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WELLBEING
PAGE 8

Students of Artstars Studio in Great Falls recently held piano recitals and performed music related to the theme of 'All Creatures Great and Small.' Jenna Wang shows off her drawing of the red panda. She played 'Baby Elephant Walk.'

Great Falls CONNECTION



Artstars Shine in Great Falls

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Langley High Band To Hold Tag Day Fundraiser

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2. not appreciated or understood.
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PHOTOS BY CARLYN KRANKING/THE CONNECTION

People line up to purchase food at the Middle Eastern Food Festival.



Six-year-old Stephen Hayes interacts with the goats at the petting zoo area.

Celebrating Culture and Faith

Church holds 25th annual Middle Eastern Food Festival.

BY CARLYN KRANKING
THE CONNECTION

When Falls Church resident Donna Haseley's son was young, they used to go to a Greek festival at a local Greek Orthodox church. So when she heard about last weekend's Middle Eastern Food Festival, she thought it was a good idea.

"My son just went to college a couple days ago, and I was a little sad," said Haseley, who attended the festival with her friend. "My friend said she was coming, so I said, 'What a wonderful way to spend a day.'"

Cars filled the parking lot at Holy Transfiguration Melkite Greek-Catholic Church and spread up and down nearby neighborhood streets as thousands of people gathered to enjoy the church's 25th annual Middle Eastern Food Festival. The festival offered authentic Middle Eastern food including kibbeh, falafel, fattoush, hummus and roasted lamb, and had kids activities, church tours and dabke dancing.

Church volunteers worked tirelessly throughout the summer to make the food sold at the festival, including about 25,000 sweets like baklava, maamoul, namoura, ghraybeh and more.

"It is really about showing hospitality to our neighbors, to our friends and to people who just want to learn a little bit about who we are," Protodeacon David Barooty said. "We pride ourselves on this love of Christ and love of one another that we then want to share with everyone that comes in."

Attendees of the festival feel this hospitality from members of the church. Barooty said that guests will often comment on how welcoming the parish is, and festival attendee Hindy Mokhiber of Great Falls noticed it as well.

"We just love to come, because there's a lot of love in this church and at this festival," Mokhiber said. "The food is fantastic, and the people are wonderful."



Eight-year-old Evie Hayes enjoyed the balloons.



Dimitrios Komninos sold olive oil at the festival.



Dabke dancers at the Middle Eastern Food Festival.



Four-year-old Rafay Saleem, seven-year-old Jahanara Saleem, and three-year-old Zara Hasan at the food festival.

The festival is a yearly tradition that members of the parish take great pride in.

"To me, it is just so heartwarming to see it all come together and to see the pride of all the parishioners who are here to welcome our guests," said Sonia McCormick,

festival publicity chair. "It's a sense of accomplishment that we've all done something really amazing together that's going to benefit the church, but that's also going to introduce our parish to the greater Washington community."

Lebanese Nonprofit Spreads Awareness About Diabetes

Jackie Maalouf, Ph.D., traveled to the United States from Beirut, Lebanon to attend the Middle Eastern Food Festival and talk about the nonprofit she founded, which is in the process of being registered in the United States. Dr. Maalouf founded the organization DiaLeb with her daughter, Sylvie, after she was diagnosed with diabetes.

"Sylvie got diagnosed at an unconventional age. She was 24 when she got diagnosed," Dr. Maalouf said. "It was definitely a shock."

DiaLeb spreads awareness of diabetes and helps support people who have been recently diagnosed through summer camps, support groups and educational sessions.

At the food festival, Dr. Maalouf sought to spread information to attendees about diabetes and DiaLeb, whether or not they were of Lebanese background.

"Diabetes does not recognize a nationality or a religion or anything," Dr. Maalouf said. "I think overall it was very productive and positive for us, being here, and I think I would definitely do it another time."

NEWS

The Langley High School Bands and Color Guard will canvas area neighborhoods to raise money to support the LHS band program. Expect a friendly "Tag Day" visit on Saturday, Sept. 8.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



The Langley High School Band dresses the part as they perform at the Great Falls Spooktacular, the village's annual Halloween parade.

Langley High Band to Hold Tag Day Fundraiser

On Saturday, Sept. 8, band and color guard members from Langley High School will participate in "Tag Day" throughout neighborhoods in McLean and Great Falls. Each year, the Langley High School Bands and Color Guard raise money through door-to-door fundraising, "tagging" neighbors for their monetary support. Monies raised during Tag Day are vital to the operation of the program, and support critical areas such as the hiring of sectionals instructors; purchase and repair of uniforms, instruments and equipment; and payment of transportation costs and competition fees.

In return, the Marching Saxons and Color Guard personally invite neighbors to attend Langley High School's Friday night football games, where they provide music and half-time entertainment throughout the Saxon football season. Home games this year

are slated for Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Oct. 26, and Nov. 2.

Band members also invite everyone to come and enjoy the Langley High School Band concerts, held in the school's newly renovated auditorium. Concerts for the 2018-19 school year are slated for Nov. 13, Dec. 13 and 18, March 7 and 12, and May 9 and 24.

The Langley High School Band program has grown tremendously in recent years, and consistently receives the highest possible ratings in Virginia assessment concerts.

Tag Day is the band's biggest fundraiser, and Langley High School greatly appreciates the support from the McLean and Great Falls community to help achieve its fundraising goals. Please go to www.langleybands.org to donate, and to see the calendar of upcoming events.



The Langley High School Band performs internationally once every four years. This spring, the band traveled to Italy, where it was invited to perform concerts in Pisa and Siena.

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Residents of retirement communities have more than the one-car-per-four-apartment formula, leading to planners to consider increasing parking.

New Look at Parking for 55-and-up Communities

Seniors need their cars.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

The Board of Supervisors, on July 31, reduced the minimum age requirement at The Woodlands Retirement Community in Fairfax. The case, discussed by the Planning Commission earlier in July, led to a discussion about impervious surface, parking spaces and seniors who wish to keep their cars.

“As we’ve seen in other cases, senior living often needs more cars because people who live there are keeping their cars longer,” said Braddock District Planning Commissioner Ellen Hurley.

Vice Chairman and at-large commissioner James Hart asked, “Do we have a formula or other criteria for evaluating how many parking spaces are needed for senior housing generally?”

Hurley said, “I believe that the current formula is one parking space for four units which is found to be way under.”

“Is the formula obsolete,” said Hart? “Do we have a formula that needs to be revisited?” he asked.

Lynne Strobel, land use attorney, represented Woodlands Retirement Community, in the specific case before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. “So what has happened, and I think this is not just on this property, I’ve seen this at other locations that I’ve worked on, if someone who is older does not use their car, they want to have a car, because it’s a symbol of independence. They know it’s something

they could use it if they wanted to,” said Strobel.

“Parking is such a quality of life issue, it makes people so angry that there aren’t enough parking spaces and we have enough apartments or town houses where people are fighting about that sort of thing. If the formula is stale, maybe it’s a suggestion to put it on the work program to reevaluate,” said Hart.

More parking will affect environmental issues too, said Hurley. “When you’re building more parking you now have to balance the trees versus the storm water.”

“To your point that we’re going to have to consider this more and more, I think it is a good work plan item,” at-large commissioner Timothy Sargeant said.

“If it’s 55 year olds living in apartments, they’re all going to have cars. 85 year olds in apartments are probably going to have cars, too,” said Hart.

Dranesville Commissioner John Ulfelder said, “One of my favorite questions. We’re dropping the minimum age from 62 to 55. So for a married couple, can or do both have to be 55 to move in?”

“One has to be 55,” said Zachary Fountain, county planning staff.

“So the other partner can be younger,” said Ulfelder. “The point here being at age 55 somebody who wishes to maximize their social security in the current plan would be working for 15 more years. So they would be going and coming at least on a weekly basis, or a daily basis, to go to work.

“Does that potential have impact on the transportation issues, traffic issues?” said Ulfelder.

“If it’s 55 year olds living in apartments, they’re all going to have cars. 85 year olds in apartments are probably going to have cars, too.”

— James Hart,
at-large planning commissioner

OPINION

Do Something

BY WENDY GRADISON
CEO PRS



The news of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade as well as a number of our own community members whose lives were stopped short due to suicide underscores the challenges that exist in preventing suicide. These stories created considerable grief, and in fact, we saw a significant increase in calls and texts to our PRS CrisisLink hotline.

When losses like these occur, we have an opportunity to change the conversation about suicide from one of loss to one of empowerment and hope. To keep people talking, we are launching the #CallTextLive Campaign during September, Suicide Prevention Month.

Suicide is a serious issue locally and nationally, claiming the lives of nearly 45,000 people annually and is the 10th leading cause of death nationwide and the second leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24. But for every death, 278 people manage to move past thoughts of suicide and survive.

At PRS, a nonprofit running PRS CrisisLink, Northern Virginia's crisis hotline and textline, we know there is more we can do to bring awareness and tools to prevent future suicides. We are inviting the community to get involved in our 4th annual #CallTextLive Campaign.



Join #CallTextLive Campaign.

Using the hashtag #CallTextLive, the campaign works to educate members of the community about resources available and actions they can take to bring awareness to suicide prevention and intervention. Campaign highlights include: an easy to use web-based interactive event calendar; great tips and resources to share via social media; a Facebook Live Q&A with experts; community training and tour of the PRS CrisisLink call center; a Selfie Day; a crowdsourcing fundraiser; t-shirts for purchase; and walk events. We will also explore special suicide prevention topics related to gun safety, veterans, older adults, LGBTQ, youth, and survivors.

It's time to challenge the stigma around is-

suues contributing to suicide and provide each other the tools to get help. #CallTextLive uses social media, activities and events to drive community conversation. We want people to visit our website—www.prsinc.org—to find simple ways to spark change through the #CallTextLive Campaign. Do one or do them all...but we definitely want everyone to do something.

If we are successful, even more people will find their way to community resources, including the PRS CrisisLink program, which handled nearly 80,000 crisis calls and text messages from the Northern Virginia region last year. In fact, a simple call or text to the crisis hotline or textline — (800) 273-TALK [8255] and text "CONNECT" to 85511 — provides the empathetic, trained voice that someone in crisis needs to reduce their pain and provide connections to care. Most of these voices are volunteers from our community — neighbors and friends — who share the gift of listening to those who hope to be heard.

Help us make it okay for more people to seek help. Join the #CallTextLive Campaign to broaden the conversation. Small or big ... do something ... we are listening and others will too.

Wendy Gradison is CEO of PRS, a mental health nonprofit in Northern Virginia.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Working with Better Angels

To the Editor:

Wow, I just read Mary Donaldson's inflammatory and incorrect letter ("Wake-up Election," Connection, Aug. 29-Sept. 4, 2018) referencing Secretary Kissinger's remarks made in a Dec. 18, 2016 appearance on Face the Nation. One can find a link to the actual video of the program. In this interview, that took place before Trump took office, Kissinger does say, "Trump is a phenomenon that foreign countries haven't seen," and hypothesizes that he could become "a very considerable president." He does not say, as Ms. Donaldson asserts, "He is the one true leader. After eight years of tyranny, we finally see a difference."

I might add that the word "tyranny" describes egregious actions of leaders with no ethical base and, regardless of one's politics, does not apply to any of our past presidents.

Please, could we check our sources before ramping up invective? Better yet, could we eliminate invective and stick with facts, wherever they may lead us. As

voting citizens, it is our duty to pay attention. That means comparing information from quality news sources with different leanings; recognizing opinions as different from facts; assessing the expertise and stature of the declarant; and logically analyzing what is presented.

Bias is too easy. Here's a test. State our complaints about an office holder or candidate; then redirect them at someone from the opposite party and see how judgments shift. Let's start working with our better angels. We have a great and blessed commonality to share: we are Americans.

Eileen Curtis
Great Falls

Fact-checking a Letter

To the Editor:

While I understand that you are not responsible for ensuring the accuracy of letters from readers, I felt compelled to offer a fact-check to Mary Donaldson's letter ("Wake-Up Election," published in the August 29-September 4 Connection). In it, she quotes Henry Kissinger - referring to President

Trump - as "the one true leader. After eight years of tyranny, we finally see a difference."

Henry Kissinger did not say that, ever. That quote was an editorial statement by the author of an article published in The Patriot Post and Liberty One News, two right-leaning websites. Discovering this was as simple as typing "Kissinger" + "one true leader" into a search engine: multiple sites popped up labeling the quote as false.

Spreading fake news drags down civil discourse, and in an age of electronic communication, avoiding it is one of the responsibilities of good citizenship. The News Literacy Project has excellent tools to make all of us better, more discerning consumers of news. I urge Ms Donaldson - and passionate partisans of every stripe - to visit www.newslit.org to learn more.

Karen E. Akers
Vienna

Misguided Decision

To the Editor:

Congresswoman Barbara Comstock (R-10) parrots President Trump's Iran deal posturing and

follows him down the rat-hole of know-nothingism. Despite her lack of expertise in foreign policy, she states in her May 8, 2018 press release that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is "misguided," ostensibly because it doesn't solve all Middle East problems in one fell swoop. The JCPOA is an historical nuclear nonproliferation agreement, nothing more, nothing less.

After forty years of distrust, the JCPOA was a first-step confidence builder between Iran and the rest of the world. With JCPOA as the cornerstone, professional diplomats could have worked with reform-minded Iranians to reduce their missile program and find peaceful solutions in Gaza, Syria and Yemen.

Congresswoman Comstock claims to be bipartisan, however she didn't consult with Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In his June 13, 2018 statement, Congressman Connolly stated that Trump's abrogation of the JCPOA increases the probability of a nuclear Iran with the Saudis soon joining the club.

Greg Brandon
McLean

Great Falls CONNECTION

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PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Having their say: Several hundred attended the first public meeting to discuss the VDOT proposal to test closures on the Georgetown Pike ramp to I-495. Next meeting, 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 13, McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean.

Ramp Closure Consultation Continues

Second meeting set for Sept. 13 at McLean High.

At 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 13, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be holding its second public meeting on a proposed four-month pilot to close the ramp from Georgetown Pike to I-495 north from 1 to 7 p.m. weekdays. The meeting will be held at McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. The pilot is intended to test the viability of a plan to mitigate congestion and address safety concerns. Currently, drivers seeking to avoid heavy traffic on the beltway between Tysons and the American Legion Bridge are cutting through neighborhoods, which in turn, negatively impacts residents in the area. For Great Falls residents, the VDOT concept has the potential of reducing cut-through commuter traffic on Georgetown Pike. However, it would also mean that residents who wish to head north toward Maryland in the afternoon would need to take an alternate route in order to get on I-495 — at Route 123, Route 267 or Route

7. During the Aug. 2 meeting on this proposal, representatives from VDOT indicated that they felt that it was important to bring this “out-of-the-box” proposal to the community for input and stressed that the pilot would not go forward unless it has strong support. Feedback from residents will be used in determining if the pilot is undertaken as originally conceived, put on hold, or whether a modified version is implemented. While some residents at the meeting spoke in favor of the pilot, many felt that closure would negatively affect other roads and increase travel time to Maryland. Many indicated that they had chosen to live near the ramp precisely because of the easy access – to work, schools, doctors, friends, etc. For more information on this issue, including materials from the first VDOT meeting, see http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/mclean_traffic_analysis.asp. Great Falls residents are encouraged to attend the upcoming meeting and “weigh in” on this important issue. The Transportation Committee (TRN) also welcomes your feedback. Please send comments, including whether you support, or do not support, VDOT’s proposed pilot to TRN at transportation@gfca.org.

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Remembrance Ceremony at Freedom Memorial

On Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m., the annual September 11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. Great Falls lost six residents to the attacks on September 11. The ceremony will honor them and all who sacrificed on that day and in its aftermath. The event will include a Marine Corps color guard, patriotic songs, remarks by Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Sharon Bulova, and a candle-lighting for each of the September 11 victims from Great Falls.

The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. The ceremony is open to all. Ample parking is available in the library parking lot. In case of rain, the ceremony will move to the library meeting room. Limited seating will be provided. Attendees are encouraged to bring portable chairs.

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WELLBEING

Aiming for Long-Term Fitness

Study shows physical declines can be detected as early as age 50.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

“I’ve been doing it since before I retired,” said Rich White, a former accountant who lives in Alexandria. “It’s easier to get up and get it out of the way so I don’t miss it. Both of my parents died prematurely of heart attacks. That’s when I decided to start running to get in shape. Eventually that turned into a habit of daily strength and aerobic exercise.”

White’s assumptions about preserving his physical health are underscored by a report from the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development at Duke University School of Medicine which found that physical decline begins when people are in their 50s, much earlier than people might notice or expect.

The study looked at 775 adults ranging in age from 30 to 90 to assess changes in fitness abilities like endurance, balance, speed and strength. Researchers found that exercise efforts must begin before the age of 50 in order to help halt the decline and maintain mobility and independence longer in life.

“Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don’t wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair,” said lead author Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D. in releasing the study.

By having participants stand on one leg for 60 seconds to measure balance and sit and rise from a chair for 30 seconds to measure lower body strength, researchers were able to detect a decline beginning in

Emma Warner, 72, meets her trainer at a Montgomery County Recreation Center gym twice a week. Together they perform a combination of exercises aimed at improving her strength, balance, endurance and flexibility.

“We stretch and do yoga poses, sometimes we speed walk outside and I also do exercises with two or three pound dumbbells,” she said. “But my mother is 98 and is in pretty good health, so I figure I have good genes. I just need to work on fitness to maintain.”

As people age, change and decline is inevitable, but the rate and severity can vary based on genetics and the level of activity in one’s lifestyle. Regular exercise can have a profound effect on the way in which one ages.

“People have their actual age, which they can’t do anything about, and their biological age,” said Martin.

“Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s.”

Fitness instructor Amy Traum has clients who run the age gamut from college students to retirees, but her overarching advice to getting in shape is similar. “Everyone needs a well-rounded exercise program that includes stretching, balance exercises,

strength and cardio,” she said. “I always begin and end classes with stretching and I try to add strength and balance elements like a weighted deadlift.”

Those new or newly returning to exercise should start slowly and gradually, says Traum. “It sounds like common sense, but I can’t tell you the number of people who come to my classes with no experience and try to work way above their fitness level

“Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don’t wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair.”

— Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D.

“Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s.”

— Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology, George Mason University

one’s 50s. The findings show the need to understand and preserve muscle strength.

“Most tissues in the body respond to stress placed on them by becoming stronger or adapting to handle the stimulus you place on them,” said Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology at George Mason University. “If you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and stronger. If you don’t do any sort of physical activity to stimulate your muscles then they get smaller and become weaker. Use it or lose it.”

and either get injured or discouraged,” she said. “There’s nothing wrong with starting out slow, sticking with it and making gradual progress. Also make it fun, like walk or jog with a friends or take a dance or Zumba classes.”

“Eating a healthy and nutritious diet is also important,” added Martin. “The antioxidants in foods, especially fruits and vegetables, can help to preserve and protect tissues from damage that occurs as part of the natural aging process.”



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

First Place prize is presented by competition judge Nick Aman to Paint Great Falls participant Lori Goll.

The Arts of Great Falls Holds Plein Air Competition

In the 4th Annual Paint Great Falls: Plein Air Competition sponsored by The Arts of Great Falls, Wednesday, Sept. 5 - Sunday, Sept. 10, artists will be painting the beautiful scenery outdoors in Great Falls. Painters will be in popular locations such as Great Falls Park, Riverbend Park and Colvin Run Mill, as well as private gardens, a historic farm, LAuberge Chez Francois and more. The community can watch the artists create their original art in "plein air" by stopping by their locations daily noted at www.greatfallsart.org/participants/.

The community is invited to two weekend Open House Receptions to see the final paintings of Great Falls scenes. Pieces painted by Friday will be submitted for the Art Walk Friday and all submissions will be hung in the gallery for the Awards & Collectors reception. Art

collectors are welcome to attend the Awards & Collectors Reception on Sunday. Paintings of Great Falls' most well-known sights and lesser known hidden gems will be for sale to the public at both receptions.

Art Walk in the Village: First Fridays, Friday, Sept. 7, 6-8 p.m.

Galleries and Studios open in the Village Centre. Start in any studio or gallery 756 or 766 Walker Road, or the Petite Gallery at 9901 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls.

Award & Collectors Reception, Sunday, Sept. 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m. View all the art submitted of Great Falls Landscapes in The Arts of Great Falls Gallery (756 Walker Road). All guests will vote for their favorite for the People's Choice Award. Sponsored by Rossen Landscape.

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Artist Jill Banks paints in "plein air" the People's Choice award winner from the 2016 Paint Great Falls: Plein Air Competition.

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NEWS

Helping Babies Emotionally

Great Falls medical student makes crocheted octopus dolls to comfort babies in hospitals.

BY ABHYA PANYA VIJ

Today the medical landscape is changing rapidly with more focus on the social and psychological components of an individual's well-being. As a student entering George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences this year I have an acute interest in finding ways for healthcare providers to support a patient's health holistically.

One group that I am especially interested in is the babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). How can we best care for the emotional health of preemies requiring an extended stay in the hospital away from family?

I came across a unique solution back in October 2017. On Facebook, I watched a video about crocheted octopus dolls being used in NICUs in Europe to comfort babies. The video explained that the tentacles give babies something to grasp and tug on instead of their monitors, and are reminiscent of the umbilical cord, which babies like to grasp in the womb. It also is a great way to introduce parents' scents (the parents sleep with their baby's octopus beforehand) and facilitate bonding. One mother shared with me the comfort she found in knowing that even while she was away from the NICU her twins had her scent nearby and a tentacle in hand.

Despite my lack of crochet experience, I promptly joined the US program, founded just a year and a half ago, and bought some approved 100 percent cotton yarn and a very tiny crochet hook (critical for crafting a tight enough octopus head). I watched YouTube videos at 0.25x speed to learn how to crochet, made several "failing" octopuses that didn't meet the very stringent safety guidelines, and finally, it all clicked. My fifth octopus had a head of 2.7" (2.5"-3.5" is passing), was stuffed hard enough that I could not compress it with a firm, one finger press (reducing suffocation risk), and I could not pass a Dum Dum lollipop stick through any gap between stitches (reducing risk of fingers being caught). Each tentacle, stretched as hard as I could pull it, measured within the passing range of 6.3"-8.5" (which reduces strangulation risk). Following completion of the sixth, I was certified with two passing octopuses. This may sound like a lot, but the stringent rules help to keep the littlest of the babies safe!

Having grown up in Northern Virginia it was important for me to find a way to give back to the community. I saw that this program had not yet



Crocheted Octopus doll by Abhya Vij.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



This first set of 40 octopuses made by Abhya Vij.

reached the NICUs in our area and enthusiastically applied to become an ambassador to the NICUs here in DC, and in the meantime contributed octopuses to hospitals nationwide. Today, I serve as the official Octopus for a Premie - US ambassador to Medstar Georgetown University Hospital, George Washington University Hospital, and Children's National Medical Center NICUs.

After getting approved I met with the Chief of

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SEE OCTOPUS DOLLS, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Finding Comfort in Octopus Dolls

FROM PAGE 10

Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine at MedStar Georgetown and presented the project. I received approval from Georgetown. On July 16, I made my first delivery of 40 octopuses to Georgetown's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and the nurses, families, and patients have been enjoying their distribution. This first set of 40 were all made by me. Georgetown's next delivery will be composed of 100 octopuses sent from crafters all over the U.S. through the national certified crafters' group.

Our biggest current limitation is the huge demand for octopuses nationwide, and not enough certified crafters (fewer than 300 for the 100+ hospitals the national group serves). Therefore, I have been working hard to train more local crafters, who will continue to help me meet the demand from Georgetown. I have been holding free crafting sessions to teach interested local groups how to make these dolls, including a group from Trinity Methodist Church in McLean, and a chapter of the Crochet Guild of America in Falls Church. Others reached out to me individually through My Neighbors Network. I also look forward to beginning a club at George Washington University, where I will teach other medical students the skill (15+ have already reached out!). I recently created a Facebook group, Octopus for a Premie - DC/Northern VA/Maryland Chapter to help connect with local crafters who are interested in con-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Crocheted Octopus dolls for Premies.

About the Author

Educational Background:
George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences, 2022; Bachelor of Science double major in Neuroscience and Computer Science, 2017; Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology, 2013

tributing.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1847394235354739/>

My hope is that with enough local crafters we will be able to meet and exceed demand from Georgetown, and then reach out to George Washington University Hospital and Children's National Medical Center. This 'giving' project can engage and benefit from any age group volunteers ranging from youth to seniors. I find it very rewarding.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 5

Newcomers & Neighbors Coffee. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at in the Community Room of the Regency at McLean, 1800 Old Meadow Road, McLean. The McLean Newcomers and Neighbors will host a coffee for members and for non-members who might be interested in joining. Visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org or email McLeanNewcomers@yahoo.com for more.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Meet Douglas Grindle. 7:30-9 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Meet the author of "How We Won and Lost the War in Afghanistan," a firsthand account of a small team of Afghans and Americans who brought peace to a portion of Kandahar Province in 2012, and then saw that peace begin to slip away as they departed. Books available for sale and signing. Free. Visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4028889 or call 703-938-0405.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 7

50 Years of Jethro Tull at the File Center. 8 p.m. at Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Ian Anderson presents 50 Years of Jethro Tull. Formed in 1968, Jethro Tull have released 30 studio and live albums, selling more than 60 million copies worldwide. \$35-\$95. Call 703-255-1900 or visit wolftrap.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 7-9

Tyson's Library Booksale. Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, 1-4 p.m. at Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Half Price / \$10 per bag sale on Sunday. Email TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com or call 703-790-4031.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 8

Virginia Indian Festival. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Learn about the culture of Virginia's first residents when the Virginia Indian Festival returns to Riverbend Park. The festival features eight American Indian tribes from Virginia, including the Rappahannock dancers and drummers. Enjoy performances, hands-on activities and live demonstrations. Hear American Indian storytelling, try a bow and arrow, throw a spear and make stone tools. Help build a dugout canoe. Visit the marketplace for American Indian crafts, pottery and jewelry. Purchase a six-hour pass in advance online for \$8. Tickets at the gate are \$10 each. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Freeman Store Vintage Market and Appraisal Day. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Freeman Store, 131 Church St., NE, Vienna. Come to the Freeman Store and Museum lawn with rolled-up sleeves to whitewash the Victory Garden fence and visit with their chickens. Set up a chair on the lawn to listen to foot-stomping Hickory Grove bluegrass music, shop the outdoor vintage sale, including antiquarian books, purchase crafts and observe spinning and beekeeping demonstrations, enjoy games for all ages, don clothes and props for your own photo opportunity. Food and drink for sale by local Vienna merchants. Three expert appraisers



COURTESY OF NVMR

The picture is one of the HO gauge steam engines stopping at the Salisbury station. This is an award winning model of the real station in Salisbury, NC.

Open House

Northern Virginia Model Railroaders hold an open house at the Vienna Depot each month and on Vienna celebration days, including Viva! Vienna and the Vienna Holiday Stroll. Free admission. Saturday, Sept. 15, 1-5 p.m. at the Vienna Depot, 231 Dominion Road NE. Call 703-938-5157 or visit www.nvmr.org.

will be on hand to evaluate jewelry, gems, coins, watches, stamps, and general items - china, glass, furniture, art work, from 10-1. Call 703-938-5187 or contact historicviennava@gmail.com for an appointment, \$10 per item. Free and family-friendly. Visit historicviennainc.org for more.

Lahey Lost Valley Open House.

Noon-3 p.m. at historic Lahey Lost Valley property, 9750 Brookmeadow Drive, Vienna. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) is preparing the historic Lahey Lost Valley property for the Resident Curator Program. The Resident Curator Program provides the opportunity for individuals, non-profit and for-profit organizations to secure long-term lease agreements in beautiful public park settings such as Lahey Lost Valley in Fairfax County. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resident-curator-program or contact Stephanie Langton at 703-324-8791.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

A Doggone Good Time. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at The Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. The Water Mine will go to the dogs this September with a season-ending event benefiting the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and Fairfax County Park Foundation. Dogs can swim in Rattlesnake River and splash in the playground area for a suggested donation of \$10 per dog. The event will also serve as a collection site for dog food donations for the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. A low-cost rabies clinic will be available in Lake Fairfax Park's Main Office from noon-2 p.m. Pets may receive 1-year rabies vaccinations for \$15 each (cash or check only). Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/watermine/ or call 703-324-8662.

Countdown Concerts in the Park:

Superfly Disco. 5 p.m. in the McLean Central Park Gazebo, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Concert series tracks the history of the McLean Community Center from its opening in 1975 — revisit a decade as the McLean Community Center prepares for the reopening of the Ingleside Avenue facility. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/alden-theatre/ for more.

Youth Orchestra Auditions. 6:30-

8:30 p.m. at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road, McLean. Students in junior high schools and high schools in the area are invited to participate in the auditions for the McLean Youth Orchestra. The conductors are full time music directors at Fairfax County public schools and will lead the groups with practices planned on Sunday afternoons for the fall 2017-18 season. Visit mcleanyouthorchestra.org for more.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 11

Youth Orchestra Auditions. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road, McLean. Students in junior high schools and high schools in the area are invited to participate in the auditions for the McLean Youth Orchestra. The conductors are full time music directors at Fairfax County public schools and will lead the groups with practices planned on Sunday afternoons for the fall 2017-18 season. Visit mcleanyouthorchestra.org for more.



Elaine Flynn portrays "Hemingway's Wives."

Hemingway's Wives

Join the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna's (SCOV) Lunch N' Life. Entertainment: "Hemingway's Wives" with Elaine Flynn, who portrays Hemingway's four wives. Follow his career as the Hemingways move from Chicago, to Paris, to Key West, to Havana to Ketchum, Idaho. Learn about how the wives' lives intersected with one another. Event sponsor is Care with Love (a non-medical care agency). Lunch is \$15 per person. Monday, Sept. 17, noon-2 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Prepayment required by Wednesday, Sept. 14. No refunds. To register, call 703-281-0538.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, located behind the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls lost six residents to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The ceremony will honor them and all who sacrificed on that day and in its aftermath. The event will include a Marine Corps color guard, patriotic songs, remarks by Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Sharon Bulova, and a candle-lighting. In case of rain, the ceremony will move to the library meeting room. Limited seating will be provided. Attendees are encouraged to bring portable chairs. Visit www.gffreedom.org for more.

"Celebrating Our Lights." 7-9 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. "Celebrating Our Shining Lights" with Suzanne Giesemann: Join evidential medium and author Suzanne Giesemann as she shares stories of communication across the veil. \$25. Visit www.unityoffairfax.org/events.

McLean Historical Society Meeting.

7:30 p.m. in the Class/Programs Office of the McLean Community Center, located in the McLean Square Shopping Center, 6645 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. The program will feature Debbie Watson and Sandra Smoot discussing the history of St. John's Episcopal Church. Everyone is welcome. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

THURSDAYS/SEPT. 13, 20 & 27

Mah Jongg for Beginners. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland St., Falls Church. A three-session Mah Jongg class for beginners. Enrollment is limited. \$85 includes nine hours of lessons with a Mah Jongg card. To register, send a check made out to WoTRS to Iva Gresko, 120 N. Fairfax St., Falls Church, VA 22046. Include your e-mail address, home address, and your home and cell telephone numbers. The check is registration. Email iva.gresko@gmail.com or 703-328-1606 for more.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 15

14th Annual Merrifield Fall Festival. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Mosaic District. Presented by the Greater Merrifield Business Association (GMBA), in conjunction with URBNmarket and Mosaic, and held will be in the heart of the Mosaic District with food vendors, a beer

garden, music and entertainment, as well as a pre-holiday handmade and vintage market. Children's activities including: Vienna Singing Princesses, pumpkin painting, face painting, hair braiding, sack races, karate, peace mural painting, carnival games and more. Visit greatermerrifield.org/merrifield-fall-festival for more.

Tea Tasting Seminar. 1-3 p.m. at Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Teas from Across Africa a tea tasting seminar with Certified Tea Specialist Chef Laurie Bell. The diversity of Africa's tea production is evident from the black teas of eastern Africa to South Africa's Rooibos and Honeybush, to Morocco's famous mint tea, and Egypt's chamomile. Tea infused treats and a take home tea sampler included. \$35. Use class activity code 266 407 0401 and visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call 703-222-4664 to register.

CommUnity FunFest. 1-4:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Fun for the whole family with food, games, music, children's activities, and an auction is open to everyone. Free, open to all. Call 703-281-1767 or visit www.unityoffairfax.org/funfest.

Model Railroaders Open House. 1-5 p.m. at the Vienna Depot, 231 Dominion Road NE. Northern Virginia Model Railroaders hold an open house at the Vienna Depot each month and on Vienna celebration days, including Viva! Vienna and the Vienna Holiday Stroll. Free admission. Call 703-938-5157 or visit www.nvmr.org.

Artists' Reception. 6-8 p.m. at Foundry Gallery, 2018 8th St., NW, Washington, D.C. Foundry Gallery presents a deux, a collection of collaborative works by local artists Ann Pickett, of McLean, and Charlene Niell. The exhibit runs Sept. 5-30. Free. Email annpickettstudio@gmail.com, call 202-232-0203 or visit www.foundrygallery.org/exhibits-events for more.

Paul Stanley Art Exhibition. 6-9 p.m. at Tysons Galleria, 1807 U. International Drive, McLean. Wentworth Gallery presents a collection of works from legendary musician and fine artist Paul Stanley of KISS. All artwork is available for purchase. RSVP to 703-883-0111 or tysons@wentworthgallery.com. Visit www.wentworthgallery.com for more.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 16

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.

Countdown Concerts in the Park: Teäze. 5 p.m. in the McLean Central Park Gazebo, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Concert series tracks the history of the McLean Community Center from its opening in 1975 — revisit a decade as the McLean Community Center prepares for the reopening of the Ingleside Avenue facility. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/alden-theatre.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 18

GFSC Event. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Come and hear about the Native American Tribes of Virginia. In addition, there will be a tribute to Joy Trickett, Great Falls Senior Center president who died July 29. Mookie's BBQ will provide the lunch. Reservations required. Email pollyfitz1@verizon.net or call 703-759-4345.

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS

Thiago Gomez displays his drawing of the giant panda. His piano piece was "Squirrels On a Fence."



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Artstars Perform in Great Falls

Students of Artstars Studio recently held piano recitals and performed music related to the theme of "All Creatures Great and Small." Classical musical selections included "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saens and "Swan Lake" by Tchaikovsky.

Popular music included "Feed the Birds" by Richard and Robert Sherman and "Baby Elephant Walk" by Henry Mancini.

The instructor for Artstars Studio is Mary Jane Cogan, who is also an artist. She encouraged her students to create artwork featuring endangered animals. One such creature is the Monarch butterfly, which is suffering from the diminishing supply of its food - milkweed. At the conclusion of each recital, each pianist was given milkweed seeds to plant in his/her garden in an effort to help the fragile, beautiful Monarch.

Artstars Studio is located in Great Falls and can be reached at Artstarsmj@gmail.com.



Syrus Weinberg chose to draw the endangered bee. He performed "The Fly's Adventure."



Madeline R. performed "Kitty Cat Blues" while displaying the endangered giraffe.



Leighton Marshlian shares her ladybug art while playing "Ladybug Boogie."

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Countdown Concerts



Superflydisco, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.



Teãze, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.



Saved by the '90s, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.



So Fetch, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.

Fall Community Garage Sale



9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Parking Garage at 1420 Beverly Rd.
Free admission.

Unruly Theatre Project Improv Workshops



8-13 year olds, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
14-18 year olds, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
MCC Programs/Registration Office
6645 Old Dominion Dr.

Family Movie Night



"Mary Poppins" 7-9 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$3 per person.
Preregistration recommended.

Harvest Happenings



11 a.m.-2 p.m.
New location!
St. Luke's School, 7005 Georgetown Pike
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NEWS

Ensuring Affordable Produce

**County Farmers
Markets receive
\$50,000 grant.**

BY CARLYN KRANKING
THE CONNECTION

With a grant of \$50,000 over three years, the Fairfax County Farmers Markets will ensure SNAP (previously called food stamps) recipients can access fresh local produce. The farmers markets received this money because they partner with Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP), which received \$1.8 million from the USDA through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI).

This money will make a difference for SNAP recipients in Fairfax County, allowing them better access to the produce at farmers markets.

"Most people on SNAP, because they're so strapped for cash, they only buy processed foods because they're very cheap, and healthy food is expensive," Farmers Market Coordinator Chelsea Roseberry said. "We're trying to bridge that gap so that little-income families don't feel like this is inaccessible to them."

At participating farmers markets, the value of SNAP dollars is doubled by the Virginia Fresh Match nutrition incentive program – for example, if a person spends \$20 in SNAP benefits at a farmers market, they will receive \$20 more to spend on fruits and vegetables.

With the grant money, this dollar-matching program will provide up to \$100,000 in added revenue to local farms as SNAP recipients purchase their prod-



PHOTO BY CARLYN KRANKING/THE CONNECTION

The \$50,000 USDA grant will help the Fairfax County Farmers Markets ensure that produce is affordable for SNAP recipients.

Farmers Market Season

How long do the farmers markets remain open?

- | | |
|--|---|
| Annandale – open through Nov. 1
Thursdays, 8 a.m. - Noon
6621 Columbia Pike | McCutcheon/Mount Vernon open
through Dec. 19
Wednesdays, 8 a.m. - Noon
2501 Sherwood Hall Lane |
| Burke open through Dec. 22
Saturdays, 8 a.m. - Noon
5671 Roberts Parkway | McLean open through Nov. 16
Fridays, 8 a.m. - Noon
1659 Chain Bridge Road |
| Government Center open through
Oct. 25
Thursdays, 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
12000 Government Center Parkway | Oak Marr open through Nov. 14
Wednesdays, 8 a.m. - Noon
3200 Jermantown Road |
| Herndon open through Nov. 8
Thursdays, 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
700 Block, Lynn St. | Reston open through Dec.1 (closed
Sept. 22 for Multicultural
Festival)
Saturdays, 8 a.m. - Noon
11401 North Shore Drive |
| Kingstowne open through Oct. 26
Fridays, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
5870 Kingstowne Towne Center | Wakefield open through Oct. 31
2 p.m. - 6 p.m.
8100 Braddock Road |
| Lorton open through Nov. 18
Sundays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
8990 Lorton Station Boulevard | |

ucts at markets. In this way, the local economy also benefits from the grant.

"Small farms are dying out," said Assistant Market Manager Sue Wolinsky. "A lot of the land is being given over to development. So, anything we can do to support family farms is in the plus column."

September Is Suicide Prevention Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and National Suicide Prevention Week is September 9-15; a time to share resources and events and spotlight activities and actions people can take to help prevent the tragedy of suicide. Suicide does not discriminate – it can happen to anyone – but it can be prevented. Understanding the issues concerning suicide and mental health is an important way to take part in suicide prevention and help people in emotional crisis. Together, we can all help prevent suicide.

Five ways you can get involved in suicide prevention in our community.

ACT. Participate in PRS Inc.'s

#CallTextLive campaign throughout Suicide Prevention Month. PRS Inc., a mental health, crisis intervention and suicide prevention nonprofit that runs the local crisis hotline and textline, has a list of daily actions and activities to help inform and erase stigma of suicide. PRS Inc. is a CSB community partner.

WALK. Walk in memory of a loved one...to end stigma...to raise awareness.

❖ Saturday, Sept. 22 – NAMI Northern Virginia's 10th Annual Walk for Mental Health

❖ Saturday, Sept. 29 – American Foundation for Suicide Prevention "Out of the Darkness" Fairfax Walk

VOLUNTEER.

❖ Help answer PRS CrisisLink's 24-hour hotlines. Apply online.

❖ The National Capital Area Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is looking for volunteers to help fulfill their mission to save lives and bring hope to people affected by suicide. Contact Bo Kim with questions.

Resources available 24/7 include:

❖ CSB Emergency Services at 703-573-5679.

❖ Text "CONNECT" to 855-11 to contact PRS CrisisLink.

❖ Call PRS CrisisLink at 703-527-4077.

Source: Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

BULLETIN

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

REGISTRATION OPEN

Girls on the Run Fall 2018 season will begin the week of Sept. 24. The program serves approximately 5,000 girls annually with over 900 volunteer coaches throughout the Northern Virginia region. Fall 2018 registration and team sites for Girls on the Run of NOVA, visit www.gotrnova.org.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND ID EVENTS

The Fairfax County Office of Elections (12000 Government Center Parkway Suite 323, Fairfax) is open daily during normal business hours to provide county residents the opportunity to register to vote or obtain a free voter photo ID if needed. Applicants will need to complete a photo voter ID application, have a photo taken and sign a digital signature pad. Call 703-222-0776.

The following special events will also provide opportunity to register to vote and/or get a photo Virginia Voter card.

- Monday/Sept. 24, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads, 3440 South Jefferson Street, Falls Church.
- Thursday/Sept. 27, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Lewinsville Retirement Residence, 1515 Great Falls Street, McLean.
- Tuesday/Oct. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Arleigh Burke Pavilion at Vinson Hall Retirement Community, 1739 Kirby Road, McLean.

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. 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. 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).

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. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter

AUG. 27-SEPT. 23

Pool Closure: Spring Hill 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. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Capital Region Business Forum. 7:30-9:30 a.m. at Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser. Visit www.bot.org/upcomingevents/dmrbizforum for more.

Public Hearing. 7 p.m. in the Oaks Room at Twin Lakes Golf Course, 6201 Union Mill Road, Clifton. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) will hold a joint public hearing on the proposed adoption of an amendment to Park Regulation Section 1.17, Remote-Control Devices and Powered Models or Toys. The full text of the proposed amendment is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/model-aircrafts-drones. Anyone wishing to speak on this subject may call Judy Pedersen, FCPA Public Information Officer, at 703-324-8662 or email parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov, to be placed on the Speakers' List.

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Poise Under Pressure – Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't want to self-indulge too much, but given the potentially life-changing seriousness of my upcoming Sept. 26 CT scan, I'm having a little trouble getting myself started in the morning – and throughout the day also, if you must know the truth? (I realize you all have your own lives to lead so that last sentence-ending question was more rhetorical than actual.)

Nevertheless, if you're still reading, you're still interested so I'll try to string together some "insightful commentary and thoughtful humor," (an original characterization of my columns) to keep you on the page. Although, given the subject of this week's column, it might be hard to tiptoe through the tulips.

The difficulty I'm having is being unable to ignore, "totally," (my mother loved to mimic the generation that popularized that word) the reality of my situation.

Typically, I've been able to maintain a relative calm and detached disposition as I go from one cancer-related thing to another. None of the tasks I must perform or the responsibilities I've assimilated into a routine (24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, chemotherapy, quarterly CT scans, annual brain MRI, quarterly appointments with my oncologist, have changed who I like to think I am compared to who I was pre-cancer diagnosis, 2/27/09; despite having the weight of a "terminal" diagnosis/original "13 month to two year" prognosis on my shoulders/literally in my lungs.

To quote Popeye the Sailor Man: "I y'am who I y'am." (And I still don't like spinach, certainly not out of a can.)

And though I've done a pretty good job of flicking these flakes of pressure and anxiety off my shoulders like unwanted dandruff, the fact is – as with dandruff shampoo or any other personal hygiene product for that matter – unless one is diligent, vigilant and cognizant of its likely recurrence, nothing will change.

Unfortunately, cancer doesn't quite react that way. It will change and it can overwhelm even your best efforts and can cause harm not only internally but externally as well (emotionally). Fending off these emotional pressures is challenging and dare I say, presents as many problems as the growth and movement of one's tumors and the side effects of one's treatment does.

What makes my present situation feel different and a bit off-putting is that what has happened has happened after nearly five years of relative peace and quiet (I was never characterized as in "remission," by the way). It seems the possibility of having to go back, so to speak, and return to the scene of the crime – against my body/life expectancy; and moreover, having to restart the process, ratchets up the stress to previously unknown heights.

And part of me is wondering (worrying actually) if I'm up to the challenge again, emotionally and of course, physically as well; whether my body can sustain the damage its likely to experience if we have to reload.

I use the word 'reload' for a reason. Without invoking too many war metaphors, being diagnosed with cancer is like being drafted into the Army, except you have little training for the battles you're about to fight. And as much as fighting against cancer is a battle, it's more a war against attrition in which the bad guys (cancer) regularly defeat the good guys (people diagnosed with cancer). In general, the cancer experience is no picnic.

It reminds me of a long-ago M*A*S*H episode in which the doctors operated through a particularly difficult surgical session after which Henry (Lt. Col. Blake) and "Hawkeye" (Capt. Pierce) went outside the operating room/tent for some relief. "Hawkeye" clearly agitated over a patient he couldn't save; Henry tried to offer him some comfort with the following words: "There are certain rules about war. And rule number one is young men die. And rule number two is, doctors can't change rule number one."

What scares me about cancer is, it follows no rules and like war, leaves devastation in its wake. I just hope I'm not about to be another casualty.

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

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