

Great Falls CONNECTION



(From left) Robb Watters, Scott Knight and Huey, his dog, Jinny Beyer, Sean Beyer, Jennifer Falcone, Great Falls Citizens Association Land Use & Zoning Committee, Patrick O'Connor, Skip Dawson and Bill Canis, President of Great Falls Citizens Association came together to share their concerns about development plans for Marmota Farm in Great Falls.



'At What Price and At What Cost'

NEWS, PAGE 3

Starting a New Chapter At Great Falls Library

NEWS, PAGE 8

A Summer Like No Other At Riverbend Park

NEWS, PAGE 9

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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AUGUST 19-25, 2020

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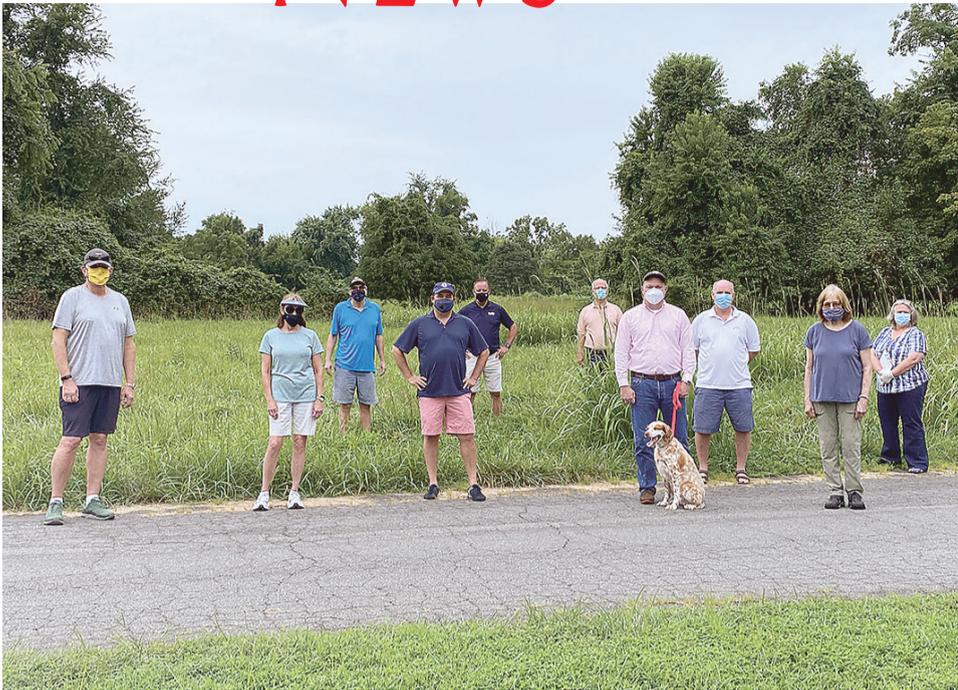
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NEWS



(From left) Mr. and Mrs. Carlson, Sean Beyer, Robb Watters, Patrick O'Connor, Bill Canis, Scott Knight, Skip Dawson, Jinny Beyer, and Jennifer Falcone stand in front of the rural vista of Marmota Farm, their backs toward Georgetown Pike, hidden by the rolling bucolic pastures of the former Digges dairy farm and before that, pristine land.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

'Lift Me Up!' is a nonprofit organization whose property abuts the eastern boundary lines of the property currently under contract between Toll Brothers and owners of the 22.781 Marmota Farm property.

'At What Price and At What Cost' Plan C comes to light for Marmota Farm.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Development plans are in the works for Marmota Farm in Great Falls. Once again, as it has for nearly 15 years, one word, "by-right" holds in its grip deterministic zoning regulations governing the 22.781-acre parcel of undeveloped, rural land located in the Fairfax County Dranesville District at 9800 Georgetown Pike. Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) represents constituents in the District. The closest abutting intersection to the property is west of the corner of Innsbruck Avenue. Great Falls Grange Park and Schoolhouse owned and operated by Fairfax County Park Authority are there.

At a recent Great Falls Citizens Association meeting, the Land Use & Zoning Committee reported that in May of 2020, home construction company, Toll Brothers, entered under contract with the current owner. According to current Fairfax County records, the owner is Stephen H. Moriarty Trustee, Souhail El-Farouki Trustee. The property holds "by-right" zoning. No public hearing is required for by-right use. Instead, projects can proceed with Fairfax County administrative approval. Citizens Sean Beyer, Robb Watters, Paul Bennett and others are concerned as are members of the Great Falls Citizens Association that convened a meeting to investigate concerns.

Beyer lives with his mother in the historic William Gunnel House (c.1750) on Innsbruck Avenue. He said, "We strive to protect the history of this area which is at the center of the Great Falls Village. Building 11 homes on the Marmota Farm site, one side of which runs along Innsbruck Avenue will diminish the viewshed of the historic Grange (1930) and the old schoolhouse (1889) and will alter the historic Georgetown Pike (built in

1813). Grading the hill to make way for an entrance to Marmota will disturb the original roadbed."

Adjacent property owner Paul Bennett, President of the Marmota Farm homeowners association said, "I guess my overall concern is that the property itself, this is a strong word, could potentially become denuded with the development...We want to be sure everybody is looking at this with a discerning eye."

"Fairfax County is short on funds due to COVID...but who is leveraging whom?... We get that they (Fairfax County) will make the fees and they are looking at the dollar value of what it is going to be worth for the County, but at the will of its constituents and not taking into consideration the ecological damage. One must ask at what price and what cost," said Robb Watters.

MARMOTA FARM is within a former larger parcel dating back three centuries of unfettered, undeveloped use. It was once a dairy farm. One thousand feet of the property frontage faces historic Georgetown Pike, Virginia's First Historic and Scenic Byway. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Watters added that traffic from the development facing the Byway proved to be one of his primary concerns, describing it as "unparalleled." However, environmental concerns, the ecological balance of the land, factored into the consideration equation. "The runoff and the silt from the construction are going to pollute the very delicate



Georgetown Pike

GREAT FALLS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

and ecological balance in the lakes we have here...They are all interconnected. So, this runoff that the County enforces and said there will be no exception, is exempted (because of by-right use)...For Foust to truly not take into consideration this neighborhood, especially on this project, is astounding to me given this day and age...I don't consider him listening to the will of this community."

The Great Falls Citizens Association provides a way for residents in the non-incorporated community, with no Town Council or local legislative body, to participate in matters including those at the County level that affect neighborhoods and families. Thus, with the Marmota Farm subdivision poised for the third time for possible development, this time by Toll Brothers after two other plans by different parties failed, and renewed concern riling among seasoned com-

munity members and those within Great Falls Citizens Association familiar with the by-right status, on July 22, William Canis, President of the Association sent a letter to Supervisor Foust.

On behalf of the Association, Canis asked Foust for support in a three-prong effort of due diligence, focused in part to get zoning reviewed given the by-right status of the property with pre-subdivision approval of 11 builder lots. He wrote: "The Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) requests your assistance in working with County staff to ensure that the Marmota Farm subdivision, previously approved, will be reviewed against all revised standards

governing site improvements involving the principal road access from Georgetown into the subdivision, controlling stormwater management (SWM), and perimeter buffers and landscaping."

In the letter, Canis expressed concern that plans were in the works to cut the elevation of Georgetown Pike at the subdivision's entrance to accommodate sight-line requirements. "The Georgetown Pike is on the National Register of Historic Places,...A historic asset worthy of preservation," he said. The original turnpike's finished roadbed was constructed by hand between 1813-1827. The process involved complex engineering specifications. Paved over circa 1919, "...no alterations have been made to the original foundation," said Canis. The Association

SEE 'PLAN C', PAGE 11

Legislating in the Time of COVID-19

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

This week, I returned with my colleagues to Richmond to revise the Commonwealth's budget in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, pass pandemic-related legislation, and to address the twin issues of racial inequity and police reform. For the past couple of months the House Democratic Caucus has worked dutifully and deliberately on an impactful package of laws that will change people's lives in an unprecedented and positive way.

Early Tuesday morning before the beginning of the session that gavelled in at 1 p.m., I attended the joint money committees (Appropriations and Finance) meeting where we heard the official budget re-forecasting data. From this meeting we received full details as to how the pandemic has affected the Virginia economy and how we will need to reshape the budget to compensate for those adverse effects. As you know, any new spending allotted by the budget that the General Assembly passed in March during the regular session was frozen, or "unallotted," due to the pandemic. After receiving the re-forecasting details and later going through the information with a fine tooth comb, it will be clear whether any of the funding can be re-allotted for its original intent, or whether further cuts will need to be made, which is unknown to me at the time I am writing this column.

To maintain physical distancing, the House of Delegates is meeting on the basketball court of Virginia Commonwealth University's Stuart C. Siegel Center with our desks spread out six feet apart from one another and wearing our face masks. While not physically open to the public due to health concerns, the session is live-streamed on the Virginia General Assembly website beginning on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 1 p.m. The session will probably continue through the



end of the month and even into September as we embark on this extraordinary undertaking during this critical period in our Commonwealth.

This will prove to be an historic session for many reasons, but especially given that this is only the third time in the Commonwealth's history that the General Assembly has not met in our traditional chambers. The first time was in 1849 due to a cholera outbreak, and then the second time was during this past April's annual reconvene session. In fact, this will be the first time in 171 years that the House of Delegates will not convene on the Capitol grounds, as the Senate of Virginia chose to meet a few miles away at the Science Museum of Virginia in April, while the House of Delegates met outside the Capitol in a tent.

This special session will stand in stark contrast to the outcome of that 1849 session, where a 17th-century ban on interracial marriage was officially codified, and where it was made a felony to criticize slave ownership, punishable by up to five years imprisonment. It is nice that this time we are moving in a much different direction. While the fact remains that like that 1849 session, we will be legislating and updating our Commonwealth's budget in the time of a deadly pandemic, our other goals heading into this year's unprecedented special session revolve around improving racial equity and reforming our criminal justice system.

Last week, the House Democratic Caucus released our legislative priorities going into this special session. It's a transformative package of legislation to remove much of the inequality in our criminal justice system and provide tools to combat the health crisis. I've included most of it here:

COVID-19 Relief

Requiring businesses to grant paid sick leave for Virginia workers.

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

Establishing a presumption as to death or disability due to COVID-19 for workers' compensation for first responders, teachers, and other high-risk essential workers.

Providing immunity from civil claims related to COVID-19 for complying with health guidance.

Protecting Virginians from eviction during a public health emergency.

Creating a Commonwealth Marketplace for Personal Protective Equipment acquisition.

Mandating transparency requirements for congregate-care facilities during a public health emergency.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform

Reforming Virginia's laws related to the expungement of police and court records.

Increasing good behavior sentence credits. Eliminating qualified immunity for law enforcement officers.

Prohibiting no-knock warrants.

Banning the use of chokeholds and other lethal restraints used by law enforcement.

Creating a statewide Marcus Alert system to ensure the presence of mental health professionals for calls related to mental health crises and wellness checks.

Strengthening laws related to Citizen Review Panels.

Eliminating certain pretextual police stops. Demilitarizing police departments by prohibiting the acquisition and use of certain weapons by law enforcement agencies.

Banning sexual relations between officers and arrestees.

Expanding the definition of hate crimes to include false 911 calls made on the basis of race.

Standardizing and enhancing training for all police academies.

Mandating the duty of one officer to report and intervene during the misconduct of another officer.

Requiring decertification of law enforcement officers who fail to properly perform their duties.

BULLETIN BOARD

THURSDAY/AUG. 20

Taste of Italy. 5:30-6:15 p.m. At Vienna Vintner via Zoom, 320 Maple Ave., East, Vienna. Vienna Vintners will be presenting a

Taste of Italy private wine tasting event to support Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC). Funds donated to SC will help us to create A World Without Loneliness. Join your friends and colleagues in the comfort of your home via Zoom Hyperlink. Your host is Victor Mendes, Owner, Vienna Vintner. Your Sommelier, Roberto D'Onofrio, will be showcasing three delicious bottles of wine. Cost is \$100 for 3 bottles of wine, \$75 for 2. Email: viennavintner@gmail.com or call 703-242-9463

AUG. 21 TO SEPT. 14

Aspire House McLean. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 952 Mackall Farms Lane, McLean. Aspire House McLean 2020 will open on Friday, August 21, 2020 with a Virtual Preview Party and remain open until Sunday, September 14, 2020. Limited

numbers of guests will be allowed to tour the home Wednesday through Sunday; face masks and temperature checks required. Cost is Adult Ticket \$50, Senior Ticket \$45, Military Ticket \$45. Visit the website: <https://www.aspireshowhouse.com/mclean>

LCNV FALL CLASS REGISTRATION

The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) is hosting beginning-level adult English language classes from October to December. Due to the situation of COVID-19, classes for the fall semester will be held on virtual platforms only, which require students to have a computer, tablet, or smartphone and internet access to participate. Registration begins Monday, Aug. 17, and runs through Friday, Sept. 18, with options to register via text message, phone calls, or in-person at certain locations and times. Classes offered this fall include: Beginning English Class: provides adult English language learners

the fundamental skills to understand and communicate in English, helping them to better engage in the community and advance their careers.

Family Learning Programs (FLP): provides English language instruction for parents or caregivers, so that they can better communicate with their children and support their education.

Classes are \$85.00 with books and assessment included. Registration is required for enrollment. Registration times and dates are available at LCNV's distance learning page (<https://lcnv.org/distance-learning-fall-session/lcnv-classes/>), or call 703-237-0866.

THE ALDEN HOLDS AUDITIONS

The Alden in McLean is bringing back its Drive-Thru Drama performances in September. The new show, "From the Ash Baxter Files: The Search for the Stolen Spyglass," will be performed Friday through Sunday over three weekends

on Sept. 11-13, Sept. 18-20 and Sept. 25-27. Show times are from 4-7 p.m. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for MCC tax district residents. A limited number of timed tickets are available and must be purchased in advance at www.aldentheatre.org. The Alden is a division of the McLean Community Center (MCC), located at 1234 Ingleside Ave. The Alden is looking for a diverse group of actors. To audition, actors must be 14 years old or older. There are no gender or ethnicity requirements and very few age requirements; however, priority casting will be given to actors who live or work in the MCC tax district (Dranesville Small District 1-A). Actors need to submit a virtual casting form as well as a link to a video recording of their monologue by midnight, on Tuesday, Aug. 18. Audition sides and more information about the roles are available at <https://bit.ly/30P3RXh>. All actors will receive a stipend of \$300. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

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Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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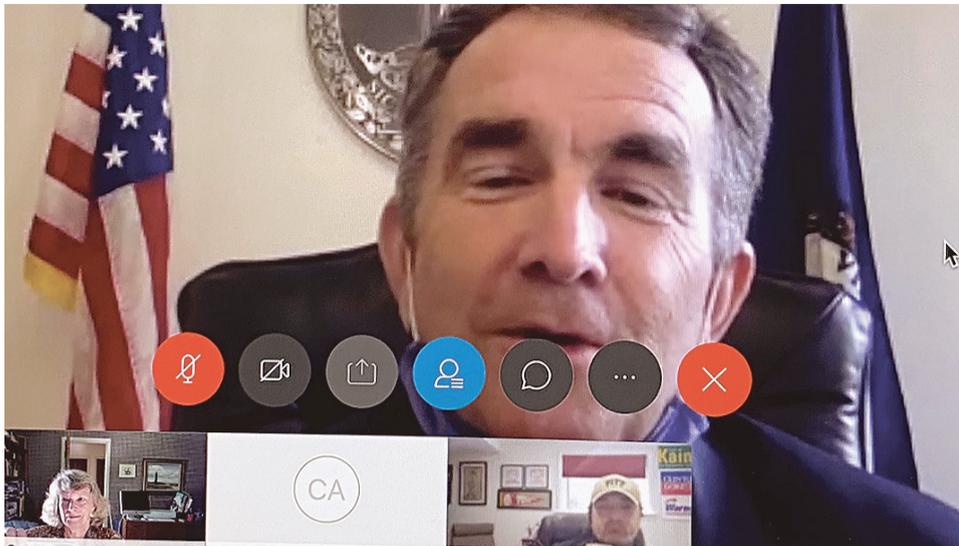
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PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Governor Ralph Northam holds virtual animal bill signing ceremony.

Governor Northam Signs Protection Bills For Dogs

Virtual ceremony held

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

In a signing ceremony, held virtually, and streamed from his State Capitol office, Governor Ralph Northam officially signed stronger protections for tethered dogs into law on Aug. 17.

In his remarks before penning his signature, Northam said, "We do need to treat our pets humanely; having pets on a tether, especially in extreme heat and cold is not a good thing; we want to avoid it." He praised bill sponsors Senator John Bell (13th District) and Delegate Mark Levine (45th District) for taking a difficult issue [animal bills] and doing well with moving their bills to passage.

The new adequate sheltering law, enacted on July 1, 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/

The law also sets minimum tether line lengths and maximum weights.

Senator Bell recounted seeing dogs on a short chain with no water on a trip through Virginia. Though he and his wife got water to the dogs that day, he knew we could do better. He commented, "A big part of what we want for Virginia is [seen in] how we treat animals."



Bill sponsor, Senator John Bell, and his wife Margaret, attend virtual ceremony with their family dogs

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Virtual Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY 2022 Budget

(July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022)

McLean Community Center Governing Board
Wednesday, Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m.

Residents who wish to speak at the Public Hearing are asked to call **703-744-9348**, to be placed on the speakers list. The draft budget proposal is available on the Center's website. Copies will be available at the Public Hearing.

Written comments may be delivered to the McLean Community Center (see address below) marked "Attention: Executive Director," or sent by email to **george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov**. Written comments may be provided after the Public Hearing up through **Monday, Oct. 26**.

www.zoom.us



ZOOM meeting ID: 992 1990 0562
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www.mcleancenter.org



Keeping children focused and away from distractions like video games can be challenging for parents of those with ADHD.

Distance Learning for Children with ADHD

Decreasing stress and increasing success in a virtual classroom.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

V oncia Hartley and her 10-year old son Kelvin are dreading the first day of school this year. Remote learning means that this Alexandria mother of three will not only oversee the education of her children, she will also have to help Kelvin stay focused and organized. He has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

"When we changed to online learning last spring, I almost felt like I needed to duct tape him to the chair so that he could stay still long enough to complete his assignments," said Hartley. "We both shed a lot of tears and did a lot of screaming."

While home-schooling or managing distance learning can be challenging for many parents, for those with children who have ADHD, it poses more complex demands. In addition to attending virtual classes and completing assignments, students with ADHD might need help locating lost pencils, notebooks or other supplies, keeping track of and completing homework or staying focused and away from video games during the school day.

"ADHD is a brain disorder that includes difficulty maintaining focus, hasty actions, and excessive body movements that interfere with daily functioning," said Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology at George Mason University. "It includes a pattern of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity [and] affects about five to seven percent of children."

Students with ADHD often need latitude with regard to the pace and method at which they learn. For

example, children might need to sit in a rocking chair or on an exercise ball while doing schoolwork.

"Homeschooling kids with ADHD can actually have its benefits," said Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C, a therapist in Bethesda, Md. "ADHD kids often do better with being able to have more freedom and flexibility in their schedules. They can have movement breaks when they need them and can modify their environments."

Parents can make distance learning less stressful by creating a schedule and helping their child to follow it each school day. Recreating classroom rituals like holding morning meetings with children to discuss the day ahead can create the structure that those with ADHD need. "Parents can help by putting out a consistent schedule for the kids to work around [and] helping kids make a plan for their day to complete work," said Barnaby. "Finding a distraction free working space; using a computer that doesn't have distracting apps to lure kids away from work. If that isn't possible using a website blocker during school hours."

"Home schooling kids with ADHD can actually have its benefits. They can have movement breaks when they need them and can modify their environments."

— Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C, therapist

Breaking down that schedule into manageable chunks and knowing how long a child can work on a particular task before needing a break can decrease anxiety and create a supportive environment. Once that is determined, Barnaby suggests "setting a kitchen timer so kids are aware of when break time happens. ... This helps them to work on beating the buzzer. If your child becomes stressed then take a break. They can come back to the work when they feel better."

For students with ADHD, sitting at a desk for long periods of time can be grueling, so Barnaby advises parents to build physical activity into the

day and adjust their expectations about their child's learning for the coming school year.

"Mostly, remember that even if your child isn't performing great during virtual schooling, things will be okay," she said. "Kids are resilient. Many kids have missed school because of family crises in the past and have done fine catching up to their peers."

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NEWS

Youth-owned Business Thrives

Product innovation and service expansion underpin growth.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Only thirteen years old, Joey Newton of Great Falls is already an entrepreneur and a savvy one. Newton owns and operates a local business, Joey's Wood Signs, based in his family's garage. There, he crafts rustic wood signs made from reclaimed lumber. Newton is conscious of reaching out to professionals for advice, developing healthy business growth strategies and donating a portion of his earned income to charity.

"During these challenging COVID-19 times, I have found a bright silver lining in my son's determination to make wood signs and start a business. He has proven himself to be a very hardworking young man," said Jessel Newton, Joey's mother.

NEWTON'S BUSINESS IDEA began with a challenge put forth a year ago by his mother. Newton said she asked him to craft a rustic wood sign to put over the family piano. She would either pay him to make it or buy one at the store and pay them. Newton said he agreed to attempt to make the sign. Not knowing much



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

Joey Newton, 13, of Great Falls, owner of 'Joey's Wood Signs' sets up a display table with his hand-crafted rustic signs made with reclaimed lumber.

of anything about carpentry skills, he turned to a pro, the person who was renovating the family home. Newton learned the hard way. He used basic hand tools, a miter saw and a hammer. "I didn't have a nail gun or an electric sander," he said. In search of low-cost or free wood, the renovator came to rescue again and made a suggestion. "We used free pallet wood from stores," Newton said. Wanting to keep expenditures low by repurposing items he needed for sign production, Newton said he used leftover paint from the house project.

As photos of Newton's sign reached family, friends and community members, he received orders. Newton realized there was no lack of market need. What started as a challenge turned to the bonafide business. "When I got more money, I got more stencils," he said. Potomac Falls resident Heath Light bought two signs, one at Christmas and another for the 4th of July. "I love seeing his creativity bloom," she said.

Given the positive response to his product, Newton's next logical step was to expand his marketing campaign. "We put it on Facebook Marketplace. They

SEE JOEY'S WOOD SIGN, PAGE 9

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PHOTOS BY LAURA GERSONY/THE CONNECTION



From left -- Great Falls Library Branch Manager Andrea Spira and Youth Services Manager Devin Parris pose with craft kits.



Great Falls librarian Elizabeth Vargis mans the front desk, separated from patrons by a clear pane.

Starting A New Chapter: Library Staff Reflect One Month Into Reopening

The Great Falls Library has ‘gotten creative’ in ways to engage the community, offering portable craft kits, online programming, and a new book recommendation service for young readers.

BY LAURA GERSONY
THE CONNECTION

Book readership up, print circulation down, online Live Chat services up 200 percent: in an era of social distancing, the Great Falls Library is adapting to countywide trends in reader involvement as it welcomes patrons back into the library.

The Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) system closed its doors to the public in mid-March, and resumed only a contactless “curbside pickup” option on June 1. When libraries opened limited indoor services on July 13, many readers rejoiced, according to Devin Parris, Youth Services Manager at the Great Falls Library.

“I’ve heard over and over again, from kids who are coming in for the first time since we reopened, ‘oh, I missed the library!’ And their caretakers are sharing, ‘they have missed the library so much. They just wanted to come back,’” Parris said. “Kids definitely haven’t forgotten us.”

Neither, for that matter, have adult cardholders, according to FCPL statistics. From April to June 2020, e-circulation was 36 percent higher than the same period in 2019. Nearly 6,000 new users registered for library cards online during this time period.

Branch Manager Andrea Spira told The Connection that the library staff has developed new ways of engaging with the community, now offering portable craft kits for various age levels, virtual reader advisory services, and a wide range of online programming on YouTube and Facebook.

“There’s changes, just like in every other area of life, but I think that what we do best is just to help people find the materials that they need, and find something good to read,” Spira said. “That’s what we’re continuing to do, even during the virus.”

The staff has also started a readers’ advisory “grab-and-go bag” program for young readers. Spira



Great Falls Librarian Muhamad Shoaib shelves a book during a quiet Friday afternoon at the library. All returned books are quarantined for 72 hours prior to being handled by library staff.

said that parents can call the library and tell them the child’s interests, their age, previous books they have enjoyed, or other relevant tips, and librarians will curate a selection of books for the child.

“We’ve had a great response,” Spira said. “The kids really love the books that we put together for them.”

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the library, in-person visits are limited to 30 minutes, all returned materials are quarantined for 72 hours, and masks and social distancing are required within the building. The library’s conference rooms, which once served as community hubs and activity centers, now serve as the overflow area for books needing to be quarantined.

But Parris said that while visitors’ experience of the library is certainly “different” during the pandemic, the bonds among its community members are as strong as ever.

“We have fewer visitors, so every connection is more meaningful,” Parris said. “That special library connection is still there, and maybe even more so.”



PHOTOS BY LAURA GERSONY/THE CONNECTION

Customer Peggy von Ehren takes her carryout Pío Pío meal from hostess Yoanna Gonzalez. Von Ehren drove from Ashburn for the Monday lunch. “I just wanted to support local restaurants, because I know it’s hard on them,” she said.

Pío Pío Rebounds

BY LAURA GERSONY
THE CONNECTION

Salsa music fills the air inside the newly reopened Pío Pío Pollo, where customers dig into ceviche, lomo saltado stir fry, and other staples of Peruvian cuisine. The restaurant is nearing stable ground, leadership says, after it suffered a major blow from the coronavirus outbreak.

Danny Pain, Pío Pío owner and lead chef, told The Connection that the restaurant’s biggest scare came in early March, when Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam’s emergency order limited restaurant service to 10 people at a time. Pain felt acutely a sense of uncertainty, coupled with dread, for the coming months.

“I was ready to throw in the towel,” Pain said. “I thought that 2020 was going to be a wash, really; I wrote it off as a terrible year.”

A week later, the restaurant halted indoor service completely, offering only carry-out and delivery services. At the peak of the downturn, Pain had to temporarily lay off five of his employees—nearly half of the restaurant’s staff.

“Telling [employees] that, unfortunately, I don’t have a job for you anymore...that’s one of the hardest things I’ve had to do,” he said.

Restaurants were allowed to resume limited indoor service on June 12, but Pain delayed opening his doors for another month, concerned by the effects of hasty reopening in other parts of the country.

“I noticed that other states were struggling with it, so we decided to wait on it,” he said, “just to be safe.”



Pío Pío owner and lead chef Danny Pain stands in front of the restaurant’s outdoor seating area, where customer Jose Sandoval sits in the shade. “We’re lucky that we’ve been able to stay in businesses, not only that, thriving,” Pain said.

WHERE AND WHEN

Pío Pío Peruvian Cuisine, 762 A Walker Rd, Great Falls, VA 22066
Hours: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday,
703-865-7700
<https://www.piopioperu.com>
info@piopioperu.com

Thankfully, Pain said, Pío Pío’s takeout service propelled the restaurant through the downturn. Pain was eventually able to bring all of his employees back to work, and the restaurant is “thriving”—an upswing he attributes to a loyal base of customers.

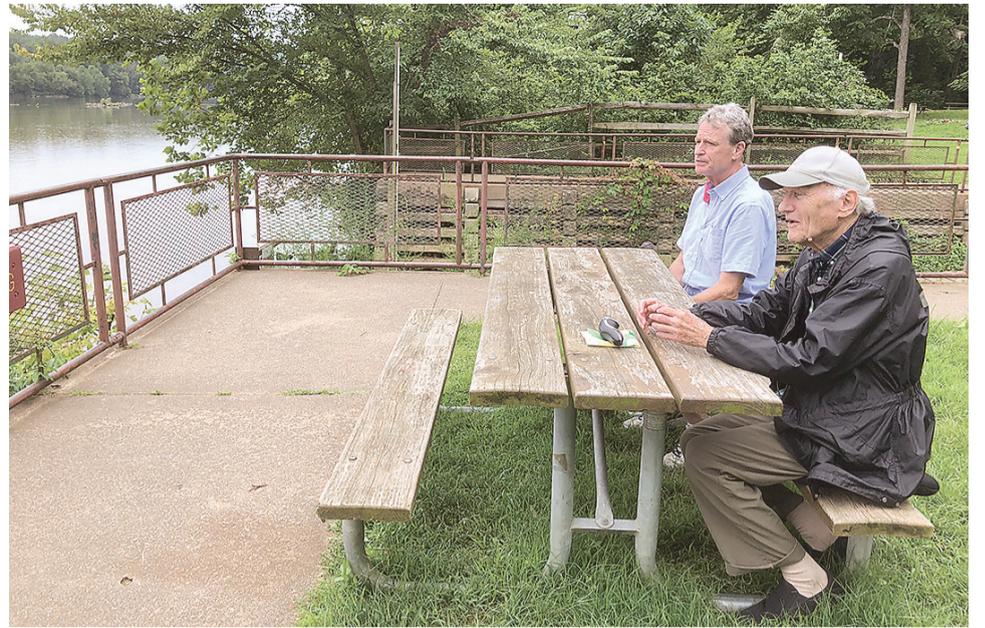
“[I want] to thank everyone, the community as a whole. If it wasn’t for them, we wouldn’t be where we are,” Pain said. “We’re lucky that we’ve been able to stay in business, not only that, thriving...It’s really a testament to the loyalty of our customers.”

The restaurant now offers the dine-in option on weekends and after 3 p.m. on weekdays. Customers may also dine outdoors, where red-checked picnic tables—placed at generous 6ft intervals—dot a shaded area across from the restaurant.

PHOTOS BY LAURA GERSONY/THE CONNECTION



Tom and Anita Breach, along with their daughter Flora, push off from Riverbend's boat ramp, ready to enjoy a cool day on the river.



John Graham and his uncle, Bill Gorham, spot a beaver in the Potomac River, after the two enjoyed a picnic lunch.

A Summer Like No Other at Riverbend Park

While Riverbend's visitor center remains closed, the park's visitation levels are up, and it has resumed services including boat rentals, boating tours, and virtual online programming.

BY LAURA GERSONY
THE CONNECTION

Neil Stern has been coming to Riverbend Park for decades to meditate, enjoy nature, or work under the park's canopy of trees. But this year, Stern's 20th working for the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), he has new job responsibilities: encouraging visitors to wear masks, sanitizing boating equipment after it is rented, and taking other measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

The park initially closed its gates in late March, only allowing visitors to enter on foot. But after opening again in May, staffers said, its parking lots quickly filled. Riverbend now fields hundreds of visitors on weekdays,

and thousands on weekends—slightly higher than its usual summer numbers, according to park employees.

Stern said that these days especially, the natural beauty of the park draws visitors looking to recharge and immerse themselves in the green space.

"At times like this, I think everybody seeks nature," Stern said. "This is a treasure, Riverbend Park... We become like small children seeking the security of mom's leg, hanging out under the tulip poplars."

Jordan Libera, the Senior Interpreter and Program Manager at Riverbend, told The Connection that many are coming to the park seeking a change of pace from their usual at-home activities.

"There's nothing else to do, so they're staying local, enjoying some of the activities



Arlington residents Joseph McNeill and Nina Wever admire the pond, now covered with green algae, on the Riverbend Park Loop trail.



Neil Stern, a 20-year employee of the Fairfax County Park Authority, mans Riverbend's boat rental area. The park uses a timed ticketing system to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread.



Riverbend staffer Ethan Killian leaps to catch a frisbee tossed by his coworker, Sean Lasik.

'Joey's Wood Signs'

FROM PAGE 7

were going well," he said. Increased product offerings followed. Denise Longo of Weichert Realtors in Great Falls said Newton's work had "such attention to detail." "I own several of them then realized what great gifts these would make for new clients... Can't wait to purchase more of them soon," she said.

Increased sales brought increased revenue, and Newton's need to manage his profits appropriately and prioritize. "Ten percent of the money goes to a giving envelope, to an organization called Compassion International... Twenty percent goes back into the business for nails, paint, stain, and stencils... and seventy percent goes into an account for a car in the future," he said.

GROWTH balanced with smarter work became crucial to the business' survival

to keep up with demand. Newton replaced his hand tools, slower and more tiring, with power tools. Driving nails had proved especially frustrating. Newton said, "I got a nail gun, which was a huge improvement. It was a pain to do every nail by hand." He switched from road map signs, labor-intensive, to another design. He said, "I'm more focused on signs that say, Home Sweet Home, stuff like that... I could do more of them faster." Roxanne Hyatt of Great Falls purchased a sign. "I selected a 'Don't Tread on Me'... as a gift for Father's Day... Can't wait to see his business grow," she said.

Focused on long-range goals and executing an ordered plan, Newton said he seeks to offer his rustic wood signs in different paint colors and purchase a machine to create custom stencils in the future. He said, "I've had people ask me to make family name signs."

Visit <http://www.joeywoodsigns.wordpress.com>.

here: fishing, hiking, boating," Libera said. "There's always new adventures that you can have here."

Riverbend Park staffers are encouraging visitors to practice social distancing and wear masks. Stern said that visitors have eagerly complied with these guidelines, brought together by their shared desire to enjoy the park.

"We haven't had any pushback that I'm aware of; in fact, quite the opposite. I've found that people are very sympathetic," Stern said.

Libera added that while most visitors are "regulars" who frequent the park, Riverbend also welcomes visitors discovering the park for the first time. One such visitor, teenager Dwayne Johnson, learned of Riverbend after seeing a video of the Great Falls on TikTok, the video-sharing platform popular among teens and young adults. He and his girl-

friend drove over an hour from Baltimore, Md. for their walk along the Potomac.

"It was a video about the beautiful scenery," Johnson said. "I saw it, and I was like, 'oh, that'll be somewhere fun that we could go to.' And here we are!"

While Riverbend's visitor center remains closed, the park has now resumed boat rentals, with a timed ticketing system to minimize contact among visitors. They are also offering virtual camps, scouting programs, and boating tours on the Potomac.

At the end of the day, Stern said, as long as prospective visitors are able to take necessary precautions, including mask-wearing and social distancing, they should not let the fear of COVID prevent them from going outdoors.

"There is plenty of space out here for people to socially distance," he said. "We want people to recognize they can still walk the trails and enjoy being with nature."

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

-Werner Heisenberg

FUN THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

ALEXANDRIA DRIVE-IN THEATRE

The Alexandria Drive-In Theatre, presented by Alexandria based businesses ALX Community and The Garden, will kick off on Saturday, Aug. 29. The six-part movie series will run on Saturdays through October 3 and will feature a popular collection of movie classics and family favorites. The drive-in theatre will be located in the Eisenhower section of Alexandria in the parking lot connected to commercial space owned by real estate developer and event partner Stonebridge. The lot can comfortably accommodate up to 215 cars per screening. To help support our food truck vendors who have been hit hard by the pandemic, event organizers have partnered with Curbside Kitchen who will be onsite providing a rotating selection of sweet and savory food truck cuisine from local truckers, such as The Chewish Deli, Gemma Gelato, Capital Chicken & Waffles and Bangkok offering mobile ordering. Movie patrons can also bring their own food.

Alexandria Drive-In Movie Line Up: Saturday, Aug. 29, 2020-- "Jurassic Park"

Saturday, Sept. 5, 2020 -- "Back to the Future"

Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020 -- "Trolls"

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 -- "Field of Dreams"

Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020 -- "ET"

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2020 -- "Mamma Mia"

Website: www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com
Cost: \$30 per car/per screening. No refunds. 100% ticket costs goes to two local Alexandria based charities

DRIVE-IN THEATERS AT WORKHOUSE

The Workhouse Drive-In Movie Theatre is set up with a 40 foot screen on campus and is limited to 75 vehicles at \$30 per vehicle. All tickets will be purchased online and parking location will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Options to purchase a packaged snack box will also be available. Alternatively, movie goers may bring their own snacks or meals purchased from local restaurants. Showtime is 9 p.m. and gates open at 8:15 p.m. At 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Visit the website: www.workhousearts.org.

Thursday, Aug. 20 -- "Suffragette"

Friday, Aug. 21 -- "How to Train Your Dragon"

Saturday, Aug. 22 -- "Labyrinth (Encore)"

Thursday, Aug. 27 -- "A League of their Own"

TYSONS CORNER DRIVE-IN MOVIES

Tyson's Corner Center is hosting Drive-In Movie Nights, in partnership with the Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner Center, on the second weekend of each month. Located along Fashion Blvd. between Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's, will open for parking, be sure to bring your ticket. Show starts at 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 12 -- "Mrs. Doubtfire" Reserve your spot - space is limited.

Reservation and movie details are located at

<https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/Events>

MOSAIC DEBUTS OUTDOOR DRIVE-IN MOVIES

EDENS Mosaic has launched a new outdoor drive-in movie series this summer. Located on the top level (7) of Market Garage across from Mom's Organic Market and Hyatt House. Check-in is on level 6. Address: 8295 Glass Alley, Fairfax. The films begin at 8 p.m. The lineup includes:

Friday Aug. 28: "Sonic the Hedgehog" at 5:15 p.m.

There is a \$28 fee to reserve a designated spot in accordance with the new social distancing guidelines. Tickets can be purchased at https://mosaicdistrict.com/events/event/drive-in-at-mosaic/?event_id=8599 Visit www.mosaicdistrict.com.

COLUMBIA PIKE DRIVE-IN

Pull up to the Columbia Pike Drive-In Movie Nights at the Arlington Career Center for some free retro-style family fun. All movies start at sunset (between 8 and 8:30 p.m.) and are shown in English with Spanish subtitles. Space is limited and new protocols are in place to keep everyone safe. Address: 816 S Walter Reed Dr, Arlington, VA 22204. Visit the website: <https://www.columbia-pike.org/movienights/>
Saturday, Aug. 22 -- "Coco"
Saturday, Aug. 29 -- "Mary Poppins Returns"

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

The Fairfax County Park Authority will livestream 25 free summer concert events featuring a mix of nationally known performers and singer-songwriters. These virtual events provide a new way to enjoy great performances from the safety of your home. To view a livestream concert, go to the Fairfax County

Park Authority's Summer Entertainment Series main page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performance, select the date on the calendar for this performance, and click on the links for the livestream video.

Schedule

Friday, Aug. 21 -- Lee District Nights: Frank Solivan, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 23 -- Starlight Cinema: Oshima Brothers, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 27 -- The End of America, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 27 -- Mount Vernon Nights: Los Texmaniacs, 7:30 p.m.

AUG. 25 -- ACT ONE

"Saltwater Farm" by Ann Timmons. 7:15- 9 p.m. Presented by Pipeline Playwrights in association with MetroStage, a two-part reading of the complete script-in-progress. Aug. 25: Act One and Sept. 1: Act Two. As an old Maine family's wealth is disappearing, siblings face hard choices while confronting their own past in a changing world. Can't make both nights? Watch live when you can, then catch up on YouTube. Link of YouTube will be posted on Pipeline Playwrights' website (www.pipelineplaywrights.org) when available. Register at <https://forms.gle/4ptA5Y2B-tUGX5u519>

THE BIRCHMERE

The Birchmere in Alexandria is reopening with limited capacity. During the public health emergency, there will be a \$25 food and beverage minimum and a \$5 Covid fee. There will be no bar service and no gathering in the stage or bar areas. Customers will be escorted to their seats, and those without reserved seats will be seated by staff to ensure social distancing.

Schedule of Shows:

Friday, Aug. 21 -- Michael Clem (of Eddie From Ohio) and Rusty Spidel (of SGLL)

Saturday, Aug. 22 -- Crowded Streets "The Dave Matthews Band Experience"

Sunday, Aug. 23 -- Vanessa Collier

Friday, Aug. 28 -- John Kadlecik

Saturday, Aug. 29 -- Tony Woods w/ special guest James Altucher

Friday, Sept. 4 -- The Johnny Artis Band

Saturday, Sept. 5 -- The Seldom Scene

Friday, Sept. 11 -- The Eric Scot Band

The venue is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. All shows at 7:30 p.m. in the Music Hall, unless otherwise noted. Visit the Birchmere's website: <http://www.birchmere.com/>

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Sign planted at 9800 Georgetown Pike, opposite Boehms Court, announces the sale of a premier 22.78 acre parcel of pre subdivision approval of 11 building lots. Graffiti, not age, covers the sign.

'Plan C' for Marmota Farm

FROM PAGE 3

asked for an alternative to cutting the byway to allow for the sight distance.

As for stormwater management, Canis said, "GFCA members and adjacent residents have expressed concern over the approved plans to route storm water drainage to properties lying to the area south of Georgetown Pike." He called attention to recent historic rains and evidence of system failures even when state-of-the-art stormwater management had been put in place.

The third and final prong of effort, perimeter buffer and landscaping, concerned all boundaries. "Lift Me Up!" is an abutting property to the east. The nonprofit operates equestrian-based therapeutic programs, "a critical and important part of the Great Falls community." According to Canis, "Lift Me Up!" "recognized the proximity of houses to them might require additional buffers to their well-managed facility. The subdivision's planned dwellings abutting the historic byway, County Schoolhouse and Grange properties, presented rear views. They visually impacted and diminished valued viewsheds critical to retaining the character of the community. Canis urged the County to consider conservation easements, modifications or insertion of language into the HOA documents to protect viewsheds in perpetuity.

JENNIFER FALCONE, Chair, GFCA Land Use and Zoning Committee, said, "I am working to schedule a meeting with county officials to ensure the key points of our concerns over the approved plan for development of

Marmota Farm will be addressed with the highest level of oversight, so the community will realize the least amount of damage and disruption should this plan or any other development move forward."

A spokesperson for the Office of Supervisor John Foust, Dranesville District, said, "At this time, we have no more details as to what is happening with the property; it would not be appropriate for Supervisor Foust to provide a quote at this time." Request for comment to Toll Brothers had not been received by press time and is pending.

According to Aug. 16, 2020, Fairfax County records, the parcel is zoned residential-one dwelling unit/two acres. Fairfax County gave approval to the site plan in 2006. There is no historic site on the property, and it is not in a County Historic Overlay District. In May of 2020, Land Development Services showed 11 single-family, detached homes in the by-right subdivision. The entrance was from Georgetown Pike.

An attempt to annex the property in 2015-2019, "Save Marmota Farm" to its neighbor, Great Falls Grange Park owned and operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, failed. 'Plan B' by John Colby, AIAE, detailed in an open memo published by the Great Falls Connection on July 10-16, 2019, offered possible solutions. Colby conceived a "gentle" by-right subdivision of fewer homes than the original 11 as approved, with "lots 59 percent larger." It also failed. According to County records as of Aug. 16, 2020, values for tax year 2020, current assessed total was \$8,250,000; tax year 2019 was \$8,250,000 and 2018 was \$3,529,290.

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Narratively Speaking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After 11 years and almost exactly six months since being diagnosed with stage IV, non small cell lung cancer, the party is apparently over. Now we're on to the after-party: stage IV, papillary thyroid cancer, the more aggressive version, the one that doesn't respond to the radioiodine therapy/nuclear medicine treatment that yours truly recently completed. What seems to be semi clear, at least according to my endocrinologist, is that I never had non small lung cancer, but rather a very slow growing thyroid cancer. So slow in fact that it wasn't until approximately two years ago, nine years or so after my initial diagnosis, that the mass began to take shape in my neck; my "Adam's Apple tumor" as I called it, as some of you regular readers may recall. In effect, I was thyroid-cancer-treatment-free for nine years until it presented.

And it was during these years that I became my oncologist's "third miracle" a lung cancer patient who didn't succumb to his disease. Originally given a "13 month to two year" prognosis by my oncologist, I was not expected to live. I can still recall when my oncologist responded to Team Lourie's question about what percentage of lung cancer patients live beyond two years: Less than two percent. Could you be the one? Sure." I didn't realize then that his comments were to be taken literally. Yet here I am, a testament to modern medicine or perhaps an anomaly of random proportions. Throughout these years, my oncologist would often bring his students in to see the "amazing Mr. Lourie" ("Kreskin" has nothing on me.) I wasn't exactly the Energizer Bunny, but neither was I am I chopped liver.

But today's phone call with my endocrinologist changes my story/narrative and puts an end to my previous stature. No longer will I be someone who survived lung cancer, rather I'll be someone who survived "the friendly cancer," as papillary thyroid cancer is anecdotally described. And not that I'll take any of it personally, but I will have to make it part of my resume, if you know what I mean? So I'm not special or lucky or blessed. It simply may be that I was misdiagnosed and survived in spite of my oncologist's efforts to do no harm, even if he was treating a non-existent cancer.

Though from what I heard today, I am hardly out of the woods. In fact, it appears as if I'm in real danger. The type of papillary thyroid cancer that is confirmed that I now have, the type that doesn't respond to radioiodine therapy has been characterized as "aggressive" and "incurable." Treatable of course, but with a list of potential side effects that is hardly endearing to me and doesn't exactly bring joie to my vivre. Quite the opposite if you'll allow me an honest expression of my apprehension treating forward.

That being said, right now, those effects are on paper, they're not yet on my person. And until that happens, I will proceed with caution but remain cautiously optimistic. As my oncologist answered in reply to our general question about which cancer is better to have, non small cell lung or papillary thyroid? "Thyroid cancer is better," he said. That's something, I suppose. And even though I can't take it to the bank and invest it in my future, I'd like to think that I'll be able to take it - in pill form as it happens. After all, who has more experience living with the ups and downs and all-arounds - and the side effects that cancer treatment can produce, than yours truly? The patient who survived stage IV non small cell lung cancer for 11 and 1/2 years only to find out that it may have been untreated thyroid cancer all along.

On balance, I suppose it's a good thing that we finally got a more definitive diagnosis. I just hope we haven't totally missed the party because I'm not at all certain that I'll be able to attend next year.

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



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