

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

DogFest Goes Virtual

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U.S. Army Captain Gavin White of Herndon with his daughter and Canine Companions for Independence service dog, Stuart. The seventh annual fundraiser, "DogFest Washington DC," previously anchored at Reston Town Center, is relocated to Facebook amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Moving Schools to Dismantle Systemic Racial Oppression

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'Lock Your Car; Leave No Valuables Inside'

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PHOTO BY TORY JUNKINS

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NEWS

A wake of waves crashes as "River Sea Chocolates Wild Sloth" docks at the pier during the 2018 Lake Anne Cardboard Boat Regatta. (File photo 2018)



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/
THE CONNECTION

Reston Pride Runs Deep, Water or Not

Coronavirus collides with
Cardboard Boat Regatta.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Reston Historic Trust & Museum canceled its fourth annual Cardboard Boat Regatta due to the coronavirus pandemic. In its place the organization presents the 2020 Cardboard Challenge during the entire month of August. Although mates won't be squeezed in sinking cardboard creations, ferociously paddling back to the dock, community spirit and pride run deep in Reston, water

or not. According to Alexandra Campbell, executive director of Reston Historic Trust & Museum, registered participants can create their favorite Reston places and landmarks mainly out of cardboard. Paint, duct tape and paper-mâché can be used. Participants can register for the event with a suggested donation of \$25. They will have a chance to win a one-of-a-kind trophy from Nova Labs and have their work exhibited at Reston Museum in October. Registrants must email images of their works info@restonmuseum.org or tag @restonmuseum on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. Visit <https://www.restonmuseum.org/cardboardchallenge>.

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Moving Schools to Dismantle Systemic Racism

NAACP holds virtual Town Hall.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County NAACP held a virtual Town Hall on Wednesday, Aug. 5. President Sean Perryman moderated discussion between Education Committee Chair Sujatha Hampton, Ph.D., Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Scott Brabrand Ed. D, and other staff. They focused on Fairfax County NAACP Education Committee Priorities 2020-2021 created to ensure educational equality of rights and eliminate race-based discrimination in the school district.

Throughout the 90-minute conversation, Hampton challenged Brabrand to live up to the school district's ideals, push for change and employ metrics and firm deadlines to goals.

"I'm watching you like a hawk," Hampton said.

Brabrand responded that in partnership, they should "watch together and learn together. ... I'm committed to doing the work ... I am serious as the leader of this system, about taking us where we need to go and I want to be a partner with the NAACP in doing that," Brabrand said.

The Town Hall began with a discussion on COVID-19 and how to protect vulnerable FCPS students, faculty and staff. Perryman said they couldn't talk about systemic racism without talking about COVID and the shutdown of schools. It was going to impact Black students as well as students of color disproportionately.

Brabrand said Covid exposed many inequities in the school system. "We are going to do everything we can to have a very strong virtual start and have all of our kids connected. And we will have metrics to begin the conversation with the community about how we can deliberately, carefully, safely ease back into school," he said.

Hampton said she and others in health and science fields were not comfortable with information the County's Health Department shared.

As a solution, Brabrand said he was working with the Virginia Department of Health and County Health Department for guidelines and metrics. They would establish decision-making policies on how to dial-up or, if necessary, dial-down students attending in-person school. The district would make certain health conditions were as low risk



Sean Perryman, president of the Fairfax County NAACP



Sujatha Hampton, Ph.D., Education Committee Chair of the Fairfax County NAACP



Scott Brabrand, Ed.D., Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools

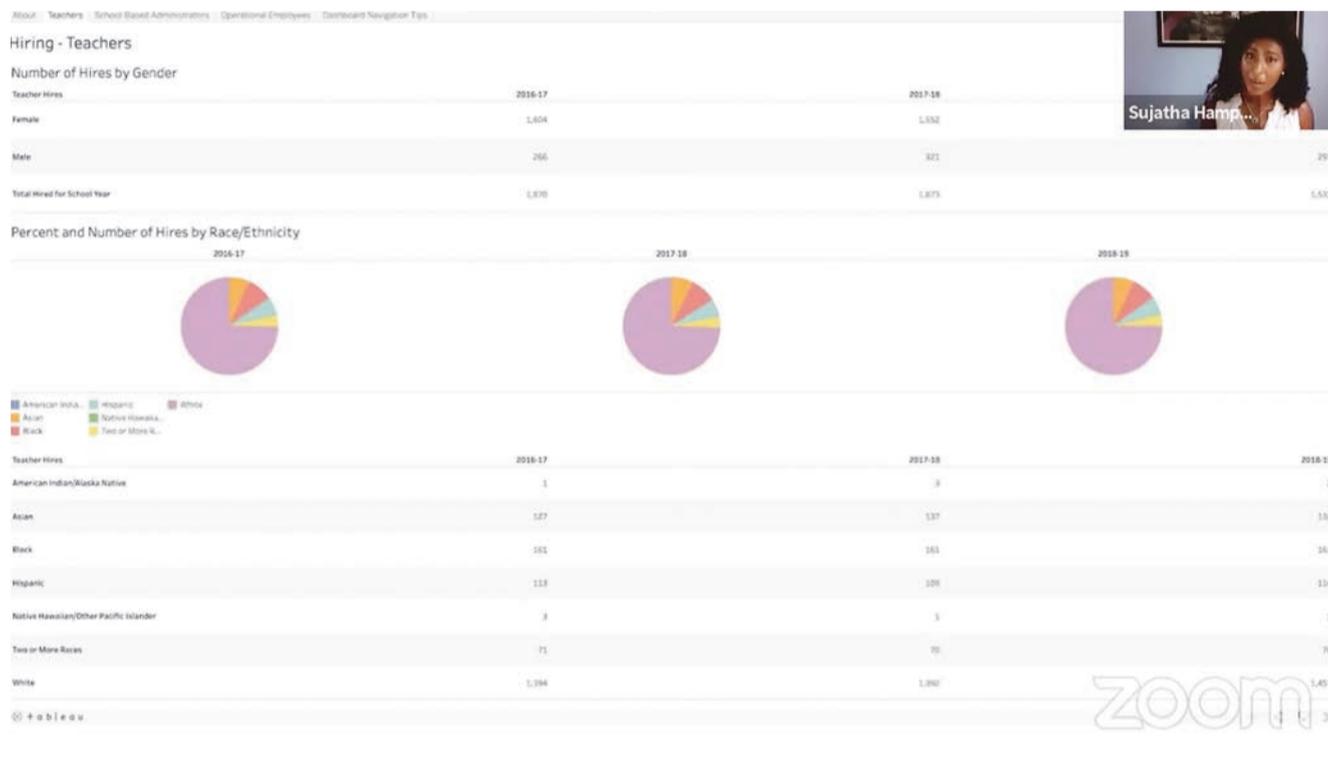
workers and restorative justice specialists, district data showed an over-representation of Black and brown children with behavior incidences.

According to Hampton, the mostly white teacher workforce "clearly have some issues because Black kids are not so bad." She said, "The problem is that when you only have teachers who are feeling threatened by their students to this degree, and nobody is reviewing whether the systems are put in place before they are disciplined, there's a problem...You should be able to look at the IEP for any child that's there and see their behavior intervention plan. You should be able to see all the things, all the steps the

school took before they got there. There are ... just gigantic, gaping holes where people didn't do due diligence. And that is tragic." Hampton described differences between schools. "It's a culture thing," she said.

Brabrand said there would be new behavior codes for the school year. They would, as Brabrand said, "make teachers dive deeper before they're referring a kid to the office."

"And we're going to do a paper review of discipline data...Our issue is solving it systematically... Real-time data tracking for discipline; quarterly follow up with Doctor Ivy... If there's trends that are of concern around disproportionality, we're going to address it, just the same way that we would look at addressing attendance or



Percent of FCPS teacher hires by race/ethnicity

as possible. Brabrand announced the public would see the "first draft at our August 18 Work Session."

HAMPTON voiced concern that the majority of County support staff who worked with vulnerable school populations had not been reached to participate in earlier district surveys. According to Hampton, unions represented only 30 percent of those individuals. "We need you to protect them," she said to Brabrand. Hampton added that the school district must commit "to gathering data, to reviewing the data, to analyzing the data with new metrics that are anti-racist (and) doing follow ups and having deadlines... Otherwise nothing happens, we just keep waiting," she said.

Hampton introduced the second Education Priority of Fairfax NAACP, to create an effective model for the Equity and Cultural Responsiveness Team by the end of the academic year. Brabrand said after hearing concerns voiced by members of NAACP and others regarding the new Chief Equity Academic Officer position, he changed course.

He intended to decouple the role and instead create two jobs. One would be Chief Equity Officer with a full range for the entire organization and the other Chief Academic Officer. "I would seek a national consultant to assist us in hiring both those key positions," Brabrand said.

Hampton said they were there to help and might have perspectives not yet considered. "You cannot achieve radical transformation, with exactly the same profile and exactly the same people at the table. It is not possible; and assuming anti-racism is a fairly new thing for systems to be considering, you have to be looking for somebody completely new, a totally different mindset," she said. Hampton offered Brabrand side-by-side "Traditional vs. Anti-Racist" job descriptions.

Brabrand and Hampton turned their attention to racial bias viewed through the lens of the disproportionate number of behavior incidents in the schools involving Black and brown children. Although the district provided School-based Intervention Programs for Behavior with a consulting system of counselors, psychologists, social

grades," he said.

Dr. Frances Ivy added they had found all schools were not reporting on the same form.

Perryman introduced the third Education Priority of Fairfax NAACP, to increase hiring and retention of Black and Latinx teachers, accessing it semi-annually in a public forum. Perryman asked, "Don't we have something like 26 schools that don't have anything but white teachers?"

Brabrand confirmed the district had 25-26 schools that had no instructional staff of color. He added, "That is a problem, and that is not acceptable."

Perryman questioned why the number of teachers of color had not changed in two years, even though there was a supply out there.

Brabrand explained the district's decentralized hiring process had moved it to central. He said, "(It) doesn't mean you are going to pick diverse candidates out of that bigger pool...This is something I'd love your

SEE NAACP, PAGE 7

Oversimplifying a Complex Issue

“Defund the Police’ slogan in response to the real problems in policing may inhibit progress towards reform.

By KENNETH R. “KEN” PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

COMMENTARY

Communications experts advise that a message needs to be short and punchy to convey its intended meaning in a short period of time. Short and sweet can lead however to confusion, mixed meaning and unintended consequences.

Virginians have realized the fallout from simple, bumper-strip-sized messages in the past. “End parole” as a campaign slogan helped former Governor George Allen overcome a 20-point polling difference to be elected governor. For some people the slogan meant less crime and safer streets, but it also filled Virginia’s prisons to overflowing shifting huge sums of money from other programs to the Department of Corrections. More people were incarcerated and for longer lengths of time, but the crime rate stayed essentially the same. The campaign slogan “End the Car Tax” got Jim Gilmore elected governor, but the resulting policy costs Vir-

ginia schools nearly a billion dollars every year even until today.

I am not particularly good at campaign slogans, but I am fearful that the current “Defund the Police” slogan in response to the real problems in policing throughout the country may inhibit progress towards reform. The number of people who want to literally take all funding from the police is small, but the use of a simplistic phrase to describe the reform movement may turn off many moderates and completely scare away conservatives. There has to be a better way to describe the desired outcomes that reflects the complexities of the problem.

Policing desperately needs reform at all levels of government. The misuse of police power and tactics by the federal government in Portland is frightening, and the Congress must take steps to reign in the administration politicizing the use of police powers. At the state level Virginia

needs to increase—not defund—its funding of state police to ensure that its pay structure will attract the best trained and most professional persons to its ranks. It needs to be able to fill its open slots to reduce overtime and stress on its current force.

At the same time the Virginia General Assembly needs in its special session this month to enact the reforms proposed by the Legislative Black Caucus including eliminating the use of choke holds, using body cameras, and enhancing training.

The same reforms need to be applied to police at the county, city and town levels including sheriff departments in Virginia. The responsibilities that have befallen the police in the area of mental health need to be assumed more by personnel in the departments responsible for and skilled in this area of concern.

The public demands and legislators will ensure that the public is safe. At the same time we must demand and put into existence a system free of discrimination and inappropriate use of force. That means we need to redefine our expectations of policing and reimagine the role of public safety officers in our society. We must be willing to spend dollars appropriately to accomplish those objectives. It is over-simplifying a complex issue to suggest that we can “defund the police.”

Vote YES on Virginia Constitutional Amendment

By JOHN LOVAAS
RESTON IMPACT PRODUCER/HOST

INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

As one looks out over the public policy landscape in the midst of a seemingly out-of-control pandemic, it is easy to feel powerless and distressed at the direction of the country’s drift.

As the pandemic continues, it has not only been mismanaged into the worst and deadliest public health disaster in over a century but also has crippled the very spirit of the USA. With nearly 40 million unemployed we are in depression mode. American youth already lost a portion of the academic year 2019-20 with no apparent plan for making up the loss. Now, we head into academic year 2020-21 with the likelihood that students in grades K through college will lose at least a portion of the coming year as local governments, parents and teachers argue “safety” versus actual classroom instruction—

be it in our vast unused brick and mortar buildings or yet unproven, part-time “virtual learning.” Our youth take the brunt of this publicly mismanaged disaster. How will we make it up to them? Now the White House is starting to dismantle one public service (besides defense) that has worked through the pandemic—the U.S. Postal Service, 500,000 men and women who keep on delivering mail to our doors.

Is there any ray of hope on this dismal horizon?

Yes. The most obvious one is November 3, the day we get to change the incumbent in the White House, elect new Congressmen and

women and one third of our U.S. Senators. Another tremendous ray of hope, also on November 3—is the opportunity to vote on Virginia’s constitutional amendment to end the practice of gerrymandering. As Congressman Don Beyer says, “this amendment is an enormous improvement on the undemocratic system Virginia has had for centuries.”

A constitutional amendment cannot be easily undone by legislators tempted to return to their old ways of carving up districts by packing them with voters of their own party and persuasion. This amendment is the product of a great deal of work and public pressure to transfer the power to draw districts (Congressional and Virginia legislative ones) from an opaque one controlled by majority legislators to a redistricting commission composed of 8 bipartisan legislators (4 from each party) and 8 independently selected citizens operating openly in public.

The amendment was passed by both the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates twice, in two different legislative sessions. In 2019, the amendment sailed through the Senate by a vote of 40 to 0 and the House 83 to 15—at the time the Republicans held a slight majority in both houses. In 2020, now with Democratic majorities in both houses, the amendment passed 38 to 2 in the Senate and a closer 54 to 46 vote in the House. Also, during the 2020 legislative session, the House and Senate both

passed accompanying enabling legislation for the redistricting criteria to which both congressional and state legislative districts must adhere. The criteria include, inter alia, that districts be compact, composed of contiguous territory, preserve communities of interest, give racial and language minorities an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and ...not dilute or diminish their ability to elect candidates of choice either alone or in coalition with others, and several other vital protections.

This year, after the Democrats captured modest majorities in both houses, a group of Democrats in the House of Delegates seemed to get cold feet, suddenly deciding that maybe things should be left as they had been... i.e., now that they held the majority and would control the redistricting process. Still the House passed the amendment, although by a smaller margin. The Senate, however, again passed the amendment overwhelmingly, 38 to 2. Democratic Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw was quoted as saying, “The arguments against that [passage] were pure bullshit.”

Our own Delegate Ken Plum, the most senior delegate in the House, voted a firm YES both times and told me just a few days ago he still supports a YES vote on November 3, as does our longtime progressive Senator Janet Howell.

The time to bring down the curtain on gerrymandering and restore fairness in Virginia redistricting has finally come. Now it is up to us on November 3.

Please vote YES on November 3!



NEWS

Cheshire family of Great Falls with the dogs they raised, Buckner, the black Lab, and Zenon, the Golden Retriever. Top - from left: Nikki Cheshire, Raymond Junkins and Ben Cheshire. Bottom - from left: Tory Junkins and Jacqueline Cheshire.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

DogFest Goes Virtual

COVID affects fundraising efforts, virtual platform spurs creative responses for the Sept. 20 event.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Cheshire family of Great Falls is raising its 14th Canine Companions for Independence® (CCI) service puppy. In between teaching their dog a reported 30 some commands, Jacqueline Cheshire, CCI's Capital Chapter President, and dedicated volunteers are planning the chapter's seventh annual fundraiser, "DogFest Washington DC |September 20-Virtual." Previously anchored at Reston Town Center, the event relocated to Facebook amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. They hope for a healthy bottom line from event proceeds to help support the non-profit organization that provides highly trained assistance dogs free of charge to people with disabilities. Costs run \$50,000 per dog, according to Cheshire.

While precautions related to coronavirus forced organizers to reimagine the charitable event, they also needed to factor into their business model diversified fundraising to counter lost revenue streams and creative event planning. Cheshire said, "We need to keep funding these dogs, raising these dogs, and getting them trained and into the hands of people with disabilities, even though there's a pandemic... Revenue is down, 20 to 30 percent this year...We have very few sponsors because we've not been able

SEE DOGFEST, PAGE 6



PHOTO BY TORY JUNKINS

U.S. Army Captain Gavin White of Herndon with his daughter and Canine Companions for Independence service dog, Stuart.

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Hunter Mill Road over Colvin Run Bridge Replacement Fairfax County

Virtual Design Public Hearing

Wednesday, September 16, 2020, 7-8:30 p.m.
www.virginiadot.org/huntermillcolvinrun

Find out about plans to replace the weight-restricted (ten tons) one-lane Hunter Mill Road bridge over Colvin Run. The new bridge will have two lanes separated by a median/splitter island. The project also includes an improved trail crossing south of the bridge, landscaping in the median/splitter island, and abutments for a new trail bridge over Colvin Run (Fairfax County will construct the trail bridge in the future).

The hearing will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the meeting will be posted on the project website (www.virginiadot.org/huntermillcolvinrun). The VDOT project team will make a presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and be available to answer questions after the presentation until 8:30 p.m.

Review project information and meeting details on the VDOT project website or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-3256 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Pursuant with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE) is being prepared as per agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be available with the PCE.

Give your comments after the presentation, submit your written comments by **September 28, 2020** via the project website, by mail to Mr. Vicente Valeza, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Hunter Mill Road over Colvin Run Bridge Replacement" in the subject line.

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-Werner Heisenberg

Announcements

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Legals

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AT&T proposes to replace an existing 27.9' light pole with a new 38' light pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 40.5' near 315 Elden St, Herndon, VA (20201271). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Drive, West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

Legals

SYA Notice of Annual Board Meeting

SYA will be holding its annual Executive BOD elections meeting on Thursday, 09/03/2020 at 7pm. Due to current pandemic, the meeting will be held virtually. If you wish to attend and/or submit your name for nomination, please send email (with resume and subject line "NOMINATIONS") to PUBLICRELATIONS@SYASPORTS.ORG. Please include name, address and phone.

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

DogFest Goes Virtual

FROM PAGE 5

to go out and show off the dogs... On the day of the event, ordinarily, we'd have vendor booth fees... and percentage of sales fees... Last year's event attracted over 600 participants and raised over \$90,000." On Aug. 4, Cheshire said they had raised \$38,000.

U.S. Army CPT Gavin White of Herndon was injured after stepping on an IED while serving in Afghanistan. He applied for an assistance dog with Canine Companions for Independence and matched with Stuart IV in 2015. White and his wife, Karissa, wrote in an email that as a result of the injury, he lost his right leg above the knee and had extremely limited use of his left leg. They added: "Stuart helps Gavin every day, assisting in the application of prosthetics, retrieval of items, and increases his mobility either by walking on Gavin's weak side or letting Gavin know that people are around him... 'Whenever I have Stuart with me, people provide the room I need to use my wheelchair and get around... When I am feeding or changing my daughter it's great to have Stuart there to help. He will pick up items that are dropped or take things to my wife if my hands are full.'"

Dog lovers and supporters can participate in 'DogFest Washington DC |September 20 Virtual'

through the newly minted Facebook event page. "This DogFest will certainly be one to remember," said Tory Junkins, Cheshire's daughter. Junkins is taking videos of the dogs for promotion and education. The celebration begins at noon and features a lineup of the human-canine bonding and testimonials by graduates, "almost like a mini telethon," said Cheshire. "Two contests are running. "One is the best dog trick...and the other competition is submitting a photograph of your dog in a costume... People will vote on Facebook." Winners will receive a basket of dog items.

Volunteer forces remain stable during COVID. Stephanie Dagata said, "Puppy Raising is fulfilling, joyful, and educational. It can also be frustrating at times, tiring at times and defeating at times but this is where our wonderful CCI family comes into action. We are all here to help."

"To raise from a puppy of 8 weeks old to 18 months or so, and then turn these loved beautiful puppies, very well behaved to the advanced training (center) and change another's life, is truly a labor of love and giving," said Deb Push of McLean.

Visit Canine Companions for Independence to learn more or to donate.

Church and Restaurant Feed Local Families

When schools closed and shutdowns forced people out of work, a local chef contacted Chantilly's New Life Christian Church about helping to feed the community. A partnership formed and, from mid-March through June, Miguel Pires, who owns Zander's in Gainesville, donated more than 200 meals/week to families in Chantilly, Centreville, Brambleton and Leesburg.

Volunteers picked up the meals at the restaurant and brought them to the nZone in Chantilly, where the rest of the 13-member team packed them up for each recipient family. And besides coordinating the pick-up and delivery volunteers, Chantilly Campus Associate Heather Smith oversaw a team of bakers so that fresh-baked desserts could be included with each meal.

One recipient wrote to New Life and said what a blessing the meals had been to her family. "God bless what you're doing," wrote the woman. "My children and grandchildren are living with me, and this is a huge burden off my shoulders during this time."

Word of the generosity spread; and soon, neighbors of the recipients requested and began receiving the meals, too. A hairdresser who hadn't worked since March said it made her cry with joy. Another family also thanked the church, saying, "If we didn't have this meal, we wouldn't have eaten."

The delivery program touched the volunteers, as well. "I was so thankful to help these families who needed a meal," said Bobby Webster. "I was grateful [to participate] and was so excited that I baked banana bread for each family to add to their meal. It was a true blessing to see the smiles on their faces."

Another volunteer, Rayni Bonchu, said, "My daughter and I delivered food and were so excited to help these families get a warm meal. It's great for my daughter to see some people in need and how we can help them with just little things."

For New Life Christian Church, serving families during this crisis is about more than just feeding them. "It's about being a light of hope in the community," explained volunteer Christine Heath. "I'm so blessed to be able to deliver meals with my husband and be the hands and feet of Jesus to these families. Everyone should try it, and it was a great example for our two boys."

New Life Christian Church has been in the Centreville/Chantilly community for more than 25 years, ministering to those in need. Its community-outreach ministry, Passion for Community, provides them with beds, household items and food. For more information, go to passionforcommunity.org or newlife.church.

— ANNA MARI GREEN

Citizen's Guide to Better Times

Things each of us can do to help our country right now.

Don't sit at home with your worry beads as you consume the news. Action is what is needed. And yes, Virginia, each of us has the power to contribute to a better future. Want to be counted in bringing better times forward? Try this simple test to evaluate how you are or will be making a difference.

50+ points – At least you're in the game. Can you find some stretch goals?
70+ points – Involved citizen.
90+ points – You rank as an active leader. Congratulations!
Wear a mask (20 points)

Socially distance (10 points)
Follow informed news sources, both sides! (20 points)
Register your support/use of Post Office and mail-in voting (10) (\$, letters to Congress, newspaper, SM)
Register your support for adequate number of voting stations (10) (ditto)
Sign up as a census taker (5)
Sign up to work at voting stations (5)
Vote! (20 points)

Eileen Curtis
Great Falls

NAACP Holds Virtual Town Hall

FROM PAGE 3

help on... (and) how to create cohorts of support for new Black teachers and Latino teachers to say yes... We need folks to be able to be courageous enough when they are offered the job to take it with us in those schools... We are not going to have schools that continue not to hire teachers of color... There are some schools that have more work to do to create that environment, and we're going to get it addressed this year."

Discussion of the fourth priority goal keyed into the roles, limits, and domain of Principals and Regional Area Superintendents to ensure during the 2020-2021 school year a system of effective oversight on issues of equity. Hampton questioned outcome differences between schools, given their principals and respective atmosphere in their schools as related to equity. "Maybe you have to look at what has kept principals from running buildings... (You) have that responsibility to do that oversight of principals," she said.

Brabrand responded that in the past, some principals used the resources they had better than others. He said, "This year equity is part of every principal's goal... There shouldn't be any discipline disproportionality... There shouldn't be any academic gaps. We have coaches to help us do that... We need to do it at a deeper level and focus it around equity," Brabrand said. He added they would be held accountable. Hampton said, "You need to put the right people in those jobs. I think that you need to reward that sort of attitude."

NEARING THE END of the town hall, Hampton and Brabrand discussed the establishment of curriculum review committees to study current curricula for racial or cultural bias, especially in the areas of Social

Studies/History/English, and to identify resources and teaching practices that could promote a more inclusive worldview and a complete study of the United States and World History. Such would be completed by the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Colleen Eddy, Coordinator for Social Studies K-12 at FCPS, said they were auditing existing curriculum to remove biased, harmful and racist resources, creating a transformative curriculum. "That means partnering with the right people across the state, focusing on the design principles for culturally responsive pedagogy, and adopting anti-bias and the anti-racist outcomes for our curriculum... with a mindset to fidelity of doing good work that's responsible and has integrity to history."

Finally, Brabrand and Hampton reviewed the admissions process to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ).

"We want to see obviously that TJ reflects the population it serves," Hampton said. She questioned why Black teens chose not to go to TJ.

Brabrand said, "I expect a conversation about TJ with our school board in the coming months to address a lot of the questions and solutions, not 20 years of status quo where we have tried to do something, but we've settled around the edges, and it has not made a major change. I'm sitting with Karen Keys-Gamarra from the School Board, with Marty Smith, our Chief Operating Officer who oversees TJ admissions, myself and the principal of TJ on a Governor's Task Force led by the Secretary of Education... and the Board of Education Chair."

Due to time constraints, not all 2020-2021 priorities as developed by the Education Committee and part of its Advocacy and Legislative Agenda could be discussed at the town hall. A follow-up meeting is planned.

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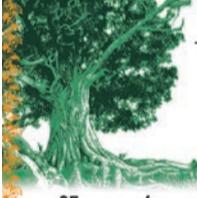
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By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Well I certainly don't like the sound of that and I especially didn't like reading it in the "impressions" part of the radiologist's report I received Friday summarizing the previous Wednesday's PET scan. Though hardly a surprise given a thoracic surgeon's description of my original PET scan 11 and 1/2 years ago: "You lit that thing up like a Christmas tree." Still, I would have rather read something a bit less ominous. But I don't suppose being diagnosed with two types of cancer (non small cell lung stage IV and papillary thyroid, stage II) lends itself to a 'bit less ominous.' Besides, 'less ominous' left the building in late February 2009 when I was first diagnosed with a "terminal" disease: non small cell lung cancer.

Not to make light of such a heavy dose of reality but, as Tom Sellick says on his recent television commercial for AAG: "This isn't my first rodeo." And neither is this statement of fact from the radiologist the first less-than-encouraging news I've heard and seen. To invoke Jack Palance (Curly) from "City Slickers" (1991): "I **** bigger than that." I've been living with a version of these words for 11 and 1/2 years. Tell me something I don't know.

Nevertheless, I'll find out what it all means soon enough. Though it might be a bit of a re-hash from a few columns ago stating that since all the tumors in my lungs can't be biopsied, practically proceeding, my oncologist will never know for certain exactly how much of what type of cancer I have. And since one medicine - from what I've been told, can't treat both cancers, life expectancy, treatment protocols, etc., are likely unclear at best. Presumably, we'll treat the cancer which is most prevalent, most aggressive and most treatable/curable? I can only hope that as I sit and write this column, two days before my surgical lung biopsy on Monday, seven days, approximately, until I hear from my oncologist, I'll be able to compartmentalize the worst case scenarios - all of which are out of my control anyway, and try to live life as normally as possible and avoid any rabbit holes of gloom and doom.

Right now, this is just another blip on the cancer radar that has been "blipping" for more than 11 years. Generally speaking, the medical feedback we receive almost always sounds mediocre (and I don't mean fair to middling either). And it never sounds worse than it did in February '09 when I initially was diagnosed and given a "13 month to two year" prognosis. Unfortunately, having outlived my oncologist's expectation by upwards of 10-plus years doesn't guarantee me any favorable news. That was yesterday (yesteryear, actually). This is today, 2020. However, much has changed/evolved in the cancer-treatment world. There have been more drugs approved for the treatment of lung cancer in the last few years than in previous multiple decades, including the introduction of an entire new class of medicine: immunotherapy. It's not exactly game and match but it is night and day.

Still, it's premature until I'm re-diagnosed and placed in a new protocol and see the results - in future CT scans. This pending biopsy may be the storm before the calm or vice versa, quite frankly. As I await results, my glass remains half full, as always. I just have to hope that while waiting for the cancer business to become clear, I don't get so thirsty/anxious that I empty my glass. That wouldn't help anybody, especially me.

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

‘Lock Your Car; Leave No Valuables Inside’

Police warn about scams and thefts from vehicles.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Still holding the meetings of the Sully District Police Station’s Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) online, due to the pandemic, three of the officers recently updated the community about the latest trends in local crimes.

Crime Prevention Officer, MPO Sabrina Ruck, said vehicle tamperings and larcenies from vehicles are continuing. So, she advised residents, “Before you go to bed at night, lock your car and be sure no valuables are left inside.”

She said criminals “will go through a neighborhood and try door handles to see which vehicles are open. And they’ve stolen everything from pocket change to a \$3,000 set of golf clubs. Also, lock up your bicycles and write down their serial numbers so you’ll have them, just in case [they’re stolen].”

SCAMS are also still prevalent, virus or not. “A person calls a grandparent pretending to be a grandchild who cries and says, ‘I’ve been in an accident and need money now,’” said Ruck. “But that’s a scam, as is anyone asking for your money urgently – for example,



Lt. Josh Laitinen addresses the community during the CAC meeting.

‘We’re going to cut off your utilities at 5 p.m. if you don’t pay your bill now.’ Stop, think and call us before doing anything.”

Community Outreach Officer, PFC Meg Hawkins, then expressed the station’s gratitude to everyone in the community who’s reached out to show their support of their local police officers. “Thank you all for your continued support – the lunches, dinners, messages, emails and letters – of our Sully District officers,” she said. “It really means a lot and the officers truly appreciate it.”

Next, Lt. Josh Laitinen, the station’s assistant commander, noted

that all the Black Lives Matter protests in Fairfax County have been peaceful. And he echoed Hawkins’s words, saying, “We’ve gotten an incredible amount of support from the community, and we cannot thank you enough.”

He said body-worn camera throughout the entire, county Police Department are being implemented and “We hope to have it done by this fall.” He said it also helps the police when residents are involved with their communities, homeowners’ associations and Neighborhood Watches. “You’re our eyes and ears,” said Laitinen. “And if there are some issues of

concern, call us.”

He, too, noted the many thefts from vehicles in the Sully District. “There’s especially been an uptick in them in the Union Mill Road and Compton Road areas, mainly between 1-5 a.m.,” he said. “Often, they’re done by kids in the neighborhood.”

Making things easier for these thieves, said Laitinen, is the fact that, “Often, keys are left in the vehicle. So don’t leave your car keys anywhere near your vehicle.” In addition, he said, “With everyone being cooped up at home, sadly, there’s been an increase in domestic-violence incidents. But I don’t have any data handy.”

Hawkins said the station is still accepting items at the station for families in need via the Help from the Heart community drive. Spearheading it is the county organization, Communities of Trust, collecting items for local food pantries to distribute to those needing them.

ONLY NEW THINGS are accepted; place them into plastic grocery bags and drop them off, 24/7, into the collection bin at the Sully District Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Needed are: Toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, lotions, diapers, baby wipes, soap, shampoo, conditioner, feminine hygiene products, adult incontinence underwear, laundry and dish detergent, household cleaners, paper towels and toilet paper, as well as face masks for children, toddlers and adults.

In normal times, the second Tuesday in August is celebrated throughout the U.S. as National Night Out, when neighbors and first responders gather together in their communities to get to know each other in a relaxed setting. But this year, because of COVID-19, the event has been moved to Oct. 6. In addition, the Sully District CAC will take a break during August but will resume its monthly meetings in September.

AREA ROUNDUPS

Car Seat Inspections Resume

Car seat inspections at the Sully District Police Station are resuming and will be held Thursday, Aug. 13 and 27, from 5-8:30 p.m., at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Participants will fill out questionnaires before car seat installations to comply with COVID-19 guidelines and safety precautions. To schedule an appointment, go to <https://bit.ly/sullyaugcs>.

Free Food Available in Centreville

Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith’s office, in partnership with the DeLune Corp., will host a free, food-distribution, next Tuesday, Aug. 18, starting at 2 p.m. It’s at Mount Olive Baptist Church, 6600 Old Centreville Road in Centreville. The food boxes include a week’s supply of fresh, dairy products. There are no eligibility requirements.

Teen Charged with Malicious Wounding

Fairfax County police have arrested a Centreville teenager in connection with a fight in which another man was wounded. Taken into custody was Sebastian Cruz Cobo, 19. On Aug. 4, at 8:48 p.m., officers from the Sully District Station responded to the 14200 block of Lotus Lane for a report of a fight.

There, they discovered a man had been assaulted. He was taken to a hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries, and the alleged assailant, Cobo, was arrested and charged with malicious wounding.

WFCM Needs Food, Toiletries Donations

All year ’round, the nonprofit Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) feeds local families in need via its food pantry. But with the demand so great, it needs donations from the community to help it do so. The pantry is at 4511 Daly Drive, Suite J, in Chantilly. For more information, go to www.wfcmva.org or call 703-988-9656.

The most-needed items in the pantry this month are: Instant mashed potatoes, diced tomatoes, canned corn, vegetable oil, 1-pound bags of sugar and flour, tomato sauce, boxed pasta and canned fruit, as well as shampoo/conditioner, soap, deodorant, feminine pads and toothpaste.

Fire Station 17 Paramedic Is Honored

Technician Julianne Tomesheski, of Centreville Fire Station 17, C-Shift, has been honored with the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) Emergency Medical Services Award. Presenting it Aug. 1 was SAR Safety Committee Chairman Bill Collier.

Tomesheski joined the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department in 2012, graduating from the academy as a Firefighter/EMT. In 2018, she completed the rigorous, 10-month paramedic program and was recently promoted to technician/paramedic.

Besides being outstanding in her duties, she also does volunteer work. Tomesheski assists with the recruitment section and the training academy and serves as a counselor and EMS coordinator for the Fairfax County Girls Fire and Rescue Academy.

This organization provides middle- and high-school girls a chance to build self-confidence and teamwork skills while experiencing what it’s like to be a firefighter/paramedic. Tomesheski develops the curriculum for the girls, selects and mentors



Technician Julianne Tomesheski (in front) with her certificate.

the instructors, develops lesson plans, procures equipment and organizes the schedule. She’s also a counselor for the four-day program and always relates well to the girls, as well as to her patients, co-workers and supervisors.

— BONNIE HOBBS