

# CONNECTION McLean and Oakton Vienna

Alex Marcilio from Macaubal, Brazil successfully rides White Dust in the championship round for 86.5 points to win the challenger event at the EagleBank Arena in Fairfax. Jacob Steele of McLean won the fan obstacle course.



## Locals Love Bull Riding

PAGE 6

## Take a Moment, Save a Life

PAGE 3

## Don't Miss The Film Festival

PAGE 7

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SCREENSHOT VIA TAKE A MOMENT - PEDESTRIAN, BIKE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN - YOUTUBE  
**Jeffrey McKay (D), Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chairman**



SCREENSHOT VIA TAKE A MOMENT - PEDESTRIAN, BIKE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN - YOUTUBE  
**Walter Alcorn (D), Hunter Mill District supervisor**

## 'Take a Moment'

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
 THE CONNECTION

**M**otor vehicle crashes, bicycle safety and pedestrian safety in Fairfax County; a new campaign called "Take a Moment," will attempt to address them all at once.

On Sept. 27, Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D); Walter Alcorn (D), Hunter Mill supervisor; Steve Steiner, Hunter Mill resident; Police Chief Kevin Davis; John Lynch, VDOT district engineer; Melanie Meren, school board member; and others gathered at the intersection of Wiehle Avenue and the W&OD Trail to introduce the "Take a Moment-Pedestrian, Bike, and Traffic Safety Campaign."

"This is not just a marketing campaign," McKay said. "We are putting our money where our mouth is."

According to Chief Davis, in a county of 1.2 million and 400 square miles, traffic fatalities today stand at 22. "That's two more than this time last year. Year-to-date, our pedestrian fatalities stand at 13. That is three more than the county had at the same time last year," Davis said. He added that overall, throughout Fairfax County, crashes are down by 400, but the county still has a long way to go. Fairfax County Police issued 5,000 more traffic citations this year compared to the same time last year.

"But we want you to put us out of business. I am sure Chief Butler and the Fire and Rescue Department want you to put them out of business as well when it comes to responding to these often very horrific crashes that happen too often in our community," Davis said. He added that while the number one traffic citation issued in Fairfax County is speeding, the number two traffic citation is failure to obey a traffic device or traffic sign.

McKay says Fairfax County will spend \$100 million on pedestrian safety over the next six years. That total includes \$25 million this year from the county's carry-over budget that the board will consider in the next few weeks.

The Take a Moment campaign is multifaceted. Disconnect while driving, walking, or cycling. Note that school zones and neighborhoods



SCREENSHOT VIA TAKE A MOMENT - PEDESTRIAN, BIKE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN - YOUTUBE

**John Lynch, district engineer, Northern Virginia District, VDOT**

require extra caution. Stop for school buses and let the children board and disembark safely. Drive, walk, and bike with awareness. Make eye contact with pedestrians and cyclists. "All these things are so important and literally only 'take a moment' of our time," McKay said.

McKay described his recent near-miss, pedestrian-vehicle crash that occurred as he was about to cross a street in Alexandria. A driver was looking in the opposite direction from where McKay stood. Before looking around to see if a pedestrian was nearby, the driver pressed the gas pedal and missed him by inches. "I'm one of the lucky ones who took a moment and looked at that car (and) knew that person wasn't making eye contact with me. ... I had to take action to protect myself," McKay said. "We must all take a moment as a community together to stop tragic accidents that are occurring throughout not just our county but really throughout the region and throughout the country."

School board member representative

## Pedestrian, bike, and safety campaign: will it be enough?



SCREENSHOT VIA TAKE A MOMENT - PEDESTRIAN, BIKE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN - YOUTUBE

**Melanie Meren, Hunter Mill District representative, FCPS**

Meren said that schools are responsible for teaching and educating the county's students. Still, students and staff need to arrive safely at school for that to happen. "Please slow down," said Meren. She urged parents to talk to their children, especially those driving, about making safe and wise choices and to take a moment.

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D) said that the timing of the "Take a Moment" campaign in Reston was significant due to the upcoming opening of the Silver Line's next phase. More people will walk and bike from their homes to the Metro, commuting to work, D.C., or Dulles International Airport.

During the campaign's unveiling, construction noise mixed with speakers' remarks. They had assembled on the parallel horse/all-terrain bike trail adjacent to the paved nine-foot-wide asphalt Washington & Old Dominion rail trail. According to Alcorn, the trail will get a new pedestrian bridge over Wiehle Avenue. After comple-

tion, planned for the fall of 2023, the Wiehle Pedestrian Bridge Project would improve vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access to the Wiehle-Reston East Metro station across from Sunset Hills by replacing the "difficult" at-grade crossing over Wiehle. The new bridge would accommodate this location's asphalt W&OD trail and gravel path.

According to the Project Information Sheet, the estimated cost is \$12 million, Federal-State Grant Fund, Fund 5000, and is part of the Reston Metrorail Access Improvement Program.

Steve Steiner, 73, who lives in the Hunter Mill District and is an experienced cyclist, talked about his crash with a car that left him with a concussion, internal injuries, broken ribs, \$100,000 in medical bills, and a \$36,000 airlift to Fairfax Hospital by medivac. It happened at the Fairfax County Parkway Trail intersection and Dulles Toll Road Exit 11. According to Steiner, he entered the intersection and saw an SUV coming toward him. He said the driver was not looking at him because she was preparing to turn on the Fairfax County Parkway. Steiner veered right, but the car's bumper crushed his bike broadside. He hit the car's windshield, and landed in the southbound parkway lane. An off-duty federal officer behind the car that hit him turned his vehicle around and blocked him.

Steiner had plenty of time during his recovery to consider what else could have been done to prevent a similar crash. Jersey barriers, traffic signals, trail signs, and more were present where he was hit. According to Steiner, a driver's default behavior at this intersection and others like it is to prioritize the right turn and keep moving. "Their attention is focused left rather than right, where a cyclist or pedestrian may be attempting to cross the intersection," Steiner said, in his opinion, that significant safety improvements would result if authorities approved a modest financial investment to install signage prohibiting such right turns at locations where trails intersect.

"We need our residents to be part of this team, and that's what this campaign is all about," McKay said. "Take a moment and potentially save a life."

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## BULLETIN

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.

### THE ALDEN AND FURIA FLAMENCA ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

The Alden at the McLean Community Center (MCC) is pleased to welcome local flamenco dance company Furia Flamenca (FF) as its 2022-23 Artist-in-Residence. The partnership will involve a number of events that will be open to the public, as well as MCC serving as an incubator for Furia Flamenca's work. During the residency, Furia Flamenca will perform and hold open rehearsals, workshops and lectures for the public, including a flamenco dance workshop for MCC's active seniors program, Seniors in Action. The theater is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave. The first public performance will be an interactive Hispanic Heritage Month show for families at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 8, in The Alden. "A Trip to Spain" introduces children to flamenco music and dance, shares some of the art form's history and invites audiences to participate in flamenco-making. Tickets are \$15, \$10 for MCC tax district residents.

For more information visit: [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org) or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY TO EXPAND HEADQUARTERS

Governor Glenn Youngkin announced that Enabled Intelligence, Inc., a provider of secure and accurate data labeling services to enable artificial intelligence applications, will invest \$1.4 million to expand its headquarters in Fairfax County. The company will add over 10,000 square feet of classified and unclassified office space to its operations located at 6400 Arlington Boulevard in Falls Church in order to increase capacity. The project will create 117 new jobs.

### SHEPHERD'S CENTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA ADVENTURES IN LEARNING FALL 2022 CLASSES

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA) continues its Adventures In Learning (AIL) line up of classes with their Fall 2022 semester schedule that includes a wide range of subjects - from a Health and Wellness series to National and World Affairs. Tai Chi is offered twice weekly. Please note that all classes are now scheduled in the morning time slots.

The following classes are but a few of the classes to choose from:

- October 13 "Our Visit to Iceland" - Paul Wormeli
- October 27 - "How Companies Acquire, Use and Protect Your Information" - Bob Reinsel

Students may attend one or all of the AIL fall classes for a \$55 fee and are encouraged to create their own schedule - attend classes all morning or attend only one class. Visit [www.scnova.org](http://www.scnova.org) or contact Carolyn Pennington, Executive Director at 703-281-0588, [carolynpennington@scov.org](mailto:carolynpennington@scov.org).

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

GrandInvolve Seeks Volunteers. Would you like a unique and

interesting volunteer experience to make a difference in a school, classroom, or in one child's life? GrandInvolve.org facilitates rewarding, flexible adult volunteer opportunities at Fairfax County Title I elementary schools, providing classroom assistance with math, reading, and other simple educational tasks. Visit [www.GrandInvolve.org/volunteer-with-us](http://www.GrandInvolve.org/volunteer-with-us) for details and to complete an interest form. Or email [info@grandinvolve.org](mailto:info@grandinvolve.org).

### AUG. 21 AND AUG. 28

Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention Events. The Fairfax County Police Department's McLean District is partnering with Craftsman Auto Care to offer free etchings of an anti-theft label into the catalytic converters of the second-generation Toyota Prius registered in the McLean District of Fairfax County. The free events are open only to Gen 2 Prius owners who live within the McLean Police District and will be verified on date of service. The first Gen 2 Prius models were introduced in 2004. To register for the August 21 event at McLean Craftsman Auto, visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d-4fa4a82ea5fccf8-free>. To register for August 28 event at Merrifield Craftsman Auto, visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d-4fa4a82ea5fccf8-free1>.

### SATURDAY/AUG. 27

Parking Reimagined Public Meetings. MCA community engagement opportunities for the Parking Reimagined Project are coming up this summer, as the project team continues to review and do an in-depth analysis of the county's off-street parking and loading rates and regulations (Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance). For more information and links to sign up for these public events, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning-ordinance/parking-reimagined>

### 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).

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, [www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org) or [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net).

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.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### It's Academic Is Back Exclusively on WETA

"It's Academic" is recognized by The Guinness Book of World Records as the world's longest-running quiz program in TV history, having been founded in 1961 by Producer Sophie Altman in Washington, D.C. and enduring for over 60 years. Throughout the show's long run, thousands of students from high schools across the D.C. Metro area have competed, encouraging a lifelong journey of learning and accomplishments over many generations.

Now in its 62nd season, It's Academic will be exclusively broadcast on WETA and will debut Saturday,

Oct. 29 at 10 a.m. and repeat at 7 p.m. on WETA PBS and WETA Metro. The first episode will feature teams from Herndon High School in Herndon, Va.; Washington-Liberty High School in Arlington, Va.; and W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, Va.

Episodes initially broadcast on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. on WETA PBS and WETA Metro. Each episode will repeat the following Monday at 3 p.m. on WETA PBS and 7 p.m. on WETA Metro. Episodes will also be available to stream on the PBS Video App and at [weta.org](http://weta.org). Visit [weta.org/itsacademic](http://weta.org/itsacademic).

### Friends of the Great Falls Library Semi-Annual Book Sale

The Friends of the Great Falls Library will hold its semi-annual book sale at the library on Friday, Oct. 7 and Saturday, Oct. 8 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day. Interested readers can attend a pre-sale event (for \$10 admission) on Thursday, Oct. 6 from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Since 2021, FGFL has donated over \$30,000 to this branch. Funds have been used to purchase: 100 new lightweight chairs for the meeting room; new tables, table and chairs for the conference room; furniture for the kid's area; and book carts for the staff. The all-volunteer nonprofit group also pays for programs and

other materials to enhance the patron experience, with an emphasis on children's activities. Educational and recreational programs for all ages are being reestablished since Covid affected operations.

FGFL holds two book sales and two puzzle sales each year and accepts financial and book donations. Books for the sales may be dropped off at the library front desk at any time (except during the sales events). Volunteers are needed for the upcoming book sale, with set up starting on Oct. 5. For more information on the sale or to volunteer, please contact [friendsofthegreatfallslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthegreatfallslibrary@gmail.com).

### Fairfax County Fire Stations To Host Open Houses

In celebration of Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 - 15, 2022, all Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations will be hosting Open Houses on Saturday, Oct. 15 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Stop by your local station that day to meet your firefighters and paramedics, join in the activities, learn about fire safety, see the fire trucks and ambulances.

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme: "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape."



#### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

#### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization 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). Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-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](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See [www.ophrescue.org](http://www.ophrescue.org) for information and all volunteer opportunities.

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](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find

out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at [info@scmaf.org](mailto:info@scmaf.org). The Center's website is [www.scmaf.org](http://www.scmaf.org).

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit [fairfaxgardening.org](http://fairfaxgardening.org) or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: [prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/](http://prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/). Questions? Email [lpadgett@prsinc.org](mailto:lpadgett@prsinc.org).

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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# BULL RIDING

PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION



The Bressler family from Fairfax arrive at the invitational.



Friends from Fairfax are ready for the festivities to kick off.

## Bull Riders Return to EagleBank

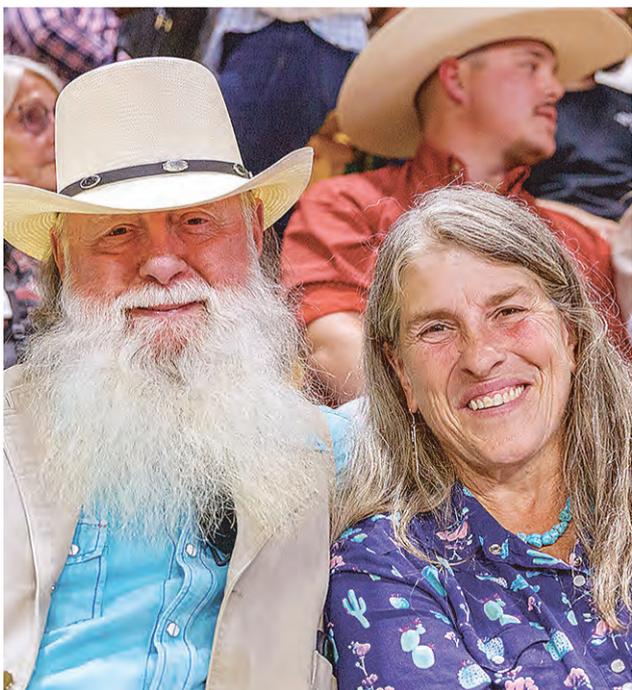
Fans return with enthusiasm; Virginian finishes second.

The Professional Bull Riders tour returned to EagleBank Arena in Fairfax with the Autolite FRAM Invitational from Sept. 24-25. Some of the top bull riders in the world competed in the newly launched Challenger Series. Alex Marcil-

io from Macaubal, Brazil won the event as the only rider to go a perfect two-for-two by finishing strong on the last ride of the weekend with a top score of 86.5 points. Michael Lane from Tazewell, Va. finished second while newcomer Mynar Barrientos from Brazil placed third.



Eder Barbosa from Goiabeira, Brazil attempts to ride Recall in the opening round.



David and Kim Sanders from Centreville are big PBR fans. David was picked out of the crowd as the best dressed fan and won a gift card.



Varnei Jose Santana Junio from Ipatinga, Brazil tries his best on Dirty Dog.



Jacob Steele from McLean was excited to win the fan obstacle course.

## FILM FESTIVAL



Colin Kaepernick kneeling during the National Anthem is examined in one of the films called "Kaepernick & America."



Banner in Reston.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

# Film Festival Supports Childhood Healthcare

Don't miss Washington West Film Festival as it kicks off Oct. 13.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The Washington West Film Festival is a lesser-known film festival coming out of Reston that packs all the punch of the bigger names like Cannes or the Sundance. It kicks off Oct. 13 with the premiere of "Refuge," at the Capital One Hall Tysons Corner.

"Refuge" is a documentary that looks at the friendship of two unlikely candidates in Clarkston, Georgia which they call "the most diverse square mile in America."

The following day starts off with a crowdfunding workshop that examines how to launch a crowdfunding campaign that could help upcoming filmmakers. Then a day of screentime featuring a few horror shorts before the evening production of "Long Live my Happy Head." This documentary is a love story about a Scottish comic book artist with a brain tumor, who uses his art to communicate his experience of cancer.

On Saturday, Oct. 15 at the ShowPlace Icon in McLean, a collection of short films from a group of George Mason University students will be featured.

According to Samantha Dols, the Director of Programming & Impact at the Washington West Film Festival, [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

val, filmmaking is alive and well in Reston. This festival is based in Reston, and has a group of Reston volunteers to help out, and even a few local film fanatics to make the festival happen. The festival is partnered with the Reston Town Center Association and the Reston Community Center. In fact, Robert E. Simon, the namesake of Reston, was on the board of the festival before he died.

In 2015, they changed the name of Reston to Hill Valley for festival week in celebration of a big anniversary event for the "Back to the Future," movie. "DeLoreans flooded Reston Town Center, and Christopher Lloyd and several other cast members joined us for a marathon screening of all films in the series," said Dols.

### Festival's Message

The festival follows a belief that "story can change the world," and their box office proceeds go toward making an impact, supporting childhood healthcare. The "make a difference," message can be seen on Sunday, Oct. 16 with the film "Kaepernick & America," and explores the impact football player



"Red Horizon" is a short documentary that tells the story of a group of pilots dedicated to keeping alive the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.

### If you go...

For a full schedule, go to [www.filmfest.com/](http://www.filmfest.com/)

Colin Kaepernick made when he took a knee during the national anthem. "That becomes a symbol," said the trailer. The film stokes the flame a little more with a clip of Donald Trump's negative reaction

when he was in office.

Although the festival is full of films with a social message, it's not limited to that, said Dols. "Every year we try to sprinkle in pure entertainment films as well," she said.

This year, there is an anti-romantic comedy that fits that genre called "Everybody Loves Jean." The main character, Jeanne, is dealing with her mother's death and meets up with a girl she knew from school.

"At the airport, she runs into Jean, a whimsical and somewhat intrusive former high school classmate." This movie is playing Saturday, Oct. 15 at 1 p.m. at the ShowPlace Icon in McLean.

This is the eleventh year of the festival, and it is usually connected with the Bowtie Cinema in Reston but this year, the theater is undergoing renovations, so they shifted to the Tysons area.

## Listen to the Young People

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

Last week as thousands of students throughout Virginia walked out of school to protest the horrible and cruel revisions to school policy related to transgender students, I was reminded of another student walkout to protest an earlier unjust situation. The facilities provided to Black and white children for their education were unequal as were the programs for them. The year was 1951 when schools for Black and white children were segregated but in no way could they be considered equal as an earlier Supreme Court decision required. Sixteen-year-old Barbara Johns in Prince Edward County recognized that the white children in her county went to a new brick school while the Black children were relegated to a tarpaper shanty with a potbelly stove and outside toilet

facilities. She organized a walkout of the Black children that resulted in a court case that went all the way to the Supreme Court where it was consolidated into the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 that found that separate facilities were inherently unequal. White Virginia political leaders fought the decision in many ways with "Massive Resistance" for nearly two decades before the schools in Virginia were finally desegregated.

So important was the act by the brave teenager, Barbara Johns, that she and the progress her actions brought about are remembered on the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial on Capitol Square in Richmond. As a young person she could see the ways segregation unfairly disadvantaged Black children, and she stood up to bring attention to the



Plum

issue and ultimately the beginning of a solution to it. She deserves the statue near the Capitol that honors her.

The children numbering in the thousands who walked out of their schools this past week are to be congratulated and thanked. A model school policy to be adopted by local school boards related to transgender students issued several years ago has been proposed to be revised by the current administration in Richmond. The proposed guidelines are being characterized as cruel and inhumane for transgender students.

The walkouts were organized by a youth LGBTQIA+ advocacy group, Pride Liberation Project. A statement the group issued said that "these revised guidelines will only hurt students in a time when students are facing unparalleled

mental health challenges and are a cruel attempt to politicize the existence of LGBTQIA+ students for political gain." The political gain references the campaign of the current governor that pitted parents and their rights as broadly defined by the administration against teachers and the schools that have a responsibility to all children. Putting transgender students in the middle of this political debate, it seems to me, can only be considered cruel and inhumane.

The proposed revised guidelines are open for public comment until Oct. 26, 2022.

Already ultraconservative groups are encouraging their members to record their support for the revisions. Those of us who recognize that the proposed revisions are a mistake need to record our support for the current policy without revisions at <https://townhall.virginia.gov/L/comments.cfm?GDocForumID=1953>.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Virginia DoE Proposal Harms Students, Families and Educators

The changes proposed by Governor Youngkin to Model Policies on Transgender students are damaging to students, families, teachers, businesses and public education.

Transgender and Gender-Expansive students, since the Sept. 16 release

date, are already missing school

for fear of mistreatment. Reports of suicidal thinking and active self-harm are proliferating. Families are wondering if Virginia will remain a safe place in which to raise their children. Many have expressed that Virginia is telling them that they and their children are suddenly unwelcome here.

Beyond transgender students, LGBTQIA+ people are impacted, and all marginalized folk know that there is a target on them too.

In the first few months of 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed and the Governor signed a law, Senate Bill 161/House Bill 145 which created VA Code § 22.1-23.3.

Treatment of transgender students to ensure that transgender students were supported "in accordance with evidence-based best practices." In response, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) reached out to LGBTQIA+

supportive organizations and mental health care professionals to create the 2021 "Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia's Public Schools" (2021 Model Policies). These model policies focused on the evidence-based practices required by the law.

On Sept. 16, 2022, the Virginia Department of Education released new guidelines, "2022 Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity and Respect for all Students and Parents in Virginia's Public Schools." These policies are not evidence-based or based on best practices. In addition they seem to have had no input from transgender, gender-expansive, non-binary, or gender non-conforming individuals or support organizations. Exclusion of the people impacted by the policies ensures the policies will not meet the needs of those impacted.

In these 2022 Model Policies, "all" doesn't really mean "all."

These new policies do not meet the wording of the law, and certainly not the intent.

The Youngkin VDOE seems to be targeting trans and non-binary youth specifically to prevent them from being comfortable in school. The 2022 policies:

- ❖ Specifically exclude sexual orientation and gender identity from the "discrimination, harassment, and bullying" policy

- ❖ Require parental permission for a student to speak to a school counselor in any way about their gender

- ❖ Require unreasonable documentation for changing a student's name and gender in school records

- ❖ Require teachers to misgender students due to an inability to change school records

- ❖ Completely ignore nonbinary students, and that some states allow a nonbinary gender marker on birth certificates

- ❖ Prevent teachers and counselors from doing their jobs and being trustworthy adults for students

- ❖ Address athletics, which the law specifically excludes and which the current (2021) Model Policies, in accordance with the law, do not address. The law has not changed, so the inclusion of athletics in the 2022 proposal is puzzling.

The new policies exclude transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students and ensure an unsafe environment for transgender, gender-expansive, non-binary, and gender non-conforming teachers, administrators, staff, and parents. With all of the discussion in these policies of parental rights, the rights of the par-

ents of students most affected are ignored entirely.

The 2022 Model Policies are inconsistent with section 1.A and section 2 of Senate Bill 161 and the identical House Bill 145 passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor of Virginia on March 4, 2020. No new legislation has been passed, and the VDOE is not empowered to rewrite state law.

We the undersigned organizations insist that the VDOE withdraw the 2022 Model Policies. We enjoy school boards to retain or enact policies that are consistent with the 2021 Model Policies.

**FCPS Pride, Inc.**  
**Fairfax County Federation of Teachers**  
**FCPS Asian Educators**  
**Hispanic Educators Association of Fairfax**  
**GLSEN NoVA**  
**4 Public Education**  
**Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington**  
**Anti-Defamation League, Washington DC**  
**Transgender Education Association of Greater Washington**  
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# CALENDAR



**Furia Flamenca: "A Trip to Spain" will be presented on Saturday, Oct. 8, 2022 at The Alden Theater in McLean.**

**SEPT. 15-OCT. 9**

Mlima's Tale by Lynn Nottage. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Tickets: Tickets: \$50 general admission, \$47 seniors (65+), \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) or 703-854-1856.

**SEPT. 24-OCT. 30**

Fall Festival. At Reston Farm Garden Market, 10800 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston. The festival will run Friday, Saturday and Sunday September 24 to October 30 with five 90 minute online ticketed sessions. Fall Festival hours are Friday through Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. \$28 per child and \$7 per parent, children 2 and under free. For times and tickets visit <https://www.restonfarm.com/fall-fest>.

**OCT. 1-30**

"Modern Illuminations – Knowledge and Power" by Rosemarie Forsythe. Presented at Reston Art Gallery and Studios. Rosemarie Forsythe's intricately detailed paintings depicting symbols of knowledge, strength, hope and resilience will be presented in a featured exhibit, "Modern Illuminations – Knowledge and Power," at Reston Art Gallery and Studios (RAGS) from October 1 until October 30. Everyone is invited to meet Forsythe when she is at the gallery for the show's opening weekend, October 1 and 2.

**THURSDAYS/OCT. 4-25**

Big & Messy Art classes for kids, a four-session class. Brown's Chapel Recreation Area, 1598 Browns Chapel Road, Reston. Click this link to register or for further details: Big & Messy Art class details. Kid-create Studio partners with Reston Association.

**OCT. 6-27**

Sights and Sounds of Early Herndon. [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The Herndon Historical Society, in collaboration with Arts Herndon, is pleased to announce a unique exhibition that will include many never seen before unique photos of the town of Herndon from the 1880-1930 time period. The exhibit will also include artifacts from Herndon's past. Exhibition visitors will experience a special view of early Herndon life, how our forefathers and families lived and worked. Visitors are invited to attend a free reception at Arts Herndon on October 14 at 6:30 p.m.

**OCT. 7-8**

The Friends of the Great Falls Library semi-annual book sale at the library on Friday, Oct. 7 and Saturday, Oct. 8 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day. Interested readers can attend a pre-sale event (for \$10 admission) on Thursday, Oct. 6 from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Volunteers are needed for the upcoming book sale, with set up starting on Oct. 5. For more information on the sale or to volunteer, contact [friendsofthegreatfallslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthegreatfallslibrary@gmail.com).

**SATURDAY/OCT. 8**

Mykle Lyons Commemorative Concert. 12-6 p.m. At Lake Anne Plaza (Waterfront), 1609 Washington Plaza, Reston. Concert in honor of Mykle Lyons, LAWPA, with the help of Kalypso's and Roxplosion. They are setting up a memorial scholarship fund with tax-deductible scholarship donations going to Friends of Music at George Mason to help a deserving music student at George Mason University.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 8**

National Alliance on Mental Illness Walk. 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza, McLean. Walk with NAMI to help open doors for everyone from every walk of life to have access to mental health resources and the community they deserve. The largest grassroots mental health organization is dedicated to raise \$115,000 to "improve the lives of

people with mental illness." Go to <http://ow.ly/3fTp50KNb95> to register now

**SATURDAY/OCT. 8**

Furia Flamenca: "A Trip to Spain." 11 a.m. At The Alden Theater, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This interactive Hispanic Heritage Month show for families by Furia Flamenca introduces children to flamenco music and dance, shares some of the art form's history and invites audiences to participate in flamenco-making.

**MONDAY/OCT. 10**

Life Story Writing. 4-5 p.m. Virtual. Join in an engaging presentation on how writing themed autobiography stories can enhance and enrich your personal legacy. Led by Craig Siulinski, proprietor of Sharing Legacies. Link to the registration page: Introduction to Life Story Writing - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home ([fairfax-county.gov](http://fairfax-county.gov))

**MONDAY/OCT. 10**

Touch-A-Truck. 10 a.m. - noon. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Parents and children can enjoy the Fairfax County Public Schools' holiday by joining MCC for this FREE event that gives kids the chance to see, touch and explore some of their favorite cars and trucks.

**TUESDAY/OCT. 11**

McLean Historical Society Meeting. 7:30 p.m. At the McLean Community Center in McLean. The McLean Historical Society will feature noted author Sandra Grimes presenting "Circle of Treason," the story of Aldrich Ames, a former CIA officer who was convicted of espionage in 1994. Everyone is welcome. For further information, contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

**WEDNESDAY/OCT. 12**

Fall Harvest Festival. 8 a.m. to noon. At Oak Marr Farmers Market, Oak

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

## Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Presented by The Alden Hispanic Heritage Month Event

**OCT 8**

Furia Flamenca: "A Trip to Spain" Saturday, Oct. 8, 11 a.m.

\$15/\$10 for MCC district residents

A School's Out Solution

Touch-A-Truck Monday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m. - noon

Free admission. Registration is required.

**OCT 10**



Presented by The Alden

The Boy Band Project Friday, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.

\$30/\$20 MCC district residents \$25 seniors, students

**OCT 14**

Presented by The Alden

"Tackling Body Image and Flipping Mental Health Challenges" A Discussion with Laurie Hernandez, Shaquem Griffin and Moderator Christine Brennan Saturday, Oct. 15, 7 p.m.

**OCT 15**

\$25/\$15 MCC district residents

McLean Pet Fest Sunday, Oct. 16, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

McLean Central Park 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd. Free Admission

**OCT 16**



The McLean Community Center [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

Home of The Alden Theatre [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)

1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101 703-790-0123

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TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

**CALENDAR**

4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**Let us know about an upcoming event**

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Chef's Island LLC trading as Cafe Ile, 8270 Greensboro Drive, Suite 120, McLean, Fairfax County, VA 22102-3835. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Wine and Beer Restaurant and Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Sang E. Nam, Member. Date notice posted at establishment: 09/26/2022. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

**CALENDAR**

FROM PAGE 9

Marr Rec Center, 3200 Jermentown Road, Oakton. Will feature live music, free samples of warm apple cider, a free pumpkin painting activity, and activities for children and families. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmers-markets](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmers-markets)

**FRIDAY/OCT. 14**

Fall Harvest Festival. 8 a.m. to noon. At McLean Farmers Market, Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Will feature live music, free samples of warm apple cider, a free pumpkin painting activity, and activities for children and families. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets)

**FRIDAY/OCT. 14**

The Boy Band Project. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Boy Band Project transports you back to a time when the boy band phenomenon dominated pop culture and TRL was appointment television. Delivered with their own special mix of handsomeness, tongue-in-cheek humor and talent from Broadway's "Wicked," "Hairspray" and "Mamma Mia" (and more), these boys recreate the sounds and choreography of your favorite boy bands, from NKOTB to One Direction.

**OCT. 14-16**

Farm Harvest Days at Frying Pan Farm. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon. Watch the cider press in action, milk a goat, shell corn, peel apples, meet the farm animals and see traditional farm demonstrations. Take a wagon ride around the park or take a spin on the carousel. Have you ever wondered what it was like to operate large equipment? Come see these up close and speak with those that operate them at Big Truck Night, which takes place on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. For even more family fun at Frying Pan, visit the Fall Carnival that runs concurrently. There will be games and rides and tasty food and beverages for sale. Carnival tickets may be purchased online, and an unlimited carnival ride pass is available for use on Friday and Sunday afternoons.

**OCT. 14-16**

Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. The Fall Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature art in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Friday, Oct 14: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday Oct 15: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday Oct 16: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. Visit [www.CapitalArtAndCraftFestivals.com](http://www.CapitalArtAndCraftFestivals.com)

**SATURDAY/OCT. 15**

NVMR Train Station Open House. 1-5 p.m. At Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Road, NE, Vienna. Stop by the Historic Vienna Train Station where you can see and hear HO scale model trolleys and trains including Thomas and some of his friends on display and in operation. Great family fun and activity for the young and young-at-heart.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Hosted by the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders. See [www.nvmr.org](http://www.nvmr.org).

## SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Free Black History Concert. 3 p.m. At 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Historic Pleasant Grove is hosting the acclaimed Washington Revels Jubilee Voices ensemble for a free Black History Celebration featuring traditional African American song, poetry, and dance. This event will take place in a quaint 1895 church setting, now an historic site. Visit [www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org](http://www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org).

## OCT. 15-16

Pumpkin Pop-Up and Halloween Experience. 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza, McLean. What better to bring in the fall season and get into the Halloween spirit than at Tysons Corner Center's Fall Festival? The Pumpkin Pop-Up and Halloween Experience invites everyone to engage with the community with a farmer's market, wine tasting, live pumpkin carving demos, food sales, music, and a costume contest.

## SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Fall Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 Saint Germain Drive, Centreville. Bag Sale on Sunday from 2 - 5 p.m. Fiction for all ages; extensive variety of nonfiction, audiobooks, DVDs and audio CDs.

## SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Fire Prevention Week. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center Street, S., Vienna. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Fire Prevention Week. This year's campaign, "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape", works to educate everyone about simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe from home fires. Visit [www.vvfd.org](http://www.vvfd.org).

## OCT. 21-23

19TH ANNUAL GREAT FALLS STUDIO TOUR: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit artists in their studios, watch them work, participate in activities, and purchase art – just as the fabulous fall foliage is erupting in color. [greatfallsstudios.com](http://greatfallsstudios.com)

# BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/).

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs a Certified Arthritis Exercise Instructor. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Volunteers for Change. A program for adults which offers more than 50 weekend and evening volunteer opportunities per month. [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

Great Falls Hike or Bike Volunteers. Bike or Hike Patrol volunteers assist park rangers by riding on accessible trails in Great Falls Park. To assist park staff in providing info and services to park visitors, maintain good public relations as

[www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

[com/arttour22](http://com/arttour22)

## 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](http://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/>

## MCLEAN FARMERS MARKET

The McLean Farmers Market opened for the 2022 season on May 6th, at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The market will run every Friday from 8 a.m. to noon through Nov. 11. Local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce and fruits; breads and pastries; prepared foods; meats: herbs; flowers, and more. All products are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within 125 miles of Fairfax County. For more information, see: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/>

## 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>

## GREAT FALLS FARMERS MARKET

The Great Falls Farmers Market Outdoor Market is open every Saturday, Spring and Summer, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. For vendors and weekly highlights see <https://www.greatfallsfarmersmarket.org/>

a representative of the National Park Service, and monitor park resources, visitor usage, and emergency needs. Skills and Experience Desired: Excellent communication skills. Ability to work with culturally, socially, and economically diversified people. Knowledge of the park and local resources, or the desire to learn. Knowledge of basic bike maintenance or willingness to learn. Willingness to provide basic first aid. Ability to demonstrate skill in basic operation of a bicycle. Call Volunteer Coordinator 703-285-2965 ext. 225

Potomac Paddlers Volunteer Corps. The Potomac Paddlers Corps is a volunteer group with the National Park Service under shared management between Great Falls Park and the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The primary mission of the Corps is to have trained, uniformed park volunteers on the Potomac River to assist the park in identifying and reporting incidents, watch out for risky park visitor behavior, and to deliver safety messages to the public about the dangers of the Potomac River in the Potomac Gorge. Contact: Volunteer Coordinator 703-285-2965 ext. 225 or visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

## ONGOING

Vienna Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30-9 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.

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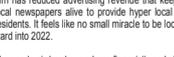
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We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784



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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.

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 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 oncoming clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Please, help save these historical papers. 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.

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# Cancer, Then and Now



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When my brother was emergency-admitted to the hospital on July 16th, it was just a few days removed from my most recent every-three-months cancer scans. For the following two months or so, until his status was no longer day to day but rather marginally less urgent, I hadn't really focused/ thought too much about my own cancer-affected mortality. It was sort of on the back burner, for a change. And given my brother's tenuous grip on life for a while, it seemed bad form/ totally inappropriate to expend any mental energy on myself considering that he was in such distress (not breathing on his own, connected to a ventilator, 24-7 dialysis, just to name a few of the many life-sustaining medical marvels he was dependent on while in SICU). It was a sort of "all hands to the pump" kind of effort, to quote the Brits. And as the doctors and staff provided my brother round-the-clock care, the least I could do was harness whatever positive vibe I could muster in his direction.

Slowly, but surely, my brother began to rally. Over the course of the last month, he was disconnected from all life-sustaining machinery, taken off all medication and eventually transferred out of SICU into a regular hospital room. There his care was much less intense and where he began to really recuperate, enough so that a few weeks after his initial transfer there he received the penultimate transfer: to the adjacent rehab hospital with an eye toward the ultimate goal: release and back home. He was getting better every day and as he improved, we improved; in our mood and in our expectations for him. His semi-return to normal enabled me, subconsciously almost, to reconsider my own mortality once again. Not that that's anything new. It's quite old in fact, over 13 and half years old, ever since I was originally diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in Feb. 2009. But for the last two months, it's been hardly a blip on my internal radar. My attention had been elsewhere.

And I must admit, in a weird kind of way, it was almost a relief to have something else to worry about for a change other than my own mortality. To clarify, it's not as if I forgot that I had cancer, but I was able to not think about all the time, if you know what I mean? I was thinking of my brother, not me. It felt unselfish which for a cancer patient is sometimes a challenging emotion to control. I remember the first bit of unsolicited advice I received from a friend (and fellow cancer patient) after she learned about my diagnosis: "Kenny" she said, "it's all about you now." Words to live by, for sure. Because a cancer diagnosis changes you in every way imaginable and in that aren't so imaginable. It's your life now – full time. As such, it's easy to lose oneself in all the demands and anxiety that characterize a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment/aftercare. Sometimes, it's helpful to have a diversion of sorts; to get your mind off your own troubles and try to help another cope. In that way, my brother's hospitalization and subsequent months' long recovery has been instructive. It turns out that even though I have cancer, it doesn't prevent me from doing the right thing on someone else's behalf. For almost six weeks, along with my sister-in-law, Vanessa, we visited my brother in the hospital every day, splitting shifts, so to speak. It wasn't about me. It was about my brother. It felt good to be there.

This week, if all goes according to plan, my brother will finally be home, after almost 10 weeks in the hospital. And with his return home (which itself will present any number of challenges for both Richard and his wife, Vanessa), my own health once again becomes top of mind. He has been in the hospital so long that low and behold, it's time for my quarterly scans already. The party, such as it was, is officially over. With my scans return all the usual mortality fears and questions. One of these days, I'm going to receive the wrong result. After all, when my diagnosis was changed to thyroid cancer three years ago, the medication I was prescribed (the best available at the time) had an effective time of three years or so. We're past that. Now that my brother is out of the hospital – or about to be, I'm back to thinking about me and my cancer and wondering if trouble is lurking.

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



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