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CONNECTION

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Pandemic Levels Blow to Women's Memorial Funding

NEWS, PAGE 4



Reserving Some Expenditures Until Revenues Materialize

NEWS, PAGE 3

Keeping an Eye On Accotink Creek

NEWS, PAGE 2

Alina Madalina, of Alexandria, walks past future Turning Point Suffragists Memorial site in Occoquan Regional Park.

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

Spring Valley Farm and Orchard Eli and Misty Cook

Due to the Covid 19 crisis, Eli & Misty Cook,
who normally participate in the following Farmers Markets:

Alexandria-Old Town Alexandria Farmer's Market
301 King Street Alexandria, VA 22314
Saturday 7:00 am to 12:00 pm

Silver Spring-FRESHFARM Silver Springs Market
1 Veterans Place Silver Springs MD 20910
Saturday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Westover-Westover Farmer's Market
1644 N. McKinley Rd. Arlington, VA 22205
Sunday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Burke-Burke VA pickup location will be in the VRE parking
lot VRE STA P Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke, VA 22015
Saturday 8am-11am.

DuPont-FRESHFARM DuPont Circle Market, D.C.
1600 20th St. NW Washington, D.C 20009
Sunday 8:30 am to 1:30 pm

Mosaic- FRESHFARM Mosaic Market
2910 District Ave. Fairfax, VA 22031
Sunday 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Reston Farmer's Market (Opening May 8)
1609 Washington Plaza N Reston, VA 20190
Saturday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Fairlington Farmer's Market
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Sunday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (Opening May 5)



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NEWS

Keeping an Eye on Accotink Creek

'Transform 66,' construction
stirring the silt pot in Fairfax.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

When the Friends of Accotink Creek looked at the muddied waters downstream from where it goes under I-66 in Fairfax County, they brought the issue to the Virginia Department of Transportation and then the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to try to stem the tide of sediments entering the waters of Accotink Creek. For the last few years, VDOT has been widening I-66 to put in toll lanes between I-495 and Haymarket, an area that includes the Accotink Creek watershed.

According to the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, "VDOT 'fixes' were not adequate," they said. The group keeps an eye on this kind

of thing and are working with the Friends of Accotink Creek to make sure the creek is protected. Dean Naujoks, a Potomac Riverkeeper at the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, is part of the effort, and said that "sediment pollution is number one source of water pollution in the country," along with phosphorus, a leading cause of impairment to the Potomac and its tributaries and Chesapeake Bay. "One of the goals of Chesapeake Bay Clean Up is sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus," he said, "phosphorous attaches to sediment to use as a transport."

The I-66 Outside the Beltway widening project crosses 5.1 miles of the Accotink Creek watershed, passing over the tributaries of Long Branch (north), Bear Branch, Hatmark Branch, Hunters Branch,

SEE CONSTRUCTION, PAGE 6

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NEWS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JORDYN SALOW

Dance Benefit Raises Funds for MS Research

Before school ended for the year, dance students from the Fairfax Academy put on a dance benefit to support those battling multiple sclerosis. The event was a big success and, besides highlighting the talented dancers, it raised \$1,700 for the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

Reserving Some Expenditures Until Revenues Materialize

Fairfax City moves its budget adoption to May 13.

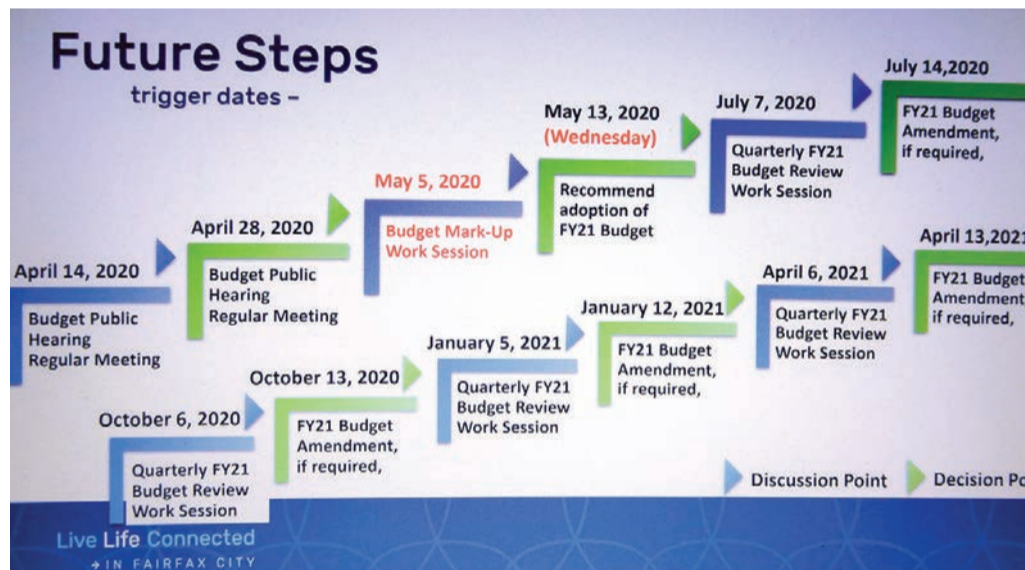
BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Continuing to grapple with the fallout from COVID-19's chilling effect on the economy, Fairfax City Manager Rob Stalzer recommended the City move its FY 21 budget adoption from May 6 to May 13. He did so because Fairfax County is also adopting its budget later than usual, and the City has two large contracts with the county.

He said that during the April 14 City Council meeting and also suggested the Council hold quarterly, budget-review, work sessions about the FY 21 budget. He then showed several slides detailing the City's estimated FY 20 revenue decreases and the projected FY 21 budget shortfalls.

For example, said Stalzer, "For FY 20, the BPOL tax [Business, Professional and Occupational License] will be reduced by about 30 percent, and the bank franchise tax will be reduced by about 15 percent. There's less traffic, so fewer fines, Parks and Rec is shut down [so no money is being made from cancelled events]."

"Less school aid is coming in, and we're getting less income on our investments because of the lowered interest rate," he continued. "So we're expecting an overall FY 20 loss of \$4.632 million [for the last 3-1/2 months of this fiscal year] because of losses in business revenue and City operations, plus the elimination of the recommended 3-cent real-estate tax increase."



A chart of important dates regarding Fairfax City's budget.

THE ONLY INCOME INCREASES are because of the drop in fuel prices for City vehicles, lower operating costs for buses since schools are closed, and capital construction projects that have either been completed or scaled back. So, said Stalzer, "It results in a \$131,000 FY 20 surplus, which will help balance the FY 21 budget."

"I'm hoping things begin to recover after six months, but we don't know – and that's why we have the review schedule," he said. "We estimate a \$17.669 million shortfall for FY 21." As a result, he's recommending nearly \$3.5 million in cuts from the upcoming budget.

"Gradually, we'll be able to bring the schools and Parks and Rec back online and collect fees again," said Stalzer. "So we'll hold \$7,851,261 in reserve for these things. I also anticipate recommending that the 3-cent tax increase be put in play in FY 22."

In addition, he'd like the City to do short-

term borrowing of \$5.335 million for the FY 21-25 CIP (Capital Improvement Program), which may be carried over multiple years. "By reducing [certain] projects in the CIP, we're not eliminating them, just reserving them," he said.

Stalzer said that, "Because of COVID-19, we're holding expenditures in reserve until we start seeing what our revenues will be. And this also applies to personnel raises." Freezing non-public-safety overtime is also on the table.

He further noted that, although he's recommending a \$200,000 cut to the City's Renaissance Housing Corp. – which makes small loans to residents to renovate their homes – this entity currently has \$600,000 in the bank that it can loan.

STALZER also recommended against dipping into the City's 12-percent fund balance. "It's far less than many other jurisdictions our size have," he said. "We're not

"Because of COVID-19, we're holding expenditures in reserve until we start seeing what our revenues will be. And this also applies to personnel raises."

— Fairfax City Manager
Rob Stalzer

going to just flip a switch and it's going to go back to the way it was. I think the recovery is going to be gradual."

"Over the next three or four weeks, do we expect the proposed tax rates to stay the same, unless something dramatic happens?" asked Councilman Michael DeMarco. Stalzer replied yes.

Councilman Sang Yi then said he wants the Council to set its budget priorities, and Stalzer said he wants to do that, too, "with the help of [City] staff and others."

Also during that meeting, resident Douglas Stewart asked the Council to defer making land-use decisions during the pandemic. He said such decisions are important, but "not essential to the continuity of government."

In response, City Attorney Brian Lubkeman said, "It's currently being hotly debated around the commonwealth. We're still wrestling with that."



Workers prepare for pouring cement footings.



Architect's rendering illustrates Turning Point Suffragist Memorial plan before cost cutting changes.

Pandemic Levels Blow to Memorial Funding

Suffragist Turning Point Memorial work proceeds with design changes.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Women are often recognized for putting the needs of others before their own. So it's ironic that the pandemic, once again, has forced women to take a back seat. Funds have been deferred for a memorial to women's struggle for passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, in consideration of local economic needs.

A memorial, the only one in the nation dedicated to the suffragists, was fully planned and designed, with work begun after ground breaking in November 2019. The site located in the Occoquan Regional Park, calls attention to the nearby historic workhouse where suffragists' imprisonment and poor treatment lead to a turning point in public opinion about their cause. Early in March, non-profit association organizers were celebrating their success after 12 years of planning and fundraising, with plans to open the site in August in a day-long event. They had accumulated all final pledges to cover construction costs for the memorial, called the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial. A grand opening in August would coincide with the 100 year anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment with attendees and famous personages from across the country.

At about the same time they celebrated, the pandemic arrived in Virginia with its associated economic and social gathering impacts. Significant pledged funding from government entities was soon slated for review in light of obvious revenue reductions related to the health crisis. Those entities will weigh the balance of short-fall needs now against the future revenue income from tourism that the monument is expected to generate.

FINAL BUDGET DECISIONS have not yet been made but other new funding prospects for the memorial look dire. The August opening celebration has been postponed indefinitely.

Although Occoquan Regional Park in Lorton is closed, except to foot traffic, work at the memorial site continues with available funding. Con-



RLN CONSTRUCTION

Chalk layout of memorial imposed on concrete footings.

struction workers, wearing protective masks in a nod to health crisis guidelines, prepared wooden forms, checked measurements, and concrete footings were poured for the entrance and wall foundations. Funds on hand will provide for completion of three plaza areas in the next few weeks: the front, middle and round areas. An outline of the layout can be seen imposed on the area. The National Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, created by Congress in April 2017, donated three bronze statues being crafted in Utah, which will be included in the monument. The life sized figures depict Alice Paul, co-founder of the National Woman's Party and author of the Equal Rights Amendment; Mary Church Terrell, co-founder of the NAACP and professor; and Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and founder of the League of Women Voters. In the open air space, the Memorial's entrance will replicate the White House gates where suffragists stood as "silent sentinels." The protesters were called "Silent Sentinels" because they protested without uttering a word, six days a week, for hours at the White House gates. They hoped to draw President Wilson's attention to their cause: the right to vote for women.

To reduce costs in light of the funding issues and high costs, the modified building plan removes the rotunda in favor of a pedestal, and eliminates water features and a small walking bridge. Without money for an irrigation system, many trees and plants envisioned in the garden

style memorial will not be practical.

THE ASSOCIATION of volunteers managing the monument has expressed hope that additional donors will come forward, but recognize the country, rightfully, has a significant number of challenges now. Construction will move toward completion in a phased approach. They will continue opportunities for donors to leave their mark on this part of history by adding their names to sections of the memorial. Major portions of the memorial still will be completed by August. The opening celebration must await a green light for crowd gatherings that can't be foreseen at present.

The memorial association's Executive Director and CEO, Pat Wirth, said, "It took millions of women from every state, creed, race and nationality 72 years to win the vote. Our association will persevere until every single one of those brave, tenacious women is appropriately recognized and honored through this national monument. It will serve as a visual symbol and educational tool to elevate them to their proper place in American history."

The Occoquan Regional Park location off Ox Road was selected for the memorial for its proximity to the Lorton Workhouse, where suffragists were once imprisoned. After arrest for impeding traffic, the ladies were ill-treated, even beaten and force-fed during their hunger strike over worm-ridden food at the workhouse. News of their poor treatment was key to turning public opinion to favor their cause, and led President Wilson to speak to Congress in support of suffrage in 1918. Congress passed the 19th amendment the following year and its State's ratification was effective on Aug. 18, 1920.

Achieving suffrage spurred women to organize in support of an equal rights amendment (ERA). Eventually passed by Congress in 1972, State ratification of ERA lagged until Virginia became the 38th State to ratify it in the last General Assembly on January 27, 2020. Constitutional questions remain regarding the timeliness of this ratification and if the ERA process must be re-started.

Readers can learn more about the Turning Point Suffragists Memorial at www.suffragist-memorial.org including history of the movement. Donations and sponsorships for the memorial can be made on-line or at TPSM, 5400 Ox Rd, Fairfax Station VA 22039.



WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Learn about Old Town, Northfax Plans

The City of Fairfax will host a remote meeting, Tuesday, May 12, at 6:30 p.m., to present its consultant's recommendations for the Old Town Fairfax and Northfax activity centers. Small Area Plans are neighborhood-level plans to guide City staff and elected officials on each of Fairfax's five Activity Centers defined in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. This includes proposed details regarding the overall designs, mix of uses, residential and building densities, multimodal transportation, infrastructure improvements and open spaces. Work on these two Small Area Plans began last summer, and they're slated for a City Council public hearing, this summer.

The meeting will be aired live on channel 12 on Verizon FIOS and Cox Communications and online at fairfaxva.gov/services/about-us/city-meetings. The public may comment, both online and in offline forums. For more information, go to fairfaxva.gov/smallareaplans or email City Planning staff at smallareaplans@fairfaxva.gov.

Fairfax Residents, City Employees:

Wear Masks

Due to COVID-19 community spread capabilities, the Fairfax City Council on Tuesday adopted a resolution encouraging residents and City employees to wear cloth masks when in settings where other social-distancing measures are difficult to maintain – including in public spaces and within City facilities and private businesses.

The CDC has said using cloth face coverings will slow the virus' spread and help prevent transmission by people who may have it and not know. And, explained Councilwoman Janice Miller during the April 28 Council meeting, "There's a concern in the business community about people coming into their businesses without masks. Grocery-store, pharmacy and hardware-store employees are doing a real service but are putting themselves at risk, every day. By encouraging people to wear masks, we're helping all of us stay a little safer."

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Obituary

Obituary



Ruth Lavelly Miller, of Springfield, VA passed away on April 25, 2020 at Greenspring Senior Living Community. Born on July 31, 1924 in Michigan, she was the daughter of the late Dr. Newell Eddy Lavelly and Mildred Lehman Lavelly.

Ruth is survived by her children; Sue C. Seerey-Lester and husband John, Kathe M. Wilson and husband Matthew, and William T. Miller and wife Beth. Also surviving Ruth are her grandchildren; Lavelly Miller, Benjamin Miller, Andrew Wilson and Brendon Wilson.

Ruth graduated from the University of Michigan in 1946 and was a teacher with Fairfax County Schools for 36 years, as well as a very active member of Immanuel UMC In Springfield. Ruth was a lover of life. She was a world traveler, a sculptor, a skier, a canoeist, an Outward Bound Camp graduate in her later years, and she worked as a volunteer reading tutor to prisoners.

A private family service is planned for a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Humane Society of Fairfax County. Demaine Funeral Home, Springfield is handling the arrangements. www.demainefunerals.com

Legals

ABC LICENSE

Burke Centre Texaco INC trading as Burke Centre Texaco, 6054 Burke Commons Rd, Burke, VA 22015. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine And Beer Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Robin M Haar, President authorizing advertisement. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

Legals

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Welcome California Market, Inc. trading as 99 Ranch Market 622, 10780 Fairfax Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22030-4323. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Alice Chen/CFO. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Legals

ABC LICENSE

EAD Entertainment, LLC trading as Muse Paintbar, 2920 District Avenue, Suite 100, Fairfax, VA 22031. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises-Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Brian Reynolds, LLC Manager. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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-Werner Heisenberg

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

Proper Order in a Pandemic?

Sickness, fear, precautions taken,
Order of the days is shaken.
Keeping distance, isolation
Sitting in our lonely stations.
Distance learning is the normal,
Laptops serving as our portal.
Screens we substitute for faces,
Books and magazines for places,
Keeping every person waiting
For the day we've all been fating.
Some will say it's far too distant,
Others say it's nonexistent.
I won't listen to their folly
Pessimistic, never jolly.
Holding hope for someday's morning
Casting out our masks and warning.
Waiting still with faith and patience,
Trusting in a God who's gracious,
We will make it through the madness
Working through our current sadness.
Washing hands and staying distant
Only lasting for the instant
Longing for a normal someday
Looking back on all this someday



Lily Och

We'll remember loss of order,
Bad reception, patience shorter.
Still I hope we learn this lesson:
Time we're given is a blessing.

— LILY OCH, 17, OF BURKE, IS AN 11TH GRADE STUDENT AT AD FONTES ACADEMY IN CENTERVILLE, WHICH TRANSITIONED TO DISTANCE LEARNING ON MARCH 17.

Construction Silt Clogging Gills in Accotink Creek

FROM PAGE 2

and the headwaters of the northwestern watershed, the Friends of Accotink Creek say. There are five different spots where the Accotink Creek tributaries go under I-66, their map shows.

According to Naujoks, projects are supposed to have National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit for construction run off that requires VDOT and its contractors to ensure sediment pollution does not leave the construction site. The site is also supposed to use best management practices, properly maintained and functioning, so that no polluted runoff reaches the Accotink or the Potomac.

The Friends group urges supporters to loosely monitor things along I-66. "Although we were unable to hold the asphalt at bay or even to have current stormwater controls applied to this project, let's all keep our eyes on it and hold VDOT and contractors to standards the citizens and environment of Virginia are entitled to expect," their website states. "Friends of Accotink Creek: ALL EYES ON I-66! - UPHOLD ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS!" it reads.

Kris Unger, a Friends member, was discouraged with the level of accountability with VDOT and the elected officials when the issue was brought up. The I-66 project spans several miles and "we only went to one spot on one day," he said, noting that the sediment runoff problem could be more widespread than originally thought. In mid-April, representatives from VDOT did answer his email though, and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Dean Naujoks, a Potomac Riverkeeper at the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, stands in the mud near the construction.

told him an action plan was in the works.

APRIL'S SHOWERS

VDOT acknowledged the concerns from members of the Friends of Accotink about possible sediment discharging to a stream located near the end of Ranger Road in the Mosby Woods Subdivision in Fairfax City following heavy rainfall in Northern Virginia and the entire region occurring on April 12 and 13, they said. The I-66 Outside the Beltway's design-build contractor, FAM Construction, is required to install and maintain erosion and sediment controls throughout their construction area to protect streams and the surrounding environment from rain and other weather events during construction. FAM's team, as well as the VDOT team, inspects these erosion and sediment controls regularly. Unfortunately, the controls could not withstand the significant

rainfall that occurred during the referenced rainstorm, resulting in the concerns that were raised, the VDOT's Megaprojects Office said.

Following this complaint, an on-site inspection was held on Friday, April 17, and a follow up visit was conducted on Monday, April, 27, resulting in confirmation from DEQ that all needed corrective actions were taken to address concerns about this stream.

PREVIOUS SEDIMENT INTRUSION

The project at I-66 isn't the first time the Friends of Accotink Creek have been concerned about sediments in the stream. When the I-495 toll lanes, loosely called "HOT" lanes at that time, were under construction, the stream took a hit then as well. The Friends note that incident on the website: At a June 2017 meeting, the Friends of

SEE ACCOTINK, PAGE 7

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS

Accotink

FROM PAGE 6

Accotink Creek, objected to tree loss without mitigation, outdated stormwater control standards, and considering transit as an afterthought, rather than a leading element in any transportation project, they said. Unger was involved at that time also and felt there wasn't enough discussion with the authorities.

"We would like to point out that four years after completion of the 495 Express Lanes, we are struggling to correct erosion control and landscaping shortcomings that did not meet minimum standards. We fully expect to face the same situation with the I-66 Express Lanes," the Friends website stated after the June meeting.

The Friends of Accotink Creek group has reached out to Virginia Senator Dave Marsden (D-37), Del. David Bulova (D-37), and Fairfax County Supervisors Dahlia Palchick (Providence) and James Walkinshaw (Brad-dock), but has yet to receive a response.

BULLETIN BOARD

CLOSURE OF SILVER AND ORANGE STATIONS

The Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) announced a new plan for construction activities for the summer of 2020 with a full closure of all Metrorail Orange and Silver Line stations in Fairfax County. These adjustments to WMATA's current construction efforts on the Silver Line and the up-coming platform reconstruction efforts on the Orange Line address the health and safety of WMATA's workers operating the rail system and the contractors working on these two major capital projects. It also considers the low ridership on Metrorail related to the impacts of COVID-19 and the current Stay-at-Home Orders in place across the National Capital Region.

The expanded station closures will advance the two largest capital projects in Virginia -- the demolition and reconstruction of the station platforms at four Metrorail Orange Line stations and work to connect the five new Metrorail Silver Line stations to the existing transit network. The closures begin Memorial Day weekend 2020 and are expected to continue through the fall.

Impacts on Orange and Silver Line Service -- All stations west of Ballston Metrorail Station on the Orange and Silver Lines will be closed beginning Saturday, May 23, 2020. The stations to be closed are:

Orange Line -- East Falls Church, West Falls Church, Dunn Loring, Vienna

Silver Line -- McLean, Tysons, Greensboro, Spring Hill, Wiehle-Reston East

All Orange Line trains will begin and end service at Ballston. Service will operate from Ballston to New Carrollton. There will be no Silver Line service for the duration of the station closures.

Free Shuttle Bus Service -- WMATA will be offering free express and local shuttle bus service to provide alternative travel options for those who must travel and use the Metrorail system. The shuttle buses will operate seven days a week during the operating hours of the Metrorail system, currently 5 a.m. - 9 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. on weekends. They will operate approximately every 10 minutes on weekdays and approximately every 15 minutes on weekends. Buses will not stop at stations that are currently closed due to WAMTA's response to COVID-19.

Free Orange and Silver Line Shuttle Service Orange Line Express -- Direct service between Vienna and Ballston Metrorail Stations.

Orange Line Local -- Service between Vienna, Dunn Loring, West Falls Church and Ballston Metrorail Stations.

Silver Line Local - Service between Wiehle-Reston East, Spring Hill, Tysons Corner and Ballston Metrorail Stations.

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And So It Begins



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The six-week schedule/treatment for my stage II papillary thyroid cancer began on Thursday, April 23 with an hour-long telephone appointment with one of the doctors from the Nuclear Medicine department. He was confirming, clarifying and preparing yours truly for the arduous task at hand: a commitment to a month-long, low iodine diet beginning April 27 (no salt, no sugar, no dairy, no normal-type bread and a bunch of other less impactful nos) and 15 on-site hospital-related visits (in lab, in doctor's office and in scan area) followed by an overnight in late May when I receive my final treatment. After which, for the following week, I am to be quarantined at home (unsafe for children, pregnant woman and pets) with miscellaneous other quarantine-associated behaviors/advisories (changing bed sheets every other day, using one bathroom exclusively, flushing toilets twice, using plastic silverware and paper plates, among others) with the fun and games ending June 5th when the quarantine period ends. Then I can resume my normal/familiar routine for the treatment of my underlying/pre-existing stage IV non small cell lung cancer. Treatment for which will likely begin again in mid July after I've had a CT scan to assess the damage/success of my thyroid cancer treatment.

By then, it will have been about six months that I've actually had any current treatment/medicine for my lung cancer. Once given a clean bill of health (so far as the thyroid cancer is concerned), I'll likely restart my bi-weekly treatments for my non-small cell lung cancer (which as my oncologist said; he could treat but never cure). Treatment which began in early March, 2009 and has continued for nearly 11 years. Pending the results of that July CT scan, my life will likely return to abnormal. Still, it's way too early to speculate on life going forward. Six months (dating back to my last treatment in Jan., 2020) is an eternity in the cancer world (heck six days is an eternity).

And aside from the obvious, that planning for or even predicting scenarios two to three months hence, it has never been my oncologist's style. Then consider, as he said during our most recent phone appointment (April 17), that he's no longer certain if the tumors in my lungs are non small cell lung cancer, papillary thyroid cancer which has moved and/or, wait for it, that my lung cancer tumors have gone into remission. Can you quote the late Phil Rizzuto: "Holy cow!" None of which will be known until a week or so after my July CT scan. And not that wondering/waiting isn't already the hardest part but before I will have learned the status of my tumors, I will have been in and out of hospitals being treated for thyroid cancer right smack in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic when I'm supposed to do the exact opposite: isolate at home and stay away from hospitals. I couldn't be looking for more trouble if I planned it. Nevertheless, I just hope the old adage applies: "Time flies when you're having fun." (And I suppose I should add: flies safely.)

I don't really feel the fun? Maybe it's the needles you feel, or the fear/anxiety associated with being in and out of hospitals multiple times in a comparatively short period of time? Or maybe you feel the worry and difficulty I'll have maintaining a low iodine diet for 31 or so days, and the hunger pains and chocolate withdrawal I'll experience during that month. I'd like to think that the time/treatment will pass quickly, but I'm guessing that the demands of the diet will slow me down to a crawl and that the experience will be an extremely challenging transition/return to normal. (Particularly so for me since food has always been the bane of my existence.)

But so what? My health status, which originally had been a terminal one: "13 months to two years" has improved dramatically. I'm still likely to die from cancer but instead of the two years maximum I had anticipated (been "prognosed"), I am now living and breathing two months into year 12, post diagnosis. And depending upon what is interpreted from my upcoming CT scan, I may yet have a bit more life to live.

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

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