

The Arlington Connection

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PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

Proud to Have
An Arlington
Jeopardy Contestant

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Finding
The Humanity

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MARCH 6-12, 2024

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‘Jeopardy’ Intimidating But a Lot of Fun

Inside look at the pressures and joys of being on ‘Jeopardy’.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Luigi de Guzman is often asked how a person studies to be on Jeopardy and his joke answer is “Gone With the Wind.” He says the person who chooses the categories over time really likes this category a lot.

But the real answer is that you watch the show and get a sense of what comes up a lot. “Those damn Etruscans.” The serious answer is that people compile the categories, about 180,000 back to 1984. “You skim them and get a sense of what’s out there.” He says people really obsess a lot about knowing things. “I don’t know all the kings and queens, etc.” But he says if you pass the Jeopardy test you probably already know enough to be on the show. He says the two categories that Jeopardy people say they don’t know are the NFL and opera.

The category that everyone dreads “and I absolutely did not want was anagrams. Some of the word play categories are very challenging like ‘triple rhyme time’ and the ‘before, during and after’



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Luigi de Guzman, Arlington Jeopardy contestant.

because you have to think on your feet.”

De Guzman, an Arlington resident, appeared on Jeopardy the first time in 2021 when he won five games which qualified him for the Tournament of Champions. There was a gap in the competition due to the writer’s strike and he finally appeared in the quarter finals on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024.

In an exciting last minute game de Guzman won that match and advanced to the semifinals which will air on March 11 and will determine who advances to the finals. Since the shows are filmed months

before they are aired, the outcome has already been determined but the contestants are sworn to secrecy.

“It’s a heavy secret to bear alone.

“I tell everyone ‘take the test, it’s so much fun.’”

— Luigi de Guzman

You can tell nobody.” The Jeopardy contestants form group chats and talk to each other while they wait.

In de Guzman’s quarterfinal match Feb. 29, another contestant took an early lead. “Juveria came

out like a house on fire. When you get punched in the face, you take it pretty hard, but you have to just focus on the next clue.” He says that he and Juveria had done a lot of prep over zoom together and knew each other well. “We are very good friends. I knew she could do this.”

But he says the Jeopardy staff told him during the commercial break that they had observed he was tripping the switch before Ken had stopped talking which is considered a false start and penalizes you with a fraction of a second. “That doesn’t sound like much but it gives the

other contestants a chance to hit the buzzer first.” De Guzman says he came in so nervous that he had no feeling and couldn’t tell he was tripping the switch.

“The Jeopardy crew wants everyone to do their best so when they see you are doing something like this, they tell you. I was able to switch myself.” He says that in the first 30 clues he attempted to answer 24, Juveria 27 and Kevin 21 but de Guzman says he only got in on time seven times. “That’s how tough these games are.”

Things started to change when de Guzman got the first daily double and said “all in please,” betting all of his money on the correct answer. Soon after, he hit the second daily double under the “Name” category and correctly answered Haile Selassie, which put him in the lead. Finally it got down to the last question and he was neck and neck with Juveria who had \$23,400. De Guzman had \$22,000 and Kevin Belle had \$5,400. In the end de Guzman was the only contestant with the correct answer of Eurostar (rail). “Now you advance to the semi finals.”

De Guzman may have had an advantage on that answer, having attended the University of Cambridge for his BA and the London School of Economics for his Masters before getting his law degree at Catholic University. (De Guzman grew up in Fairfax County and attended Flint Hill School.)

SEE ‘JEOPARDY’, PAGE 5

Afghan Refugee Dreams of Peace

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It’s 150 days until Abdul can apply for his work permit in America, and he is counting them down. Abdul arrived in America on December 2, 2023 on a tourist visa to lecture for a few days at the University of Maryland.

“On January 12 I courageously submitted my application for asylum seeking peace and safety in a new land. In February they took my biometrics and now I have to wait for I don’t know—2, 4, 6 years...”

He is escaping Afghanistan due to persecution resulting from his activities as a peace ambassador and activist. He says the day after the Taliban took over in 2021 he heard a knock on his door. “I was assaulted by five members of the Taliban who ransacked my house, took

all of my belongings including my documents, laptop and essential equipment. They told me I was an ideology promoter, a representative of the U.S. and so on. The invasion of my sanctuary marked not only a violation of my physical well being but also an assault on my very identity and livelihood. I lost my job, my house, everything.”

He says, “I was only 24. I was afraid. It was my first experience with this. I thought ‘I am young. I am a university lecturer; what’s my problem?’” The incident led to his incarceration for 12 days in Herat Central Prison. A religious leader eventually got him released. Abdul explains every morning they would torture his arm with a cable and hit him in the face. “They would ask me how many dollars did you get from the U.S. to promote these ideas.”

At the time Abdul was an asst. profes-

sor of sociology at Herat Public University and had been a human rights defender since 2018. “I did a lot of political activities, demonstrations, peace and conflict resolution.” He says when he became a lecturer in the sociology department, he established a peace community.

Now that Abdul is in the United States he spends every day in the George Mason Law Library in Arlington working on his English to add to the other four languages he currently speaks. He said George Mason has made him an adjunct faculty member so he is currently mentoring bachelor’s and master’s students. He has gone from his very big house in Afghanistan with his flower garden and a car to a shared space at George Mason which he rents for \$895 a month. “No drink or smoke so I played with my garden.”

His aim is “to make some change to make a better life.” He is designing

proposals and seeking funds to support scholarships for women in other countries. He hopes for Afghanistan’s freedom, especially for women’s rights. “I hope to live with peace and diversity together and for the U.S. to be stronger. He says since he came to the U.S. he hasn’t experienced any discrimination. “Other countries have it.”

He continues, “I think diversity in America is the big difference from Afghanistan—diversity in food, culture, life relations, communications. Another difference is America is the land of opportunity. In Afghanistan opportunity is only for smart people.” He explains there is a lack of education in Afghanistan; they don’t have information.”

One other cultural difference he has noticed is that in America people don’t

SEE AFGHAN REFUGEE, PAGE 5

ARLINGTON CONNECTION ❖ MARCH 6-12, 2024 ❖ 3



PHOTO SBY EDEN BROWN



Kathi, who was picking up her vegetables at the Westover Farmers Market, stopped on Oct. 8 to comment on the Oct. 7 attacks.



Claire was concerned about the over-retaliation by Israel and believed if more women held positions of power in government, this kind of violence would not occur.



Nupur, from Bangladesh originally, spoke about the attacks in Israel while dropping a client at National Airport.

We Struggle with the Aftermath of Oct. 7

Quakers, Muslims, Rabbis preach: "We must find the humanity in each other."

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

Arlington is a long way from the Gaza Strip and Israeli villages attacked on Oct. 7, but the events have hit local residents like a gut punch. The inhumanity of the attacks, as well as the death of over 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza, haunts many. The impact on families and politics persists here, five months later and counting.

The day after the Hamas attacks, Kathi was walking back from buying produce at the Westover Farmers market. "I grew up around Palestinians in Michigan. They are great people. Kind people. And Hamas is not all Palestinians. Furthermore, as people who came here to the U.S. from genocide, we don't want to see the Israeli government engage in killing innocent civilians. I feel very bad right now, which is why I wore this sweatshirt today, to remind people that "Kindness can't sit down simply because anger has stood up."

Claire, sitting at Northside Social waiting for her sister, said: "My strongest feeling right now is just overwhelming sadness and why is this the only choice — to

bomb a densely populated area in response to Hamas' attack? I have sympathy for Palestinians and while I am horrified by the Hamas attack, I feel the reaction of Israel is going to be beyond proportional, whatever justification for outrage. I also feel if there were more women in government this wouldn't be happening. It is particularly disturbing to me that a lot of social media is ramping up divisions in our own country and is not even authentic. It's time to speak honestly about what is happening in Israel. A lot of people I know feel very uncomfortable with the settlements expansion."

Diane, on a dog walk in Arlington, said, "Do people not realize how many Israelis were killed who were helping Palestinians? Take this guy for instance, Ofir Liebstein, who lived near the Gaza border. According to an Israeli who has built bridges with Palestinians to save the Dead Sea, Oded Rahav, 'Ofir was the head of the Sha'ar Ha-Negev regional council. He worked endlessly to create hope for Palestinians living in Gaza. He began the Arazim Industrial Zone that would provide 10,000 jobs for Palestinians in Gaza. He embarked on a mission to provide renewable energy with solar power. He allocated land from his council for that and pushed forward a program that would provide fresh water for thousands of Gazans. They actually placed pipes all along the Gaza strip. And what did Hamas do? They dug up the pipes and made rockets from them. On Oct. 7, Ofir woke to the sound of gunfire and died protecting his family. His son was shot and remains missing." Diane hadn't heard about another



Some Palestinians found themselves arm in arm with Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP) protesters at the call-for-a-ceasefire march.

Israeli who was murdered on Oct. 7, an Israeli filmmaker, Yahav Winner, whose short film, "The Boy" captures the dissonance of life along the Israel Gaza border and served as a protest against the policy of the Israeli government.

Nupur, originally from Bangladesh, a driver, said, "How do I feel about what is happening in Gaza? I

don't support what Hamas did but they have lived for years suffering as refugees in their own country. Palestinians have been kicked out of their homes. It's the British who are to blame. They messed things up everywhere with their 'divide and conquer' strategy. We lived through it in Bangladesh. There

SEE WE STRUGGLE, PAGE 6

‘Jeopardy’ Intimidating But a Lot of Fun

FROM PAGE 3

He says there are three things that govern your appearance on Jeopardy—you, the board and the draw which is the people you play against. “The only one of these you can control is yourself.” He explains you may get a really tough draw of other competitors or you might get a particularly difficult set of categories on the board.

De Guzman says the response around Arlington to his Jeopardy appearance has been really interesting. “After the initial run I was getting recognized every so often. I’d go to the grocery store for a loaf of bread and someone would recognize me. One day I was having lunch at Rocklands and some guys

at the bar had me come over and talk about it. They were so proud to see someone from Arlington on Jeopardy.”

He says it’s kind of cool that you don’t realize whose day you made by just showing up. De Guzman added, “It’s a wild thing to become a guest in 10 million living rooms.

The first time Johnny Gilbert said my name to 10 million viewers, I’m not going to lie. It was kind of intimidating.

“The experience of actually being there is surreal. Inside you are screaming. You kind of need the commercial break to calm down.

“But I’ve got to stress this was re-

ally a great experience, the people you share the stage with, the other past contestants who are from Arlington. We all became friends. It’s a weird interim option to normal life, a wonderful interruption, and you form a strange bond. I tell everyone ‘take the test, it’s so much fun.’”

Afghan Refugee Dreams Of Peace

FROM PAGE 3

allow you to stay more than one night in their home. “In Afghanistan you can spend weeks.”

Abdul says, “I have a dream. My goal is to be a university lecturer, and I think I would like to go into the political world. A lot of congressmen come from the academic world. “ He says he would like to do his best to resolve Afghanistan’s problems. The U.S. spent a lot of money there. What’s the result? There is sexual and mental violence against women under Taliban control. It’s very important to find funding to stop it.

“My friends from Afghanistan told me it is difficult here. I told them you have to work hard—be smarter. A lot of people just want to make money but you have to improve your education. You can make some change to make a better life.”



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NEWS

We Struggle

FROM PAGE 4

has to be a solution to this problem so the conflict can end."

Rez, originally from Kashmir, was demonstrating against the deaths of children, marching to the White House with his wife and young son. "I'm here because the Palestinians are my Muslim brothers and sisters. I cannot stand by and watch children die without protesting. It is costing \$3 billion a year to aid Israel and provide the means to bomb and attack Gaza. Think of what we could do with \$3 billion a year! These are my tax dollars and I should have a say in whether they are used to attack innocent civilians or not. This conflict has made me question everything. Everything! The Democrats seem unable to act to stop this violence; 1982, when Israeli forces began shelling the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Beirut, President Reagan just called up Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and told him to stop. The U.S. is sending weapons to many countries: they need to think harder about how they are helping governments put down Kashmiris, or Kurds, or Palestinians, or other minorities who are victims of policies put in place by colonial powers."

Nat, from Arlington, said, "You have to realize that 1400 Israelis (now officially 1200) were killed on Oct. 7: that is as if we lost more than 40,000 Americans in one day. We bombed Afghanistan for less than that. But Jews seem to be easy targets: Israelis bomb and they are accused of committing murder and genocide. Throughout history Jews get blamed — they are easy targets because of the latent anti-semitism that runs as an undercurrent in society." (Preliminary data from Anti-Defamation League Center on Extremism indicates that reported incidents of harassment, vandalism and assault increased by 388 percent over the same period last year.) Had Nat experienced anti-Semitism? "No, that is, yes, but not in direct relation to the attacks, but the other day I was passing a group of girls on a bridge near I-66 and they seemed to hide something when I came closer. I stopped and asked them what they were doing and they hid the item they were holding. Only when I said I was supportive of their cause did they shyly show me an Israeli flag. 'We are protesting on behalf of Israel,' they said, almost whispering. They were afraid. No one should ever be afraid in this country of supporting ANY cause."

Deena, a local barista, said,

SEE WE STRUGGLE, PAGE 8

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

ONGOING

MoCA Arlington's Innovation Studio + Store is now Open. At 525 14th Street South, Arlington. MoCA Arlington's Innovation Studio + Store is the museum's second location and is designed to connect visitors with contemporary art and artists! At this 1,500 sq. ft. retail space, you can shop, attend special programs and drop-in sessions, meet the artist-in-residence working within the studio, and make art of your own! The space complements the work of the flagship museum and will inspire you, while you experience contemporary art in an interactive setting. Visit anytime Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

FEB. 16 TO MARCH 24

"Romeo & Juliet." At Synetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington. Set amidst the whirring gears of a giant clock, Shakespeare's timeless tale of star-crossed lovers unfolds as a bitter family feud sends the pair on a race against an ill-fated destiny. With masterful physicality and choreography, Synetic Theater's Romeo and Juliet presents a unique and stunningly visual interpretation of a classic story, capturing emotion with every movement. Visit www.synetictheater.org.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 6

Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village. Via Zoom. A History of St. Andrew's. In January, ANV moved its office to the Renahan Center at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Lloyd Starns and Jane Massant, longtime members of St. Andrew's, will share information on the church's 73-year history and the impact that it has had on the community. Through additional discussion of ongoing ministries and outreach, they hope to explore ways in which this new partnership with ANV can develop.

FRIDAY/MARCH 8

Introduction to Vegetable Gardening Part 1. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Online. Have you thought of growing your own vegetables but are not sure how to begin? Join Extension Master Gardener Faatimah Muhammad for a beginners' class on the many aspects of vegetable gardening. In Part 1, you'll learn how to select a site, improve your soil, plan your garden, and obtain seeds, plants, and equipment. This is a two-part course on learning how to grow a vegetable garden. Free. RSVP at <http://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

FRIDAY/MARCH 8

Free Chamber Concerts. 12 p.m. At St. George's Church, 915 N. Oakland Street, Arlington. The Friday Morning Music club will perform two free chamber concerts. The March 1 concert will feature works by Bartok, Ravel and Beach; the March 8, works by Hasty, Mangani, Mozart and Debussy. The one-hour concerts continue every first and second Friday of the month through May.

SATURDAY/MARCH 9

Spring Garden Kickoff. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy Street, Arlington. Join Arlington Urban Agriculture for Plot Against Hunger's 2024 Spring Garden Kickoff! There will be terrific speakers on gardens and food pantries, seed and seedling giveaways, and garden tips. Plus a chance for gardeners to meet and mingle, information on how to participate in the Plot program, and more! This event is FREE to the public. More information and registration: <https://arlingtonurbanag.org/2024-spring-garden-kickoff/>

SATURDAY/MARCH 9

Benchmade Laser Engraving Event. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Casual Adventure, 3451 Washington Blvd., Arlington. Back by popular demand, Casual Adventure will be hosting a free Benchmade laser engraving event. Bring your own Benchmade knife or buy a new one - either way, get laser engraving absolutely free. Plus all Benchmade knives will be 20%

off (in store, in stock only).

SATURDAY/MARCH 9

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. 7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle. Hosted by Christian Hunt, this amazing experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for March's show is the hilarious Jay Agbon. Visit capitalcityshowcase.com

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 13

46th Annual EcoAction Meeting. 6:30 p.m. 46th Annual Meeting: We All Live Upstream, At Washington Liberty High School Cafeteria. The 46th annual membership meeting of EcoAction Arlington will celebrate protecting our waterways with a featured presentation, an overview of EcoAction Arlington programming for 2024, the election of our board of directors and exhibits from local organizations. Light refreshments will be served. Free. All paid members are eligible to vote. Registration requested.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 13

Coffee and Conversations: Encore Creativity - Did you sing in your high school or church choir? Via Zoom. Are you the one who sings your college cheer songs the loudest at alumni football games? Are you looking for an outlet to share your singing voice? Then Encore Creativity might be for you. Encore is the nation's largest choral arts organization for adults over 55, with multiple choirs in the D.C. area. Josh Vickery, Chief Executive Officer will talk about the benefits of participating in a professionally-led choral arts program, and how you can get involved. Spoiler alert: you don't have to audition! Part of Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village.

FRIDAY/MARCH 15

Introduction to Vegetable Gardening Part 2. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Online. Join Extension Master Gardener Faatimah Muhammad for a beginners' class on the many aspects of vegetable gardening. In Part 2, you will learn tips on how to care for your crops as they grow and how to harvest your fruits and vegetables. Free. RSVP at <http://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

FRIDAY/MARCH 15

Beyond The Table: A Holistic Look at Healthy Eating. 2 p.m. At Arlington Central Library, Arlington. Healthy eating starts with identifying safe and nutritious sources of food, creating balanced menus, practicing sound food safety and storage practices, as well as connecting with others at mealtime to nourish our souls. Join Alison Neov and Alex Freiman, Registered Dietitians with Goodwin Living, who will talk through a holistic approach to planning, eating & enjoying healthful meals. They will be providing a cooking demonstration of easy to prepare foods and recipes for the audience. Register: 703-558-6859 or seniorhealth@vhchealth.org

MARCH 16-17

32nd Annual Tossed & Found Rummage Sale. At 2100-B Crystal Drive, Arlington (inside Crystal City Shops at 2100). The Junior League of Washington (JLW) is offering quality, used merchandise at bargain prices. This two-day sale provides bargain prices on high-quality, gently used merchandise and creates opportunities for individuals facing economic hardship to purchase household items at near-rock bottom prices. The event is entirely volunteer-driven, and proceeds fund grants and programs that support pathways to opportunity across the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. This includes partnerships with over 20 child and adult literacy programs including Calvary Women's Services, Horton's Kids, Bright Beginnings, Higher Achievement Program, and many

others.

SATURDAY/MARCH 16

Arlington Chorale's "The Stranger." 5-6:30 p.m. At Westover Baptist Church, 1125 Patrick Henry Drive, Arlington. The Stranger: This musical journey was crafted to raise awareness for the plight of refugees worldwide and commissioned by the Together in Hope project, whose mission is changing lives through music with a purpose. Negin Khwalpak, an Afghan conductor, will be featured in this concert. The performance is presented in partnership with Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area, and will also include musicians from the refugee community.

SUNDAY/MARCH 17

"Forest Her: The Next Wave of Conservation" 1-3 p.m. at George Mason University's Van Metre Auditorium, Arlington. The screening is followed by a panel discussion featuring notable figures such as the director/producer Cheryle Franceschi, Melody Mobley - the nation's first African American woman forester, and Dr. Leah Nichols, Executive Director of the Institute for a Sustainable Earth at GMU. This event not only celebrates the groundbreaking work of these women but also aims to inspire ongoing dialogue and action towards gender equity in conservation.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

Civil War Nurses Walking Tour. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Arlington National Cemetery, Tanner Amphitheater, Arlington. In honor of Women's History Month, Arlington National Cemetery is excited to be hosting a special new walking tour focused on the pioneering Civil War nurses buried at the cemetery. For too long, the stories of these courageous women have been overlooked. Visit their graves and honor their contributions to the military. No registration is necessary. Meet at the Tanner Amphitheater, dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring plenty of water.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Diverse Romantic Visions: Florence Price and Brahms. At Gunston Arts Center, Theatre 1, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington. This program reflects the National Chamber Ensemble's commitment to diversity in music and pays tribute to a truly gifted American composer, Florence Price. The evening also includes some short works for clarinet and Johannes Brahms' famous Clarinet Quintet, a work by one of the great romantic European composers. NCE is also thrilled to welcome back classical star clarinetist and crossover artist Julian Milkis. Program/Ticket info: 703 685-7590.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Spring 2024 E-CARE. 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Wakefield High School, 1325 S. Dinwiddie Street, Arlington.
Accepted Materials: Automotive fluids, Batteries, Car care products, Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), Corrosives (acids/caustics), Fire extinguishers, Flammable solvents, Fluorescent tubes, Fuels/petroleum products, Household cleaners, Lawn and garden chemicals, Mercury, Paint products (25-can limit), Photographic chemicals, Poisons (pesticides), Printer ink/toner cartridges, Propane gas cylinders (small hand-held or larger), Small metal items (returning to E-CARE for 2024), Swimming pool chemicals
Unaccepted Materials: Asbestos, Explosives and ammunition, Freon, Medical wastes, Prescription medications, Radioactive materials, Smoke detectors
Electronics: Electronics including computers, printers, keyboards, scanners, copiers, cell phones and televisions (no large wooden console TVs) will be collected curbside from residential trash/recycling/yard waste customers with an online request for electronics pickup or by calling 703-228-5000 Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Locked Up ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... but not freaked out. It's happened again, and I'm sure it won't be the last time, given it's me manning the controls. Not to worry though. I have a neighbor who, among many neighborly attributes, unlock my computer with his eyes closed (bit of an exaggeration but you get the point). The point being that all is not lost or all that could be found won't be delayed a week or so if I must take my computer to a store, where a computer professional will unlock the damage, I have "mouse-clicked". What a resource for a person who if his (my) life depended on computer knowledge, like so many of us of a certain age I'm sure, it would be a life soon forgotten. Moreover, one of my greatest fears if ever I needed to be computer literate for my income/daily bread. Fortunately, I am not dependent on too much technology for food, shelter, dollars, and sense. However, being frozen out from my computer does present challenges that can be hard to overcome - without paying through the nose at your local repair geek.

Thankfully, I, as does everyone else in the neighborhood, have Robert to rely on. He's a middle-aged man who works out of his house along with his mother and sister, in an E-Bay world of buy and sell. Some of their recent purchases have been prom dresses, and bucket and buckets of hand sanitizer. Two purchases which cost pennies on the dollar, almost literally, and according to them are sure to return a profit. From the various items they've bought and sold/sold and bought, I imagine they could provide a layman's "Art of the Deal." They may not have the panache of the original author, but they might have some prime examples of deals getting done - at the non-corporate level.

If not for Robert's expertise and/or my new relationship with my smart phone I can now (after a 90-minute phone call with Verizon) retrieve my emails which comes in quite handy after you've been locked out of your main computer. Meaning, I am not stuck, like I used to be. Can you imagine, as an example, that had I no other resource than my desktop, on the day, as it so happens that I'm waiting for an email from my oncologist to update me on my most recent PET scan. A PET scan which will indicate if there's been any growth in the papillary thyroid tumors in my lungs since I've been off my cancer medicine for two months. This is "... Kind of a big deal" to invoke Wayfair, Red Lobster and KFC advertisements. The anxiety I'm likely experiencing while waiting for the result - with commentary posted by the doctor, would be exponentially worse if I didn't have access to my computer/emails for more than a minute. Yes, when you're a cancer patient, sometimes, minutes matter, in your head anyway. As I've said to my oncologist on more than one occasion, time is of the essence and waiting for medical results can be excruciating. Whether they are good, bad, or indifferent, their substance can't be overstated. We need to know, we must know, we better know - do you know what I mean?

In this context, you can guess how important access to our computer/phone is. It's everything, and if cut-off from your doctor while awaiting results from a medical procedure which might indicate whether you're in medical trouble or not, it would be impossible to sit still, remain calm even breathe normally regardless of where your seat tray is. These kinds of rubber-meet-the-road moments matter way more than when rubber actually meets the road. That's transportation. This is life and/or death. But having a resource like Robert a phone call away, within walking distance no less and often available for an immediate rescue is to invoke a Jack Nicholson movie: "As Good As It Gets." And when you're a dope like me, when it comes to computers, who is afraid sometimes to even stroke a key for fear of the consequences to the computer and by association your life that day on said computer is a problem; especially, if on that particular day, you're waiting to hear back from your oncologist concerning a recent medical scan which quite possibly could spell the kind of trouble you've rarely had in the previous 15 years of "cancer hood," well; the impolite description is initialed s.o.l., the polite version is you're screwed. There really isn't an appropriate way to describe the level of fear, anxiety, and impatience that one might experience - when your life may be hanging in the balance and you're waiting to hear, and now you have no means of computer access to learn your fate. Eliminating all this drama is what Robert provides. If there was a neighborhood award for knowledge and availability above and beyond the call of neighborliness. I would nominate Robert. I am forever in his debt. I just wish I would hear back from my oncologist. I've eliminated the problem on my end. Now I need him to eliminate the problem on his end. It's been three days since my scan was completed. As my late mother would say: "It's enough already."

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

The Final Countdown

BY SENATOR ADAM EBBIN

We're in the final week of the 2024 General Assembly session and we still have much work to do. As of this writing, 785 bills have passed both chambers and are on their way to Governor Youngkin's desk, while 306 bills await final action by the legislature.

Between now and the legislature's scheduled adjournment, Sine Die, on Saturday, March 9, the General Assembly must also complete work on the budget that will set Virginia state expenditures for the remainder of this year and the next two fiscal years.

My priorities for Virginia's budget remain steadfast, including reversing the \$300 million cut to public education that was contained in Governor Youngkin's introduced budget, and increasing our investments in K-12 public education. New funding for Metro is also at the top of my priority list; I encourage the Senate and House budget conferees to provide Metro with needed funding to prevent it from entering a death spiral.

Another issue related to ongoing deliberations over the state budget is Governor Youngkin's proposal for Potomac Yard. As I have said before, I believe that the Commonwealth's budget is not



the appropriate legislative vehicle to consider the creation of a state authority that would issue bonds to pay for a proposed sports arena for the NBA's Washington Wizards and NHL's Washington Capitals.

I will continue to advocate these and other priorities to the budget conferees and I look forward to seeing them embraced in the final compromise agreement when it is released later this week. Under rules

adopted by both the Senate and the House of Delegates, the budget must be finalized in time to provide legislators with at least 48 hours to review the compromise prior to their voting on it.

Once the General Assembly votes on the budget, it will be transmitted to the governor. In addition to the ability to sign, amend, or veto individual bills, Virginia governors may take similar action on the state budget bills after they are passed by the General Assembly.

In fact, past governors have in some instances proposed extensive amendments to the budget after it reaches his desk – actions that are either approved or rejected by the General Assembly when we return to Richmond for Reconvened Session scheduled for April 17, 2024.

It is my continued honor to serve the residents of the 39th Senate District

We Struggle with the Aftermath of Oct. 7

FROM PAGE 6

“Well, I definitely support the cause of the Palestinian people. As for terrorism, no, I cannot support violence of that kind. But now, how do we stop the attacks on civilians, many of whom have lived for decades as second class citizens?”

Alix, who came to the March for the Children in front of the White House, felt encouraged by the humanity being expressed at the march. Torn between her feelings for both Israelis and Palestinians, she said, “The best thing I've heard recently is Ezra Klein's podcast, “Sermons I needed to Hear This Week. My own view is that we often see injustice and abuse of power but we don't necessarily take action to stop it. It's like having an abusive member of the family, an alcoholic or abused spouse that you tolerate, even facilitate, not wanting to, but being unable to intervene. You love your country, and you hope it is better than this, and then it becomes impossible to look the other way.”

trayed in “The Boy.”

Josh's Blog is an equally helpful piece to explain why a call or gesture of support after the attacks was reassuring to Jewish friends in the U.S. who feel a family tie with Israeli Jews and remain wary of being attacked, wherever they live. See: <https://joshgilmansblog.wordpress.com/2023/10/13/why-you-might-have-lost-all-your-jewish-friends-this-week-and-didnt-even-know-it/>

Ezra Klein's podcast, “The Sermons I Needed to Hear Right Now” features Rabbi Sharon Brous. Brous is the founding and senior rabbi of IKAR, a Jewish community based in Los Angeles, and the author of the forthcoming book “The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World.” She addresses the conscience of the people of Jewish faith and the lessons of reconciliation in the Torah. Her conclusion: we have to find the humanity in each other.

Resources for More Understanding

Many remain upset and are anxious to read more, understand more, do more to blunt the pain on both sides of the conflict. Some voices of reason are worth the time to seek a constructive response to the onslaught of social media and digital media reports: in the “Medium” piece by Faraaz Ahmed, whose family lived through the 1992 anti-Muslim attacks in Bombay, he stresses you don't need to cancel out empathy for the Palestinians just because you feel empathy for the Israelis who had their world turned upside down on Oct. 7.

“As a Muslim, an immigrant, a New Yorker, and a father, my heart breaks for Palestinians being bombed, just as it also does for those Israelis that were murdered. I can weep for a dead child being pulled out of the rubble in Gaza and also pray for one that has been kidnapped from Israel. I can advocate for peace and also shut down any action that even borders on anti-semitism. My humanity is not limited, I can do both. To read the whole post, see:

(<https://medium.com/standandstare/our-humanity-cannot-be-limited-c0a2fc97c5d1>)

For videos that shed some insight into more hopeful stories of the area in conflict, see: “The Gaza Surf Club” and “Dead Sea Guardians.” And also the dark side, por-

Bringing the issue home here, Khalid Mekki, the Palestinian owner of the Bawadi restaurant in Seven Corners lost his niece and three of her children in the Gaza bombing; and Director of Philanthropy at the UN Refugee Agency (UNRWA), Hani al Madhoun lost his brother, sister-in-law, and their children in Gaza two hours before the earlier (now ended) ceasefire was signed. To read his account of his family's destruction, see: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/02/opinions/gaza-family-killed-israeli-air-strike-almadhoun/index.html>

For suggested reading on the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict, see: https://www.reddit.com/r/CriticalTheory/comments/1777p-bu/what_are_your_best_reading_recommendations_on_the/

<https://parentsirclefriends.org/> A site for about 700 bereaved parents who have lost children to both sides of the conflict and have committed themselves to reconciliation instead of revenge.

And to help with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and the aftermath of the attacks in Israel, donate to:

- www.doctorswithoutborders.com;
- www.anera.org;
- <https://hias.org;>
- www.redcross.org;
- www.savethechildren.org

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