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# Great Falls CONNECTION

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# NEWS

## ‘Fair Winds and Following Seas’

### Drive-by-parade and presentation held for Commander Franco Neto United States Navy, Retired.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**M**cLean resident Commander Franco Neto United States Navy officially retired May 1, 2020.

No one sent out formal invitations to a military Retirement Ceremony to honor him and mark the milestone event. No guest list featured high-ranking speakers to honor, toast and thank Neto for his dedication and achievements, as he ended his watch after a 28-year career. Instead, Neto received something different.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of all official retirement ceremonies, Neto's mother, Fatima had organized a small group of family and friends to participate in a surprise drive-by-parade and watch socially distanced as members of American Legion Post 130 Falls Church presented Neto with Certificate of Honor on Saturday, May 2, the day after he officially retired. "It's the love of a mother," she said.

A career Naval Intelligence Officer with more than 20 years of experience leading intelligence operations and analysis organizations, Neto was a problem solver with extensive managerial expertise in personnel and program management, including the supervision of a 50 person Naval Intelligence Center afloat, research analysis in support of Personnel Recovery Operations, and management of a multi-million dollar Navy space program, according to LinkedIn.

**FOLLOWING A SMALL** family retirement ceremony on Friday to mark the occasion, according to Neto, Saturday morning, he put on his Full Dress uniform, the one with full-size medals above the left breast pocket. He said he thought the attire would be for "some pictures out front." Little did Neto know that at the same time, two blocks away, a parade-caravan of friends, extended family and members of American Legion Post 130 Falls Church gathered in their vehicles. "Under normal conditions, the military has very appropriate ceremonies on behalf of the retiree," said Harry Shovlin Treasurer of American Legion Post 130 Falls Church. "Since no other ceremonies were going to be held because of COVID-19, Fatima Neto asked us to be involved with the plans. We feel any career officer or enlisted person deserves public recognition for their service to our country," said Shovlin.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**Commander Franco Neto United States Navy, Retired prepares to give a hand salute as the flag passes by his position. Friends and family held a drive-by-parade to honor and recognize Neto the morning after his watch officially ended.**



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**(From left) 17th District Finance Officer and 1st Vice Commander and Past 17th District and Post Commander Tommy Powell, Commander Franco Neto United States Navy, Retired and Commander of Post 130 Wayne Hines.**

### A Fitting Tribute

"Mike and I served as civilians for the U.S. Navy for over 50 years of combined service, so we were delighted to be invited to honor Fatima Neto's son's service to our country. A "drive-by" his home waving flags was a fitting tribute." - Joy Erdman

"For our three young children, this important occasion was not only a lesson on patriotism but also that the true spirit of community cannot be defeated. We were honored and inspired to be part of it." - Lisa Marinelli Woestman

"So proud of my brother Franco for his 28-year service in the Navy! Wishing him fair winds and following seas in his next endeavor." - Christiane (Neto) Lourenco

"Today's retirement celebration of Navy Commander Neto, who served his country for 28 years, is truly inspirational and a great source of pride for both his family and for America. It is the men and women who choose military service who give us the freedom to be free." - Gail and Larry Marinelli

Meanwhile, Neto and his family gathered on the front steps of their home for photos. He noticed men posting the colors at the end of his driveway. Each wore the distinctive American Legion cap. Neto heard the distant sound of beeping horns. Moving closer toward the curb, Neto looked down the street and saw a long line of vehicles turning the corner off Great Falls Street and coming his way. In vehicle after vehicle, masked friends and family members held up congratulatory posters. They waved flags and called out, "Thank you, congratulations." Neto gave a hand salute at the moment each flag passed his position.

Members of American Legion Post 130 Falls Church, 17th District Finance Officer and 1st Vice Commander and Past 17th District and Post Commander Tommy Powell, Commander Harvey Hines, Treasurer Harry Shovlin, and Sergeant at Arms and Past Post Commander John Johnson joined Neto at the end of his driveway. From the far curb, friends and extended family members stood socially distanced and watched.

"I definitely wasn't expecting this," Neto said.

Not at the traditional military Retirement Ceremony, not in a ballroom or Officers Club but at the end of an all-American suburban

driveway Neto stood at attention between the posted colors and received recognition and thanks for his service.

**POWELL READ:** "The American Legion Certificate of Honor. This certificate is presented to Franco Neto in recognition and grateful appreciation for serving in the United States Armed Forces in the name of freedom and democracy, and for allegiance to God and country in courageously protecting our liberty and independence. Presented by the American Legion Post 130 Department of Virginia this second day of May 2020."

# OPINION

## Make Every Day Mom's Day

**Mother's Day can be every day during quarantine.**

BY STACIA DATSKOVSKA

When I go to bed each night, I thank God for how saturated my life is with my mom's presence, especially now that we are together at home: safe and closer than ever. I know this is more than a typical sixteen-year-old girl (at the peak of her rebellious, parent-averse phase, no less) can say for herself, but it has not always been this way.

My mom and I did not share mutual understanding from the get-go— apparent even in

the difference between how we now spend Mother's Day and how we used to spend it. I once took this special day to be a go-hard-or-go-home shot at proving my love for the woman who created me. Mother's Day is every day in my heart now: gone is my yearn to redeem myself as a daughter, only to retire from the effort on Monday. Realizing that love and devotion cannot be resized to fit a square on the calendar, I can finally rest easy. As long as I remind her daily, my mom already knows I appreciate her— box of chocolates not required.



Don't get me wrong: I am glad there is a day set out for female caregivers all over the world to feel valued. God knows they don't get enough of it. But gifts or even kind words on Mother's Day cannot stand as placeholders in the spot where mutual love should reside if that place is vacant and dusty the rest of the

year.

Once my mom and I agreed to seek something deeper in the holiday, beyond material gifts, we realized that what brought us the most happiness was simply sharing experiences and each other's company. This was one gift I could give every day! From then on, I tried (with shortcomings) to make it so my mom just as likely feels special on May 10th as on June 10th or even February 29th—to the point where she wouldn't feel Mother's Day is any different from a lowercase "d" day at all.

Now is the easiest time to live by this tenet: when all our days seem to blend into an indistinguishable haze of sameness. More time on your hands could not only allow you to rekindle your relationship but also think of a more thoughtful, soulful gift for Mom. Here are some suggestions for how to bolster her spirit this Mother's Day— easy to replicate on any given day you wish to simply reconnect.

SEE MOM'S DAY, PAGE 11



Kimberly Adams



Sean Corcoran



Ron Kuley



Tina Williams



Tammie Wondong

## Hazard Pay in Honor of Frontline Workers

**We are putting our lives on the line; Hazard pay honors our sacrifices.**

BY KIMBERLY ADAMS,  
FAIRFAX EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
SEAN CORCORAN,  
FCOP LOCAL 5000  
RON KULEY,  
IAFF LOCAL 2068  
TINA WILLIAMS,  
FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS  
TAMMIE WONDONG,  
FCGEU - SEIU VIRGINIA 512

As frontline workers and as rank-and-file labor leaders representing Fairfax County firefighters, law enforcement officers, educators, nurses, social workers, trash collectors, and other hard-working county employees, we are proud of the work that our members do every day to keep Fairfax County running.

We keep families safe, care for and educate children, keep our public spaces clean, take care of people who are sick and need support, maintain our community's infrastructure, help people get where they need to go -- and more.

We are Black, White, Latino, Asian, and many of us are immigrants. We are every religion and every kind of family.

Right now, we are responding to the biggest 4 ♦ GREAT FALLS CONNECTION ♦ MAY 6-12, 2020

crisis we have seen in our lifetimes. In the midst of this global pandemic, we continue to keep Fairfax County moving forward.

We are picking up trash, putting out fires, protecting the community, delivering health care and mental health services, educating children, cleaning and maintaining public spaces -- and so many other things that may be invisible to the community because they happen without people thinking about them.

We're also reaching out to our neighbors, raising money for nonprofits, donating food, and supporting those hit hardest by the virus and closures.

We are proud to continue serving our community during this crisis. To do so however, we are risking our health and well-being, and the health and well-being of our loved ones.

In recognition of this reality, neighboring jurisdictions, including Arlington, Alexandria, Washington, DC and the State of Maryland, have all begun offering hazard pay to their workforce.

Hazard pay honors the commitment and sacrifices that frontline workers make every day as we risk exposure to perform essential services.

Before coronavirus, when we left the house

each day, many of us feared that we might not return to our families. Now, we fear that we might bring this virus home to our families.

Hazard pay offers frontline workers an extra measure of financial security to stay focused on our critical work.

We have been offering ideas, and will continue to work with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to pass a county budget that invests in good jobs, quality health care, affordable housing, public education, PPE, and services and supports for every family in Fairfax County.

We believe that budgets are moral documents that must reflect the values of our community, putting people before profits.

Fairfax County has long been a wonderful place to live, work and play. We stand united with elected officials and community leaders who are fighting to support working people throughout our county. Together, we can keep our community safe, healthy, and thriving for years to come.

*Kimberly Adams is President of the Fairfax Education Association. Sean Corcoran is President of FCOP Local 5000. Ron Kuley is President of IAFF Local 2068. Tina Williams is President of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. Tammie Wondong is President of the FCGEU - SEIU Virginia 512. United together, we advocate for good jobs and quality public services for all people in Fairfax County.*

Great Falls  
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## WELLBEING

Virtual fitness classes aid in the effort to stay healthy and fit.



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
CHRISTIAN ELLIOT

# Virtual Fitness Classes Offer Options

Online choices for those who want to get or stay in shape.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Staying physically and mentally fit is proving to be a challenge for some as local gyms, yoga studios and weight management clinics have closed their doors in an effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. As a solution, many local health and fitness studios are offering live-streamed and recorded digital classes that can be joined from almost anywhere. From pre-recorded sessions on Facebook to live sessions with an instructor and personal sessions with a physical trainer, instructors are giving the curious and uninitiated a look inside their cyber classrooms.

"I am encouraging people to focus on the mental health benefits from exercise and movement to help deal with the stress of COVID-19," said Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at the Washington Center for Weight Management and Research in Arlington. "I am also encouraging people to be okay with exercise looking and feeling different right now. Something is better than nothing."

Practicing yoga can offer mental health benefits, says Luann Fulbright, Studio Director of Dream Yoga in McLean. "Yoga means to unite, and human beings, like other mammals, need to connect to stay well," she said. "The virtual classes enable our community to continue to come together to practice."

A disrupted schedule can lead to increased anxiety during this time of uncertainty. "The crux of regular exercise for many people is routine and familiarity, when that gets interrupted, it can be difficult to establish a new normal with exercise," said Trope. "This is a very tricky time. We are using both live exercise classes and pre-recorded exercise content combined with written workouts."

Creating as close to a real experience as possible for students, including allowing for teacher-student interaction makes the classes more effective. "We transformed one of our classrooms into a virtual studio with good equipment so our classes look as professionally done as possible," said Fulbright. "We have a good camera, microphone, umbrella lighting, and large monitor screen so teachers can better see their students and alignment."

The students who are joining the classes represent a wide demographic. "Many of our regular students have gone virtual with us," said Fulbright. "The ones that surprised us were our older students in our Yoga for Creaky People and other classes. At first, we wondered if they would want to Zoom, but we were wowed. Most of them are Zooming with us now. They are rocking it."

There are even solutions for those who are only marginally interested in fitness or need help staying motivated.

"I had a former client reach out to me yesterday saying she just couldn't stay motivated doing the free home workouts because no one cared if she did or didn't show up," said Christian Elliot, Health Coach at TRUE Whole Human. "She's finding she prefers an appointment to keep her accountable. The one-to-one personal training with trained eyes watching, although more expensive, often provides the most accountability and bang for the buck, especially if you don't have much equipment to work with."

Classes can be tailored to the abilities and interests of each student. "I've found, probably not surprisingly, that different people prefer different formats," said Elliot. "Not having to think of what to do may be the biggest draw, regardless of the format. Some like the structure of a program and thoughtful movement and a slower pace, others like showing up at a particular time, doing whatever the workout is for the day, and knowing when the workout will be over."

"I'm excited to watch our great, collective, American ingenuity have a new outlet for creativity," added Elliot. "I look forward to seeing how this strange blip in history brings new and better solutions to the market that we otherwise would not have come up with."

**"I am encouraging people to focus on the mental health benefits from exercise and movement to help deal with the stress of COVID-19."**

—Rachel Trope,  
Clinical Exercise Physiologist  
at the Washington Center for  
Weight Management and Research



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLIE GUNN

## Special Salute from the Blue Angels

Centreville's Charlie Gunn took this photo of the Navy's Blue Angels, Saturday morning, May 2, from his driveway in Virginia Run, when they and the Air Force Thunderbirds did a flyover en route to Inova Fair Oaks and Fairfax hospitals to salute healthcare workers and other essential personnel serving on the frontline against COVID-19.

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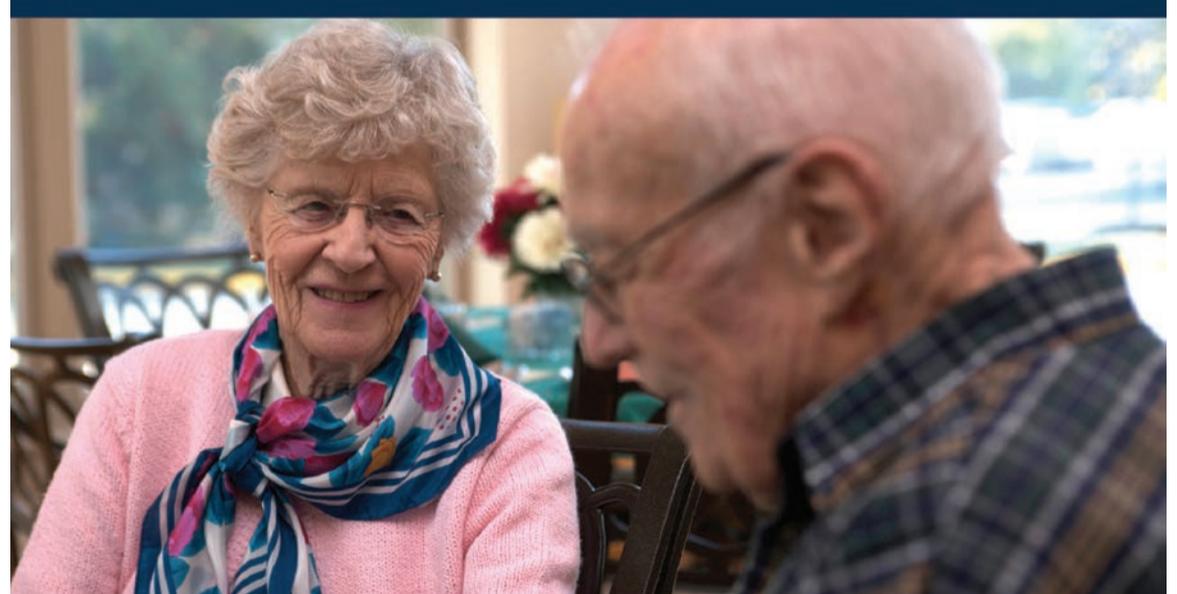
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# NoVA Legislators Lasso Outdoor Tethering Law

New tethering restrictions go in effect on July 1.

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Companion animal advocates are among those with reason to celebrate the 2020s Virginia's General Assembly. This year, grassroots progressives saw nearly a dozen bills pass related to animal care and humane treatment. New laws will include restrictions on outdoor animal tethering; puppy stores; creating care criteria; consumer protections; annual inspections by the State veterinarian; and to recognize December as Virginia puppy mill awareness month.

**ANIMAL WELFARE** is an issue where "two Virginias" are often evidenced in citizen viewpoints: rural and urban. Many in urban Virginia tend to see pets as members of the family who reside inside the home and are treated like furry children. Many in rural Virginia may see animals more traditionally; often kept outside for security, sport or agriculture. Perhaps nowhere has the difference in views of what constitutes humane treatment been seen as acutely as in the multi-year legislative debate over tethering: confining a dog outside on a chain or rope. On this issue lawmakers have been at odds, literally over 60 inches, and degrees of temperature for several years.

This year new restrictions on tethering go into effect on July 1.

The new requirements raise the minimum tether length to the greater of 15 feet or four times the length of the animal, measured tip of nose to base of tail. If inspected, an animal control officer may determine if a shorter length of no less than ten feet or three times the animal's length is better suited. The tether material itself must not cause injury or pain, nor weigh more than one-tenth the animal's body weight.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Delegate Mark Levine (Arlington/Alexandria/Fairfax County) worked for the House tethering bill version.

The new law recognizes the dangers to animals left tied outside during certain conditions including extreme temperatures and severe weather events. Outside animal tethering is not considered adequate shelter:

- ❖ unless the animal is safe from predators;
- ❖ unless animal is well suited/well equipped to tolerate its environment;
- ❖ during the effective period for a hurricane warning/tropical storm warning issued for the area by the National Weather Service;
- ❖ during a heat advisory issued by a local or state authority;
- ❖ when the actual or effective outdoor temperature is 85 degrees Fahrenheit or higher;
- ❖ when the actual or effective outdoor temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or

lower;

- ❖ during the effective period for a severe weather warning issued for the area by the National Weather Service, including a winter storm, tornado, or severe thunderstorm warning.

**SHELTERING EXEMPTIONS** may be allowed in situations, only if an animal control officer, having inspected an animal's individual circumstances, has determined the animal to be safe from predators and well suited and well equipped to tolerate its environment, i.e. a thick furred husky in 31 degree snowy weather versus a short-haired chihuahua in the same circumstances. No exemptions may be made during issued hurricane/tropical storm warnings.



PHOTO COURTESY HUMANE DOMINION & HOMEWARD TRAILS

Dogs tied outside in Virginia await new weather and tethering protections effective July 1.

House bill provisions that would have prohibited outdoor tethering between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., and allowing localities to adopt more stringent ordinances than the state provisions were not accepted. Leash walking a dog is not considered tethering.

Readers may find the full language of the bills at [www.lis.virginia.gov](http://www.lis.virginia.gov) by searching HB 1552 or SB 272 Tethering animals; adequate shelter and space.

*The author is Director of the VA Dog Army, a companion animal law enforcement and legislation advocacy group.*

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### TOWN ELECTIONS ON MAY 19

The Vienna and Clifton town elections are rescheduled to Tuesday, May 19 with polling locations opening at 6 a.m. and closing at 7 p.m. However, the Virginia Department of Elections encourages voters to protect their health during the COVID-19 outbreak. Voting by mail is strongly encouraged and a ballot can be requested today. Voters may choose reason "2A My disability or illness" for absentee voting. Tuesday, May 12 at 5 p.m. is the deadline to request an absentee ballot. Visit the Fairfax County Office of Elections website ([www.fairfax-county.gov/elections](http://www.fairfax-county.gov/elections)) for more information about absentee voting. The Town of Vienna is the only jurisdiction in Fairfax County that has a contested election on May 19.

### CEDAR LANE BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

Fairfax County Department of Transportation announces the expansion of service on Fairfax Connector bus routes 462 and 467, effective Saturday, May 9, 2020, to assist travelers during the demolition and reconstruction of the Cedar Lane Bridge over I-66. The Cedar Lane Bridge reconstruction effort is part of the Virginia Department of Transportation's Transform 66-Outside the Beltway project and is expected to begin mid-May, 2020, and last through November 2020. The expanded service on Fairfax Connector routes 462 and 467 will be free for the duration of the Cedar Lane Bridge closure, and provides expanded hours during weekdays and new service during the weekends. During the bridge closure, Cedar Lane will be closed between Cottage Street and Hilltop Road, and the

bridge itself will be demolished and rebuilt to accommodate the widening of I-66 that is underway. Drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists will also be impacted by the bridge closure and should be aware of the following detours:

Drivers will be re-routed to Gallows Road to cross I-66 using either Cottage Street (north side of I-66) or Hilltop Road and Lee Highway (south side of I-66). Pedestrians and bicyclists should use sidewalks along Cottage Street on the north side of I-66, shared-use path along Gallows Road by the Dunn Loring-Merrifield Metrorail Station, and multiple sidewalks on the south side of I-66.

### FRESHFARM MARKETS OPEN

Local FRESHFARM Markets are opened. Residents are encouraged to pre-order as much as possible, but grab-and-go and prepackaged options will be available for pur-

chase at all of the markets listed below.

Saturday Markets  
Arlington, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. -- N Courthouse Rd. and 14th St N, Arlington  
Oakton, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. -- 2854 Hunter Mill Rd., Oakton.  
Sunday Market  
Mosaic, 9 a.m - 2 p.m. -- 2910 District Ave., Fairfax

### GIANT OFFERS VIRTUAL NUTRITION CLASSES

Giant Food will be offering free, weekly online nutrition and healthy living classes aimed at supporting the greater community, as well as individuals with chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease. People can choose from the following online classes:  
Nutrition at Noon – For those who have general healthy living questions, join Giant nutritionists Monday-Friday at 12 p.m. for quick, 15-minute Q&A sessions. Topics

discussed during these classes include healthy snacking habits, must-have pantry staples and healthy meal ideas for at-home cooking.

Eating for Heart Health – Attendees can learn about foods that promote heart health, manage cholesterol and hypertension, and how to improve blood pressure, pulse rate and other heart vitals in this weekly online web series.

6 Steps to a Healthier You – Whether it's a concern about weight, chronic disease management or just optimizing health, participants will learn how to identify relatively simple and gradual lifestyle changes to help them live healthier lives.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

# 'Don't Forget About Us'

## County supervisors hold public budget hearings.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

One of the ACLU People Power Fairfax lead advocates, Diane Burkley Alejandro testified on the revised fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget proposal before the Fairfax Board of Supervisors. "Let me first say that my heart goes out to all of you. You have difficult choices to make in uncharted territory. The health, welfare and lives of Fairfax residents are in your hands. I urge you to remember that you will never be faulted for overreacting. You will be faulted forever for under-reacting," Alejandro said. The revised budget differed from the one County Executive Bryan Hill presented to the board before the COVID-19 pandemic. Slashed were nearly all new programs, staff positions, compensation increases and more.

FOR THREE DAYS, April 28-30, people testified live by phone, and by video and written testimony. Whether the person represented an organization, like John Cartmill, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions who advocated Supervisors be fiscally responsible, reduce the County's carbon footprint and purchase electric vehicles or represented a union, like Emily VanDerhoff, Fairfax County Federation of Teachers who advocated for increased numbers of school psychologists, counselors and social workers, a common theme emerged - don't forget us. "We are here, and we are serving. Please, when you are making your decisions, don't forget about us," said Naketa Proctor, a supervisor with Self-Sufficiency in South County in a video submitted by the Fairfax County Government Employees Union SEIU Virginia 512.

Individuals testified for current funding to "stay the course." They solicited additional funds to offset increased need or abort program closure, and they offered the fiscal solutions to use reserve funds now, save programs and lives later.

Alison DeCoursey is the executive director of United Community. She said the organization served the largest island of the disadvantaged in Fairfax County, the neighborhoods along Route 1. DeCoursey reported a recent 890 percent increase in the number of clients at its food pantry. "Coronavirus is going to require extra resources... but we cannot lose sight of our goal ...

ending multi-generational poverty by turning these islands of disadvantage into communities of opportunity. Just as United Community stays the course, we urge the County to stay the course on its own plans to actualize One Fairfax."

Nancy Scott also urged Supervisors to stay the course. Speaking on behalf of Insight Memory Care Center, a nonprofit adult day health and resource center for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other memory impairments, Scott said, "Insight was a lifeline for me and my late husband, Jim ... (and) relies on funding from Fairfax County to sustain its programs, and is hopeful it will continue to receive CCFP (Consolidated Community Funding Pool) funds."

Judith Dittman is CEO of Second Story, an organization that provides services to homeless and at-risk young people and families. She said Second Story tried to find other revenue sources to fund increased expenses but failed. She asked the Supervisors for \$190,000. "Without this funding, we will have to close Second Story for Teens in Crisis," Dittman said.

FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF Stacey Kincaid described the extraordinary effort the men and women in the public safety agency make on the front lines of COVID-19 and its toll. She said, "Front line responders have not been able to get pandemic-related types of leave... We support providing flexible leave... (and) expanding the limits of carryover compensatory time." Kincaid said she hoped Supervisors addressed funding for 2.06 percent of the Market Rate Adjustment during FY 21, considered equitable compensation and focused "on Diversion First, which ensures that our residents with mental illness or substance use disorders receive the care and assistance they need."

Burkley Alejandro testified COVID-19 disproportionately hurt the immigrant community, and they too needed a safety net. She offered a financial solution saying, "Be bold and swift. Use your emergency powers... Feel free to act incrementally... People's lives are more important than the County's credit rating... Let the scores be damned. The balanced budget requirement is a red herring. Here, you have more than sufficient reserves and TEC SAC funding (Tertiary Education Commission Student Achievement Component funding).

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit: <https://fairfaxcounty.gov/cable-consumer/> to watch the budget public hearings.

**May 5:** Board of Supervisors marks up FY 2021 Budget and adopts FY 2020 Third Quarter Review

**May 12:** Board of Supervisors adopts FY 2021 Budget, tax rate and budget transfer amount to FCPS

**TBD:** School Board adopts FCPS FY 2021 Approved Budget

July 1: FY 2021 begins



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and staff meet socially distanced and remotely for the Wednesday, April 29 public hearing on the revised fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget proposal before them.



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# Great Falls Doctor Pleads Guilty to Opioid Conspiracy and Health Care Fraud

A Fairfax physician pleaded guilty on Monday, May 4, to leading and organizing an extensive and illegal prescription distribution conspiracy and a related health care fraud scheme.

According to court documents, Dr. Felicia Lyn Donald, 65, of Great Falls, organized, led, and operated a prescription “pill mill” from at least April 2016 through April 2020. Donald practiced medicine at For Women OB/GYN Associates and NOVA Addiction Center. Donald distributed more than 1.2 million milligrams (mg) of Schedule II opioids at or above the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guideline for dosages that a practitioner should avoid, with a total street value of over \$1.2 million, and illegally distributed at least 325,190 mg of oxycodone and other Schedule II controlled substances. Donald also committed health care fraud on numerous occasions in furtherance of her scheme.

“Donald flagrantly violated her oath as a physician and put countless lives at risk,” said G. Zachary Terwilliger, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. “It is critical that those with the power to prescribe controlled substances be held accountable for their actions, and that putting the health and safety of the American public at risk is a federal crime. This is especially true at this very moment when we are relying on medical professionals to save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Additionally, Donald fraudulently prescribed Schedule II opioid pills that she illegally distributed to a close associate, knowing that this individual sold the prescriptions on the street for profit. Around the same time, Donald issued prescriptions to the close associate for alprazolam pills, which belong to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines. Donald admitted that the use of opioids with benzodiazepines is a dangerous combination of drugs that can make a person stop breathing, and could have killed or caused serious bodily injury to the close associate or to the ultimate users.

“Donald’s actions fueled our nation’s opioid crisis and endangered lives,” said Maureen R. Dixon, Special Agent in Charge for HHS-OIG. “We will work tirelessly with our partners to prevent

criminals from preying on the Medicaid program and its beneficiaries.”

**DONALD ADMITTED** that she prescribed opioids to addicts and/or drug dealers who had traveled from out-of-state or long distances to her practice; individuals that informed Donald of their pending drug charges; individuals who Donald knew had failed urine toxicology screens; individuals who Donald knew were selling the pills that she prescribed to them; paying certain employees, in part, with opioid prescriptions rather than through paychecks; and giving blank prescriptions to certain members of her medical office staff and other co-conspirators for their personal use.

**“Donald’s actions fueled our nation’s opioid crisis and endangered lives,”**

— Maureen R. Dixon, Special Agent in Charge for HHS-OIG

Donald attempted to conceal her patterns of illegal prescribing by falsifying medical records to make it appear as though individuals who were never her patients received examinations and medical care, when in fact they had not, and engaging in Medicaid fraud. Donald fraudulently issued prescriptions to others in the names of at least nine unwitting individuals, none of whom were her patients. Donald also issued prescriptions for high doses of oxycodone to multiple women who were pregnant.

**DONALD PLEADED GUILTY** to conspiracy to distribute and dispense controlled substances outside the usual course of professional practice and without a legitimate medical purpose, and health care fraud. She agreed to surrender her medical license and faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison when sentenced on Aug. 21. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

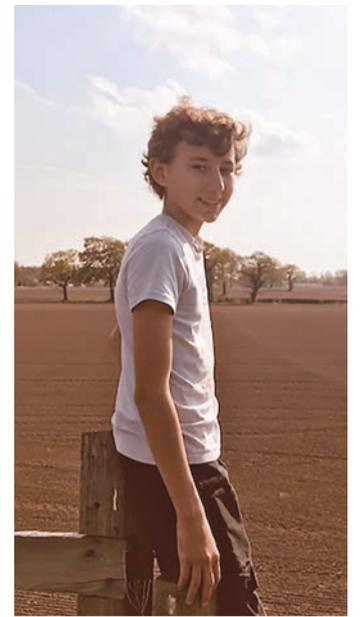
## POETRY CORNER

### The Pleasantries of Seneca

BY OSCAR JORDAN  
GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6

The tall beautiful trees, that hung above us like a tunnel of lush green vegetation,  
The leaves raining from the sky of all colours,  
The vibrant reds, and browns, of the cardinals, could never be missed  
The Blue Jays playing and singing mid flight,  
The woodpeckers peck the great trees,  
The nostalgic smell of damp leaves on the ground,  
The dozen of bucks and does, the majestic and powerful creatures,  
Drinking from the cold, gentle streams trickling past, the rocks of varying sizes,  
That we would sit on, and have countless picnics, and are to have, countless more to come.

APRIL 17, 2020



## Reston, Mount Vernon and Burke Farmers Markets to Open in May

**It could pave the way for more as the county gradually reopens.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

As the country heads into the third month of COVID-19 restrictions, the Mount Vernon Farmers Market on Sherwood Hall Lane is one of three markets that are opening in May.

The other two are in Burke and Reston, which are central locations that can cater to a wide scope of the county residents, said Fairfax County Park Authority spokesperson Judy Pederson. “These three are located in different areas of the county which places them within reasonable travel distances for all our residents.”

**THE FIRST OPENING** will be Saturday, May 9 in Reston, followed by Mount Vernon on Wednesday, May 13 and Burke opening day on Saturday, May 16.

This is a step towards normalcy but operations in the markets will not be business as usual, due to the pandemic. Social distancing will be urged, as will face masks. “Face covering strongly recommended,” the rules state. Face masks are required at the Reston market.

Throughout the pandemic, grocery stores have been allowed to operate with special rules in place. Most stores have had tape marks on the floor to ensure social distancing. Grocery stores are listed as essential businesses by Governor Ralph Northam (D), but the markets are not. “Because of that, the markets must operate under more stringent safety protocols in order to open,” Pederson said.

The governor is currently making other moves that open facilities across the state. For example, he announced that hospitals and dentists will be allowed to resume non-emergency procedures as of midnight Thursday, April 30. On April 15, Governor Northam’s office put out a directive for restrictions including extending Executive Order 53 for two weeks, through Friday, May 8, 2020.

Executive Order 53 originally signed on March 24, bans crowds of more than 10 people; closes recreation, entertainment, and personal care businesses; and limits restaurants to offering takeout and delivery



PHOTO BY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

**Fresh air, fruits and vegetables bring out the smiles at the county’s Farmers Markets.**

services only.

Executive Order Fifty-Five, which directs Virginians to stay home unless they must leave for essential services, remains in effect until June 10.

### MARKET MASTERS

According to the Fairfax County Park Authority, there are usually two market managers overseeing each market, and the size of the market, depends on the number of vendors at the site. “As we open the markets this year, because of the extra safety precautions related to the pandemic, we’re seeking to place between four and six volunteer market masters and park staff members at each market,” Pederson said.

There will be a combination of old and new vendors at the markets, and as with the market standards that have been in place through the years, each vendor has to go through the application and acceptance process.

The Fairfax County Park Authority markets are strictly producer-only, which means that all of the farmers and producers sell only what they grow on their farms or make from scratch. To stick with the “locally-grown” mantra, the vendors must be located within 125 miles of Fairfax County.

“We also encourage value added vendors to use local ingredients,” Pederson said.

After evaluating these three market openings, the Park Authority will assess the situation to determine if any changes are needed. The agency is hoping for successful 2020 market debuts that will pave the way for the opening of all FCPA farmers markets, their information said.

Up to date information about COVID-19 can be found at [virginia.gov/coronavirus](http://virginia.gov/coronavirus).

FROM PAGE 5

Eating for Prediabetes and Diabetes – For those with prediabetes and diabetes, learn practical and delicious ways to keep blood sugar rates in check. Attendees will also be able to learn some simple lifestyle changes to prevent the progression of prediabetes and diabetes. Giant is also offering free personalized online consultations with their team of registered and licensed dietitians for customers who have further questions about their health and wellness. Consultations are by appointment only. To schedule a consultation, sign up for a class or participate in the weekday “Nutrition at Noon” series, go to [giantfood.com/nutrition](http://giantfood.com/nutrition) or email [nutrition@giantfood.com](mailto:nutrition@giantfood.com).

## Mom’s Day

FROM PAGE 4

Start a mailbox garden together. You see neighbors walking their dogs by your front yard daily, so why not let Mom’s mailbox receive a “spring refresh” and impress the passerby? Buy some flowers and a trellis for an uplifting arrangement, then plant together and catch up on all sorts of things in the process. If you live far away, surprise Mom with a giftcard to a nearby plant nursery or a delivery of fresh, garden-ready botanicals from a local business.

Digitize old photos. Looking at old snapshots is currently keeping my mom and I busy reminiscing on past travels— while also planting a seed of hope for what is still possible in the future. This Mother’s Day, sit Mom down and let her pick a few favorite photos, as a start, to scan at home. Ask her about where she was in the photo, what she was doing during its taking, and what she remembers thinking about.

Indulge in a themed night to remember. While wine tours of Tuscany and Vespa-powered adventures around Rome are out of the question, who says you and Mom can’t enjoy an evening infused with the culture of a chosen country? Whether it’s a place you wish to visit or one you loved traveling to with Mom, pick a few signature recipes, a movie filmed there (or in the country’s language, if you’re bold!), and a virtual offering that relates to the region, such as a Louvre tour or Canada’s own Northern Lights livestream. Savor connecting with your mom over this unprecedented experience.

When you wake up the next Monday, take it as a chance to give your mom the gift of a second Mother’s Day. And then a third. And then a fourth. Call her, Zoom her, and, if you are so fortunate, hug her! But don’t idolize these simple gestures. Don’t give them as much glamour as to say they are fit only for a designated day in spring. No— this Mother’s Day, let your celebration of God’s best gift last a whole year! Then watch as your quarantined days take on a new meaning.

Stacia Datskovska, 16, is an 11th grader at Langley High and lives in Vienna.

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## Hair Today, Not Gone Tomorrow



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Sheltering in place while isolating at home, like so many others are, in a state, Maryland, where non-essential businesses remain closed, life has mostly come to a screeching halt. And unlike Georgia and nearly 30 other common-sense offenders, salons - among many other trying-to-get-going concerns, are not open. Moreover, given the social-distancing guidelines and the stay-at-home mandate, it's unlikely I'll be receiving any service providers in my home either. And considering that I'm not running a bowling alley in my basement, the chance that my hair stylist is going to unexpectedly knock on my front door is fairly slim. As a non result, what's continuing to happen then is my hair is continuing to grow. Despite my year of immunotherapy, I have a full head of hair; now more than ever, in fact. So what did I dream about last night? Getting a haircut.

As it was dreamt, I was in Virginia (I live in Maryland) doing non-barbershop/salon things when quite unintentionally I walked by a salon that was open and operating. Since I wasn't on a schedule and I needed a haircut, to quote Bob Seeger: "I tucked my hair up under my hat," (sort of) and went inside to make inquiries. I remember asking, as I have previously in real life, if anyone there knew how to cut curly hair. One stylist/operator, who was not familiar to me, offered his services for the task at hand. That's all I remember except feeling pleased with myself when I woke up this morning as if I had accomplished something overnight. Which of course, I hadn't. Oh, how the mighty have fallen.

Of all the things I've dreamt about: interacting with my deceased parents, flying through the air with the greatest of ease, sex, the past, the future, adventures, etc., I dreamt about getting a haircut. How pathetic is that?

One week into my low iodine diet (as preparation for my thyroid cancer treatment), when I haven't had any salt, any dairy, any bread, any most especially, no chocolate or sweets of any kind (jelly beans are on back order), I would have thought that if there was a dream to be dreamt, it would involve food at the very general and chocolate at the very specific, like being in an endless dessert buffet line (social distancing and limiting crown size notwithstanding). But no. What my subconscious focused on was yours truly getting a stupid haircut. There was no special occasion or event for which I was needing my hair cut, it was simply, maintenance. All the more disappointing given the endless possibilities to dream that exist in our heads. What a waste of a deep sleep.

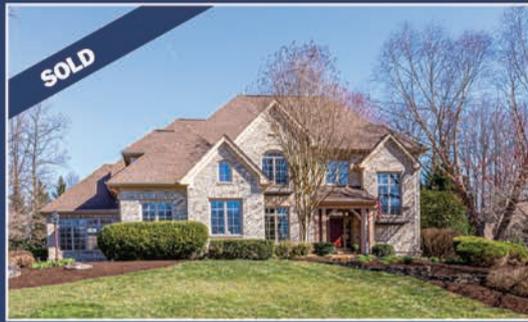
What makes the dream even worse is that for the past month or so I've had very poor sleep, lying in bed for hours with very little to show for it. Specifically, rest, relaxation and dreams; not dreaming at all in fact. Then, in the midst of this poor sleep pattern I awake this morning with the recollection of having dreamt (meaning a deep sleep) about getting my curly locks cut. Mundane minutiae if there ever was such a combination.

Granted, getting my hair cut was a very important part of my life, particularly so for my mother. For my mother, her sons getting a proper haircut was paramount and once she found a barber, Rocky Spirazzo, who cut hair with a scissors instead of a clipper, she was smitten, so to speak. As such, we followed Rocky to whatever barbershop/salon he worked at, including some of the finest hotel barber shops in Boston. We even occasionally went to his home in Roslindale, where he had a barber chair set up in his unfinished basement. I can still that lone bulb above my head attached to a chord hanging from the ceiling.

And so it was, throughout my life when my mother had control of my hair-cutting, that hair cuts were not nearly so arbitrary as they might have otherwise been. Without really admitting it, I guess I would say that getting my hair cut is of some importance, dating back to my "yout," to quote Joe Pesci from "My Cousin Vinny." Like it or not, my mother's influence persists. Now in the midst of a pandemic, with so many other potential problems impacting our life, apparently my subconscious still has its priorities.

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

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