with a variety
of vendors. Call 703-734-9566 or visit www.MiddleEasternFoodFestival.com.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 5

Concert on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village
Centre Green, behind the Old Brogue, Great
Falls. Featuring Hello Cleveland. Sponsored
by John Nugent & Sons.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 9

Reston and Mid-Century Modern. 7-9 p.m. At
1639 Washington Plaza, Reston. All virtual
program. This presentation showcases early
Reston interiors, exploring how mid-century
modern style and architecture influenced
their look and use. Learn about Reston's early
designers, see how interiors were furnished,
and how Registration Required. Free.

SEPT 10-19

Ken Ludwig's Sherwood: "The Adventures of
Robin Hood." At NextStop Theater Company
in Herndon. NextStop will create an open-air
theatre in the parking lot of the Northwest
Federal Credit Union headquarters in Hern-
don. This production will give audiences the
chance to come together with their neighbors
for a rip-roaring romp through Sherwood For-
est, featuring all the thrills and romance you
could possibly ask for. Flying arrows, clanging
swords, and perilous feats of daring fill this
not-so-ye-olde tale of everyone's favorite hero
outlaw and his noble quest to steal from the
rich and give to the poor.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 11

Storytime Live. 10:30-12:30 p.m. At Kiddie Acad-
emy South Riding, 43060 Edgewater Street,
South Riding.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 11

Clifton Caboose 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run. 1 Mile
Fun Run/Walk starts at 6 p.m. 5K Run starts
at 6:30 p.m. Intersection of Clifton Rd, New-
man Rd, and Main St, Clifton. A 5K Run and
1-Mile Fun Run/Walk beginning in Clifton.
The scenic course winds down a gently rolling
country road, across a creek, and past a horse
or two. Early Pick-Up/Registration: Cash/
Check only. Friday, September 11, 5-7 p.m.
at the Barn 7139 Main St, Clifton. Race Day
Registration and Pick up packets (cash/check
only) from 4:00-5:30 pm at the Barn, 7139
Main St., Clifton. Cost: 5K Run - \$25, One-
Mile Fun Run/Walk - \$20. Visit the website:
<https://c25k.redpodium.com/clifton-caboose-5k-run-c25k>

State Farm Insurance G. STEPHEN DULANEY

IN GREAT FALLS



AUTO • HOME • LIFE
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Like A Good Neighbor, State Farm Is There.®

Open Saturdays

Complementary Insurance and Financial Review

Visit www.gstephendulaney.com



703-759-4155

731-C WALKER RD. • GREAT FALLS, VA

State Farm Insurance Companies
Home Office Bloomington, Illinois

Proud Supporter of Military Appreciation Mondays



Get a 24-step vehicle inspection for just \$20

Since 1933, the Safety Inspection Program has helped keep
Virginia's motorists safe, with affordable annual checkups that
ensure your car - and all those around you - are roadworthy,
reliable and ready to go. Learn more at vasafetyinspection.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIANT

Local mobile health clinics can help to make receiving flu and COVID vaccines as well as COVID booster vaccines convenient.

Get Your Flu Shot

Local health officials say it's important to get both flu and COVID vaccines, and CDC says they can be given at the same time.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As students return to in-person learning while social distancing and mask mandates are less in evidence, local health officials are urging residents to get a flu shot to prevent an uptick in the number flu and COVID-19 cases.

"We could be in for a more serious flu season compared to last year, which saw record-low flu-related deaths, thanks in large part to people wearing masks and maintaining social distance," said Kurt Larrick, Assistant Director, Arlington County Department of Human Services.

"This year, people are out and about more, so getting a flu shot is important."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), September and October are generally good times to be vaccinated against flu. Ideally, everyone should be vaccinated by the end of October.

"While we all are focused on COVID-19, flu can also cause severe illness and death, particularly in people who are older and have underlying medical conditions," said Dr. Benjamin Schwartz, Fairfax County Health Department's Director of Epidemiology and

Population Health. "The CDC recommends that the COVID vaccine can be given at the same time as the flu shot. This can make it more convenient for people to get protected against both infections. As many people will be getting COVID boosters in the fall, if they haven't received their annual flu shot yet, that would be a great time to do so."

"Since the flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine do not contain any live virus, there is no chance of getting infected from either one," Schwartz said.

In an effort to maximize the number of patients who can receive both vaccines, local pharmacies have set up mobile clinics where flu, COVID-19 and COVID-19 booster vaccines can be administered.

"Giant's pharmacies throughout the area are ready to help residents get their seasonal flu vaccine with no appointment needed, and often covered in-full by most insurance plans," said Sujin Roberge, Manager of Clinical Programs at Giant Pharmacy. "Giant pharmacists will continue administering COVID-19 vaccines, including a third dose of either Moderna or Pfizer vaccine for immunocompromised individuals. Booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines will be available at Giant pharmacies once approved by the CDC."

Health officials say that some have questioned the necessity of receiving both vaccines. "Even if you have received the COVID vaccine, you should still get a flu vaccine," said Larrick. "Neither protects from the other. The flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID, and

the COVID vaccines will not protect you against the flu. Both flu and COVID are potentially deadly diseases that are preventable with vaccinations."

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html>

"As many people will be getting COVID boosters in the fall, if they haven't received their annual flu shot yet it, that would be a great time to do so."

— Dr. Benjamin Schwartz,
Fairfax County Health Department's Director of Epidemiology and Population Health

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

Great Falls where she has slowly been restoring native plants. In addition to planting native trees in a meadow to restore forest on her property, she also has removed lawn to establish a fenced native plant garden. The garden has thrived and is now home to butterflies and songbirds, skinks, toads, native insects, hawks and so much more.

Check out Meghan's Instagram account @cultivatnature to follow the seasons of her garden and to pick up gardening tips and advice. EP members may remember Meghan's Zoom presentation in October 2020.

SEASONAL FLU VACCINATIONS AT GIANT FOOD

Giant Food announces that seasonal flu vaccinations are once again available at all 152 of its in-store pharmacies for both adults and children with no appointment required. The vaccinations are administered by Giant's certified in-store pharmacists and are often covered in-full by most insurance plans.

New this year, COVID-19 vaccines and other flu and non-flu vaccines including tetanus, shingles, pneumonia, meningitis, hepatitis and many more, can be administered together as the 14-day waiting period between COVID-19 and other vaccines is no longer recommended by health experts. Giant is also currently offering a third dose of Moderna and Pfizer mRNA COVID-19 vaccinations for immunocompromised individuals as defined by the CDC.

To help customers stay healthy throughout the flu season, Giant has made getting vaccinations simple and easy with no appointment needed. Insurance companies, including Medicare, are billed directly, often at \$0 copays. The flu vaccines offered this season will cover four strains of the flu virus and Giant will again offer high dose flu vaccines for adults aged 65 and older.

ONGOING

In-Person Worship Begins. 10:15 a.m. The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. In-person worship services will resume with some restrictions. Details at: https://faithconnector.s3.amazonaws.com/goodshepherdva/files/revised2_in_person_worship_begins_june_13.pdf

TEXT FOR FOOD

No Kid Hungry Virginia encourages families to text FOOD or COMIDA to 877-877 to find free summer food sites organized by school districts and community organizations. Meal sites are offering a variety of distribution models to help safely connect students with meals and promote social distancing, including "Grab and Go" service and food delivery along bus routes while passing out multiple days' worth of meals at one-time.

FRESHFARM MARKETS OPEN
Local FRESHFARM Markets are

opened. Residents are encouraged to pre-order as much as possible, but grab-and-go and prepackaged options will be available for purchase at all of the markets listed below.

Saturday Markets

Arlington, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. -- N Courthouse Rd. and 14th St N, Arlington

Oakton, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. -- 2854 Hunter Mill Rd., Oakton.

Sunday Market

Mosaic, 9 a.m - 2 p.m. -- 2910 District Ave., Fairfax

COVID-19 TEXT MESSAGES IN SPANISH

As part of its efforts to provide coronavirus-related information and assistance in multiple languages, Fairfax County now provides COVID-19 text alerts in Spanish.

To sign up, text FFXCOVIDESP to 888777.

FAIRFAX COUNTY ACTIVATES CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER

Fairfax County activated a Joint Information Center in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 13.

Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus

Emergency Information Blog (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center – The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.

Twitter – @fairfaxcounty and @fairfaxhealth

Facebook – www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first and third Thursday of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, scov.org. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

COVID Turned Her Life Upside Down

COVID long hauler gives back and fights back.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Not all races are about the time; sometimes, they are about the athlete knowing she is stronger with the support of others, allowing her to thrive. When Taralyn Tharp Kohler of Reston enters the finish chute of the 26.2-mile run course of the 2022 IRONMAN Cozumel after completing the 2.4-mile open ocean swim and the 112-mile bike course on Nov. 21, she will not be alone.

Ten miles off the eastern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula, in Quintana Roo estado (state), southeastern Mexico, Kohler will be running under the wings of loved ones, her son, Quinton, 19, daughter, Kailyn, 17, her COVID pod, friends who became family, and a new supporter.

A year ago, Kohler could barely walk, part of a group of people called COVID, “long haulers.” Now she is running again and living her passions. “We are so proud of our mom. She’s always encouraged us to shoot for the stars,” said Quinton and Kailyn.

The ironman will not be Kohler’s most grueling race. She says she is a comeback story, not a pity party. The Connection first interviewed Kohler on March 12, 2021. The date approached the first anniversary of Virginia’s 2020 COVID lock-down, but more significantly, it neared a day forever burned in Kohler’s brain and one that changed her life, March 23, 2020. Kohler said she recalled phoning her physician, feeling very sick and saying, “I may have COVID.”

According to Kohler, she might have been one of the first COVID-19 patients in Reston. Kohler competed in seven half-ironman competitions before being infected with the virus and “was in stellar shape” when she got COVID.

“I had a lot of different symptoms; I vividly remember, like I had an alien in my stomach, with child-birth level pains. It was excruciating. I had headaches, chills, and absolutely no energy, where you are so sick you cannot walk down the stairs to get medicine,” Kohler said in the March 2021 interview. Symptoms proved debilitating and long-lasting.

“I quarantined myself and tried to get back up ... and resume life... Kohler said. “I felt like I had adult mono, no energy for a month and a half, and brain fog... Weeks later, I realized I couldn’t taste or smell,” she said. [Then] my hair started coming out in gobs ...I had really odd rashes and still do, like the one I have now,” Kohler said, showing her arm. “All of these are COVID long hauler symptoms,” she added.

Time passed after the initial COVID symptoms. Kohler recalled that in August of 2020, she experienced extremely high blood pressure. In the emergency room, doctors told



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Taralyn Tharp Kohler, COVID long hauler, donates convalescent plasma at Inova Health.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Taralyn Tharp Kohler, Olympian Andy Potts, and Gail Gottfried at Legacy Triathlon in Alamitos Beach, Long Beach, Calif., in July 2021.

Kohler her high blood pressure and other symptoms were consistent with a condition called COVID-19 syndrome or “long COVID.”

A positive antibody test indicated Kohler’s body had produced antibodies as part of her immune response to COVID. Long COVID affects otherwise healthy people as well as those with underlying conditions, the young and old alike. Kohler, an endurance athlete, had gone from working out two hours a day pre-Covid to barely walking around the block as a diagnosed COVID long hauler.

Undaunted, Kohler committed to help others and help herself. In August 2020, the Food and Drug Administration announced an Emergency Use Authorization for convalescent plasma for patients with COVID-19. With the fight against COVID escalating in the United States, Kohler donated her blood plasma as a possible treatment for hospitalized patients with active COVID-19 infections.

Now, since spring of 2021, she was rebuilding her fitness, getting back on her bike and back into the pool, trying to figure out how to do things differently to get her body to respond and “work at a pace that it wanted



PHOTO BY TARALYN THARP KOHLER

Taralyn Tharp Kohler is treated at Fair Oaks Inova Hospital Emergency Room for extremely high blood pressure, a possible COVID long hauler symptom.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

On the road to recovery and thriving, Taralyn Tharp Kohler and her son Quinton prepare to skydive.

to work at.”

“When I started running in the spring, I couldn’t run a mile,” she said.

She regained some of her strength but wanted greater improvement. “I’m also a level one, USA Triathlon certified coach. I got my certification during COVID. So, I decided I would try to coach myself. ... But what I found out is, I can’t coach myself,” she said.

Kohler participated in the Legacy Triathlon in Alamitos Beach, Long Beach, California, last month, July of this year. The inaugural event was part of the lead-up to Los Angeles’ 2028 Olympics. Long Beach is poised to host water polo, handball, Triathlon (Olympic and Paralympic), marathon swimming, BMX racing, and sailing. While she has crossed many finish lines, Kohler said that the Legacy Tri meant the most to her for various reasons and not because of her time. It was not a personal best.

At the Legacy Tri, Kohler said she was “incredibly honored and humbled to be part of history in the making [and] be surrounded by such an inspirational, accomplished group of giving Olympians and amateurs.”

In one event, age-groupers like herself were paired with a former Olympic athlete in a celebrity competition to benefit USA Triathlon Foundation.

Kohler found herself partnered with Andy Potts, who competed in triathlon at the 2004 Summer Olympics and was 2007 Ironman 70.3 World Champion.

Potts agreed to coach Kohler. “[Kohler’s] great attitude and desire to learn and improve are exactly what will help her reach her goals,” said Potts. “I am so excited to work with Taralyn.... She is open to new ideas and also willing to put in the work.”

Kohler continues to work toward the November 2022 IRONMAN Cozumel. “I’ll cross that finish line taking everyone with me who’s been on this journey.”

“Stronger Together was the hashtag we used with CORE,” said Kohler, who is Executive Director of the Reston-based CORE Foundation.

Calling herself “a badass” in her determination to knock down COVID, her teenage children picked up on the phrase.

“It’s inspiring to see her setting an example and kicking butt,” said Quinton and Kailyn.

A Smarter Way to Power Your Home.

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!

ACT NOW TO RECEIVE A \$300 SPECIAL OFFER!*
1 (833) 688-1378

*Offer value when purchased at retail. Solar panels sold separately.



TRANSFORM YOUR BATH OR SHOWER IN AS LITTLE AS ONE DAY

CALL NOW

FOR \$500 Off*

OR

NO PAYMENTS & NO INTEREST FOR 18 MONTHS**

Offer Expires 9.30.2021

BCI BATH & SHOWER Military & Senior Discounts Available
844-945-1631



*Includes product and labor; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires Sept. 30, 2021. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify. See your dealer for details. ©2021 BCI Acrylic, Inc.

Services

Fairfax Plumbing NV Inc
A-Z Plumbing Service.
Drain Cleaning
Gas Piping & More
Family Owned 35 YR Exp.

\$35 coupon

Tel: 703-987-5319



Need Rent Relief?

Millions of dollars in assistance available.

Apply now at
dhcd.virginia.gov/eligibility

VIRGINIA RENT RELIEF PROGRAM




Upgrade Your Home with a NEW METAL ROOF

Guaranteed to Last a Lifetime!

60% off
YOUR INSTALLATION
+
10% off
TAKE AN ADDITIONAL

Install for Military, Health Workers and First Responders

ERIE Metal Roofs

Call today to schedule your FREE ESTIMATE
1-844-902-4611

New orders only. Does not include material costs. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Minimum purchase required. Other restrictions may apply. This is an advertisement placed on behalf of Erie Construction Mid-West, Inc ("Erie"). Offer terms and conditions may apply and the offer may not be available in your area. Offer expires December 31st 2021. If you call the number provided, you consent to being contacted by telephone, SMS text message, email, pre-recorded messages by Erie or its affiliates and service providers using automated technologies notwithstanding if you are on a DO NOT CALL list or register. Please review our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use on homeservicescompliance.com. All rights reserved.

Be a part of our:

Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?
E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Sign up for FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION to all of our papers

www.connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe



Prepare for power outages with a Generac home standby generator

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!
844-947-1479

FREE
7-Year Extended Warranty*
A \$695 Value!

Limited Time Offer - Call for Details

Special Financing Available
Subject to Credit Approval

*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.



Leaf Filter GUTTER PROTECTION

BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE

EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!

15% OFF YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE
10% OFF SENIORS & MILITARY!
5% OFF TO THE FIRST 50 CALLERS ONLY!*

WE INSTALL YEAR-ROUND!

FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET!*
Promo Code: 285
*Subject to credit approval. Call for details.

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE
1-877-614-6667

Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST


*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. **Offer valid at time of estimate only. *The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2010 and recognized LeafFilter as the "#1" rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America. Manufactured in Plainfield, Michigan and processed at LMT Merco Group in Ohio. See Representative for full warranty details. CS-04 1030755 - DCRU #1078968-5501 - License# 7956 License# 50145 License# 41354 License# 59338 License# 128344 License# 218294 WA US# 603 233 977 License# 2102212986 License# 2106212546 License# 2205021533 License# LEAF1NW2222 License# WV056912 License# WC 29998 H17 Nassau HIC License# NJ1007030 Registrations# 25662 Registrations# NC1049992 Registrations# C12229 Registrations# C12229 Registrations# 36620918 Registrations# PC1476 Registrations# 8233804 Registrations# 1344555-3500 Registrations# PA069383 Suffolk, VA License# 82229 H License# 220519445 License# 20700022 License# 262000403 License# 0085950 Registrations# NJ19114

Back to School

If your child is entering 7th grade they must have the **Meningitis, HPV, and Tdap** vaccines in order to enroll. Talk to your doctor and vaccinate them now!

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

vdh.virginia.gov/backtoschool/



Crisis in Afghanistan Reverberates Locally

FROM PAGE 3

refugees, my brothers and sisters, who only wanted peace in a world of greed and violence."

Aurozo Niaz said she and other Afghan Americans are angry and experiencing survivor's guilt. They can freely walk down a street in the U.S. without a man beside them and have access to all the resources offered here.

"The reason I'm a refugee right now is complete luck. I was born in America and not one of the most overexploited, destabilized countries in the world... I think that's why we put so much effort into having these donations."

She said the U.S. goes into countries "under the guise of freedom and defense, and it conquers, leaving the country in absolute chaos, abandoning the promises to take care of it. ... Now our government destroys and destabilizes these countries, then pats itself on the back accepting the refugees that they displaced."

Aurozo Niaz said the withdrawal is not a partisan issue; blame is not for one President or another but on the U.S. empire as a whole. The United States had been intervening in Afghanistan since the Carter administration, Aurozo Niaz said.

"We just failed the people of Afghanistan."

Kerrie Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, Cornerstones said: "We're worried about the families that we serve here who have relatives that are coming over or still stuck there [in Afghanistan] ... We work with our partners to direct people to the right places, Catholic Charities, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Lutheran Social Services, and some of the other groups that have been the frontline ... They are the organizations that have always worked with immigrant refugee families. [They] are set up to help the process, help them connect with relatives, or help them connect with other short stay places."

Right now, it is "triage," Wilson said. "The first thing you do is make sure they are fed and have a safe place to stay. Then you can begin your wraparound services." Several faith groups and congregations, like St Mark's Orthodox based in Fairfax, have connected with Cornerstones.

Cornerstones and some other county providers offered safe, short-term quarantine sites for refugees to isolate if needed due to COVID. Organizations like Cornerstones are the backbone of human service that would be here for families as they settle in.

"We are the second wave... We will embrace those families and individuals in our programs, as we would any other families," said Wilson.

Ebbin

FROM PAGE 4

General Assembly allocated \$700 million to bring high-speed broadband to every home and business in the state by 2024. (Currently some 234,000 still remain unconnected!)

Small businesses can also expect \$250 million in relief via RebuildVA grants and \$50 million in tourism and marketing grants to draw customers back in and start to make up for the incredible impact the pandemic had on hospitality and destination based small businesses in Virginia. To prevent future tax increases on small businesses and ensure Virginians get the help they need if they are or become unemployed, the General Assembly deposited \$862 million into the depleted coffers of our Unemployment Trust Fund. We also allocated \$91 million to improve the efficiency at which the Virginia Employment Commission processes, adjudicates, and disperses unemployment benefits. The current system was overwhelmed during the peak of COVID-19, and continues to fail many Virginians in getting the help they deserve. I am hopeful that these investments will finally bring a resolution to this issue.

Finally, the General Assembly continued to work on a core priority of mine: preventing evictions and increasing af-

fordable housing. We appropriated a combined \$750 million in housing assistance, \$250 million of which will be used to cover overdue mortgage bills, taxes, insurance, and HOA fees. To learn how to access these funds, visit <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp>. Because of this major influx in rental relief, and the end of the federal eviction moratorium, we also prohibited landlords from taking any action to obtain possession of a rental unit for nonpayment of rent unless they have first applied for rental assistance and their tenant refused the assistance or did not qualify for the funding. This is one of the most important actions we have taken this special session, and will protect tenants and landlords alike from the painful, economically devastating process of evictions.

With the Governor's signature, these historic investments will begin flowing, shovels will go into the ground, businesses will continue opening, and Virginians will begin to feel some weight lifting from their shoulders as a more robust safety net is constructed. A firm base has been laid for the future of our Commonwealth, and I look forward to building on it in the years to come.

It is my continued honor to serve the 30th District.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALL 703-549-0004

FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

ELECTRICAL ELECTRICAL

K & D ELECTRIC

COMMERCIAL / RESIDENTIAL SERVICE
Family Owned & Operated

Recessed Lighting Ceiling Fans Phone/CATV Computer Network Cabling Service Upgrades Hot Tubs, etc...

Licensed/Bonded/Insured

Office 703-335-0654

Mobile 703-499-0522

lektrkman28@gmail.com

LANDSCAPING LANDSCAPING

Quality Tree Service & Landscaping

Reasonable prices. Licensed & insured.

Summer Cleanup...

Tree removal, topping & pruning, shrubbery trimming, mulching, leaf removal, planting, hauling, gutter cleaning, retaining walls, drainage problems, etc.

25 years of experience - Free estimates

703-868-5358

24 Hour Emergency Tree Service

Landscape Drainage

Landscape Drainage



A JES Services, Inc Company
Eco-Friendly Landscape Drainage Experts
Drainage, Erosion, Landscaping, Hardscaping, Patios, Retaining Walls & More
Your Neighborhood Company since 1987!

703-772-0500 www.ProDrainage.com

VA. Licensed Class A Contractor

Sign up for
FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION
to any or all of our 15 papers
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE

Weight For It ..., Weight



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Speaking of side effects (at least I was in last week's column, "Enough Already") being a regular part of chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy; the big three non-surgical options for cancer patients, I am currently experiencing a new side effect which as it happens is a dream come true: weight loss. Which has enabled me to eat to my heart's content without your typical consequences. Meaning for now, I can be comfortable in whatever food I eat. As Curly Howard of The Three Stooges might say: "What an experience!"

For my entire life, I have not been thin. Growing up all my clothes were purchased in the "Husky Department. In spite of that accommodation, my clothes always had to be let in or let out and nothing ever fit. I've stood over so many piles of clothes in store dressing rooms which didn't fit, and made so many "walks of shame" out of the dressing room and onto the floor (where my mother would look me up and down to determine if the shirt, sweater, pants or short I was wearing had any redeeming qualities) that it has left a permanent mark. Most of the time, it was hopeless and I was forced to retreat back to the dressing room with even more clothes to suffer yet another indignity. To this day, some 60-odd years later, I am still traumatized by the years of suffering and humiliation I endured as an overweight child/adolescent forced to buy clothes for the fall/winter and the spring/summer. Oh, how I dreaded those shopping trips into Boston to visit Jordan Marsh, Filene's and Kennedy's. If it wasn't for the two Joe & Nemo's hot dogs I was promised, the day would have been a total loss - for me.

However, after years of being fat, tubby, obese (per the health and fitness charts), slow-footed and unable to do even one chin-up during those annual phys-ed exams in secondary school; and moreover, never being able to lose any weight or change my diet to facilitate losing a few pounds, I have stumbled onto a surprising and quite unexpected remedy (of sorts): lenvima, my thyroid cancer medicine. A 10 mg pill I take once a day, rain or shine seems to induce weight loss. Now that's a side effect with which I can live. In fact, for an eater like me (challenging), living a scan-to-scan existence when the quarterly results determine my immediate future and/or whether my life hangs in the balance, it doesn't get any better than that.

After nearly nine months on this treatment, in speaking to my endocrinologist last week, she happened to mention in response to a question I asked concerning my shortness-of-breath side effect, about another side effect: weight loss. Ding, ding, ding. We have a winner (without the chicken dinner). The patient (yours truly) who was apparently originally misdiagnosed with a terminal form of lung cancer (stage IV) instead of what would have been a very treatable and curable form of papillary thyroid cancer, known as "the friendly cancer," finally got some good news. Unfortunately, the re-diagnosis came too late and I'm still on a limited schedule, if you know what I mean? (F.Y.I.: the nickname given to papillary thyroid cancer as being friendly is because it's very curable.)

Not that I don't already eat my share of "comfort" food, but by consuming it so regularly, I usually pack on a few pounds and rarely if ever lose weight. My entire life, until this recent lenvima revelation, food had never been just for thought. As a result, lenvima has become my second favorite word after "stable," (scan results). Now it seems, so long as scan results continue to be stabilizing, I'll be able to eat what I want and let the chips fall where they may, literally and figuratively.

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



Work with the #1 Realtor

DIANNE

VAN VOLKENBURG



Twee Ramos, Susan Canis,
Joe Trippi and Justin Scango

Buy With Confidence, Sell With Success



Great Falls

\$4,500,000



Great Falls

\$1,299,000



Great Falls

\$1,700,000



Great Falls

\$1,450,000



Great Falls

\$3,250,000



Great Falls

\$2,299,000



Great Falls

\$1,776,000



Falls Church

\$735,000



Great Falls

\$1,699,000

Inventory Is Low - Call Me Today

LONG & FOSTER® | CHRISTIE'S
REAL ESTATE INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

9841 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066
703-759-9190 • GreatFallsGreatHomes.com

703-757-3222

sales@GreatFallsGreatHomes.com

