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Oak Hill Herndon CONNECTION

Ziyad Drissi, 7, and Julie Tsai, 6, of Herndon, put their letter and art skills to work creating valentines for their classmates and teachers. The students attend Floris Elementary School in Herndon.

HomeLifeStyle

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
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NEWS

First Grade Valentines From the Heart

Letter writing in a meaningful way.



Ms. Laura LaFlame's First—grade class at Floris Elementary School makes valentines reinforcing their friendly letter writing skills in a meaningful way.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The art of personalized letter writing and the joy of creating one of a kind Valentines are not lost art forms for first graders at Floris Elementary School in Herndon. The week before Valentine's Day, children in Ms. Laura LaFlame's class put their skills to the test. "In our current writing unit, our students are learning how to write friendly letters. They are demonstrating an understanding of this skill by writing valentines to their classmates. Once they finish writing them, they will put them into cards and decorate the outside," said LaFlame.



Kenil Gupta, 6 and Ziyad Drissi, 7 set to work to complete their valentines. The students attend Floris Elementary School in Herndon.

Students spread out over the classroom. In one corner three children sat on the floor together. Stickers, glue and red construction lay strewn across the floor. "I'm making cards for each of my friends and teachers," said Julie Tsai, 6. "I'm making my cards too," said Kenil Gupta, 6. Ziyad Drissi had the process down pat. He had composed a different letter to each of his classmates sharing with them what he liked about each one. Ziyad explained how to make valentines. "You glue the letters on the red paper and fold them. Then you decorate them and give them your friends," he said.

"It is a fun project and a great way for students to apply what they learned in a real and meaningful way," said LaFlame.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



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With loved ones looking on, Cesar del Aguila makes history as the first Latino American elected to office in the Town of Herndon and signs his oath of office certificate during the Herndon Town Council 2019-2020 Swearing-In Ceremony held Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2019.



Sheila A. Olem gathers with family and friends and accepts congratulations from Fairfax County Sheriff, Stacey A. Kincaid during the Herndon Town Council 2019-2020 Swearing-In Ceremony. The Mayor and Herndon Town Council named Olem vice mayor by resolution earlier in the week.

Historical Firsts for Town of Herndon

Town of Herndon Holds Swearing-In Ceremony for Council: First Latino American and Nepalese American Town Councilmembers take the oath office.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Mayor Lisa C. Merkel and members of the 2019-2020 Herndon Town Council were formally sworn into office at a special ceremony held in January at the Herndon Municipal Center. The ceremony marked historical firsts for the town, Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia: Councilmember Cesar del Aguila is the first Latino American in elected office in the town, and Pradip Dhakal is the first Nepalese American in elected office in the town, county and state, and one of only four elected Nepalese Americans in elected office in the country, according to Merkel.

TOWN MANAGER Bill Ashton welcomed members of the community, visitors and dignitaries among them Fairfax County Supervisor John Foust (D), Fairfax County Sheriff, Stacey A. Kincaid and Mayor David L. Meyer, City of Fairfax. Reverend Stephen Smith-Cobbs Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church provided the Invocation. He asked that as the Town Council begins its new service for 2019-2020 that God grant them wisdom and understanding.

Viki L. Wellershaus, Town Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to Merkel who will serve her fourth consecutive two-year term as Mayor of Herndon, the third largest town in the Commonwealth of Virginia. After taking her oath, Merkel addressed the large crowd seated in the lobby of the



A large crowd sits in the lobby of the Herndon Municipal Center and stands on the second-floor balcony for the Herndon Town Council 2019-2020 Swearing-In Ceremony.

Herndon Municipal Center and standing on the second-story balcony looking down. She said, "I thank you for once again placing your trust in me, and it is my honor and privilege to serve as your mayor. É When I was first elected in 2012, I got some great advice from a former mayor about how to get things done. Simply have a vision and stick with it. And that's what the council

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Pradip Dhakal is first Nepalese American elected to office in the Town of Herndon, Fairfax County and Virginia. With family beside him, Dhakal makes history as he takes the oath of office for Herndon Town Councilmember during the 2019-2020 Swearing-In Ceremony.

and I have tried to do. Goals have been pretty straightforward: Downtown, Metro, Strong and Inclusive Community. Downtown remains my number one priority. Public-private partnerships are complex, and the progress is slow but steady. Comstock plan is in site-plan review and hopes to be before HPRB by spring. ... Metro is coming,

and Herndon is ready. On opening day you'll be able to drive, walk, bus or bike to Herndon station. And opening day is slated to happen next year. Most importantly, Herndon is a hometown for everyone. A place where all are welcome, no matter where you come from, how you worship, or who you love."

Following her remarks, Merkel introduced each member of the Council individually. She read their biography and invited each forward with family and friends to take the oath of office administered by Wellershaus. In addition to Merkel, del Aguila and Dhakal, the other members of the 2019-2020 Herndon Town Council sworn-in at the ceremony were Jennifer K. Baker, Signe V. Friedrichs, William J. "Bill" McKenna and Sheila Anne Milstead.

EARLIER IN THE WEEK, Merkel and members of the Herndon Town Council approved a resolution naming Sheila A. Olem as vice mayor for the 2019-2020 term.

"It is a very exciting time to be in Herndon, and the council is ready to get to work," said Merkel. "Herndon will be well served by this dynamic, diverse, visionary group of people and I am honored to share the dais with each of them."

Roland Taylor who sought a Town Councilmember seat in the recent election and lost, attended the ceremony. Afterward, he said, "I am so optimistic with our new diverse council and look forward to helping where needed. We should see a more transparent and welcoming council, respecting all views."

NEWS

Helping Rescue Area Wildlife

Rescue League launches vegetarian/vegan policy for events; seeks volunteers.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

Wildlife Rescue League (WRL) of Northern Virginia located in Arlington offers a network of helpline volunteers, transporters and wildlife rehabilitators to support local wildlife rescue efforts. The organization is dedicated to providing care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife with the intent of releasing them back into their native habitat.

On Saturday, Feb. 2, nearly 40 WRL members and supporters celebrated the launch of the organization's new Vegetarian/Vegan policy at GreenFare, an organic whole plant cafe in Herndon. All proceeds from the event supported the work of WRL.

Carolyn Wilder, President of the organization, said that over the last two years the Wildlife Rescue League's board has contemplated adopting a vegetarian/vegan policy for its events. Adopting an animal-friendly



Teresa Browder of Manassas and Toni Genberg of Falls Church volunteer for the Wildlife Rescue League. "It works for me," said Bowder. "I get supplies, transporters who bring the animals to my home and other rehabilitators offer assistance for vacation days."

menu policy is not uncommon for groups that support animals. "Feb. 2, Ground Hog's Day is the culmination of the efforts," said

Wilder.

In addition to celebrating their new policy and holding a fundraiser, the organization



PHOTO BY REBECCA CHOI

John Edwards of Wildlife Rescue League releases a large snapping turtle back to its pond.

also wanted to put a shout out for volunteers. Volunteers are needed in the Herndon/Reston areas to assist with answering helpline calls, transporting wildlife and educating the public about the natural history of native wildlife and how to exist with wildlife. Volunteers for the helpline must be at least 15 years of age (with parental approval), and transporters must be at least 18 years old with a valid license. For more information, call 703-440-0800, ext. 6 and leave a message or visit www.wildliferescueleague.org.

- lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way.
- 2. not appreciated or understood.
- 3. no longer owned or known



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'Living Coral' Named 2019 Color of the Year

“... can help to brighten a space lacking natural light.”

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

A breeze of warm air to heat the winter chill is how some designers are describing one of the trendiest colors on tap for this year. “Living Coral” was selected as the 2019 Color of the Year by the Pantone Color Institute, the self-described global authority of color. It’s a shade that is expected to have a prominent presence in interior design, home accessories and fashion this year.

“It works well with most of the foundation colors everyone has in their homes including white, taupe, gray, and brown,” said designer Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria. “If you choose to paint, it can help to brighten a space lacking natural light.”

Described as a nurturing color that can be found in nature, Living Coral is a shade of orange with a golden undertone. “It can be used as a wonderful accent color,” said Mertins. “Introduce it with artwork, toss pillows, rugs and throws.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICELY DONE KITCHENS AND BATHS

Life-affirming and reminiscent of coral reefs, Living Coral is credited with the ability to breathe life into any space in one’s home. “[It’s] is vibrant, energizing shade ... that can be incorporated as a light accent or bold statement in both a kitchen or bath,” said designer Natalia Fabisiak of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths in Springfield. “As the timeless trend of white kitchens continues, Living Coral offers the perfect pop of color an all-white kitchen may need.”

“Coffee mugs, dish towels, trays and trivets are an easy and inexpensive way to introduce the trending color of the year into your kitchen,” added Fabisiak.

Home accent pieces are the way that de-

signer Julie Ackerman of Home Polish in Bethesda recommends using the Pantone pick. “Dishware, serveware or decorative accent pieces and porcelain figurines, like those by Herend are a great way to incorporate Living Coral into your home,” she said.

For a more long-term commitment, Fabisiak says, “In a bathroom, Living Coral can be used as a wall color that can be easily paired with neutral tile and fixtures. If painting the walls is too drastic, bath accents like coral towels or a rug can brighten up the space beautifully as well.

In announcing the selection, Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, said, “Color is an equaliz-

When used on a wall in a kitchen or bathroom, Living Coral can make a bold statement, says designer Natalia Fabisiak of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATINA POLISHED LIVING
Living Coral can be introduced into one’s home through art, says designer Amanda Mertins.

ing lens through which we experience our natural and digital realities and this is particularly true for Living Coral. With consumers craving human interaction and social connection, the humanizing and heartening qualities displayed by the convivial Pantone Living Coral hit a responsive chord.”

Each year, the Pantone Color Institute makes a prediction about the color that will be on trend for the upcoming year. The selection process, which takes about nine months, has color gurus at Pantone spanning the globe, taking note of the trends in industries that run the gamut from ranging from film and entertainment to art and interior design.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

THURSDAY/FEB. 14

Make Art Inspired by History. 10 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. This Valentine's Day, gather friends and family together at the park to create art inspired by history. The artwork created will reflect the season or month, and the projects are designed for artists age 6-adult. \$8 per person. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Girl Power! Book Club. 6:30 and 7 p.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. February features two picks for the Girl Power! Book Club. "Into White," a book tackling some tough issues will be discussed from 6:30-7. Parents are encouraged to attend. At 7, review the 2019 Newbery Medal winner, "Merci Suarez Changes Gears" by Meg Medina. All middle grade readers are welcome. Call 703-966-2111 or visit scrawlbooks.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 15

The Storytime Social Hour. 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Every Friday, moms, dads, caregivers and kids are invited to join a Storytime Social Hour. Scrawl will provide coffee and treats for the adults; stories and fun for the little people. Call 703-966-2111 or visit scrawlbooks.com.

Fishing Workshop - Tackle. 6-7 p.m. at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Hone fishing skills with this hands-on workshop that covers topics such as rods, reels and other tackle. Ages 10-adult. \$8 per person. Call 703-471-5414 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax.

Calamity Improv. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Direct from Fauquier County, Dark Horse Theatre Company presents "Calamity Improv," the wild west of improv shows. \$15. Call 703-956-6590 or visit www.ArtSpaceHerndon.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 16

The Bookworms Club. 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Young readers are invited to join Scrawl's all-new and completely free Bookworms Club. Explore a new theme each week with picture books, special guests and most often, authors. Join or participate any time. Call 703-966-2111 or visit scrawlbooks.com.

Saturday Series: Nature Explorer. Noon-1:30 p.m. at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. In the "Exploring Nature Series-Winter" program, students age 6-adult will explore Virginia's ecosystem. Sessions are spread over four Saturdays in February with a new topic to explore each week: Feb. 16 - Birds and Feb. 23 - Trees. Each session is \$8 per person. The program takes place both outdoors and indoors, so dress accordingly. Call 703-471-5414 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax.

Haint So: A Staged Reading. 7 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Come sit on the wide front porch with members of the Wells family in Southwest Virginia, as their Sunday afternoon conversation turns to tales of the supernatural. Haint So explores the rich tradition of folklore, superstition and the mystical spirits of the dark mountains in Virginia. Haint So is the third production from Shoestring Theatre Company, based in Oakton. \$20. Call 703-956-6590 or visit www.artspaceherndon.org.



Weekend Food for Kids

Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, invites community members to help pack food for its Weekend Food for Kids program. This critical program provides nonperishable food over the weekend to children who receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year at Title I schools in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. May arrive at 9:30 to help with setup. Thursday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m.-noon at Dominion Energy, 3072 Centreville Road, Herndon. Free. Email philanthropy@ALNV.org or visit www.alnv.org for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 17

Fishing Workshop-Reading Water. 4-5 p.m. at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Learn how to identify bodies of water and develop techniques to increase the chances of catching fish. Ages 10-adult. \$8 per person. Call 703-471-5414 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax.

Celebrate Galentine's Day. 6:30 p.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Scrawl Books is hosting a post-Valentine's Day party for the ladies with two wonderful women's authors, Orly Konig and Erika Marks, plus food, drinks, raffles and more - all to support a local charity. Bring a girlfriend and join in for the party after the store closes. Call 703-966-2111 or visit scrawlbooks.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 18

Children's Performing Arts Series: Bunny Business. 10:30-11:15 a.m. at Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Bunny Business by Bob Brown Puppets. Watch silly bunnies dance and swing on the trapeze with their forest friends. Ages 1-10. \$4 in advance, \$5 at the door per person, per show. Children under the age of one are free. Call 703-787-7300 or visit herndon-va.gov.

Reston Photographic Society. 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Room 6 at the Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Reston Photographic Society invites photography enthusiasts of all skill levels to attend meetings. Nonmembers are welcome. Visit www.leagueofrestonartists.org.

TUESDAY/FEB. 19

Live Music: Spencer and Rains. 7:15 p.m. (doors at 6 p.m.) at Amphora's Diner Deluxe, 1151 Elden St, Herndon. Tricia Spencer is a Kansas fiddler who grew up learning the tradition of old time music from her grandparents. Howard Rains is a native Texas artist and a fourth generation fiddler from a musical and artistic family. \$10 members, \$11 non-members; at the door or contact Dave at DAHurdSr@cs.com. Call 703-435-2402 or visit www.restonherndonfolkclub.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 21

Weekend Food for Kids. 10 a.m.-noon at Dominion Energy, 3072 Centreville Road, Herndon. Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit

organization, invites community members to help pack food for its Weekend Food for Kids program, providing nonperishable food over the weekend to children who receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year. May arrive at 9:30 to help with setup. Free. Email philanthropy@ALNV.org or visit www.alnv.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 22

The Storytime Social Hour. 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Every Friday, moms, dads, caregivers and kids are invited to join a Storytime Social Hour. Scrawl will provide coffee and treats for the adults; stories and fun for the little people. Call 703-966-2111 or visit scrawlbooks.com.

SATURDAY/FEB. 23

The Bookworms Club. 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Young readers are invited to join Scrawl's all-new and completely free Bookworms Club. Explore a new theme each week with picture books, special guests and most often, authors. Join any time. Call 703-966-2111 or visit scrawlbooks.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 24

Introduction to Watercolor. 2-5 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Starting at the very beginning, this introduction to watercolor course will go over brushes, paper types, the use of water, negative space, glazing, color mixing, and more. With Katherine Rodgers. Six-week session, \$225. Call 703-956-6590 or visit www.artspaceherndon.org.

Fire Building and S'mores. 4:30-5:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn the science and art of fire building at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. Discover what it takes to build a fire, and then test new abilities with primitive fire bows and modern fire-making techniques and then roast s'mores. \$8 per person, and children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-631-0013 or visit fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Live Music: Nothin' Fancy. 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Make plans to "hitch up the team" and head to Frying Pan Farm Park this season for Bluegrass Barn. Food and beverages available for purchase. \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park/bluegrass-barn or by phone at 703-222-4664 or 703-437-9101.

BULLETIN

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

WINTER SHELTERS

Find homeless and cold weather drop-in centers and shelters that serve Northern Virginia at www.novaregion.org/174/Homeless-Shelter-Lists.

DONATION REQUEST

Diva Central Accessories Drive. Through Feb. 28, Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Reston Community Center will be collecting gently used items at its Hunters Woods and Lake Anne locations. RCC is accepting donations of accessories, including shoes, jewelry, handbags and shawls. RCC does not need donations of dresses this year. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com for more.

Support Reston Historic Trust & Museum.

The Reston Historic Trust & Museum has launched a GoFundMe campaign with the goal to raise \$15,000 to go towards the repair, cleaning, and reinstallation of icons on the façade of the former Lakeside Pharmacy, an original Lake Anne Plaza store, in a new permanent exhibit. The new exhibit will be unveiled during Reston's annual Founder's Day event, April 6. Read more about their history and donate at www.gofundme.com/preserve-lakeside-pharmacy-icons to assist in their preservation. Thank you for your help!

INPUT SOUGHT

Shaping the Future Together. Fairfax County Government is beginning a strategic planning process with the community to shape the future together. The goal is to hear all voices and reach all segments of the community. This effort will span most of 2019, but in this first phase, the community is being asked to visit fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan and:

- ❖ Take a short five-question online survey
- ❖ Join a community conversation in person: Feb. 25 – Alexandria; Feb. 26 – Fairfax; March 6 – Falls Church.
- ❖ Share the survey and conversation invitation with neighbors, co-workers and county family and friends.

TUESDAYS THROUGH FEB. 19

Workshop Series: Mind in the Making. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 – Room 100, Dunn Loring. Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs by Ellen Galinsky, encompasses an evidence-based list of life skills that are essential for children to succeed socially, emotionally and intellectually in the short and long term. Participants may register for one or all of the workshops and do not need to attend the previous class. Registration is limited. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

- ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 19 – Self-Directed, Engaged Learning (part 7)

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 13

Anti-Scam Presentation. 1:10-2:15 p.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., Vienna. Fairfax County is offering a free Silver Shield Anti-Scam Presentation. Subject matter experts will discuss warning signs of fraud and present information to empower families against scams in the community. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults and click on Silver Shield Anti-Scam Campaign. Call 703-273-4113, TTY 711.

Fairfax County Park Authority Board Meeting. 7:30 p.m. in the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 941, Fairfax. The Park Authority Board is a 12-member board appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to set policy and establish strategic policy and direction for the Park Authority. Open to the public. For information regarding meeting agendas, Park Board members, opportunities for public comment, or to view meeting materials, board minutes and archival materials, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm.

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So Far, So Good



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

This column will be the definition of premature.

After subjecting you regular readers to multiple columns discussing my anxiety – and fear – about the potential/presumptive and possibly debilitating and life-changing/life-ending side effects of immunotherapy, I am here to say that after my first pair of bi-weekly infusions – occurring over the past three weeks, I am no worse for the experience.

I'm feeling better than I felt while undergoing chemotherapy: No eating issues, less fatigue, less shortness of breath and more energy. The only caveat to this empor is whether the infusions are actually shrinking my Adam's Apple tumor, which was the primary reason for making the medicine change we did.

Now whether the side effects are still coming; I certainly don't know, but should they still be on the way, I can't help but wonder: Will they change the quality of my life – for the worse? Because, for the bi-weekly moment, I am less impacted by my treatment than I have been for years.

I can't say with any degree of certainty however, or recall what my oncologist might have said concerning the likely onset of the "over 30 percent report some side effects" as the reprint from "chemocare.com" indicated. Generally speaking, my oncologist would rather not discuss future scenarios: What happens when? What do we do if? When do we do what? And so I don't ask nearly as many questions as I used to.

It's not that I'm less curious, it's that I'm more experienced. And I have learned through my experience, that part of being a cancer patient is unfortunately, waiting and seeing – and of course, hoping. Talking/anticipating/being told what to expect is helpful – up to a point.

The point which is most helpful is when something actually happens. Knowing what to expect is less important than knowing what to do/how to manage expectations should they manifest. It may be something or it may be nothing. Trying not to make matters worse is the key.

Being a cancer patient/survivor is a series of challenges – both emotional and physical. Finding a stride in which you can take the ups and downs and all-arounds will help you live life in the cancer lane. And just because the road is bumpy, doesn't preclude you from smoothing it out.

Actions and reactions, plan "A" and plan "B" are par for the course. So be grateful for today because tomorrow the course may play much more difficult. Being positive about the negative offers the path of least resistance.

Today, I am not experiencing any side effects, thankfully.

"Tomorrow" however, as Scarlet O'Hara said at the end of "Gone With The Wind," "is another day." Worrying, as I had been admitting to in previous columns, about something which as yet had not happened, is especially unhelpful and wastes precious time.

As a cancer patient, there's plenty of actual bad news, generally, so there's no benefit in rushing it along. Let it happen naturally, or not at all; and occasionally, you might be pleasantly surprised, as three weeks into my new immunotherapy regimen, I am, as what side effects I anticipated/feared have not affected.

I realize I'm probably early in assessing the likely side effects of my treatment but, for the time being, I can find some peace and quiet; and when you're a cancer patient diagnosed originally as "terminal," "peace and quiet" is never to be taken for granted.

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

OPINION

Be Part of the Pet Connection

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of February, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Friday, Feb. 22.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your busi-

ness have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your family depend on an assistance dog?

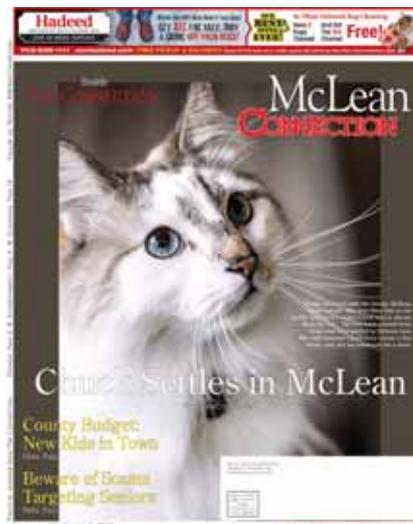
Or take this opportunity to memorialize a beloved pet you have lost.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and humans.

Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description what is happening in the photo, and include

address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

Email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com or submit online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets.



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— MARY KIMM

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EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Film Celebrates Diversity

To the Editor:

The Baha'is of Vienna are sponsoring a showing of the award-winning film, "Me-The Other" at the Angelika Theater of the Mosaic Shopping Center in Vienna/Fairfax, on Thursday, Feb. 21,

between 7 and 10 p.m. Following the showing of the film, there will be live discussion of the film with the film's director and co-producer, Shidan Majidi. Light refreshments will be served. "Me, The "Other" is a documentary film created in less than five months about a diverse group of students living in Washtenaw County in Southeast Michigan. Through their struggles, we find ourselves in each of them.

In words of Mr. Majidi, Director/Co-Producer:

"I believe that at this critical juncture in our journey as a human race, we need a radical paradigm shift in our approach to the preservation of our collective home by starting to view our planet as one country and humanity its citizens. Elimination of prejudice is one of the fundamental principles in establishing this goal. Storytelling is a powerful tool in raising awareness and bridging the gaps. With this film, we set out to tell stories of a diverse cast of characters who are on some level experiencing prejudice in their lives. They come from various backgrounds but in that deep place inside, they are all essentially one and we are one of them. My personal hope for this film is to expose that sacred place inside where beyond the clouded isms of race, religion, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical appearance—lies a place of

light, warmth, hope, and pure love called the human soul."

The film has won a few awards:

❖ March 2018 - The Washtenaw County Commissioners honored the film with a special Proclamation as it "voices an urgent message that our diversity should be the cause of unity for our communities in these challenging times."

❖ March 2018 - University of Michigan honors the film's producer and cast member with the Ida Gray Award for its celebration of diversity.

❖ June 2018 - The film wins the Best Documentary Award at the Buddha International Film Festival in India.

John Russo
Vienna

Re-think Spraying

Dear Editor,

On Jan. 24, Fairfax and Prince William County spokesmen urged a Virginia House of Delegates subcommittee to allow localities to continue to kill caterpillars with broadcast spraying. At issue is *Alphitobius pometaria*, the inchworm or fall cankerworm, a native insect that in its larval stage is a caterpillar, a major food source for spring breeding and migrating birds. Some view this caterpillar as a "nuisance" when it spins down from trees on a silken thread.

A coalition is trying to stop this spraying, which kills not just the target species but all butterfly and moth caterpillars exposed to the spray, *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* (Btk). "This collateral damage is much too high a price to pay, when the focal animal is a natural element of Virginia's forest ecology," wrote the University

of Connecticut's Dr. David Wagner, a world caterpillar expert.

Some spraying advocates contend that inchworms defoliate and kill trees. Opponents argue that it takes several years of severe defoliation to kill a tree, which is rare; that most trees releaf in one season; and that tree mortality has many, often undetermined causes.

Del. Kathy Tran (D-Fairfax) offered a compromise to her original bill to require residents to opt into the spray program, a reversal of these counties' current opt-out programs. The subcommittee rejected the bill on a party-line five to four vote.

The inchworm is a native insect, part of the natural ecosystem, not a destructive invasive like the gypsy moth. Government officials at all levels should understand the value of native insects and their role, critics that noted biologist E.O. Wilson said are "the little things that run the world." Killing caterpillars without documentation of real harm or without understanding their importance is inexcusable.

Ashley C. Kennedy, MS
PhD Candidate, Tallamy Lab
Dept. of Entomology and
Wildlife Ecology
University of Delaware

Extremely Disappointed

To the Editor:

I graduated from college in 1986. I went to the University of Mississippi my freshman year and half of my sophomore year. My freshman year (1982), the school was still waving Confederate flags at football games and was in the process of transitioning to using a flag that just said, "Ole Miss" in red on a blue background. To protest, the Ku Klux Klan showed up at at least one football game. It was terrifying. The KKK is not funny. Not even a little bit.

I am extremely disappointed to discover that Mr. Northam participated in photo wearing Blackface with someone in a KKK outfit. He knew better. I voted for Mr. Northam, so this makes the discovery even more painful.

Everyone does stupid things in college. This was not stupid. It was mean and it wasn't funny. Mr. Northam should resign in order to show respect for his Black constituents and, really, all Virginia voters.

Amy Dickson
Springfield

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

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