

Bringing Midsummer Night's Dream to Fairfax

NEWS, PAGE 3

Duke Theseus (Justin Winters, Fairfax) and Hippolyta (Isabelle Baucum, McLean) in the City of Fairfax Theatre Company's outdoor Midsummer Night's Dream production.

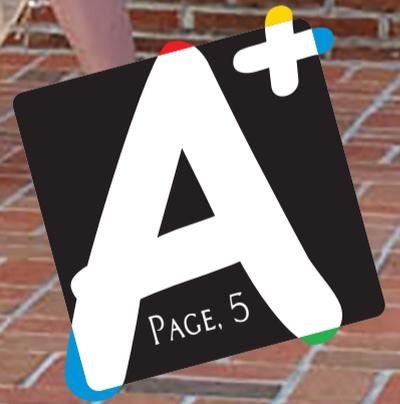


Vienna Teen Earns US Fencing Bronze

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Vienna Police Highlights

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VIENNA POLICE HIGHLIGHTS

The following summary contains various incidents of general interest as well as vehicular crashes handled by the Town of Vienna Police Department from Aug. 7 – Aug. 13, 2020.

INCIDENTS

Vehicle Tampering -- 800 Block Cottage Street, SW Between July 13 at 12:01 a.m. and Aug. 3 at 11:59 p.m. A resident reported that an unknown person entered her unlocked vehicle and took a bag of clothes. The stolen items were recovered by another resident on Oak Street on July 14

Lost Property -- 200 Block Locust Street, SE Between July 30 at 8 p.m. and Aug. 10 at 9 a.m. A resident reported that her glasses were missing.

Animal Case -- 300 Block Nutley Street, SW Aug. 7, 9 a.m. A citizen reported a severely injured fawn in the area. An officer observed the fawn was in grave condition and euthanized the animal.

Suspicious Event -- 7-11 537 Maple Avenue, West Aug. 7, 8:09 p.m. A citizen reported that she was being harassed by another woman because she refused to share a cigarette with her. An officer spoke to the other woman and the two of them agreed to avoid each other in the future.

Petit Larceny 20-006340 Wawa 465 Maple Avenue, West August 8 between 6:00 p.m. and 6:13 p.m. A group of juveniles parked their bikes outside of Wawa. When they returned, one of the bikes had been stolen.

Suspicious Vehicle -- Wolftrap Hotel 430 Maple Avenue, West Aug., 8 6:55 p.m. An officer observed a vehicle with the driver's side window broken out in the hotel parking lot. The management did not know about the damaged vehicle or if it belonged to a guest at the hotel. The officer was unable to locate the vehicle's owner.

Assault -- 200 Block Oak Street, SW Aug. 9, 5:48 p.m. A resident reported that her roommate sprayed Lysol at her. The resident was advised of the warrant process should she wish to pursue charges.

Juvenile Case -- W&OD Bike Trail near Adahi Road, SE Aug. 10, 10:12 a.m. An officer responded to the report of a juvenile sitting alone on a bench on the trail. The juvenile advised that his father was jogging on the trail and that he was waiting for him to return. When the man returned, approximately twenty minutes later, the officer counseled him on the dan-

gers of leaving the child alone on the trail.

Petit Larceny -- Giant Food 359 Maple Avenue, East Aug., 10 6:05 p.m. An employee reported a man concealed several bottles of champagne and left the store without paying for them. The employee reported that this was the same man who has shoplifted from the store in the past.

Hit and Run -- Beulah Road and Church Street, NE Aug. 10, 6:22 p.m. Officers were searching the area after receiving several calls regarding a reckless driver. The vehicle they were searching for was then involved in an accident and the driver fled the scene. This case is under investigation.

Suspicious Person -- Vienna Community Center 120 Cherry Street, SE Aug. 10, 7:28 p.m. Officers responded to the report of an intoxicated man near the gazebo. Officers located the man who lived in the vicinity and escorted him home.

Vehicle Tampering -- 100 Block Ayr Hill Avenue, NE Between Aug. 10 at 10:30 p.m. and Aug. 11 at 6:30 a.m. A resident reported that someone rummaged through his unlocked vehicle and stole a pair of prescription sunglasses and coins.

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Hermia (Graciela Perez, Centreville) and Helena (Jordan Hundley, Chantilly) discuss Helena's love for Demetrius (Benjamin Cudmore, Vienna).



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM AND SUSAN GIBSON

Bringing Midsummer Night's Dream to Fairfax

The City of Fairfax Theatre Company hosts a distanced Midsummer Night's Dream in the Veterans Amphitheater.

BY JESSICA FENG
THE CONNECTION

Much like Central Park's Shakespeare in the Park, the City of Fairfax Theatre Company hosted their own outdoor Midsummer Night's Dream. With pandemic risk still looming high, the director and staff took extra precautions to ensure audience and cast safety.

Since its inception, the Midsummer-Night's-Dream-outdoors idea has changed radically. Director and Vienna resident Adam Ressa recalls initially pitching it as only a reading before being asked to adapt it into a full play.

"It took a little bit of time; I really thought about it and decided just the chance to do these things live, for us to participate, have an experience with an audience, and make them enjoy something was worth it."

Ressa stressed the importance of safety in the planning of the play. He explains the process the crew used to ensure they surpassed safety requirements.

"The idea was that we would set it up so we would have these milestones and check back in. We would constantly adapt to make sure that we were complying with every single requirement but then on top of that, we were staying a step better."

DUE TO COVID-19 precautions, the actors only had 6-7 in-person rehearsals so blocking was difficult to master. Actress and Alexandria resident Mel Gumina, who plays Puck, enjoyed the chance to be over-the-top and brighten the audience's day.

"Our directors Adam and Andy have been absolutely fantastic with figuring out how to make social distancing fit into the context of this story, so you'll see

none of our actors on stage actually ever touch each other. The way they've done that has been really interesting because it highlights a lot about what brings people together tears them apart."

Veteran costume designer and Fairfax City resident Lori Crockett said the costuming process changed drastically. Instead of shopping for all cast members, she and Director Adam Ressa came up with photographs for cast members to replicate using their closet.

"All of this stuff that you see in the play like the wall, the masks, and the armor - we provided. I dug them out of the costume lot that we have. If anybody didn't have a particular piece then I could go out and just shop for that one person as opposed to having to costume an entire cast."

According to audience member Heather Wautlet, who lives in Vienna, the outdoor environment added to the atmosphere of the play. She appreciated the effort of the cast members to bring live theater in the current situation.

"It is just what people need now to carry them away on a magical journey of romance, comedy, music, and fairies. In a time when theatre and gatherings seem impossible, they have created an experience that is a joy for our community, the audience, actors, and creative team."

Rising McLean High School senior Benjamin Cudmore plays Demetrius, one of the lovers in the show. As one of the youngest cast members, he has learned a lot under the mentorship of older actors.

"There's one actor, in particular: Justin Winters, who plays Duke Theseus. He has been such an inspiration to me because he showed me how theater can be so fun and engaging to the audience. Justin has also taught me how to fence and how to hold a staff."

THROUGH ALL THE OBSTACLES, Ressa says the performance has been worth it to give actors a chance to perform again.

"That's the most fun; they've wanted to do this for so long and then they couldn't but we figured it out. We found a way to get them to be who they are and then we've also found a way to get people to sit and enjoy this safely."



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Chelsea Hu, of Vienna, is recognized by USA Fencing as Bronze Winner.

USA Fencing Recognizes Vienna Teen as Bronze Winner

USA Fencing has announced the 2019-20 Regional Recognition Program winners. Vienna Youth, Chelsea Hu, a freshman at BASIS Independent McLean and an elite fencer at Advanced International Fencing Club in Herndon, was honored by USA Fencing as the Bronze Winner in Women's Youth Epee in Region 6 that comprises 12 states: West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Washington D.C., Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. The Regional Recognition

Program honors the top three fencers during the season on the Regional Youth Circuit (RYC) in each region. The recognized athletes receive a gold, silver or bronze patch in honor of their achievement. Chelsea is the only female fencer in the Commonwealth of Virginia who received the honor in this category.

Chelsea has also acquired her National Ranking from USA Fencing in 2020. She is currently working towards qualifying for Junior Olympics Fencing next year.



Chelsea Hu is currently working towards qualifying for Junior Olympics Fencing next year.

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NEWS



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED
 Scoutmaster Bob Steinrauf of Boy Scout Troop 869, held a COVID-friendly Eagle Court of Honor for Life Scout Steven Lourenco.

Earning Eagle Rank in Pandemic Time

Steven Lourenco of McLean achieves rank of Eagle Scout, heads to VMI.

Scoutmaster Bob Steinrauf of Boy Scout Troop 869, held a COVID-friendly Eagle Court of Honor for Life Scout Steven Lourenco. The Court of Honor was held outside at Kent Gardens Elementary School on Saturday, Aug. 8, 2020.



Steven Lourenco

To earn the Eagle, the Scout must plan, and show leadership in accomplishing an “Eagle Scout Service Project”. The project must be approved by the Boy Scout Council before the actual work can begin, and the project must be deemed as “benefiting the community”.

Steven’s project was building and painting picnic tables for Kent Gardens Elementary School. As a former member of the Chess Club at Kent Gardens, he decided to paint chess boards and tic-tac-toe boards on each table so that children could enjoy playing outdoors.

in order to finally achieve his Eagle rank.

Steven is just one of the growing list of Scouts with Troop 869 who has earned their Eagle rank, the highest award in the Boys Scouts of America organization. The Eagle award is truly a mark of distinction, as only between 3 — 4 percent of all youth who join BSA achieve the honor. Many businesses, corporations pay close attention to resumes in hiring, and all branches of the military give preference to Eagle Scouts with an automatic higher pay grade upon successfully graduating from basic training boot camps.

To achieve the Eagle rank, the Scout must have earned a total of 21 merit badges, 13 of those are *Eagle required badges. Steven earned 33 merit badges total. He earned the following: Camping, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Cooking, Emergency Preparedness, Lifesaving, Environmental Science, First Aid, Swimming, Personal Management, Personal Fitness, Family Life, Archery, Space Exploration, Canoeing, Wilderness Survival, Backpacking, Kayaking, Hiking, Aviation, Digital Technology, Finger Printing, Geocaching, Leather Working, Mammal Study, Programming, Reptile/Amphibian, Rock Climbing, Scouting Heritage, Journalism and Genealogy.

One of the essentials to earning the Eagle seems to be perseverance. A Scout must rise through the ranks, starting out as a “Tenderfoot,” then progressing to 2nd Class, then 1st Class ranks. From there, a Scout must earn the Star rank, then Life rank. Each rank requires meeting many skill levels in Scouting, as well as accepting and performing leadership skills within the troop. Once the Scout achieves Life rank, they are finally eligible to start planning to earn their Eagle. Steven persevered and overcame delays due to COVID

One of Steven’s most memorable scouting experiences was High Adventure Camp at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. After plans to attend Philmont Scout Ranch were cancelled due to the forest fires, troop leaders were able to provide an equal if not more exciting summer experience to the scouts. Scoutmaster Steinrauf noted, “Steven hiked more miles at SBR than he would have at Philmont.”

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

Voncia 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

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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.”

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.”

“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

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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
Password: 104320

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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 SGGL)

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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AT&T proposes to replace an existing 31.8' metal streetlight pole with a new 35' metal streetlight pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 40.3' near 1600 Capital One Dr., McLean, VA (20201304). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

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

BULLETIN

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

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.

Eagle Scout

FROM PAGE 4

During Steven's COVID-friendly Eagle Court of Honor, fellow Eagle Scout Kevin Lu served as Master of Ceremonies and Scoutmaster Bob Steinrauf led the Eagle Charge and placed the Eagle neckerchief over Steven's shoulders during the ceremony. Followed by Steven's mother, Christiane Lourenco, who pinned the cherished Eagle medal on his uniform. Steven spoke briefly and presented pins to his mother and father, Severin Lourenco. He presented the Eagle Scout Mentor's Pin in absentia to former Troop Scoutmaster Jim Thomas. He also presented the Eagle Scout grandparent pin to his grandmother who was present, Fatima Neto.

That same weekend Steven was dropped off at the Virginia Military Institute where he begins his next chapter playing D1 soccer and working towards a computer science degree as an Army ROTC Cadet. His twin sister, Jessica Lourenco, will be attending UMW to earn a degree in Elementary Education.

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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 joy 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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