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Vienna's Summer Concerts on the Green kick off on town's official Facebook page.

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NEWS

Home Proves to Be Truly ‘Essential’ in COVID-19 Time

How has pandemic impacted McLean and Great Falls Real Estate Market.

BY KAREN BRISCOE

The first half of 2020 has come to a close. At the end of the first quarter the real estate market was showing a strong opening season. Second quarter was met with the COVID-19 pandemic with stay-at-home orders by the Virginia Governor effective March 30, 2020. Unemployment skyrocketed and the financial markets experienced significant fluctuations. All of this impacted the residential real estate market as well as mortgage lending. The good news is that the US Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security (CISA) included residential real estate and related professions on the list of essential services during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. This included real estate agents and brokers, inspectors, lenders, settlement services and governmental workers who facilitate those industries.

PEOPLE DISCOVERED during this unprecedented time that home is truly “essential.” Shelter went beyond meeting the basic human need and also became for many people their workplace, school for students, location for physical exercise, meal preparation and dining, entertainment, rest and recreation. Governmental officials and medical



McLean & Great Falls Half Market Analysis of Home Sales (Based on List Price):

2020 1st Qtr compared to 2019 and 2010						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil		\$2-3 Mil		\$1.25-2 Mil	
	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k	Total: 195	Total: 330	
22101	6	7	13	9	10	19
	37	35	72	11	20	31
	31	29	70	2	3	5
22102	1	3	4	1	5	6
	12	18	30	10	7	17
	8	9	17	53	47	100
22066	1	1	2	2	3	5
	18	26	44	13	19	32
	24	20	44	2	12	14
	Total: 19	Total: 30	Total: 146	Total: 80	Total: 131	Total: 119
	Combined Total Upper Brackets: 195			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 330		
2019 1st Half Total Sales: 595						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	7	18	72	39	83	24
22102	6	7	21	23	27	123
22066	2	4	39	35	42	23
	Total: 15	Total: 29	Total: 132	Total: 97	Total: 152	Total: 170
	Combined Total Upper Brackets: 176			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 419		
2010 1st Half Total Sales: 441						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	4	3	28	27	56	82
22102	3	7	12	12	23	96
22066	0	5	23	18	33	19
	Total: 7	Total: 15	Total: 63	Total: 47	Total: 112	Total: 197
	Combined Total Upper Brackets: 85			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 356		

Key to show the impact of Covid:

#	#	#
1st Qtr + 2nd Qtr = 1st Half		

professionals stated that people are safer at home during the pandemic. People were encouraged to shelter in place and for many it became their sanctuary.

Even during a pandemic, people often have a need and desire to make a move. There are those that discover their family could use more space. Others are looking for more physical distance, moving out of more dense urban areas. Life changes occur

including death, divorce, marriage, having children, job changes that lead to making a physical move. People continue to buy and sell homes even during times of crisis. The volatility in the stock market led many people to invest in real estate as a safe haven as many view real estate as a more stable investment.

The total number of sales for McLean and Great Falls in the first half of 2020 was

525. These numbers mean there were 525 sellers and 525 buyers. And although those numbers are strong for a pandemic, they are down almost 12 percent compared to 595 in the same time period 2019. The good news is the market has considerably improved over a decade ago in 2010 which came in at only 441. That represents an increase in sales of 19 percent over the last decade. Thus even as we as a nation and world were navigating the impact of COVID-19, people still were in situations where they had a need to move.

The most significant gains were in the upper brackets which constitutes homes over \$1.25 m, with sales increase of around 11 percent. This could be a strong indicator that prices are rising in the under \$1.25 m segment as buyers stretch into the next segment in order to buy. Further, there is considerable demand for under \$1.25 m and thus the drop off in number of sales could likely be due to a lack of inventory. Good homes priced correctly for the market are selling.

THE REAL ESTATE COMMUNITY follows CDC protocols to serve clients in almost all capacities in the buying and selling process. Agents continue to list houses for sale, show properties to buyers, write offers and negotiate contracts and settle on transactions. Advanced technology is available such that many services can be performed on digital platforms which includes virtual showings and open houses, Zoom meetings, document eSigning, and online notary cam or drive-by closings.

<1st> Karen Briscoe with HBC Group at Keller Williams is an active and experienced Realtor® in the Northern Virginia marketplace. Karen, alongside her business partner Lizzy Conroy and team, works with sellers, buyers, investors and builders in all price ranges. www.HBCGroupKW.com, 703-734-0192, Homes@HBCGroupKW.com.

Summer on the Green Goes Virtual

Vienna offers a variety of summer entertainment programs on town's Facebook page.

BY CHAMBERLAIN ZULAUFT
THE CONNECTION

In the face of a recent COVID-19 pandemic the town of Vienna did not skip a beat in transitioning to Facebook Live to hold the Summer Concerts on the Green. For a 130th birthday Vienna has been offering many types of online entertainment which kicked off July 11 with a performance by Sarah Swanner & Kevin Greta whose stream was supported by Bards Alley and sponsored by the Rotary club. Along with the classic Summer on the Green concerts Vienna's official Facebook page will host Kids on the Green, Summer Stories & Sprinklers, and a Dis-

tance Matters 130k challenge.

This third annual Kids on the Green program will include live animal shows, a magic show with Lorenzo the Great as well as multiple other interactive activities for children every Tuesday at 10 a.m. Summer Stories & Sprinklers will prove to be a good evening pastime for the family with stories and songs; this event encourages participants to stay in the 4th of July spirit with backyard sprinklers showing every Wednesday at 1 p.m.

With a positive and interactive audience ranging from 30-45 viewers Swanner and Greta played a variety of songs from 6:30-7:30. The duo performed popular songs like Anna Kendrick’s “Cups” and “Billie Jean” by Michael Jackson. The event even allowed

for fan requests and shout-outs. Throughout the concert a constant stream of supportive commenters gave praise to the duo.

Commenters were especially active during the intermission trivia hosted by Lily Widman. Three questions were asked to which commenters could respond for the chance to win a prize: pack of goodies. Widman also announced the winner of a gift card to Bards Alley for a lucky person who RSVP'd to the event.

The three questions asked were: what year Vienna was founded; what Vienna's oldest business is and what current business is housed in the former local movie theater. Respectively, the answers were 1890, Money and King Funeral Home, and Spokes.

To finish off their performance Swanner and Greta dedicated two Dolly Parton



Vienna online entertainment programs kicked off July 11 with a performance by Sarah Swanner & Kevin Greta.

songs, “Jolene” and “Coat of Many Colors” to their family members.

Next Wednesday Summer on the Green will host the Richard Walton Group, while continuing all other events through mid-august.

To find these live streams is as simple as going to Town of Vienna, VA on Facebook and any event can be watched afterward on the same page or YouTube.

Founder of Stroke Comeback Center Retires

Advocacy for those impacted by aphasia continues at the national level.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Darlene S. Williamson, M.S., CCC-SLP, of Oakton, long-term Executive Director and Founder of the Stroke Comeback Center (SCC), recently retired stepping away from the non-profit organization she launched in 2005. "Darlene made it her life's work to advocate for people who had strokes," said Amy C. Georgeadis, MS, CCC-SLP Program Director at the Stroke Comeback Center. "Darlene's specialty was always working with adults, and especially adults who had aphasia," she said.

According to Georgeadis, aphasia is an acquired communication disorder that impairs a person's ability to process language and speak and understand others. It may occur after a stroke or a head injury from damage to portions of the brain, usually the left side. "But what it doesn't affect is cognition or intelligence," said Georgeadis.

Joyce McCarty of Oakton is an SCC Stroke Survivor member and Chairperson of the non-profit organization's Board of Directors. McCarty said, "Darlene is

a dynamo. She has worked tirelessly to further the mission of the center and to educate everyone about stroke and the potential for recovery. She has strived to make each member's recovery be the best that it can be."

While COVID-19 halted a formal retirement party, staff and others organized a drive-by retirement parade in Williamson's honor held at the Vienna Community Center the last weekend in June. The parade might have proved even better. "Darlene was so touched because we surprised her... and (she) doesn't like being the center of attention," said Georgeadis. "This was so great because she didn't have to make a big speech, but instead got to spend one or two minutes, visiting people she loves, cares about and has had a relationship with over these past years."

Williamson said, "Creating the Stroke Comeback Center was the capstone of my career and the realization of a vision. The support for families was necessary in 2005 and is even more necessary today, so the organization will continue to thrive long into the future." Williamson added that she will remain committed to individuals with aphasia as president of the National Aphasia Association.



PHOTO BY JOY ASICO

In 2017 after awarded Washingtonian of the Year, Darlene Williamson (center), founder of the Stroke Comeback Center, is joined by her staff (from left) Julie McGraw Financial Director, Melissa Richman, Virtual Center Coordinator, Amy Georgeadis, Program Director and Suzanne Coyle, new Executive Director.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Joyce McCarty of Oakton drives by in the retirement parade for Darlene Williamson.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pat and Patty Horan of McLean wish Darlene Williamson well at her retirement parade.

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VIEWPOINTS

McLean Students Discuss Life During a Pandemic

— MARIN HEBERLIC

Kareen Gill, 16, McLean, National Cathedral School

The worst part of quarantine has been the lack of social interactions in person, and also being away from the cathedral close. The best part about online school was that classes were shorter and more manageable. I'm excited to be back on campus but also anxious about how the new socially distant classes will function with so many restrictions and key differences. My school is doing a hybrid approach - half online half in person, and it will be interesting to see how it plays out.



Anjali Donnelly, 16, McLean, Sidwell Friends School

The worst part of quarantine for me has been that I can't see my friends that much anymore. We went from seeing each other almost every day before quarantine, and now I've only been able to see them a couple of times. It's also difficult to find things to do because everything is shut down. The best part is definitely spending more time with my family. We've started taking walks together and playing board games in the evenings. I feel like all of us have gotten closer over the past few months as we've seen each other more often. I'm excited to go back to school because it has been quite some time since I have last seen my classmates and teachers. I'm not quite sure what my school plans on doing for next year, as they will be sending it out later this month.



Brent Moore, 16, McLean, National Cathedral School

The worst part of quarantine was not being able to see my friends and people at school. I realized that I took school and the class environment for granted which was something I didn't realize before quarantine. Also, spending so much time with my family was definitely not enjoyable. The best part of quarantine was definitely the extra hours of sleep and less stressful school schedule. Also, seeing my friends for the first time after months of not being able to see them was memorable. I am weary of my school's plan of 2 groups with alternating schedules next fall, because it means there is a high likelihood that I will not be with some of my friends. Also I think we will have complete online learning in the fall because COVID-19 cases keep increasing.



Will Denton, 17, McLean, St. Albans School

Personally, the worst part of quarantine has been not being able to see friends, and also not being able to travel. Although, it has been nice to catch up on sleep and have more free time than usual. St Albans has not released a plan yet for the fall, other than doing a mix of online and in person learning. I feel nervous about everyone going back to school, but I do think that there is a way to do a mix safely.



Ryan Cilluffo, 17, McLean, Landon School

Missing the last few months of school including baseball season and prom was the worst part of quarantine. Also, not being able to see my friends as much hasn't been very fun. The best part of quarantine is that I have gotten to spend more time with my family. I also have been able to try some new things that I may not have had the time to do otherwise. I am excited to hopefully go back to school in the fall. Right now, there is not a definitive plan, but there is supposed to be some sort of hybrid system, where we are sometimes in school and other times at home.



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Susan I. Wranik,
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Speech-Language
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6 ♦ VIENNA/OAKTON / McLEAN CONNECTION ♦ JULY 15-21, 2020

NEWS

South Block Opens in Vienna

With more than 10 locations across Washington D.C. and Virginia, South Block has just opened the doors on its newest storefront at 207 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. The new location will sell everything that South Block has come to be known for including acai bowls, smoothies, fresh pressed juices, coffee, superfood lattes, super snacks, South Block's new smoothie bowl kits, and more. The new Vienna location will have outdoor patio seating as well as indoor seating at half capacity due to current Covid-19 mandates. Pick-up and delivery options are also available through the South Block website, App, and Uber Eats.



WEEK IN MCLEAN

McLean Project for the Arts Receives \$50,000 CARES Act Funding

McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) received a \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The organization was among the 14 Virginia arts organizations and 846 U.S. arts organizations selected to receive direct funding.

"This grant provides critical support as we continue to adapt our visual arts programming and carry out our mission during and beyond this COVID-19 pandemic," said MPA Executive Director

Lori J. Carboneau.

The National Endowment for the Arts received more than 3,100 eligible applications requesting \$157 million for the \$45 million available in direct assistance. Applications were limited to those who were previous NEA award recipients from the past four years. These non-matching grants are provided to support staff salaries, fees for artists or contractual personnel, and facilities costs.

For more information about MPA, visit [www.mpaart.org](http://mpaart.org).

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-Werner Heisenberg

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Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And not just Tuesday, either. All week in fact, I'll be waiting to hear the music. One day, I'll hear from my oncologist and on another day, I'll hear from my endocrinologist. What I'll hear first is the status of my underlying non small cell lung cancer, stage IV (diagnosed Feb., 2009) and later in the week, I'll get results concerning my most recent party crasher: papillary thyroid cancer, stage II, diagnosed Jan. 2020. This will be the first time I will have been waiting for results simultaneously, concerning TWO cancers that I now have. (What? One wasn't enough?) And B.B. King thought the thrill was gone. For those of us unlucky enough to have been diagnosed with two different and active cancers, this is the kind of week which tests your mettle and is as far away from thrilling as one could possibly imagine.

C'est la vie, or at least it is because I'm not ready to be morte. Who says taking five years of French between seventh and eleventh grades was a waste? Here I am 50+ years later and I'm still able to dip into that old bag of tricks. I fear however, that the longer I'm still living as an active, still-being-treated cancer patient, the more my health is at risk. Cancer is not exactly a friendly visitor. Rather it's the kind of uninvited guest that takes up residence in your home and never leaves, like dust mites, fleas and mold. In some instances, you know they're present; in other cases, you're told. And the longer they stay, the worse the situation becomes.

My cancer diagnosis was sort of like that, a surprise. A lifelong non-smoker with no immediate family history of cancer, I woke up one day with a pain in my left rib cage. A few days later, after the pain had migrated to the other side, combined with difficulty I was having catching my breath, I decided to go to the Emergency Room. A brief examination followed but revealed very little to the doctor. He suggested I return in a week to see the pulmonologist. Which of course, I did.

By that time, the pain had totally subsided and I remained pain-free for the next eight weeks until I got "the call" from my internal medicine doctor advising me that the previous week's biopsy confirmed a malignancy. Then I was in pain, emotionally - and afraid, as you can probably imagine.

But here I sit, 11 and one half years later, living proof that a "terminal" diagnosis is not necessarily terminal. Somehow, through a combination of conventional wisdom/treatment, some non-Western alternatives in the form of pills and potions and a good attitude which has meant keeping my glass half full while trying to maintain a good sense of humor, I have been lucky enough to see my beloved Boston Red Sox win their third and fourth World Series Championships of the 21st century. (Their first two championships in 2004 and 2007 were pre-Kenny's cancer diagnosis.)

But looking backward, as gratifying and rewarding as it can sometimes be, has not been my modus operandi. My 'operandi' has been to walk quietly, laugh heartily and be positive (like our friend, Ray's blood type) and not presume any facts which are not yet in evidence. Moreover, try taking any and all news in stride and be a patient patient (which is not double talk) and put one foot in front of the other and see where it leads.

For me, it has led to a future that I wasn't supposed to have and a present for which I am eternally grateful, even during weeks such as these when I'm about to enter when my life, vis-a-vis what I am told by my oncologist and endocrinologist, is hanging in the balance not once, but twice. Really, twice is a bit much, don't you think? I mean, I think I'm doing my unhealthy bit by having one type of cancer. There's really no extra credit/extra benefit in having two types, especially at the same time. Nor is there any BO-GO-type discount on my health insurance costs. Quite the contrary, actually. But if I'm still alive to complain about it, then I'm still alive and that's nothing to complain about.

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