

# CONNECTION

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 10

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION



## Will Building New Trail Hurt Ecosystem?

PAGE 9

Area naturalists and local residents explore the forest, walking down to an earthen dam put there by developers years ago. They are concerned about damage to the woods that could be caused by construction of the Cinderbed Bike Trail.

## Renaming Roads with Racist Past?

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## Kites Can Be Hazardous

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# Many Residents Are Opposed

Far from all residents support changing street names.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

❖ This article will present the views of those opposed to the name changes. See “Time To Make a Change?” on page 3 for the views of those in favor of changing the street names.

**D**uring a three-hour public hearing, last Tuesday, June 14, a large contingent of residents told Fairfax City Council why the City’s Confederate-related street names shouldn’t be changed.

“The street names reflect the City’s history and what happened right here,” said Dorothy Storm of Ranger Road. “I never thought of them as memorializing the Confederacy. Mosby Woods street names reflect both the North and South, plus generic military terms, like Ranger.

“I’ve had Black, Asian and white neighbors, and no one ever complained about the names being racist. It’s a lovely, close-knit neighborhood. The name ‘Fairfax’ is associated with the Confederacy – and named for a slaveowner – but you aren’t recommending it be changed.”

Her husband Dean said the name changes will cost time, money and inconvenience and, “The City could use the money better than wasting it on this. Through-



The Ranger Road and Raider Lane sign stands out against the blue sky.

out U.S. history, many military organizations, trucks and sports teams have proudly borne the name, ‘Ranger.’”

Many cited anecdotal polls and counts.

Referencing park rangers, Army rangers and the Texas Rangers baseball team, Ranger Road’s Francis Dietz said, “No one didn’t know their street name when they moved there. We took a poll, and 80 percent of Mosby Woods residents oppose the name change. We have a warm, cohesive neighborhood where people of all races

and colors care about and look out for each other.”

Traveler Street’s Chris Andrews said none of its residents want that name changed. “As spelled on our street sign, Traveler has no connection to the Confederacy, Robert E. Lee or the Civil War. It’s not ethnically, racially or socially insensitive.”

Carolyn Chapel has lived on Mosby Road for 47 years and didn’t want her street’s name changed because “all the things we’ll have to change will cost us a lot of money, including business costs. I run



Confederate Lane and Plantation Parkway in the Mosby Woods community.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

a business from my home, and 95 percent of my street has petitioned for no change.”

Neighbor François Pazhwa said he moved here from Pakistan, “where history was being erased. Consider the unintended consequences of your actions. The past is the past. Don’t allow political agendas and activism to influence your decision.”

Another neighbor, Jennifer Geer, said changing street names “divides us more than unites us. A street name is a formality and doesn’t represent the friendly

neighborhood. We, as a nation, need to stop being offended by every little thing. The equity of all Fairfax City residents should be considered, not just one stakeholder group. Instead, put these name changes to a vote in November. Inclusion in our neighborhood isn’t affected by its name.”

Shiloh Street’s Julie Matthews said 64 percent of the recommended name changes are within Mosby Woods. “Let them decide whether they want their names changed,” she said. “We don’t believe our representative on SAG accurately reflected our views.”

Barbara Hunt of Ranger Road said her husband spoke with 100 community members and 70 didn’t want their street’s name changed, 20 did, and 10 had no opinion. “The majority said ‘Ranger’ was innocuous,” she said. “They wanted our tax money better used for schools, roads, public safety, etc.”

Her neighbor, Forrest Kneisel, said he polled 25 Ranger residents, and 22 told him the name “is not disparaging,” he said. “And many are first-generation immigrants. Council should respect the wishes of the people who were polled and not change the name.”

Anahita Renner, of Plantation Parkway, told Council she’s an immigrant from Iran and lived through the Iraq War. “When the Islamic Republic took over, they took down the names representing Iran’s rich history,” she said. “But it’s important to remember history. And two homes on Confederate Lane recently sold for \$772,000 and \$735,000 – which is still really good. We’re not celebrating the Confederacy – we’re remembering the history with all these names.”

Born and raised in Fairfax City, Shiloh Street’s Jessie Liese said, “It’s hard to hear that my personal

SEE FAR FROM ALL. PAGE 6

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## Time To Make a Change?

Fairfax City might change Confederate-related street names.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

❖ This article will present the views of those in favor of the name changes. See “Many Residents Are Opposed” on page 2 for the views of those opposed to changing the street names.

Following a rise in the nation’s consciousness about the need for racial justice and healing, in fall 2020, Fairfax City Council developed “Connecting Fairfax City for All.” This initiative sought a way for Council to better listen and learn from the community to inform its decisions that would create a more equitable and inclusive future City for all its residents, businesses and visitors.

That led to Council’s January 2021 creation of a diverse, 16-member, Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). Recognizing there’s strength in community diversity and inclusion, Fairfax leaders acknowledged the need for a broader conversation about the City’s racial and social equity, historical past, systemic racism, symbolism and identity.

Council then directed the advisory group to examine City streets and neighborhoods that were named for specific, confederate leaders/soldiers or were closely associated with the confederacy, slavery or the “Lost Cause.” (Considered a myth or legend by many historians, the “Lost Cause” presents the Civil War from the Confederates’ perspective and in the best terms possible.)

After extensive research and community engagement, the Stakeholder Advisory Group concluded that, by having streets named in honor of Confederate heroes and imagery, the Mosby Woods neighborhood perpetuates that myth. However, the first phase of houses built in that neighborhood was in 1961 – four years before the City schools were even desegregated.

The developer suggested the name after seeing a Mosby’s Midnight Raid historical marker in downtown Fairfax. And officiating the community’s dedication ceremony in June 27, 1961 was Virgil Carrington Jones, author of the book,

In April, about 100 people provided feedback regarding street names during a Community Outreach Open House at the Sherwood Community Center. In addition, Council has received petitions and emails from residents and the Mosby Woods Community Assn., plus comments via the City’s online Engage page.

The 14 streets advisory group recommends Council rename are: Plantation Parkway, Confederate Lane, Raider Lane, Ranger



A closeup of the Confederate Lane and Plantation Parkway street sign.

Road, Reb Street, Scarlet Circle, Singleton Circle, Traveler Street, Mosby Woods Drive, Lee Highway, Old Lee Highway, Lee Street, Mosby Road and Stonewall Avenue. All but the last five are in the Mosby Woods community.

Last Tuesday, June 14, Council held a public hearing on the matter, and residents weren’t shy about voicing their opinions. Some 47 people signed up to speak and definitely gave the members an earful.

Patricia McMurray was an original resident of Mosby Woods, moving there in 1962. She’s since moved away, but still owns that house in which her daughter and her family now live.

“It’s time to make a change,” she said. “What we name things represents our values.

“Systemic racism still exists in our country, and this won’t stop it, but it’s a small step in the right direction. I look forward to visiting my grandchildren someday without having to cringe when I pass the intersection of Plantation Parkway and Confederate Lane.”

Marissa Perrone of Ranger Road said homes on streets with names having Confederate connections sell for 6 percent less. “Zillow said it amounts to \$40,000/house in Mosby Woods.”

Gesturing toward the packed room of predominantly

white people, Ramin Mostafabi of Oakton told Council, “The affected people are clearly underrepresented here. This is a bunch of non-Black people speaking for Blacks. No streets are named after the Holocaust, either, but no one’s forgotten it. The mild inconvenience of changing street names

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A peaceful setting for the Mosby Woods Drive sign.

PHOTOS BY  
BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

### What Confederate-Related Names Mean

Below is an explanation of the meaning behind each street name and why SAG believes it’s offensive and should be changed.

#### Mosby Woods Streets:

❖ Confederate Lane: Term for southern states that seceded, its military and government.

❖ Plantation Parkway: Large farm with crops produced by an enslaved or lowly paid labor force. Associated with homes and large landscapes in Southern states with large numbers of enslaved people.

❖ Ranger Road: Col. John Singleton Mosby led the 43rd Cavalry Battalion known as “Mosby’s Rangers” in the Confederate Army.

❖ Raider Lane: Another term for Mosby’s Rangers was Mosby’s Raiders; also the name of a commando or ranger.

❖ Reb Street: Secessionists/Confederates were commonly called Rebels or Rebs.

❖ Scarlet Circle: Likely origin of this name is Scarlett O’Hara, the fiction-

al Southern heroine in “Gone with the Wind,” a 1930s novel by Margaret Mitchell. The theme follows Southern “Lost Cause” ideology and portrays only warm relationships between enslaver and enslaved.

❖ Singleton Circle: Singleton is John Mosby’s middle name.

❖ Traveler Street: Traveller (spelled with two “l”s) was the name of Gen. Robert E. Lee’s favorite horse.

❖ Mosby Woods Drive: This street leads to “Mosby Woods Condominiums,” adjacent to the Mosby Woods Subdivision, and was named for Col. Mosby.

#### Streets Elsewhere in the City:

❖ Lee Street, Lee Highway and Old Lee Highway: All named after Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

❖ Mosby Road: It honors Col. Mosby.

❖ Stonewall Avenue: Confederate Gen. Thomas J. Jackson gained the nickname “Stonewall” at the 1st Battle of Manassas. Confederate soldiers referred to him holding his position like a “stone wall.”

**“It’s time to make a change. What we name things represents our values.”**

— Patricia McMurray

# Housing for All

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK  
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

**A**ffordable Housing. We all hear the term, but, especially in today's market, what does that mean? To me, it means having a broad spectrum of new and existing housing options that provide opportunity for all who want to live, work or stay in Fairfax County to do so. This applies to many more individuals and families than you might expect — first time homebuyers, seniors aging in place, students, and of course, middle class families and folks with lower incomes, including custodians, clerks, new teachers and police officers, service workers; the list goes on.

The definition of an affordable home means having enough income to pay your housing expenses and still have enough money left over to provide for basic needs like food, clothing and medical care. Ideally housing expenses should not exceed 30-35% of your income. I deeply believe everyone needs a home they can take pride living in, regardless of income lev-

el, whether renting or owning — a place to relax and call your own at the end of a long day. The security of a home is crucial to our growth as individuals and families. With rents continuing to rise and incomes not keeping up, many critical frontline and essential workers are finding it increasingly difficult to find homes in the communities where they work. A housing market which accommodates the diversity of workers needed to support a community is an essential element of a thriving, healthy and vibrant one.

My Board colleagues and I recently dedicated more than \$100 million and doubled our affordable housing production goal from 5,000 to 10,000 new units by 2034. The Board is also committed to preserving the affordability of the approximately 9,000 market affordable multifamily units. The Board's Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force has made recommendations to preserve existing affordable housing — in-



Storck

cluding addressing the unique challenges and opportunities of manufactured (mobile) home communities.

In the Mount Vernon District, we have many projects underway, including North Hill (216 multifamily and 63 senior units), The Arden (126 units); and the

preservation of Cityside Huntington Metro Apartments (569 units) and The Landings I & II (292 units) as affordable housing. We also continue to look for new and creative opportunities to utilize or repurpose County-owned properties. The Beacon Hill Emergency and Supportive Housing is an example where we are co-locating County services with various levels of supportive housing to increase successful transitions for our neediest residents.

I understand and have been involved with supporting this basic need since the 1970s when I first led nonprofits' housing support efforts. Later, as President of Good Shepherd Housing's Board, I led GSH to begin purchasing afford-

able housing units to better serve its clients. I am very proud to say that Good Shepherd Housing just celebrated its 50th housing purchase! Housing is basic for us all, while the strongest communities are built on homeownership. Homeownership is essential for building generational wealth and stable, vibrant, welcoming communities, enabling folks to reach their full potential.

In our District, which has both the most expensive and least expensive homes, and with Fort Hunt named the healthiest housing market in Virginia, we understand the importance of having a full spectrum of housing options. Maintaining this balance matters as we support our existing beautiful homes and neighborhoods while revitalizing the Richmond Highway corridor, creating its new vibrant, walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use and mixed-income developments. As your Supervisor, I am committed to affordable housing for all and to Leaving No One Behind as our revitalization continues, ensuring that folks who live here now, or who want to, will have a home.

# What to Expect on July 1st

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

**T**he days are getting longer, and it is clear that summer is finally here to stay. There is much to be excited about over the warm months ahead, and included in that are the numerous new laws slated to go into effect next Friday, July 1st.

As you may know, on July 1st, Virginia's next fiscal year begins (FY23), and laws passed during the 2022 Regular Session become law. In a standard year, all laws passed during a regular session of the General Assembly take effect on the first day of July, unless another date is specified. Some laws may be passed with "emergency clauses", meaning they go into effect immediately upon the Governor's signature. Others may be passed with a delayed enactment, meaning they go into effect at another specified time, and yet others are passed with reenactment clauses, meaning they must be passed again in a consecutive year



Krizek

in order to become law. Below I highlight some laws going into effect next week, and what the consequences are that they will have on the Commonwealth.

❖ My legislative package (six bills) on charitable gaming will go into effect, ensuring that Virginia's charitable gaming system is a transparent and fair system, free from conflicts of interests, with clear definitions, serious penalties, a powerful enforcement arm, and with the goal of raising funds for charity as first and foremost in mind. The enactment of these laws could not come at a more appropriate time, as cases have recently come to light where unscrupulous gaming operators extended predatory and irresponsible lines of credit to vulnerable gamblers, sometimes leaving them hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. Under these new strict laws, these practices are illegal.

❖ Delegate Carr's HB 632 (I originally copatroned Delegate

Watts' similar HB 367, which was rolled into this legislation) will finally go into effect, allowing law enforcement to ticket drivers whose vehicles create excessive noise. Drivers who purposefully alter their vehicles by removing sound reduction exhaust mechanisms have created a scourge of noise across Virginia, but this is especially felt here in our community near the Beltway and along Richmond Highway. This will be

a welcome policy change. HB 740 makes it a Class 6 felony for a person to willfully break, injure, tamper with, or remove any part or parts of any vehicle, aircraft, boat, or vessel to remove a catalytic converter or the parts thereof.

❖ Road safety is further improved with House Bill 67, which requires drivers who are transporting oversized loads that pro-

SEE WHAT TO EXPECT, PAGE 7

## Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name.

Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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# Kite Flying Fun But Brings Hazards

**Fliers urged to manage their lines for human and wildlife safety.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Last week park users were concerned to find large quantities of nylon filament drifting from trees, wrapped in lower growing plants, and balled along trails and entrance roads to Laurel Hill Park, at both the Central Green and Equestrian Center. Ecologists working on park projects there also found the filament and abandoned kites in meadow and reforestation areas. The level of concern increased after a biker using the trails was injured, sustaining a minor neck injury, when coming into contact with the line under tension.

The abandoned kite lines present a hazard to bikers and other users of the park, and to wildlife, particularly birds and reptiles, which may easily become entangled. Though beautiful in flight, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency advises to be aware of the hazards kites and their tethering lines can present. "Kites put extreme tension on the kite lines making them razor sharp. Any line under tension can cause severe cuts, bruises and burns if it comes into contact with anyone at any speed." They advise against flying kites over people, who may be hit at speed, or near highways where kites may cause a distraction or accidentally land causing an accident. Nor should they be flown near power lines, or trees. Kites cut, when tangled, may fall on the trees and bring string lines with them. Those lines can entangle birds causing their death.

Speaking for Fairfax County Park Authority, Judith Pedersen says, "We hope that people using any recre-



Laurel Hill Park's Central Green provides an open area for kite flying (March 2022)

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

ational equipment for kites or fishing or any activity in parks, consider the impacts on wildlife and fauna, collect any debris and act as citizen stewards."

## Earliest Written Account of Kite Flying - China 200 B.C.

Source: American Kitefliers Association

Kite flying is a popular pastime in the United States; with the coming of March winds, a rite of Spring. The American Kitefliers Association, a national group, recognizes and standardizes judged flying competitions, including flying single sport kites to music, teams of sport kites, and flying precision maneuvers. Competitions draw teams and enthusiasts, with people flying trains of multiple kites with long tails being particularly popular. The group will host its 43rd national convention in nearby Ocean City, Md. Oct. 10-15. <https://www.kite.org/>

The AKA advises, "It is each kite flier's responsibility to fly safely so that we continue to be welcome at our favorite windy places. Clean up after yourself. Take all of your materials and trash home with you. Ensure that all kite lines are accounted for at the end of the day so as to not leave any as rubbish." If you see an animal entangled in line or in distress, please contact Fairfax County Animal Protection Police. Report injuries to Fairfax County Park Authority.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Kite line found in park should have been removed to prevent injury to humans, birds and other wildlife



Bike rider using Laurel Hill Park trail was injured when encountering an unseen kite line under tension left in the park.

## Frontier Drive Extension and Braided Ramps Fairfax County

Joint Virtual Location & Design Public Hearing and NEPA Public Hearing

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 7 p.m.  
<https://www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive>

Find out about plans to extend Frontier Drive (Route 2677) from its southern terminus at Franconia-Springfield Parkway (Route 289) to Loisdale Road (Route 789) to relieve congestion and improve access to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station and surrounding area. The project includes a four-lane divided roadway with a shared-use path and sidewalk, new braided ramps at the Frontier Drive/Franconia-Springfield Parkway interchange, a new intersection at Metro Access Road with Frontier Drive, reconfigured sections of the Metro station circulatory road and access to parking garage entrances, all existing access points will be maintained. This project will involve changes in limited access control.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration and will be available for public review and comment. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is included in the EA.

VDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) will host the joint public hearing as a virtual/online meeting. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at <https://www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive> and <https://wmata.com/plansandprojects>. The project team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

Review the EA and other project information and meeting details on the VDOT webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-1794 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel. Materials are also available to review at Metro's Headquarters, 300 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024. Please call ahead at 202-962-2511 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by July 29, 2022 via the comment form on the VDOT or Metro website, by phone at 202-962-1901, by mail to Mr. Zamir Mirza, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or Office of the Secretary, WMATA, 300 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024, or by email to [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov) and [franconia@wmata.com](mailto:franconia@wmata.com). Please reference "Frontier Drive Extension and Braided Ramps" in the subject line.

VDOT and Metro ensure nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775. ASL interpretation will be provided. Languages other than English interpretation/translation services can be provided free of charge upon request. For ASL assistance, contact Metro at 202-962-2511.

State Project: 2677-029-204, P101, R201, C501 UPC: 106742  
Federal: STP/F-5B01 (030)

In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held Monday, September 19, 2022 at the same time.



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# Fairfax City Might Change Confederate-related Street Names

FROM PAGE 3

pales in comparison to 400 years of slavery and 150 years of systemic racism.”

Ben Hardington of Ranger Road said what’s important is the totality of history. “We have an opportunity to put down our own marker [acknowledging] that we hear from our residents that something makes them feel unwelcome, uncomfortable or unsafe,” he said.

“We use historical references to let people know what we associate with – and in the ’60s, when these streets were named, that was the case. Ranger Road wasn’t named after other types of rangers. What do we want future historians to think about our values?”

Noting that he was a SAG member, Jay Lamb said, “Many of the street names we considered were related to confederate military officers who perpetuated a system that was brutal and inhumane. People in Mosby Woods like the names, Ranger and Traveler; but the fact that they’re where they are, has brought attention to them. Street names aren’t the repository of history, but our group’s efforts are an attempt to [right the wrong].”

“I’m in full support of changing all the names,” said Michael Gillespie of Plantation Parkway. “It’s a human consideration; what do we want others to think about our community? It’s an investment in making our City more inclusive and welcoming to others. I wonder what people think of our City when they see names like Confederate Lane or Lee Highway.”

President of the Mosby Woods Community Assn., Robert Reinsel lives on Singleton Circle. “We’ve held several conversations in our



The Sherman Street and Confederate Lane sign in front of a weeping willow.

community, took a poll in April and made a report,” he said. “Sixty percent of the community is in favor of changing Plantation Parkway, Confederate Lane and Reb Street. Some 494 individuals were polled, and 47 percent responded. The results for the other names were reversed, with 60 percent not wanting them changed.”

Ranger Road’s Joe Messa said, “I have no love for the Confederacy; and because of the hatred they inspired and the division they caused, I’m in favor of changing the three street names Mr. Reinsel mentioned. Ranger and Traveler aren’t words attached to slavery and the Confederacy. And Traveler [Robert E. Lee’s favorite horse] didn’t have a choice in which side he fought for.”

A Mosby Woods resident on Scout Drive, Maureen Borsati wants the names of her community and all its streets changed. “It’s a great neighborhood, but the name is outdated and offensive. It

doesn’t represent the best of us, and we should define a new future for our neighborhood. It’s not what we want to be known for.

“If a new neighborhood were to be built with those names, they wouldn’t be welcomed. To not change their names is to approve them in 2022 – and in my opinion, that’s not tolerable.”

Also speaking was 10-year-old Lyra Gillespie of Plantation Parkway. “Street names can hurt people,” she said. “We learned about the Civil War in fourth grade, and our street names are offensive and impact children, too. One time, a friend and I wanted to write a letter to our role model, but we didn’t send it because we thought our street name would offend her.”

Next, Luke Waldron said, “I’m in an interracial relationship, and her cousin recently asked why we had a street named Plantation Parkway. She asked, ‘Wouldn’t I have worked there?’ and it broke my heart. Many cities have Martin



The corner of Reb Street and Confederate Lane.



The intersection of Scout Drive and Tecumseh Lane on a residential

Luther King or Arthur Ashe drives; we name streets after what we believe in. Plantation shouldn’t be one of them.”

“Black friends coming to my house tell me the names Confederate and Plantation are painful to them, so I think they should

be changed,” said Brigade Drive’s Joyce Garland.

Mosby Woods community member Chuck Monaeg said, “By not changing the names, we’ve discouraged Black people from moving into our neighborhood. We weren’t

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## Far From All Residents Support Changing Street Names

FROM PAGE 2

history will be uprooted. You don’t change your name if your brother kills someone – you create something better out of it. These names don’t continue to represent slavery in our community – I will not tolerate that. This is the illusion of change and inclusion. Build affordable housing and foster inclusive dialogues in our community.”

Atlanta Street’s Warren Bose of Mosby Woods called the street-renaming process “disruptive. Neighbors and family members are forced to take sides. You can’t fix the present by attempting to change the past.”

“The SAG didn’t explore the diversity in our neighborhood and suppressed our community’s opposition,” said Confederate Lane’s Jeff Wilson. “Seniors, the disabled and others on fixed incomes would be hard-hit to pay for all these [address] changes. It’s unfair to have these changes forced on us without giving us the benefit to vote on

it. Please take back this process before anyone else is harmed.”

“Why are you pitting homeowner against homeowner?” asked Plantation Parkway’s John Russert. “In our neighborhood petition, 67 percent said don’t do anything – and we’re not even done with it, yet.”

Shiloh Street’s Dennis Egan said, “We’ve been discussing street names as if the way people treat their neighbors depends on what their street is named. Table the street-renaming discussion.”

Ranger Road’s Kristen Erkum said her neighborhood lacked outreach about this issue. “I just got a flyer telling me to go to the Engage Website,” she said. “We didn’t choose our neighborhood because of Confederate ideals, but because of our home’s price and the nice neighborhood. Atlanta, Sherman and Tecumseh streets are allowed to stay – and William Tecumseh Sherman killed American Indians and others. Re-

move Ranger Road from the renaming process.”

Neighbor Chris Snyder said, “If you asked someone if Confederate or Reb are offensive, they’d say yes, but not Ranger. And many people don’t even know who Mosby even was, or what he stood for.”

“When I was a kid, I wanted to be a park ranger, and I have a cousin who’s an Army ranger,” said Tammy Tayman. “So I was thrilled with the name, ‘Ranger Road.’ Later, I saw Plantation Parkway and Reb Street – which has no addresses on it and is just a one-block connector. Only three names are really bad – Confederate, Plantation and Reb. Change the name of the Mosby Woods subdivision, and then nothing hurts.”

“Unless somebody tells you, you need to be offended by Singleton, you wouldn’t be,” said Singleton Circle’s Ann Marie Berabo.

Also opposed to changing their street’s name, her husband Alan said Singleton was

Mosby’s middle name. “He was also a representative to Hong Kong, appointed by former Union General Ulysses S. Grant,” said Alan Berabo. “Mosby Woods is a community where people feel welcome and safe.”

Tim Tilson said 10 of the 11 households on Traveler Street are against changing its name. “We have Vietnamese, Korean and Lebanese families who had no idea what this was about,” he said. “And we all get along well.”

“Does changing street names affect our ability to accept people?” asked Confederate Lane’s Malcolm Mercer. “Spend the money elsewhere in the City.”

His wife Irina said, “It’s not just about names, but the community, itself. We never thought about our street name when we moved here. This name change is a politically correct thing to do, but we should instead put up a sign saying everyone’s welcome.”

# NEWS

## Frontier Drive Extension Inches Closer to Transportation Option in Springfield

### Metro wants public input on this future transportation improvement.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**M**etro is looking into traffic flow challenges as the Frontier Drive extension project moves closer to implementation in the next few years, opening up a transportation venue just south of the Springfield Town Center.

Currently Frontier Drive skirts the eastern side of Springfield Town Center, under the Springfield-Franconia Parkway to the Metro station. When the project is finished, Frontier Drive will extend south, past the newly opened Transportation Security Administration building and Loisdale Estates community, and link to Loisdale Road where a traffic signal began operating about 18 months ago. This opens access to the Northern Virginia Community College Medical Campus as well.

With the Frontier Drive extension, transportation officials are looking to possible include the following modifications to the Metro

station:

Adding two new signalized intersections; one at Metro Access Road and Frontier Drive, and one reconfigured intersection to improve traffic flow and operations.

Reconfiguring sections of the Franconia-Springfield Station circulatory road and access to parking garage entrances (all existing access points would be maintained).

Adding three new bus bays at Franconia-Springfield Station.

Adding a new bus layover facility.

Eliminating the pick-up/drop-off area at Franconia-Springfield Station.

Currently transportation officials are seeking public input on these changes and are planning a virtual meeting to discuss the findings on July 1. This project is led by Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County.

More Details Including How to Provide Feedback: <https://www.wmata.com/about/news/Public-comment-frontier-drive-extension.cfm>

## Time To Make a Change?

FROM PAGE 6

in the room when these streets were named in the early '60s, but that shouldn't stop us from doing the right thing now. And this is also about the people who aren't here and would be ashamed to move into our neighborhood."

Beverly McNeill, who is Black, said, "Every time I go past one of those streets, I get a sick feeling in my stomach. The names should reflect all of this area's rich history. I've studied African American and Civil War history, and I'm a descendant of enslaved people, plus a Confederate soldier.

"I honor him because, when his son had a child with an African American woman, he supported that child after his father died. The names of community leaders of all religious and ethnic groups should be on streets, parks and

other things in our City so our children have role models who look like them."

Jim Gillespie of Old Lee Hills said, "I support the name changes. This community had a red-neck, bigoted reputation, back in the day. But it's come a long way in terms of inclusiveness and has moved past that. Mosby Woods will do that, too, and continue to be a strong community."

"When we moved here, 26 years ago, we fell in love with the City," said Brenda Carter. "But we didn't move into Mosby Woods, and I don't take my children there, because the names are off-putting. Fairfax City is a wonderful place, and our street names should reflect that to the world."

Council members will now evaluate everything they've heard and make their decision on June 28.

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

JULY 6-29

Host French Teens. Ten volunteer [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

families are needed to host French students from July 6-29. Enjoy an international experience and help promote international understanding and worldwide friendships, Call Tiffany 484-347-3459. Visit the website: <https://www.smored.com/n2csd>

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

# Village Square at Crosspointe

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## NOW THRU AUG. 27

Summer Saturdays. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road Lorton. Explore history in different ways with this drop-in summer program. Each Saturday will have a host of different activities around a different theme. Savor history, dig in the dirt, and play games as we learn about the 18th century at Gunston Hall. Visit the website: <https://gunstonhall.org/events/summer-saturdays-2/>

## JUNE 23-26

Parish Yard Sale. 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. At St. Mary of Sorrows Parish Center, 5222 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. St. Mary of Sorrows Parish Yard Sale will be full of great treasures in Furniture, Art, Jewelry, Antiques, Household & Garden, Toys, Books, Sports Equipment, Dishes, Holiday and more. Cost: \$10 for Thursday preview; free Friday-Sunday.

## THURSDAY/JUNE 23

Lunafest. 7 p.m. At Angelika Film Center, 2911 District Avenue, Fairfax. A film festival featuring eight short films by, for and about women, and fund-raiser for Girls on the Run of NOVA. This year's stories are told from a variety of perspectives that champion women and gender nonconforming individuals, highlighting their aspirations, accomplishments, resilience, strength, and connection. Tickets and Information: <https://bit.ly/GOTRNOVALUNAFEST2022>

## FRIDAY/JUNE 24

Once Upon a Prom. 7-11 p.m. Safe Space NOVA, a local nonprofit organization benefiting LGBTQIA+ youth, is hosting the inclusive prom at The St. James Sports, Wellness and Entertainment Complex, 6805 Industrial Rd. Springfield. This Student Ambassador organized Pride Prom is unique in that it combines Action (LGBTQ+ advocacy), Compassion (mental health providers will be on call for the event and a quiet board game room will be available), Education (local affirming organizations will be on hand sharing information), and Celebration. The event is open to all students (grades 9-12) in Northern Virginia and the surrounding region. Admission includes food, drink, photography, and prom swag. The prom will also include a live DJ, dancing, suspended ropes course, rock climbing, local vendors, trampolines, door prizes, drag shows, and much more. Tickets: <https://www.cognitofirms.com/SafeSpaceNOVA/OnceUponAProm>

## FRIDAY/JUNE 24

Seán Heely Celtic Trio. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Mason District Park Amphitheater, 6621 Columbia Pike in Annandale. As a champion fiddler, singer, composer and arranger, Heely is a creatively versatile and captivating young artist. He is a U.S. National Scottish Fiddle champion, as well as an award-winning Irish fiddler and singer in the folk and Gaelic traditions of Scotland and Ireland. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 25

Santi Budaya Concert. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Ossian Hall Park, 7900 Heritage Drive, Annandale.



The Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton will hold a Fireworks Celebration on Saturday, July 2.

Stemming from a 200+ year performance arts lineage directly from Java, Indonesia, Santi Budaya preserves the best of Indonesian dance culture with a diverse group of highly trained dancers, musicians and the most lavish costumes seen in the area. Call (703) 324-SHOW (7469) before leaving home for inclement weather updates.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 25

MAD Science Washington. 10:30-11:15 a.m. At Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, Fairfax. Experience foggy dry ice storms and discover how giant beach balls can float in the air! Kids and adults will be amazed by sizzling, shivering scissors and special bubbly showers! Website: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

## SATURDAY/JUNE 25

Bachelor Boys Band. 7:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Enjoy a stand-up comedy opening act, followed by a fun concert by the Bachelor Boys Band. All performances are free. The Summer Entertainment Series is sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## JUNE 25-26

Amateur Radio Field Day. 2-11 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Northern Virginia Ham Radio Operators demonstrate modern capabilities for wireless and emergency communications and the Vienna Wireless Society participates in 2022 National Field Day. Local amateur radio operators ("hams") will join thousands nationwide to show off their amateur-radio and emergency-communications capabilities. The Vienna Wireless Society with members around Northern Virginia will have its Field Day site at Burke Lake Park. Enter the park at the traffic light just south of the Burke Lake Golf Center on Route 123. Look for tents immediately on the left of the road before the park entrance. Visit the website: <https://viennawireless.net/wp/>

## SATURDAY/JUNE 25

The Great Zucchini. 10-10:45 a.m. A Burke Lake Park Amphitheater, 7316 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Blue Sky Puppet Theater features audience participation and humor for all ages. With a hilariously relatable story of sibling squabbles and a vegetarian wolf who's uninterested in pigs, this puppet theater will have the whole family clutching their sides with laughter. Concerts are held outdoors and may be canceled due to inclement weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

ent weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 25

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. 10-10:45 a.m. At Mason District Park Amphitheater, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Come out for an engaging show by the FSO Percussion Duo in Dance to the Beat and the musical clown Cowbells. This exciting performance will demonstrate the basics of percussion, and it will feature a variety of fun instruments, including a snare drum, cymbals, xylophone, cowbell and castanets. Kids will love dancing and singing along to new and familiar tunes, such as "Baby Shark," "Wheels on the Bus" and more. Concerts are held outdoors and may be canceled due to inclement weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## SUNDAY/JUNE 26

U.S. Army Blues Band. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Mason District Park Amphitheater, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Featuring the U.S. Army Blues, part of the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own." The premier jazz ensemble comprises exceptional musicians from across the nation, and they strive to fulfill their mission through public concerts, educational outreach and the preservation of the tradition of America's unique art form: jazz. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## SUNDAY/JUNE 26

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Mary Rouse will speak about one of the oldest houses in Burke, known as Mulberry Hill (ca. 1790), on today's Windsor Way.

## JUNE 28 TO OCT. 17

Hummingbird Photo Exhibition. At Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. For those who can't get enough of the beauty of hummingbirds, a group of local photographers are mounting an exhibition this summer at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. The title of the show is "A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," and it will feature works from more than 20 area artists and include hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. All profits from the sale of photos will be donated to the Friends of Green Spring, a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the gardens and furthering public education and outreach.

## FRIDAY/JULY 1

National Concert Band of America. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Mason District Park Amphitheater, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Kick off Fourth of July weekend by joining the National Concert Band of America on July 1, 2022. Founded by former members of the four D.C. military bands, the National Concert Band of America strives to perform a wide variety of music in the character of great American concert bands for the enjoyment of all audiences. Their lineup ranges from Bach to Sousa to Gershwin and everywhere across the musical spectrum. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

### 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](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

### ONGOING

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit or-

ganization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org). STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia

as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11





PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

This tree is at least 100 years old, said Alan Ford of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

## Naturalists Highlight Wildlife In Path of Trail Construction

Can Cinder Bed Bikeway be in harmony with ecosystem? Bike group supports the new trail.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

There are several battles going on in the thick forest off Beulah Street in the Island Creek area that has residents, activists and insects in an uproar.

The American Holly tree is trying to grow fruit for the birds, the native blueberry plant is seeking enough sun to produce fruit, the English Ivy is a harmful invasive plant that's just in the way. The Cinder Bed Bikeway project is the elephant in the room that is planned to be built soon regardless of how the ecosystem is disrupted.

The bikeway is partially built now, but the last section, "Segment Six," will cut through the thick forest, eliminating several trees, undergrowth species vital to the birds, and tranquility that many seek in this area. The

plan calls for path lighting in the woods which will include lots of digging and eliminating cover for many that depend on a dark night when they feed.

"Lighting in the woods is something we're concerned about but not the only thing," said Renee Grebe of the Audubon Naturalist Society who was recently on a tour through this forest led by Alan Ford, the president of the Virginia Native Plant Society's Potomac Chapter. Preserving the environment is difficult in the face of transportation and development, including the Ciderbed Bikeway plan. "The process to build this trail doesn't address the environmental concerns," Grebe said. "The car infrastructure seems untouchable."

The trail is supported by Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, "The proposed trail will

SEE NATURALISTS, PAGE 10

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# Naturalists Highlight Wildlife

FROM PAGE 9  
benefit all future users, whether they travel by bike, on foot, wheelchair, or other active transportation mode," said Bruce Wright of FABB in a letter published in the Connection in March. "The proposed trail is included in the County Bicycle Master Plan and the Countywide Trails Plan and has been in the works for many years."

Ford led a group of about 15 Island Creek and Amberleigh residents on one of the many dirt paths down the hill towards Long Branch which will parallel the bikeway all the way to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. The bikeway is partially in the Mount Vernon District and partially in Lee District, so it's on both Supervisor Rodney Lusk's (D-Lee) and Supervisor Dan Storck's (D-Mount Vernon) radar.

So far, they've been voicing their concerns but haven't seen any options from officials. "We're working to open that conversation," said Grebe.

Also on the walk with the Island Creek residents were Betsy Martin of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Philip Lakusa of the Friends of Accotink Creek and Ann Bennett of the Sierra Club.

On the trail, Ford pointed out a rare plant called Indian Pipes, a few 100-year-old native trees and the dreaded "Oriental Bittersweet," another invasive species. "It strangles trees," he said. Another plant he identified was sassafras, he called "the original fruit for root beer."

According to the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway project will provide a continuous shared use path between Newington Road and the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. A shared use path will be constructed along the west side of Cinder Bed Road, connect to an existing trail through Fairfax County Park Authority property, and then continue through private property to tie into the trail at the end of Barry Road that leads to the Franconia/Springfield Metro Station. Construction will include two pedestrian bridges to cross Long Branch. The project length is approximately two miles.

At the northern end, the trail will connect to Barry Road and nearby residents currently use that trail to get to the Metro station. Construction on the Bikeway is scheduled to begin in November this year and be completed in May 2024. The total price tag is \$14,750,000.

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# OPINION

## What to Expect on July 1st

FROM PAGE 4

trude from the sides of the vehicle by at least 4 inches or from the back by at least 4 feet, to mark the load with orange or red warning flags. This bill will keep our drivers more aware of hazards on the road around them and takes effect July 1, 2023.

❖ We further protect our communities with House Bill 283 and Senate Bill 467, sponsored by Delegate Brewer and Senator Vogel, which establish training standards for law enforcement to recognize, prevent, and report human trafficking. Comprehensive training for our officers on human trafficking will help increase awareness about this criminal enterprise and reduce its incidence. I am glad to see laws such as this go into effect that complement my successful creation two years ago of the position of the State Trafficking Response Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

❖ Senate Bill 755, introduced by Senator Lucas, admits that our judicial system makes mistakes by compensating wrongfully incarcerated people \$55,000 per year of incarceration, adjusted for inflation. The bill requires 25% of the total compensation be paid immediately, with the remainder to be paid out over the next ten years. The bill also provides an income tax subtraction for any compensation awarded to the wrongfully incarcerated person.

❖ We also protect our youth from violence with HB 741, presented by Delegate Bell, which requires local schools to create detailed and accurate floor plans for school safety audits. This bill will enhance the security of our schools through the creation of more informed safety protocols and increase protection of our children at school. Also from Delegate Bell, HB 750 will prohibit any law enforcement agency in the Commonwealth from establishing a formal or infor-

mal quota that requires a law-enforcement officer to make a specific number of arrests or issue a specific number of summonses within a designated period of time.

❖ Delegate Roem's HB 925 requires health insurers, corporations providing health care coverage subscription contracts, health maintenance organizations, and the Commonwealth's Medicaid program to provide coverage for medically necessary prosthetic devices.

❖ In changes to workers compensation laws, HB 392 extends the date by which COVID-19 causing the death or disability of a health care provider is presumed to be an occupational disease compensable under the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act. This date is extended to December 31, 2022. Another bill goes into effect which expands cancer presumption benefits for our firefighters who are at a far higher risk for developing cancer than the general public.

❖ In education, Delegate Roem's HB 583 requires each school board to adopt policies that prohibit the school board or any school board employee from denying a student the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular school activity because the student cannot pay for a meal at school or owes a school meal debt.

This year's General Assembly was filled with victories and defeats, with compromises and on-going stalemates. While I was dissatisfied with some of the bills passed, a majority of the bills this year were a victory, albeit small ones for the most part, and I was glad to help our Mount Vernon and Lee community by voting for legislation to protect our residents and improve our lives in this wonderful Commonwealth we call home. As always, it is my honor to represent the good people of the 44th (and future 16th) District.

### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 8

and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

**Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed.** Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriend-A-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

**Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum,** 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteers@fairfax-station.org or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

**RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria,** offers a wide array of opportunities

for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

**Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke** serves those 50 and older who no longer drive. Volunteer drivers are needed for trips (Monday-Friday) to medical appointments and companion shopping within the Fairfax/Burke area. Office workers are needed to answer phones in the SCFB office (Monday-Friday) to match drivers and those who need rides. Call 703-323-4788.

**Positive Parenting Strategies Course.** At PHILLIPS, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS' counselors. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Stryjewski at 703-658-9054.

**Thermal Camera Loan Program.** Learn where the energy is leaking out of the home with a special attachment for the iPhone or Android. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/energy or call 703-324-5955 for more.

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## Left To My Own Devices - Literally



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I guess I had no real idea about the true seriousness of my condition as a stage IV, papillary thyroid cancer patient until I received an unsolicited phone message from my healthcare provider earlier today. The message was from a staff member at my HMO advising me that due to a grant, I would be eligible to receive - at no cost, to include monitoring for one year, a medical alert device. If I accept their offer and utilize the device, I'll have more than "the clapper" to ask for help. I'll have a real-life medical alert GPS enabled device, whose sole function is to assist me in the event of a mishap or misstep so I will never be left waiting or wanting should I need emergency/immediate assistance and be unable to request it myself/can't get up (press a button for help, I guess). Apparently, in my greatest hours of need, I will now have a resource which could save my life. This wouldn't bother me if it wasn't part of a pattern.

First, I received an email reminder from my internal medicine doctor reminding/encouraging me to get/update my medical directive - which I don't have by the way. A 'medical directive,' if you're not familiar with such matters, is basically a set of instructions for whomever (family/health-care team) provided by the patient directing his or her end-of-life decisions. As you might imagine, it eliminates a whole host of potential problems/complications. It's a prudent precaution to have in place so that decisions can be made in accordance with the wishes of the patient. And who among us wouldn't prefer that their wishes - especially at death, be honored and respected.

Then, a few weeks later, earlier today in fact, I receive this message about a medical alert device. Since no one is telling me anything - directly, am I to assume that someone is not telling me something, indirectly? I mean, I am a cancer patient over a certain age. I imagine I'm in a higher risk category, certainly higher than someone under 65 who hasn't been diagnosed with cancer. I get that I'm at a greater risk but is there something else that I'm not being told. I was told I was "terminal" once before when I was initially diagnosed with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer back in late February 2009. Having been re-diagnosed a few years back as a stage IV papillary thyroid cancer patient, am I once again "terminal?" And if I am, can someone please tell me. I'd like to know without reading between the lines. I'd like to exactly read what's on the line. I don't want to guess. I don't want to wonder. As I've said to my oncologist before: "Give it to me straight, doc. I can take it." I can tell you - from personal experience, it's the not-knowing which is difficult. Taking one's disease day-by-day and not being too high or too low and trying to roll with all the various punches and not put any carts before any hearses, has enabled me to balance out my life in spite of the ongoing cancer noise.

I don't want to overreact but receiving these two health-related offers kind of remains me of the joke about the man who was clinging to life sitting atop his house as flood waters raged. As help was offered in one manner or another, he kept turning everybody down saying God would provide. Eventually, he drowns and upon seeing God at the pearly gates asks God why he didn't send help while he was stranded on the roof of his house. God said: "I sent the rowboat. I sent the helicopter." "What were you waiting for?" God asks: "A sign," said the drowning victim.

I don't think I'm drowning, exactly, but I seem to be getting offers to help someone who might be drowning. I wish I knew the reason for this recent outreach. I hope I'm not neglecting a sign.

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

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