

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Herndon ♦ ^{Oak Hill} Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Doggy Swim at Dogwood Pool

PAGE 8

John Bergmann brought Goose, his adult son's shepherd. Goose dove nonstop into the pool to retrieve tennis balls.



Macbeth in the Great Outdoors

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Principals and Pups

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CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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Virginia Education on Right Track?

BY DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



Virginia Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera is a miracle worker if we are to believe her opinion column, "Virginia's Education Future is Now on the Right Track," in the Washington Post in mid-August. Just eight months after taking her job, the Secretary of Education is trying to knock down a strawman of education concerns that she and her boss Governor Glenn Youngkin set up.

Her assertion that the administration's commitment "that every family has access to a quality education that prepares their children for success in life" is hardly a new idea. Nor is the objective that all children achieve to their full potential an original idea. The Secretary acknowledged in her column Virginia's "reputation and overall high performance" but claimed that there has been "a recent slip in comparison with other states on a range of academic achievement measures." I share her concern that there was a decline in educational attainment during the pandemic in Virginia

and in every school system in the country. Likewise there has been a challenge among all school systems about the achievement gap among minority students. We need to look truthfully where Virginia schools were when the new administration came to town.

According to WalletHub (WalletHub.com), a company that specializes in complex statistical analyses, Virginia had the 4th best schools in the Nation in 2022 based on 32 key metrics they considered. Only Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey had better scores on quality and safety of schools than Virginia. Intelligent.com used key metrics related to performance, safety, community, investment, class size, and attendance for all 50 states and ranked Virginia 5th in academic performance and 6th overall of the best schools in the Nation. Scholaroo.com used 42 key indicators to compare school systems across the country, and they ranked Virginia as the 5th best among all the factors.

How were Virginia schools on the wrong track that needed to be righted? One big

criticism the administration made of school programs was the emphasis on equity, the effort to have all students succeed in their academic work. They also used the conservative dog-whistle of critical race theory that only persons with the most active imaginations could see. They also lamented the few charter schools in the state as being a weakness regardless of the broad range of choices in the public schools. Governor Youngkin named the Wyoming State Superintendent, Jillian Balow, to the same job in Virginia. She comes with a reputation of being opposed to critical race theory wherever it may exist or be imagined to exist. Wyoming schools ranked 20th, 33rd, and 24th on the three rankings used above for Virginia schools.

Secretary Guidera ended her opinion column by declaring that "Youngkin has achieved his Day 1 agenda." On Governor Youngkin's Day 1, he had only a political impression of the schools in Virginia clouded by his conservative ideology. Now that the amazing accomplishments of Virginia public schools have been made obvious, the Governor and his staff should not de-rail a system that was on track for student success long before they took office.

CONNECTION

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Publishes: Sep 14, 2022 | Advertising Due: Sep 8, 2022

Our annual Newcomer's and Community Guides, for each of our 8 communities, provides inside facts on what makes each community special, their secret places, their real power players, how to get involved and more. Inside you'll find information about local history, schools, parks, libraries, local people, elected officials, county/city offices, how decisions are made, and other vital community information.

This year's guide will also include a SENIOR LIVING section. We'll cover topics like local senior services, senior villages, cultural and social activities like Senior Olympics, education, jobs and volunteering.

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NEWS



Chantilly High grads Maggie Shircliff and Amro Ibrahim are in City of Fairfax Theatre Co.'s "Macbeth."



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Some of the actors rehearsing a battle scene in "Macbeth."

Macbeth 'Will Grip the Audience'

Chantilly High grads are in outdoor production of 'Macbeth.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Two Chantilly High grads are in City of Fairfax Theatre Co.'s (CFTC) upcoming production of "Macbeth." They are Maggie Shircliff and Amro Ibrahim, who graduated in 2016 and 2020, respectively.

Featuring a cast and crew of more than 30, this chilling tale of witchcraft, power and bloodshed shows what can happen when good people are consumed by insatiable ambition that threatens to destroy a nation.

Performances are Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 8, 9, 10, and Sept. 15, 16, 17, at 7:30 p.m. (rain dates TBD) at Veterans Amphitheater, behind Fairfax City Hall at 10455 Armstrong St. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets, lawn chairs and picnic dinners and enjoy a riveting evening of drama under the stars.

Tickets are adults, \$25; and children, \$15, at <https://www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org/productions/macbeth>. Discounts are available for groups of 12 or more; contact CFTCBoxOffice@gmail.com for details.

Shircliff portrays one of six witches in this production, as well as several other characters. In CFTC's show, three older witches are controlling three younger witches like puppets. "I'm one of the older witches," said Shircliff. "They symbolize how little control we have over our own decisions."

"The younger witches are more fun, like Wednesday Addams, and what you picture as traditional witches. The older ones are more like demons, and you only see their eyes. They're shadowy figures and forces that influence everyone's actions. It's an ensemble feel; we have individual speeches and also really cool moments when we're all speaking together. There are a lot of slow, twisting movements as we control the other witches,"

plus interesting technical elements where we create a star as our witches' symbol."

Enjoying her role, Shircliff said CFTC's version of "Macbeth" offers "an interesting take on the witches, and it's been a fun challenge to explore how to act with my body when people can't see my face."

"This is definitely one of the best cuts of 'Macbeth' I've seen, highlighting the important parts," she added. "And through our movements and expressions, we bring the story to life and make it understandable and enjoyable for everyone. The audience will also like the battle scenes and the unique aspects the directors bring to our show."

Ibrahim also plays several roles, including Murderer One. "He's a sleazeball who'll do anything for money," said Ibrahim. "He does questionable things that have earned him his descriptive name. He's interesting to play because I can get into the darkness of his character."

"In scenes where I can explore more of him through his conversations with others, I get to show more depth to him," continued Ibrahim. "And what's fun is that he's in two of the three fight scenes. I have martial arts experience, and that's helped me with the fight choreography. It allowed me to learn these fight sequences really well and execute them with the grace necessary to be technically safe."

As for the audience, he said people will like the actors' movements onstage and "all the gorgeously choreographed war scenes, which are just as spectacular as any dance. Also, the directors condensed the script so the story moves quickly and will grip the audience right away. This show is the culmination of community theater; the cast loves the process of putting on a play, and I'm enjoying being in the presence of the other actors."

The directors are Stephen Shetler and Julia Tasheva, who are married in real life. He's a classically trained actor, and she was

a mime, puppeteer and dancer, so their combined talents enable the actors to do more than just stand and speak. He's also the lighting director, and she's one of the costume designers and in charge of sound.

"LED lighting lets us change colors and show the time of day and mood of the scene," said Shetler. "It'll be like rock-and-roll and dance lighting, emphasizing the body and space to reinforce the movement. Many times, actors' faces won't be fully seen; the light will come at them from odd angles."

Regarding the music, Tasheva carefully chose each selection to support the mood of the action onstage. As for the costumes, she said, "All our soldiers have armor, and their uniforms are a synthesis of different colors symbolizing their characters' individual qualities."

ual qualities."

A master of movement, she's taught the actors to express themselves with their bodies and gestures. And, she said, "We also use ropes, strings and sticks to show the audience things they don't expect." Even fabric is employed, with a large, red cloth descending over a battlefield to symbolize the bloodshed there.

Overall, said Shetler, "Macbeth was a fairly heroic, trusted man, loved by his friends. But his and his wife's ambition sends them both into a descending spiral of paranoia. When he hears the witches predict he'll become king, he initially thinks, 'OK, if it happens, it happens.' But then he realizes he can take action. So did the witches compel him, or did he do it of his own, free will?"

Route 29 Bridge Northbound over Cub Run Under Repair

'We need to work without the traffic in the way'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Work began in May to rehabilitate the northbound Route 29 bridge over Cub Run in Centreville to improve driver and pedestrian safety and extend the overall life of the bridge. And VDOT recently held an online meeting to update local residents on this project's progress.

The bridge was built in 1954, and Route 29 carries an average of 26,000, combined northbound and southbound vehicles a day at Cub Run. So VDOT is doing some much-needed upgrades and repairs of this 68-year-old bridge.

The improvements include removing and replacing the concrete deck and bridge rails, installing steel beams, rebuilding the concrete pedestals, replacing the bridge bearings and repairing cracks on the underside of the bridge deck and in the pedestals supporting the bridge. Furthermore, a walkway with a barrier will be added and connected to the existing sidewalk just north of the bridge.

"We're building two new parapets, plus a new 7-foot-wide walking path," said VDOT Construction Manager Reed Pinkney. "And the path will be protected by the parapets on each side of it."

That news especially pleased Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully). "When we first heard about this project, people wanted a path where they could walk," she said. "So I'm happy to see that's a part of this project."

SEE CUB RUN BRIDGE, PAGE 5

FCPS PRINCIPALS AND PUPS

FCPS Principals and Pups

SEE MORE, PAGE 5



Mount Vernon: Quander Road School Principal Frank Tranfa Jr.- “This is me, Frank Tranfa, principal at Quander Road School, and my Boston Terrier, Ike. Ike’s favorite thing to do is sunbathe and play with his friend Ozzie, the French bulldog.



Vienna: Kilmer MS Principal Amy Miller and her dogs, Rosie and Pepper.



New FCPS Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid and her dogs Nita, Zeus, and Rufus. All three pups made the cross-country road trip with Dr. Reid from Oregon.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Springfield: Garfield ES Principal April Cage and her dog Beaux, who loves “Frosty Paws.” It’s ice cream for dogs, and he loves to do zoomies around the yard and inside the house. He’s so fast!



Oakton HS Principal Jamie Lane and her dog, Zeus. “Zeus is a three-year-old Great Pyrenees Mountain Dog. Zeus always wants to be in the lead and loves hiking and playing in any rivers or creeks he can find.”



Mount Vernon: Wayneswood ES Principal Katie Cachine with her yellow lab, Wilson, when he was a pup. He’s a Caps fan.



Mount Vernon: Woodlawn ES Principal Laura Elliott and her pup, Milo – “Road trip. Milo enjoys sniffing everything on his walks and cuddles on the couch,” Principal Elliott says.



Mount Vernon: Bucknell ES Principal Rashida Green enjoys kisses and snuggles from her Mini Goldendoodle, Willow Wiggles, as a form of self-care.



Mount Vernon: Bucknell ES Principal Rashida Green – “This is me and my three daughters and Willow Wiggles.”

Thanks to Kathleen Miller, FCPS, who helped gather the snapshots and captions for the “FCPS Principals and Pups” feature in our Pet Connection.

FCPS PRINCIPALS AND PUPS

FROM PAGE 4



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Ft. Belvoir Upper Elementary School Principal Jamey Chianetta and “Beau” (center) are ready for fall football season! Jamey’s husband, James (left), is also FCPS. “Beau is a ‘mutt’ that our son adopted while he was in the Army, while he was stationed at Fort Drum, NY. We don’t know what kind he is, but we suspect he has some Australian Cattle Dog. We’d love to do a doggie DNA kit. Beau LOVES to be outside to catch frisbees, go for long walks, and play in the snow. He loves his treats too, and according to his vet, he needs fewer of them because he’s in a family who loves to treat him. Beau is a snuggler and will kick you off the couch for his favorite spot. He’s the best pup in the world.”

Franconia Elementary Principal Andrew Smith and Lola Jane. “Lola Jane is a 20-month-old Pitbull-Terrier and Beagle mix. She loves finding the squeaker inside her toys, snuggling with family on the couch, and playing tag with her best friends Arlo and Murphy.”



McLean High School Principal Ellen Reilly and her dog Joy Ful, who passed away last year- Principal Reilly had Joy Ful, a mixed breed rescue, for 13.5 years. Joy Ful was the social butterfly of their cul-de-sac. Every afternoon she visited with neighbors to get treats, take a nap at their house, or just stop by for a visit. She sometimes got lucky and stayed for dinner.



Thanks to Kathleen Miller, FCPS, who helped gather the snapshots and captions for the “FCPS Principals and Pups” feature in our Pet Connection.

PETS CONNECTION



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Sarah Selvaraj-D’Souza, president-at-large Reston Association: “Helen is a merle Catahoula leopard hound who is blind and deaf due to irresponsible breeding.”



Sarah Selvaraj-D’Souza, president-at-large Reston Association: “Helen (left) lives with Vicky, the long-haired German Shepherd who was found living on the streets in Iran. Both were purebred rescues who were found as strays. Vicky came from Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation. Helen came from Saved Me Rescue in Philly.”

Cub Run Bridge

FROM PAGE 3

The work area runs from .15 mile east of White Post Road (in the vicinity of Gate Post Estates) to .08 mile west of Paddington Lane (near the London Towne community). The existing bridge is 40 feet wide and 68 feet long, with two equal spans. The northbound portion has two lanes and no sidewalk with a speed limit of 50 mph.

In addition to state and local money, this project is financed with federal, State of Good Repair funds used for maintenance of structures and bridges. Preliminary engineering is expected to cost \$200,000, and construction, \$3.6 million, for a total of \$3.8 million.

The work is being done in three stages: first, the right side of the bridge, then the center and finally the left side. And all of it will happen within the VDOT right-of-way. The contractor is Martins Construction Corp.

Pinkney said the project will also entail some short, 6-to-8-foot lane shifts, back and forth. One already happened, and three others are slated for October, December and January 2023.

He said the plan is to maintain two lanes open in each direction during the traffic shifts. However, there may be occasional, single-lane closures, as necessitat-



A view of where the bridge work is happening along northbound Route 29 over Cub Run in Centreville.

ed by the work. “We have to do the shifts because the bridge is broken into sections,” explained Pinkney. “And we need to be able to work on each section without the traffic in the way.”

Construction hours are planned for 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m., with some night work. The project is anticipated to reach substantial completion by March 20, 2023, with a contract finish date of April 20, 2023. However, times and dates are subject to change, as a result of the weather or other unforeseen events.

Project updates will be available at virginiadot.org/Route29CubRun.

BRIEFS

Personal-Safety Information for Women

The Sully District Police Station’s Crime Prevention Unit will hold a women’s personal-safety presentation Wednesday, Sept. 7, from 7-8:30 p.m., in the station’s community room, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Information will be presented on crime prevention, reducing the opportunity for crime, situational awareness, reducing the risk of an attack, observing your surroundings, developing a plan of attack, and knowing when to use force. Physical techniques won’t be included but will be discussed. Register at <https://bit.ly/personalsafety090722>.

Car Seat Inspections, Sept. 8

Parents may get their children’s car seats inspected on Thursday, Sept. 8, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It’s at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are asked to wear a mask and adhere to social-distancing and safety precautions.

They should also install the child safety seat themselves, so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed, if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly, in the future. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for Sept. 22, at the same place and time.

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Moran-Perez

Centreville Man Charged with Juvenile's Assault

Fairfax County police arrested a local man last Wednesday, Aug. 24, in connection with a child's assault in Alexandria. He is Kevin Moran-Perez, 22, of Centreville.

Police say officers responded that day at 4:23 p.m. to the 5000 block of Caryn Court after Moran-Perez reportedly approached a group of juveniles playing outside near an apartment building.

According to police, "Moran-Perez [allegedly] displayed a knife and grabbed a preteen by the hand. The juvenile was able to break free from [him], and all three juveniles ran away." No one was injured.

Officers found Moran-Perez nearby and arrested him. He was taken to the Adult Detention Center and charged with assault and possession of a schedule I or II drug. He was held without bond and has an Oct. 14 court date.

Resources for parents to discuss the dangers of abduction with their children may be found at the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's Website, <https://www.missingkids.org/education/kidsmartz#resources>.

Detectives continue to investigate this case and are asking anyone with information to call them at 703-256-8035. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by calling 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting "FCCS" plus the tip to 847411, or by going to <http://www.fairfax-crimesolvers.org/>.

Or download the P3 Tips' App, "Fairfax Co Crime Solvers." Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000. If they wish to be contacted by a detective, they should leave their contact information.

— BONNIE HOBBS

CALENDAR



The Concerts on the Green in Great Falls on Sept. 4, 2020 features Hello Cleveland.

REGISTRATION OPEN

2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. Sept. 10-24. Register online by Aug. 31 at www.nvso.us, \$20 for unlimited events. Go to the website for events, rules, eligibility, photos, past results. For information, email nvso1982@gmail.com.

SEPT. 3-4

Middle Eastern Food Festival. At Holy Transfiguration Church, 8501 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Holy Transfiguration Melkite Greek-Catholic Church will host its 29th annual Middle Eastern Food Festival, September 3 and 4, on the church grounds -- 8501 Lewinsville Road, McLean, Virginia. The festival will feature authentic Middle Eastern food, pastries, music and dancing, as well as vendors, church tours, and activities for both children and adults.

Join in the fun from 11 a.m. – 10 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 3 and 12:30 – 5 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 4. Smell the aromas from the outdoor grills, partake of Kibbee, Chicken Shish Kebab, Roast Lamb, Falafel, Fattoush, Hummus, and Stuffed Grape Leaves, or any number of other delicious menu choices. Be sure to save room for dessert and coffee. Some of the mouth-watering Arabic pastries include Baklava, Maamoul, Namoura and Ghraybeh. There also is Atayef, a pancake-like dessert stuffed with a delicious pistachio mixture and rose-water simple syrup. Once you've satisfied your appetite, visit the vendors or go on a church tour. Children, meanwhile, can enjoy the moon bounce, face painting, pony rides and the petting zoo, as well as participate in some of the many games going on throughout the festival. A highlight of the event is the Saturday night, 6:00 p.m. "Hafli" ("party" in Arabic) that will feature live music and dancing. Join us and learn to dance the "Dabke," a traditional folk line dance. The festival will be held rain or shine. Admission and parking are free. To learn more, visit www.MiddleEasternFoodFestival.com.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 4

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring Hello Cleveland – Variety of rock music from the '60s to today. Hosted by Cornerstone Building Services. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 8

Blood Drives Return This Fall. Noon to 5 p.m. McLean Community Center is helping the American Red Cross with Diverse Blood Donations! It is urgent for donors of all ethnicities to support patients in need. Join us and

support the community with your lifesaving blood donation. All donors will receive a \$10 Amazon Gift Card via email. For an appointment, click here or visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor word: HEARTOFGOLD, or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) Eligibility Questions: Call 1-866-236-3276.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 23

Wheel of Fortune Live! At Capital One Hall, Tysons Corner. Guests can audition to go on stage and feel like they stepped into the game show itself. They will have the chance to spin a replica of the Wheel and solve the puzzles on the tour's puzzle-board to win fantastic prizes including \$10,000, a trip to Paris, Hawaii and more. Tickets start at \$51. For tickets, visit www.WheelofFortuneLive.com. Call (800) 514-ETIX (3849).

SATURDAY/OCT. 1

Oktoberfest Vienna. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. At Church Street in Vienna.
3 Stages of Entertainment, Two Beer and Wine Gardens, Great International Food, Free Kids Activities and Games, Car Show, Business Expo, Vendor Market, Handcrafters. Visit the website: ViennaOktoberfest.org.

SATURDAY MORNINGS

Summer Programming for Kids. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Reston Museum, 1639 Washington Plaza, Reston. Reston Museum is launching new summer programming for kids! Visit the Reston Museum to participate in fun and creative activities inspired by Reston's history. Program is free and everyone will receive an Explore Reston packet.

NOW THRU DEC. 31

Crafts for Kids. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Free, themed art projects for children (with guardian) are offered at Reston Art Gallery and Studios every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com

SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER

The Reston Farmers Market (sponsored by the Fairfax Co. Park Authority) will take place at Lake Anne Village in Reston from 8 a.m.-noon. SNAP beneficiaries receive up to \$20 match. Visit <http://restonfarmersmarket.com/>

HERNDON FARMERS MARKET

Thursdays through Nov. 3, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 765 Lynn St., Herndon, VA, 20170 <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/herndon>

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We Need Your Help Again
We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784

And affiliated newspapers

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

Visit connectionnewspapers.com or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>
Connection Newspapers... Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette, Centre View, Potomac Almanac
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What a Difference Five Weeks Makes



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The first call I received from my sister-in-law, Vanessa, from the hospital that Sunday, nearly six weeks ago, was to tell me that my brother, Richard (her husband) had been ambulated to the hospital earlier that day due to pain in his leg which prevented him from walking. The second call from Vanessa a few hours later was to say that the pain in his leg was so severe the doctors were considering amputating it. The third call, even later, was Vanessa crying and saying the doctors didn't think my brother was going to survive the night. With that news, my wife, Dina, and I were on our way to the hospital, Covid rules be damned. (Vanessa had suggested on an earlier call that we wait until further notice. This was officially 'further notice.')

What we saw when we arrived in SICU (Surgical Intensive Care) was my brother lying in a hospital bed, completely sedated in front of a phalanx of IV pumps (eight total) infusing him with everything necessary to sustain his organs, all of which had shut down because of the septic shock which ensued when an infection in his leg shot through him unabated. This occurred because his white blood cell count - after two chemotherapy infusions, was barely measurable, one of the attending physicians told us and left him vulnerable. In addition, he was hooked up to a 24-7 dialysis machine, a ventilator (with a tube inserted in his mouth), a heart monitor, electrodes, a blood pressure cup on his left upper arm, an EEG machine monitoring brain activity, a wound V.A.C. to vacuum out any miscellaneous debris/infected tissue still in-and-around his infected leg, all managed by a full-time nurse. Typically, in the SICU, a nurse covers two patients. However, my brother was so sick that his nurse was not assigned any other patients. Her entire focus was on my brother. As I wrote in a previous column, and it bears repeating, one of the attending critical care physicians characterized my brother as "the sickest patient in the hospital," a hospital whose number of beds exceeds 900. Unable to make any significant progress (get the patient to wake up/respond to instructions) with my brother's condition, he said he had one option left: "a hail Mary," as he called it. It was some sort of infused drug that he said could only be used once. He was out of ideas, otherwise. I certainly can't recall its name, but I believe its color was red.

Well, it worked. Not immediately mind you, but very slowly and occasionally surely; Richard got better. Three weeks later, he was finally transferred from SICU to a regular bed on the wards. Unfortunately, 12 hours or so later, a bleeding event got him transferred back to an ICU, this time it was Medical Intensive Care. After a few days of rest and recovery there, his doctors thought it safe to move him back to the ward, where has remained for the past 10 days or so. And it has been within this private room where his remarkable recovery has really sped up. To the point where there's discussion about transferring him to a rehabilitation facility because he no longer requires the type of hands-on care provided in a regular hospital ward, and it's now considered time/appropriate to rehab his entire body.

Disconnected from nearly every medicine and machine now, and with his trach tube replaced with a plug sort of a thing, he's still not able to walk, but he can sure talk, according to Vanessa who visited him yesterday, as she has every day – and some nights, too. I skipped my visit today because, according to Vanessa, as Richard has been weaned off the ventilator, breathing on his own has been exhausting so all he wants to do is sleep. And he doesn't want me sitting at his side just to hear him snore.

I'll see him tomorrow for sure. It will be the first conversation we'll have had in over a month. I can't wait. I will congratulate and encourage him on a recovery well done, and we'll have a few laughs, but unfortunately, we may not be through the worst of it, oddly enough. Surgery looms (as he's no longer a candidate for chemotherapy, he "failed it" they said), and it's risky, his surgeon said. But due to his amazing recovery, it is possible he is now a candidate for surgery. Who would have thought? A month ago: nobody.

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

RA's Dog Paddle 2022 Paws down the best fun.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

For local dog owners, the end of August and the approach of Labor Day weekend means one thing. It is an opportunity for them to visit dog swims with their four-legged best friends before staff drain and clean the pools. On Saturday, Aug. 27, Reston Association hosted the fourth of its five dog paddles, this one at Dogwood Pool. Dogs were welcome for 90-minute registered visits, sponsored by All Friends Pet Care.

The event proved a fun opportunity for Josh Light of Reston and Bailey. Not only were there other dogs for Bailey to play with on the deck and in the water, but the whipped cream biscuit-topped pup cup provided by Maria Queen, RA Parks and Recreation, added to the experience.

Reston resident John Bergmann brought Goose, his adult son's shepherd. Goose dove nonstop into the pool to retrieve tennis balls.

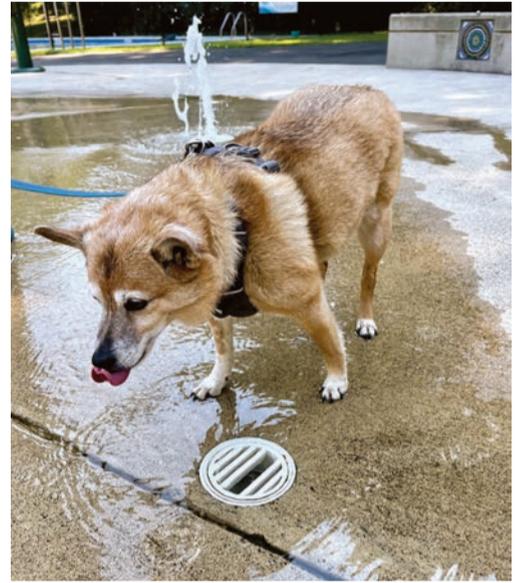
On the other hand, Luna showed she was unsure of the entire water



Bailey of Reston laps a pup-cup as his human, Josh Light of Reston, looks on.



King's other dog, Gibbs the beagle, sniffs a pup-cup offered by Maria Queen, RA Parks and Recreation, and says, "No thank you."



Foxy, a Japanese Sheba-Inu, is a well-muscled, spirited and good-natured dog, according to her human, Larry King of Reston. Foxy, King says, displays a confident yet empathetic personality and enjoys playing and lapping up water at the drain rather than swimming.

experience. Susan Simpson, her human, moved her wary pet away from the group to calmer waters in the deep end. Simpson gently tried

coaxing Luna onto a pup water ramp, but Luna was too scared to complete the final steps. Simpson said that Luna would get in when

she was ready.

Ashleigh Soloff, community event supervisor at Reston Association, said that the last day for

dogs to swim in a pool closed for the season is Saturday, Sept. 24, at Ridge Heights Pool. Register online at reastonwebtrac.org.



Luna is too nervous to take the final steps into the water, even with a doggie ramp.



So she goes off to think about her predicament until she notices a floating frisbee.



In an instant, Luna has jumped into deep water, grasped the frisbee, and begun swimming the entire lap lane with confidence.



Triumphantly, Luna exits at the shallow end, wags her tail and heads to her human.

PHOTO BY **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION



Goose leaps toward the water.



tucks,



and high tails it to the tennis ball,



which he retrieves.