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Great Falls CONNECTION

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Raising a Roof, Building a Home

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Rotary Great Falls Interact Habitat teen volunteers preparing house foundation drainage while taking part in third annual Habitat for Humanity service project.

Ramp Closure Proves Hot Topick

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The Northern Virginia homeowner's bathroom renovation wish list included more storage, better accessibility, a larger shower and that "Hollywood"

style. Once Abbey's designers knew what their clients wanted, they also knew exactly what had to be removed and revised from the current space. Abbey's professional redesign of the bathroom floor space made it open and functional. They accomplished this by removing the corner tub and tearing down the wall separating the existing water closet. This opened the room up to bring a more organic flow to the space. These seemingly small changes made a big impact and showed off an enlarged open floor plan for the bathroom.

Abbey Design Center's professional team of craftsman then installed a vanity to replace the corner tub and enhanced the space with a custom-built cabinet bench with a quartz top. This luxurious touch also provided extra functional seating and storage. The shower was then enlarged and took over the space that

was once an enclosed water closet. The smaller, dated bathroom vanities were replaced with two tall cabinets that made a dramatic visual impact as well as giving the homeowners even more storage for bathroom essentials. Lastly, new built-in linen cabinets were installed to accommodate the spa essentials of any Hollywood inspired retreat.

Finishing touches like the natural textured stone tiles and warm desert color palette brought this glamorous California dream to life. The result was an earthy and organic luxury spa-like bathroom that this couple was happy to enter into and start their mornings in each day. Abbey Design Center took their project beyond expectations to deliver this project. Let Abbey help you turn your house into a home that you will be happy to come home to each day.



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VDOT chief engineer Garrett Moore presents the proposal to limit access to the northbound Capital Beltway from the Georgetown Pike ramp to alleviate traffic congestion in the area.



Having their say: Several hundred attended the public meeting to discuss the VDOT proposal to test closures on the Georgetown Pike ramp to I-495. Many came prepared to make comments and lined up to do so.

Ramp Closure Proves Hot Topic

Hundreds area residents turn out for Aug. 2 public meeting on closing access to 495.

ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia Department of Transportation listened when citizens in McLean complained that commuters passing through their neighborhoods to connect to the Capital Beltway via the northbound entrance ramp from Georgetown Pike were causing traffic congestion. Residents are sometimes trapped in their own driveways.

Catherine Lorenze of McLean says it can take her an hour or more to travel the 2.1 miles from her home to Langley High School, where two of her children graduated, and a third is an incoming freshman.

“It affects their schoolwork, their participation in afterschool events and activities. I know parents who no longer let their kids get involved in some after school programs, just because it can be impossible to get there and back in a reasonable amount of time.”

Lorenze wants to see a survey among local parents about traffic effects on school activities, and hopes the test program will gather more information.

VDOT’s chief engineer, Garrett Moore, visited the area to get a first hand look at what the complainants were experiencing.

“It was unbelievable,” said Moore. “I witnessed some of the most aggressive and dangerous driving I think I have seen anywhere in the United States.”

VDOT immediately got to work, studying the problem, holding public meetings in September of 2017 and May of this year and forming a regional advisory group representing affected stakeholders.

Short and intermediate term improvements were put in place. Temporary traffic monitoring cameras were installed, along with additional regulatory signage and the intersection was painted to discourage drivers from stopping “in the box” when making the turn onto the ramp and causing further congestion. VDOT even widened the



Bill Canis of Great Falls talks about the VDOT proposed pilot plan to State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) before the public meeting. Canis, the president of the Great Falls Citizens Association, says the group sees the value in reducing traffic on local roads, but knows that locals use the route to reach schools and jobs in Maryland.

shoulder on the north side of Georgetown Pike at Balls Hill Road to allow police to safely enforce traffic violations.

DESPITE THESE EFFORTS, the problems persist.

Following additional study and the performance of some scenario modelling, at a public meeting at McLean High School on Aug. 2, Moore outlined a possible next step – a four-month pilot program testing the closure of the northbound I-495 ramp at Georgetown Pike. The VDOT study suggests

closing the ramp on weekdays, from 1-7 p.m.

Local resident Graham Jones questioned the lengthy shutdown period. It’s recommended because “drivers adjust to the new conditions,” said Moore. Drivers change their drive times as much as they can, leaving earlier or later than normal and then causing different traffic choke points, according to VDOT studies.

“It’s unique. It’s a radical approach,” admitted Moore, who said that the plan would not go forward without “strong support

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



Catherine Lorenze was one of the few who spoke in support of the pilot program. Not sure if it’s the answer, the McLean resident whose 2.1 mile trip from home to Langley High School can take over an hour, says “doing nothing is not acceptable.”

from the community.”

Since the models show that there could be improvement, with relief to traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods, Moore said they felt compelled to bring the proposal to the public for discussion.

Several hundred area residents – and a few from other parts of the county – attended the meeting to hear the full scope and rationalization of the proposal and to have their feedback delivered in person to officials like Moore, and VDOT’s Transportation & Land Use Director for Northern Virginia, Allison Richter.

As a testament to just how hot a topic local traffic issues can be, the meeting also drew elected officials, as well, including U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10), State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), and Dranesville Supervisor John Foust.

SEE VDOT, PAGE 9

OPINION

An Open Letter to Readers and More

Buy an ad in our annual **Newcomers and Community Guide**, please.

Adapted from a 2016 editorial ...

Has your organization been featured in the Connection News papers, or the Alexandria Gazette Packet or the Mount Vernon Gazette or the Centre View or the Potomac Almanac?

Have any of our papers taken note of your business when you and/or your employees pitch in to help the community? Or when you opened your doors or celebrated a milestone?

Are you an elected official whose messages are enhanced by coverage of issues in the Connection?

Do you work for a part of local government that has asked for help getting the word out about a need or a new initiative or accomplishments?

I have a special favor to ask:

Buy an ad in our 2018 Newcomers and Community Guide. Please.

Show your support for our organization which continues to be here to support the forces of good in our communities.

Our annual Newcomers and Community Guide is a pullout section that will appear in the Aug. 22, 2018 edition of all 15 Connection Newspapers, published by Local Media Connection. Deadline is Aug. 16.

We are striving to create a quality special issue, and we need your help. Whether you invest in a small ad in a single paper (super af-

fordable), or a full page in all 15 of our papers (super value), we appreciate your help this month.

To put on my publisher's hat (and not my editor's hat) for a minute, if you have a marketing budget, and you value coverage of local newspapers (not just ours), why wouldn't you spend a portion of that budget (any portion) supporting that platform? Heed the cautionary tale in the closures of many newspapers in the last couple of years.

But this request is more than a charitable effort.

EDITORIAL

Share Tips about Community

We need help from our readers for our annual Newcomers and Community Guide.

We're hoping to share special places, activities, events, organizations and volunteer opportunities. What should someone new to your neighborhood know about? Events that should not be missed? Organizations that do a great job? Places to volunteer? Tips for navigating your PTA or your school's front office? A great place to see the sunset? We'd love to have your photos to go along with your suggestions.

What are your favorite parks? Favorite historic sites? Lunch place? Spot for coffee? What tips do you have for someone getting to know the community?

We will publish a selection of local tips along with a plethora of information useful to new-

For the same reasons that organizations, businesses and campaigns know they want local newspaper coverage, newspaper advertising is an effective way to reach voters, residents, clients. The Connection reaches more than 150,000 readers, in print and online, including remarkable demographics. Our readers include local and national decision makers in the public and private sector.

The deadline for the Newcomers and Community Guide is Aug. 17. Digital enhancements and support are available. More information at email sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431.

comers and long-time residents alike, including our award-winning Insiders Guide to the Parks, and information on how to vote and more.

See last year's community guides by going to www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/ and scrolling down to Newcomers.

Email tips and photos to editors@connectionnewspapers.com or send as a letter to the editor via the website at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/> by Wednesday, Aug. 17.

— MARY KIMM

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Paying Tribute to Joyce (Joy) Trickett

To the Editor:

We lost a true life force in community service recently when Joyce (Joy) Trickett succumbed to a brief illness. She was the consummate volunteer, and we would be remiss to allow her to pass through our lives without acknowledging her contributions.

A Great Falls native who stayed in her birthplace all of her 75 years, Joy was born into a home of deep faith and inherited the love of community service and passion for good works from her parents. From those roots, she began a life of caring about the needy, the lonely and the abandoned.

After a long career with the federal government, she put her organization, strategy and management skills to work for the community and the less fortunate. Her beloved Dranesville Church of the Brethren, where she was a deacon and chair of the leadership team,

was a springboard to long-time affiliations that include Link Against Hunger; Good Shepherd Alliance where she was a former board chair; and the Great Falls Area Ministries (formerly Great Falls Ecumenical Council). Over the years, she received volunteer awards.

I met Joy when a small group of us was just getting the Great Falls Senior Center off the ground. She understood what the Center could mean to our community and how it could positively affect the social and intellectual lives of our mature residents. My memories and thoughts begin with the working relationship we would share at the Center.

Lip service was not part of Joy's makeup. She was action personified and knew how to get things done with laser beam focus. I knew her to always keep her eye on the prize and to never seek the spotlight. The work wasn't about her; it was about the end goal — meeting the needs.

As one of the Senior Center's founding members and its first communications officer, I was able to witness it take shape from a

seed and evolve into the viable entity it is today. That success is product of many volunteers who have served at all levels, from leadership to committee member. Joy's leadership and team player traits were evident during those formative and growth periods: respectful of others' opinions and ideas, straightforward and solid, relentless in pursuit of the goal, creative problem solver, capable of compromise, and totally committed. And she was a unifier who could bring diverse personalities and perspectives closer to a consensus. At her death, she was the Center's president.

I'm hopeful these memories carry a high degree of objectivity. I believe that those who've collaborated with Joy on behalf of organizations she touched will find their own sentiments among these words.

Joy's gifts to our community are her legacy from a life well lived. Those who knew her can nurture and grow that legacy by celebrating her work. And, by extension, she would want us to celebrate her fellow volunteers for they often are unsung heroes.

While she's gone now, I take comfort from knowing and working with a human being of such high calibre and big heart.

Linda Fernald
Great Falls

Taxes Are Not Thievery

To the Editor:

In regards to Mr. Decker's letter ("Tax Cut Good for Families Like Mine, Connection, July 25-31, 2018), as voters we should demand our taxes be used in a wise and accountable manner. And, to that end, we have the right to hold our elected officials to that task. However, taxes are not thievery from citizens' pockets, but instead insurance for society. Taxes pay for teachers, first responders, snow removal, and roadway maintenance to name just a few important uses. Cutting taxes constricts the availability of funds for vital community needs. I hope Mr. Decker intends on using his pock-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 5

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NEWS

Great Falls Cadette Girl Scout Earns Silver Award

Shriya Iyer, a Cadette Girl Scout in Troop 2784 in Great Falls, earned her Girl Scout Silver Award on Sunday, July 22 by holding a technology fair for the residents of Brightview Senior Living facility in Great Falls. Her team worked with residents to answer their questions about their smartphones, personal computers, and iPads. Residents provided questions ahead of time as well as on the day of the event. While some of the questions had easy answers, some of them really challenged the girls on how best to explain in easy-to-understand terms. The team also sang songs and entertained the residents in the memory care facility. Both the residents and the scouts learned a lot from each other.

The Girl Scout Silver Award is the highest recognition a Cadette (grade 6-8) can earn and must be a minimum 50-hour community service project which includes planning and execution.



Team members working with a resident and her iPhone.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Shriya Iyer (third from the right) and her team entertaining the memory care residents at Brightview.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 4

eted cash for buying educational instruction for his children, a home defense program, and a snow shovel to clear his street after the next storm because those are the coffers from which the money to line his pockets will be taken. I for one would rather pay some for excellent community services rather than rely all on my own bank account. So, I will be voting for State Senator Jennifer Wexton to replace the fiscally irresponsible Rep. Barbara Comstock.

Margaret Woldin
Great Falls

Comstock's Bipartisan Accomplishments Worthy of Praise

To the Editor:

While many folks and media outlets across our Commonwealth monitored the returns of the recent primaries while making partisan political predictions, Congresswoman Barbara Comstock was doing something far more important.

She was on the floor of the United States House of Representatives presenting bipartisan legislation to help combat the opioid crisis.

The scourge of opioid addiction is afflicting our country and community at an alarming rate. Everyone acknowledges more must be

done. Comstock is leading the charge. Her legislation passed with bipartisan support as part of a major package of opioid-related legislation advancing through Congress.

This is just one of Comstock's several bipartisan accomplishments. On human trafficking, gang violence, and human rights, Comstock has proven herself capable of working across the aisle.

In Washington these days, that is an accomplishment in and of itself – worthy of praise.

Gary Lennon
Great Falls

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Legalizing Short-Term Rentals

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Providence District Supervisor Linda Q. Smyth experienced a short-term rental operating illegally in her neighborhood. “I have the distinction, perhaps dubious, of being the board member with an Airbnb situation a half block from my house,” said Smyth.

“So I’ve seen the operation of it, it has not been a happy situation, it’s been a disruption for the neighbors, and it’s been difficult,” she said.

Smyth was one of three supervisors to vote against the short-term lodging regulations that passed the board on Tuesday, July 31, to go into effect on Oct. 1.

“If we had required that the host be present during the short-term lodging contract period, I think I could have gone along with it, because the host is the neighbor and that’s the person the neighbors would know,” she said. “But because we are not doing that I really still have major reservations because of experience.”

“I cannot support it,” Smyth said.

Despite the estimated 1,500 short-term rentals operating in the county to date, the county has only received 80 complaints about short-term lodgings, according to county documents.

“I do believe that owner operators, where they are not present during the rental, where the home isn’t the owner’s residence, are really operating a business in our neighborhoods,” said Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity. “And it does change the residential character of our neighborhoods, and I’ve always supported protecting those neighborhoods,” he said, during the board’s meeting Tuesday.

“But I am concerned, on the other side, that we lose tourism benefits, that this really is like Uber and Lyft, part of the new economy. It is something done across the country,” Herrity said.

Herrity, who represented the second vote against the short-term lodging plan, asked the board on July 31 to take more time to study the “complexity of the issues.”

“I think there’s good reason that the General Assembly took two years to address it,” he said.

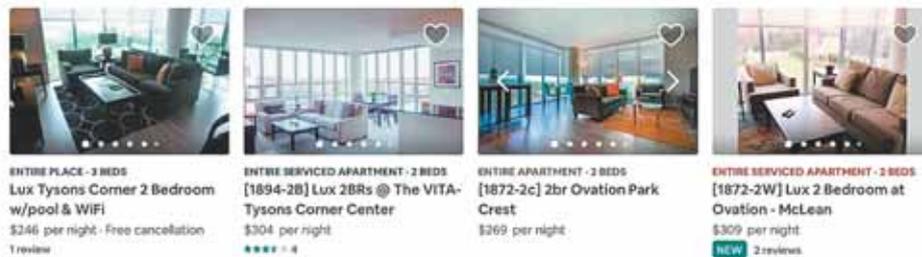
Braddock District Supervisor John C. Cook was the final vote against the plan.

“I share some of Supervisor Smyth’s overall concern with the concept, but I also recognize that we have to be responsive to a changing economy,” Cook said.

“To me, the way to address the impacts on the surrounding community are to enforce existing law,” he said. “We have a zoning ordinance and we have it for a reason.”

“Occupancy limits are designed to make sure our homes don’t overwhelm the area,” said Cook.

FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, county planning commissioners, planning staff and Board of Supervisors have been interacting with county residents about regulating rent-



Possible listings through short-term rental sites, including McLean and Tysons.



POSSIBLE LISTINGS THROUGH SHORT-TERM RENTAL SITES, INCLUDING MCLEAN AND GREAT FALLS.

als such as those advertised on Airbnb, VRBO and FlipKey.

Interest has been high.

More than 7,500 people took part in an online survey. Hundreds of people attended dozens of public meetings. More than 45 people signed up to speak at the Board of Supervisors public hearing on the topic on July 10, 2018, cumulatively speaking for hours. The public hearing before the Planning Commission in May lasted more than four hours.

“I am fortunate that the McLean Citizens Association, they represent 60,000 residents in my district, took this very seriously,” said Dranesville District Supervisor John W. Foust.

“And they recognize that this is going to be a balancing act, they identified the advantages, additional income for the homeowners, making homes more affordable, providing a cheaper alternative to hotels, and providing an opportunity to meet people from other states and countries,” said Foust.

“They warn that there are concerns that they wanted raised. And one was the impact on the character of the neighborhood, very legitimate, introduction of commercial uses in a residential area, parking and traffic on local streets, safety and security, noise and trash, impact on homeowner association and condo agreements, and enforceability,” he said.

Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith, as chairman of Development Process Committee, spearheaded the board’s efforts to finalize regulations to be passed.

“We’ve been at this for a long time. The General Assembly took a couple of years to come up with the code allowing us to do this,” said Smith.

“In reflecting, we’re really here because people change how they do things, we’ve developed a sharing economy, we have shared rides, we have this with the housing,” said Smith. “And sometimes local government is a little bit behind the changes.”

SURVEY RESPONSES revealed that 82

New regulations will permit homeowners to rent out homes up to 60 days a year.

following requirements:

- ❖ Owners or renters must be permanent residents of the property they offer for short-term lodging

- ❖ Properties may be rented for no more than 60 days per calendar year.

- ❖ Lodgers will be limited to six adults, all be associated with the same rental contract

- ❖ Only one contract per night is allowed

- ❖ Operators must identify an authorized agent, not including themselves, who will be available in to address problems that arise while a property is being rented.

- ❖ There must be one designated parking space available for lodgers.

- ❖ Postings must include the short-term lodging permit number

- ❖ Postings must identify the location of the required parking space

- ❖ Properties may not be rented for events or commercial purposes like parties, weddings or fundraisers.

- ❖ Properties must be made available for inspection by county code enforcement inspectors upon request, and comply with state building safety rules

- ❖ Two-year permit will cost \$200

- ❖ Operators must pay transient occupancy taxes

- ❖ Homeowners associations and community associations can still prohibit short-term lodgings within their subdivision or development

MOUNT VERNON District Supervisor Daniel Storck identified short-term rentals as entrepreneurship.

“This is the new economy, this is entrepreneurship, this is exactly what it is. You’re always kind of skating near the edges of what’s legal or not legal, what the rules are or not the rules, because that’s part of what creates change in society,” said Storck.

“We’re here, and now we have to address it. As an entrepreneur I don’t want to shut it down but at the same time, I have a lot of concerns,” he said.

Chairman Sharon Bulova said the board’s decision “was not an easy one.”

“Short-term lodging, while people have been doing that sort of thing over the years, it hasn’t really had a name and hasn’t been something that’s been recognized in our zoning ordinance. But it’s becoming something that is popular and that people are doing,” Bulova said during the meeting. “Without any kind of regulation or oversight I feel that we could be interfering with the quiet enjoyment of people’s neighborhoods and homes.

“There were many factors to consider and various ways the county could go about regulating or restricting. Through today’s decision, the Board of Supervisors aimed to strike the right balance between allowing short-term rentals to operate in Fairfax County under certain circumstances, while protecting the character and quiet enjoyment of residential neighborhoods in Fairfax County,” she said.

percent of respondents thought short-term rentals should be allowed in single family homes; 74 percent answered that they should be allowed in townhouses; 76 percent answered they should be allowed in condominiums. Fully 40 percent of respondents said they had first-hand experience with short-term rentals.

“While it would be nice to wait, I don’t think waiting is going to yield us any new information that we don’t already have today,” said Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay.

“You’re going to have people who don’t understand it, you’re going to have people who love it and want no regulations, and you’re going to have people who don’t want these anywhere in the county,” he said.

The county will examine how the regulations are working after 18 months.

“I do think it is an issue that we need to set rules of engagement, put them in the ordinance, test them, see what’s happening, allow people who are doing these in a way that doesn’t impact the rest of the community, a legal means by which to do that,” said McKay.

NEW RULES go into effect Oct. 1, 2018, allowing homes to be rented out as short-term lodgings with restrictions.

“I think the enforcement issue is going to be a big deal,” said Foust. “I do remind people that this is currently illegal, and we’ve got thousands of people doing it. So we’re going to make it legal, let’s hope that they respect that it will now be legal and they live within the confines of the law.”

These rentals will generate an estimated \$428,268 in new transient occupancy taxes a year based upon the estimated 1,500 active listings, according to the county. Of this amount, \$249,823 would go to the county’s budget fund and the remaining amount would be used to support tourism and regional transportation as required by state law.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS will be allowed in single-family homes, townhouses, condos, mobile homes and apartments with the

Preparing for New School Year

Home organizing saves space and time.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The sight of store shelves overflowing with school glue sticks and crayons signals that the beginning of school is just around the corner. While squeezing in one last vacation, the thought of turning an eye to getting one's home in order before the school bell rings might be met with dread.

"It can feel like a daunting task to organize when artwork overflows from school or small trinkets come home from birthday parties, the end of summer is a great time to purge a lot of unnecessary items to make way for new school year ahead," said Allie Mann, designer-senior interiors specialist, Case Design/Remodeling. "And it's always a great time to donate gently used items as well."

"Especially now as families are preparing to get back to school, it's so important to get organized," added Anne M. Walker, Esq., Allied ASID, Owner + Principal Anne Walker Design LLC. "Nothing is more stressful than searching for something when you're already five minutes late, it's pouring down rain, it's picture day at school, and you have a big work meeting in 45 minutes."

Now that organization is often considered a part of interior design, the tools and hacks available are more stylish and innovative than ever, say local designers. "In a kitchen in Old Town, Alexandria I installed four shallow drawers underneath the countertop at the island — one for each family member," said Sarah Glenn, interior designer and project manager, Braswell Design+Build, Alexandria. "I designed the drawers to be just large enough to store school papers and a laptop so that each family member would have a dedicated temporary storage space without creating four individual junk drawers."

A Potomac, Md. family recently enlisted Walker's help in redesigning and reorganizing their home from top to bottom with an eye toward all things chic and stylish. She began in the bedrooms of the family's teenage daughter, creating custom closets.

"After the new closet was installed, I spent the better part of two days helping this teen fill the closet with all of her belongings, putting things where they were visible and readily accessible," she said. "Organization is important primarily because of the time it saves. If you can find what you need to get out the door right away, you can sleep 20 minutes later."



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICELY DONE KITCHENS AND BATHS

This kitchen by Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths features custom cabinets of painted Maplewood and quartz countertops. An abundance of drawer space helps with organization.



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

Hooks for backpacks and jackets, like this one by Allie Mann of Case Design/Remodeling, are a must for an organized mudroom.

A similar closet was created for the family's middle school aged son. "Amazing how even young children can keep their rooms tidy as long as there's a system in place that they can understand and is practical enough for them to use," said Walker. "If you know exactly where all of your clothes are, and exactly where to put them back after laundering them, it will seem like you just won the lottery. You won't believe how many things you have, many of which have been long forgotten, stuffed in the back of some drawer or under the bed."

One of the most important tasks on Walker's agenda was organizing a large basement space with abundant shelving to create a home office. "In an office this size, children could easily use it for homework while the parent was working there, also," she said. "Sometimes it's calming and comforting just to be in the same space, even if you aren't actually helping the child with their work."

A home's mudroom is supposed to serve as a gateway into the main house, creating order and keeping clutter from overflowing into the home's interior, but often that isn't the case as clutter overtakes the space. In a recent mudroom project, Mann incorporated elements into the design that addressed the family's lifestyle. "Cubbies and bench storage for sports and after-school activities for older children are a must," she said. "If space allows, allocating a designated cubbie for each child is best to keep things separated and from getting lost."

"With organization, you are constantly trying to strike a balance between carving out enough space for a specific function without over-organizing to the point that you lose flexibility to change what you store as your life evolves," added Glenn.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNE WALKER

Interior designer Anne Walker installed a custom closet by Capitol Closet Design in the bedroom of this Potomac, Md. home to create an organized space in time for school.

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ONGOING

Art Exhibit: "Too Much of Too Much." Through Aug. 18, gallery hours in the Bullock | Hitt Gallery at MPA@ChainBridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. McLean Project for the Arts will open "Too Much of Too Much: Overstimulated, Overexposed, and Overextended," featuring works by mid-Atlantic artists whose works explore the ideas of overstimulation, excessiveness and bombardment. Visit mpaart.org.

REGISTRATION OPEN

Vienna Youth Soccer Fall 2018. House Soccer is Vienna Youth Soccer's recreation soccer program. House is open to all boys and girls ages 3-18 years old who wish to play and learn soccer while having fun, making friends, and developing sportsmanship in a non-pressure environment. Visit www.vys.org.

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 8

Summer Stories, Songs, and Sprinklers. 1 p.m. on the lawn of the Freeman Store, 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. Young children and families are invited to listen to a story, tune into some favorite songs, then have a little casual fun with water sprinklers at 1 p.m. Free and appropriate for all ages. Visit www.viennava.gov.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/AUG. 8-9

Studio Ghibli: Spirited Away. Wednesday, 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Thursday, 11 a.m. (English dubbed) at Angelika Film Center - Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. The Angelika Mosaic will feature animated films from the celebrated Studio Ghibli praised for their originality, stunning animation, and ambitious storytelling. All tickets are regular admission. Visit www.AngleikaFilmCenter.com.

THURSDAY/AUG. 9

Nottoway Nights. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Featuring Cathy Ponton King (Blues/Soul). Bring blankets and chairs and enjoy music from around the world every Thursday evening at Nottoway Park. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances/nottoway-nights.

FRIDAY/AUG. 10

Three Classical Comedies. 3 p.m. at The Madeira School Chapel Auditorium, McLean. After weeks of learning classical theatre, practicing movement and vocalizing, and roasting s'mores over the fire, Traveling Players' youth ensembles will present a festival of three classical plays. The schedule for the full day is: 3-4 p.m. - Bourgeois Gentleman (Middle School Ensemble); 4:15-5:45 Love's Labor's Lost - (High School Ensemble); 5:45-6:30 - Dinner (picnic on the lawn); 6:30-8 - Sleeping Beauty (Commedia Troupe); 8-8:30 - Campfire cast party/strike. \$10 tickets available at the door. For directions, visit www.madeira.org/about-madeira/contact-us/.

River Fishing by Boat. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Fish for smallmouth bass and sunfish from a canoe or boat with an introductory class on boating and fishing basics. No previous experience paddling or

rowing is required. Boats and personal flotation devices (PFDs), fishing rods and bait are provided. Designed for participants age 5 to adult. Maximum of three participants per boat, one of whom must be 16 or older. \$16 per person, and each participant must register. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Summer on the Green: Richard Walton Group. 6:30 p.m. area residents can catch a new and diverse musical act at the Town Green or at Chillin' on Church. Bring blankets and chairs, but please leave Fido and any other pets at home. The concerts are free and open to the public. Visit www.viennava.gov.

13th: The Movie. 7:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Mystical Movie Night—13th: Join Unity of Fairfax for a screening and discussion of "13th," an Emmy-Award-winning look at the 13th Amendment and the history of racial inequality in the U.S. prison system. Free. Visit www.unityoffairfax.org/events.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/AUG. 10-12

Beauty and the Beast. Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 1:30 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Vienna Youth Players' premieres Walt Disney's Beauty and the Beast. The cast and crew features more than 30 aspiring student-artists, ages 8-18. This production will be a swan song as it is director Barbara 'Babs' Dyer's final show with the company after helming the director's chair 26 years. Tickets are \$15 each general admission, at viennava.gov/webtrac or at the community center.

SATURDAY/AUG. 11

Author Event and Book Signing. 1-3 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue, E., Vienna. What was it like to live in early 20th century rural Vienna? George Atkisson, 95, a lifelong resident of Vienna and a World War II veteran, will sign copies of his new Vienna-inspired novel "The Chalice and the Stirrup Cup" and answer questions about the book or his life in Northern Virginia during the Great Depression. Copies will be available for purchase on site, or buy a copy before the event at the Freeman Store or online. All ages. Visit historicviennainc.org or call 703-938-5187.

Bands for Bikes. 1-4 p.m. at Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Rising college freshmen Jack Lichtenstein and Morgan Poirier, will host their 5th annual "Bands for Bikes" concert to benefit Wheels to Africa (a youth-led all volunteer 501c(3) that collects used bikes for needy children). Joining the boys as an organizer this year will be Langley rising sophomore and musician, Claire Fulton. Area student musicians and bands will be performing on the outdoor stage. Bike donations welcome (but not required) and can be dropped off 10 a.m.-4 p.m. that day.

Live Music: Dan Navarro. 8 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. With a career spanning decades and a dozen albums with Lowen & Navarro, Dan Navarro has just released his first true studio-recorded solo album, "Shed My Skin." \$20-25. Visit www.jamminjava.com.

SUNDAY/AUG. 12

Alden Summer Concerts: Morgan Taylor's "Music of Gustaf Yellowgold" (Family Friendly). 5 p.m. in McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd. Free parking at



PHOTO BY GREG HOTSENPILLER

From left: Eric Stein, organizer Jack Lichtenstein and Bryan Bedell of The Unexpected have played Bands for Bikes for the last four years.

Bands for Bikes

Rising college freshmen Jack Lichtenstein and Morgan Poirier, will host their 5th annual "Bands for Bikes" concert to benefit Wheels to Africa (a youth-led all volunteer 501c(3) that collects used bikes for needy children). Joining the boys as an organizer this year will be Langley rising sophomore and musician, Claire Fulton. Area student musicians and bands will be performing on the outdoor stage. Saturday, Aug. 11, 1-4 p.m. at Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Bike donations welcome (but not required) and can be

Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. The Alden's 2018 Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park expand this year to include a "welcome, summer" concert on Sunday, June 3, and then seven concerts from July 1 through Aug. 12. Visit www.aldentheatre.org.

Concerts on the Green: Rew Smith. 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Centre Green. Sundays throughout the summer, bring a picnic and chairs for an evening of free, live music. Visit www.celebrategreatfalls.org.

MONDAY/AUG. 13

Dining with Dorothy. 12:30 p.m. at Ledo Pizza, 141 Park St., Vienna. A program of the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna. Join with friends or make new ones. Newcomers are always welcome. To reserve space, contact event chair, Dorothy Flood at dflood1706@gmail.com.

Donation Deadline. During bank hours at Sonabank, 6830 Old Dominion Drive, # A, McLean. Sonabank is collecting school supplies at all branches. Visit www.sonabank.com.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, AUG. 13-17

Mini-Miller Camp. 9 a.m.-noon at Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. The mini-miller camp gives children ages 6-12 an opportunity to work a 200-year-old operating grist mill. They'll learn the skills the miller needed as well as those of a blacksmith, and have a chance to make their own butter. Cost for the full week of camp is \$197. Call 703-759-2771 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill.

TUESDAY/AUG. 14

Live Music: Cory Wong. 8 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Known for his guitarwork in the midwestern ensemble Vulfpeck, Cory Wong steps out on his own for the 2nd time with "The Optimist,"

due out Aug. 17. \$15-25. Visit www.jamminjava.com.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/AUG. 15-16

Studio Ghibli: Howl's Moving Castle. Wednesday, 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Thursday, 11 a.m. (English dubbed) at Angelika Film Center - Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. The Angelika Mosaic will feature animated films from the celebrated Studio Ghibli praised for their originality, stunning animation, and ambitious storytelling. All tickets are regular admission. Visit www.AngleikaFilmCenter.com.

THURSDAY/AUG. 16

Nottoway Nights. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Featuring Seldom Scene (Bluegrass). Bring blankets and chairs and enjoy music from around the world every Thursday evening at Nottoway Park. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances/nottoway-nights.

FRIDAY/AUG. 17

Chillin' on Church with Fat Chance. 6:30 p.m. area residents can catch a new and diverse musical act every Friday at the Town Green or at Chillin' on Church. Bring blankets and chairs, but please leave Fido and any other pets at home. The concerts are free and open to the public. Visit www.viennava.gov.

SATURDAY/AUG. 18

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony. 10 a.m. at Safeway - Chesterbrook, 6244 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Safeway will unveil renovations to its Chesterbrook store. Local dignitaries are expected to join Safeway officials for the ceremony, with live music presented by McLean High School band students.

Paddle the Potomac. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Watch for deer



Mary Jane Cogan exhibits at Great Falls Library.

Art Exhibit

As a young piano student, Mary Jane Cogan studied the three Bs of music: Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Now as an artist, she has selected three popular Bs of art - Blossoms, Birds, and Butterflies - for her art show at the Great Falls Library. The theme is presented in a variety of media: watercolor and acrylic paintings, alcohol inks, and photography. The exhibit can be viewed through Aug. 30. Great Falls library is located at 9830 Georgetown Pike.

foraging on the islands and osprey and bald eagles searching for fish as you paddle a kayak through a wildlife-rich section of the Potomac River. This is not a whitewater tour, and no previous experience is required. Kayaks will be provided - one person per kayak. For participants age 14 to adult runs. Download the waiver at go.usa.gov/xnFnc and bring the completed form to the tour. \$40 per person. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

SUNDAY/AUG. 19

Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon at Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St., N. Vienna. Get omelets, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy and more. Adults \$10, children 12 and under \$4. Call 703-938-6580.

Concerts on the Green: Vinyl Invention. 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Centre Green. Sundays throughout the summer, bring a picnic and chairs for an evening of free, live music. Visit www.celebrategreatfalls.org.

MONDAY/AUG. 20

Ann Wilson & Jeff Beck. 8 p.m. at Wolf Trap's Filene Center, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Ann Wilson of Heart is gearing up for a busy summer that will see her performing on the "Stars Align Tour" with Jeff Beck and Paul Rodgers and prepping the release of her new solo album, IMMORTAL, due out Sept. 14. \$35-\$75. Visit www.wolftrap.org for tickets.

VDOT Presents Radical Solution to Traffic Woes

FROM PAGE 3

Before and after the meeting Comstock, Favola and Foust were surrounded by constituents, wanting to make their opinions known. Foust, for one, is not convinced the proposal is the answer, but in a phone interview earlier in the day, he said he would consider the recommendations and listen to what his constituents wanted.

Those constituents lined up quickly to voice their views during the public commentary period.

“Nothing they can say will make me believe this a viable option,” was Joanne Theon’s reaction to the proposal. A fifty-year resident of the area, Theon says the closures would cause great inconvenience to local residents.

“Why didn’t VDOT listen to us before?” she asked, when residents complained that “dumping the HOT lanes right here” would only add to the traffic pileup before and after the Georgetown Pike ramp.

Michael Mahoney of Langley Oaks is another opponent of the plan. Mahoney has a list of other ideas that should be considered “long before taking this drastic step.” Mahoney says that officials “aren’t using what’s already available to us,” like road shoulder usage with green and red arrows similar to what has been used on I-66, or widening the ramp, or utilizing other road services - what he called the “zipper roads” - such as the road under the Route 123 bridge.

Several of the attendees expressed the concern that while the plan might improve the Beltway traffic flow – although Moore repeatedly used the term “a wash” when describing the potential change in Beltway traffic movement as a result of the ramp closure – it would simply send the bottleneck further down the line, toward the already congested interchange with the Dulles Toll Road, and further down I-495 to Tysons and beyond.

“And what about other neighborhoods, like those along Route 7, Lewinsville Road and around Tysons?” asked several of the commenters. As much as the McLean residents want a solution to their traffic woes, most did not wish to achieve that goal at the expense of others.



A 50-year resident of McLean, Joanne Theon says the plan is an inconceivable inconvenience to local residents. “It just doesn’t make sense. It’s not a solution.”



“Give it a try,” said Joe Yoon of Great Falls, who thinks the real answer is in a new bridge over the Potomac, but “since we will have flying cars before a new bridge,” Yoon thinks it’s worth testing the plan.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

IN RESPONSE to those concerns, Moore said that VDOT would “stress test” other areas that appear to be adversely affected by the ramp closures.

Jeffrey Parnes was one of those who pointed out that “there is more going on here” and any proposed solution cannot be so microscopically focused in his estimation. The Oak Hill resident commented that Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia have “spent millions ... to encourage economic development by the relocation of industry, commercial and residential uses to our county” but that infrastructure has not kept pace to support the growth “not just in the Tysons area, but the whole Dulles Corridor, including Reston, Herndon and Vienna.”

Without solving the real issue, Parnes said, “you are removing my ability to transverse state and interstate roads to solve a purely local problem.”

While possibly not in the majority, there were those who expressed approval – even if sometimes with reservations – for the pro-



Michael Mahoney of Langley Oaks is opposed to the ramp proposal. “There are other options that haven’t been explored and need to be before taking this drastic step.”

posal.

Lorenze, the local resident who experiences the “ridiculous” journey from home to Langley High School, is willing to give it a shot. She defends the plight of public school parents fighting to get to Langley High School or Cooper Middle School, ver-

sus the inconvenience caused to those who chose private schools in Maryland or the District. In the public school system, parents “don’t have that choice of where to send their kids.”

Lorenze wants VDOT to survey parents in conjunction with area schools to see just how increased traffic in the last two years has affected their children and participation in sports, after-school activities, and other school events.

“Have the courage to move forward with this pilot VDOT,” Lorenze urged in the comments she emailed after the meeting. While the plan may not work, she feels it is an opportunity to gather data, and Lorenze says doing nothing is “simply not acceptable.”

Great Falls resident Joe Yoon also thinks the pilot program should be given a try. “We need the data to make the right choice.” As for affecting traffic further south along the Beltway, Yoon says “those are roads that can still be changed, adjusted, unlike Georgetown Pike.”

Yoon, in agreement with the comments of several of the attendees, said that the ultimate solutions are vast improvements to the American Legion Bridge and a new bridge over the Potomac. Since Yoon thinks “we will have flying cars before a new bridge,” he is willing to support the four-month pilot program. “Let’s see what we get and go from there.”

INFORMATION about the proposed plan is available on the VDOT website www.virginiadot.org and at the Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax. VDOT is asking the public to submit their comments and suggestions via

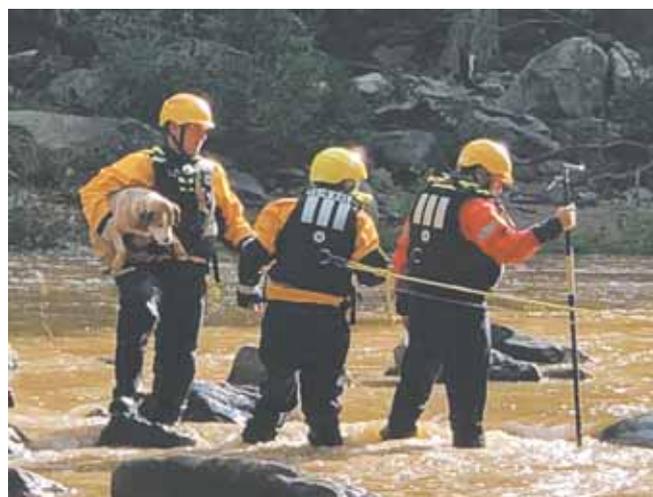
email to Allison Richter at meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov, including “McLean Area Traffic Analysis” in the subject line. VDOT will be updating the site with a summary of comments received and any actions take. Another public meeting will be held in the Fall.

Dog Rescued from Water in Great Falls

On Wednesday, Aug. 1 at 4:48 p.m., personnel from stations 12 (Great Falls), 18 (Jefferson), 39 (North Point), and 42 (Wolf Trap) responded with other supporting companies to a report of a dog trapped on the rocks in Difficult Run near Georgetown Pike in the Great Falls area of Fairfax County. The dog was stuck on a rock in the middle of the waterway and unable to return to shore. Swift water personnel were able to return the dog

safely to its owner without injury — according to Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department.

With potential rain still in the forecast for the near future, everyone should remember to exercise caution while near any waterway as conditions can turn unexpectedly hazardous quickly. In this case, bystanders did the correct thing by staying out of the water, contacting 9-1-1, and helping identify the exact site of the emergency.



Swift water personnel were able to return the dog safely to its owner without injury.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

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NEWS

Raising a Roof, Building a Home

Great Falls Rotary Interact Club teens take part in third annual Habitat for Humanity service project.

The Great Falls Rotary Interact Club went from digging and filling drainage ditches to helping raise a roof at the group's third Habitat for Humanity service project in Lynchburg, Va. The 17 club members, ranging from 16-18 years old, traveled to the central Virginia site Sunday, July 22 and returned home July 25.

While there, the teenagers learned from and worked with the seasoned Greater Lynchburg Habitat construction teams on a house built in memory of longtime Habitat volunteer/builder Ann Marie Myers. Ms. Myers was a special part of the "Women's Build" group.

THE INTERACT CLUB MEMBERS also worked alongside the soon-to-be homeowner, Akira Saunders. "They have been working so hard," Saunders said as she worked with the team on site, "This warms my heart that they would do this." In addition to receiving interest-free loans from Habitat, homeowners like Saunders must volunteer at least 200 hours helping build Habitat homes as a precondition to purchasing.

Executive Director of Greater Lynchburg Habitat for Humanity Donna Vincent said the Great Falls Interactors bring help that is vital to their organization. "With cheerful demeanor and without a single complaint, they dug in some of the hardest ground on the planet in order to place drain tile in it. They waterproofed a foundation. They lifted roof trusses into place," said Vincent. "They had really thoughtful questions, clearly aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the Habitat for Humanity mission. We will look forward to some of them returning next year for the fourth Great Falls Interact Youth days here at Greater Lynchburg Habitat."

Twelve of this year's Interact group graduated from high school this year. Five of them — Ashley Baradari, Chloe Bennett, Thompson Brownlee, Jared Tewodros and Declan Thinner — have volunteered at every Habitat service trip.

"The Habitat trip was such a special experience," said Ashley Baradari. "It was so great to see everyone working together to put the roof up and I couldn't be more proud of such an amazing group. I'm so glad I got to go on this trip one last time with everyone."

THE FIVE NEWER MEMBERS said they learned so much from this first build. "It was a great experience to help others and see what goes into actually building a house," said Juliana Wilhelmy, one of next year's Interact co-presidents. "I learned skills like using a power drill, and it was all thanks to the kind and patient volunteers who took the time to teach all of us. It was also awesome to see the Lynchburg community come together to support Habitat through meals from the church groups. I'm so happy that I had the opportunity to go and meet all of the wonderful people working with Habitat and help a family build a home."

Interact clubs are sponsored by Rotary International, a global service organization that operates through a local club, the Rotary Club of Great Falls. Interact is for 13-19 year-old teens. The Interact Club engages in many charitable activities throughout the year, such as canned food drives for local food banks, and fundraisers like car washes and bake sales to raise money for service projects such as the Habitat for Humanity project. The Interact Club holds bi-



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Rotary Great Falls Interact Habitat Volunteers pictured at the project site.



Members of Rotary Great Falls Interact New Leadership Team.



Great Falls Interactors sheeting the roof trusses.

monthly meetings near the Great Falls village center.

For more information on Interact or Rotary visit greatfallsinteract.com/ or email: greatfallsinteract@gmail.com

BULLETIN

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is looking to expand its team of volunteers for the upcoming tax season. Tax-Aide, now in its 51st year, offers free in-person preparation and assistance to anyone, especially those 50 and older, who can't afford a tax preparation service. Volunteers make a difference in their communities by assisting many older, lower-income taxpayers, and their families, who might otherwise miss out on the tax credits and deductions they've earned. To learn about volunteer opportunities, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxaide or call 1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277).

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's Merrifield Center offers a new stand-up information kiosk. Part of a pilot project, the new feature aims to improve the customer service experience and decrease wait times for individuals who are seeking mental (behavioral) health services. To check in, individuals respond to five simple questions, then the CSB's Patient Track software alerts staff. Based on clinicians' schedules and availability, as well as the needs of the client, individuals are triaged and seen by the next available staff member. For more information on available services, call the CSB at 703-383-8500 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). In an emergency 24/7, call CSB Emergency Services at 703-573-5679 or the Fairfax Detox Center at 703-502-7000 (TTY 703-322-9080).

SUNDAY/AUG. 12

Spiritual Prosperity Workshop. 1:30-4 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Learn how to make changes in life using spiritual laws of abundance in this workshop with nationally-known author and speaker Edwene Gaines. Workshop is offered on a love offering (donation) basis. Call 703-281-1767 or visit www.unityoffairfax.org/four-spiritual-laws-prosperity-workshop-s for more.

THURSDAY/AUG. 16

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

After Work Networking Mixer. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at 8300 Greensboro Drive, Suite 150, McLean. Wine Tasting and Networking Event, hosted by Dr. Nicole Van, DDS, PC. Wine tasting will be served by Vienna Vintner and appetizers will be catered by Purple Onion Catering. Visit tysons-chamber.org to register.

SATURDAY/AUG. 18

Write Away Stress. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Learn how in a writing workshop featuring the all-new Write It Away method of stress management. Facilitator is Sue McCollum, LPC, therapeutic writing coach and co-author of a soon-to-be-published book on how to use writing to tame the tension in your life. \$30. Email comms@unityoffairfax.org.

AUG. 26-SEPT. 9

Pool Closure: Providence RECenter. Four Fairfax County Park Authority RECenter pools will be closing for regular, periodic cleaning and maintenance next month. Consider trying out another county pool during the temporary shutdown. RECenter passes are valid at all nine Park Authority RECenters. Dates are subject to change. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter for more.

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"Slow Progression"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

OKAY. It's not exactly what I wanted to read in the email from my oncologist interpreting the results of my July 25 CT Scan.

Since August 2013 when I was hospitalized for a week with fluid in my lungs, "CT stable" has been the recurring message. Now the message is different.

My question, which will be addressed Monday afternoon: can I live with 'slow progression?' I would imagine that there are more aggressive characterizations of 'progression.' Nevertheless, I have to wait three more days to find out.

What has been suggested so far by my oncologist is simple enough: reduce the interval of my infusions or change medications. Sounds reasonable and not particularly drastic. What's distressing (but not at all drastic) however, is the fear of the unknown.

Not having had a reason to change in five years, I've grown awfully comfortable and confident in the ebb and flow of my life vis-à-vis my cancer treatment/side effects. I've known what to expect and when to expect it.

For a terminal cancer patient still undergoing treatment, this kind of regularity/normalcy is as good as it gets. Accordingly, I've been able to live a relatively manageable life.

And by 'manageable' I mean a life worth living and one not consumed by, if I may retrieve a phrase from last week's column: "cancer centrality." Not that I don't have deficits or spiritual, emotional or psychological problems/complications, I do, but I have so much more than that. I not only have a present, I have a future too.

No small caveat when one considers I was given a "13 month to two year" prognosis on Feb. 27, 2009. Over nine years ago - and counting. As Maurice Chevalier sang to Hermione Gingold in "Gigi" (1958): "I remember it well."

So life has indeed gone on and I'd like to think that despite this most recent email from my oncologist, life will continue to go on. I have to think positive; I'm my father's son, and deceased though he may be, he wouldn't have it any other way.

Besides, as Dr. Mobley said to Augustus McCray in the epic mini series, "Lonesome Dove," (1989) when Gus refused to let him amputate his remaining leg: "I assure the alternative is gloomy."

Well, Gus was rarely gloomy and considering my circumstances, neither have I been gloomy. There's just no future in it.

Right now, it's the present I'm concerned about. Specifically, Monday afternoon when my oncologist and I (we, actually; my wife, Dina will be on the phone as well) will talk.

Having a three participant phone conversation is a little awkward. The questions and answers might not flow as easily as if the three of us were sitting together in an examining room. But since that's what's happening/been scheduled, we'll endeavor to make the best of it.

What probably will help, oddly enough, is the three days Dina and I will have to think about what concerns we have, what questions we'll ask and what answers from the oncologist we anticipate hearing.

Then, with the doctor's encouragement, together we'll be able to make an intelligent decision concerning a prudent course of action/treatment going forward. A discussion we've had many times before.

And given our respective history over the last nine-plus years, there's no reason to think we can't achieve similar success living forward.

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

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