The Need for Food Knows No Boundaries

‘Be Twice as Good, Work Three Times as Hard’

Dairy-Box Distribution Helps Local Families

Steve Kim, with the Centreville Volunteer Fire Department, Station 17, is about to place food into a vehicle. Thanks to the DeLune Corp. of Springfield, last Tuesday, Aug. 18, some 1,400 local families in need received a box of free, dairy products.
Women’s Equality Day

By Kenneth R. “Ken” Plum
State Delegate (D-36)

Today, August 26, is Women’s Equality Day commemorating the 1920 adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution which prohibits the federal and state governments from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex. August 26, 1920—just 100 years ago—was the day when Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the proclamation that the required number of 36 states had ratified the amendment.

From the 1776 idea that “all men are created equal” to allowing women to vote was a long time coming with the real push for women’s suffrage coming about fifty years before it happened. The first women’s rights convention in the history of the United States was held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, but it took many marches, petitions, and protests outside the White House, imprisonments and hunger strikes before the amendment passed Congress and was ratified just as the country emerged from another pandemic. The dedication of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial at the location of the former Occoquan Workhouse in Northern Virginia where 120 women protesters were imprisoned was to have been dedicated this month but has been delayed with the pandemic. (https://suffragistmemorial.org/)

Virginia turned down an opportunity to be part of ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment by the General Assembly voting against it on February 12, 1920 but did get around to ratifying it on February 21, 1952. The Virginia Association Opposed to Woman’s Suffrage actively worked against the amendment using a familiar argument—“Woman Suffrage: The Vanguard of Socialism.” A 1910 broadside of the organization now in the collection of the Virginia State Library used the argument that “If you hold your marriage, your family life, your home, your religion, as sacred, dear and inviolate, to be preserved for yourself, and for your children, for all time, then work with all your might against Socialism’s vanguard—Woman’s Suffrage.” In another publication by the same organization the argument was made that “Women cannot have the franchise without going into politics, and the political woman will be a menace to society, to the home and to the state.”

Virginia was late also in ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment whose provisions include a guarantee that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” Congress approved the amendment in 1972 with a deadline for ratification by 1979, later extended to 1982.

Numerous attempts by me and others to get Virginia to ratify the ERA failed until the outcome of the elections in 2019 resulted in enough new members elected to make Virginia the 38th and last state needed to make ratification a part of the Constitution, but the issue of the deadline remains to be resolved.

Virginia has been too slow in responding to issues of human rights in the past, but I look forward to reporting to you in coming weeks on the progress being made in erasing racial inequalities in the Special Session of the General Assembly now underway.

Commentary
The Need for Food Knows No Boundaries

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

Alex Rodriguez is Organizing Chair of the Herndon Labor Support Center. On Saturday, Aug. 22, shortly after 9:30 in the morning, a white box truck with the words, ‘Heritage Fellowship Church’ pulls into the 7-Eleven parking lot in the Town of Herndon, an informal day laborer site. Inside are 300 boxes of food to be donated to anyone who asks. Rodriguez later said, “This gives you an idea about the generosity of the Herndon community. I believe someone once said, ‘Character is what you do when no one is watching.’ Well, there’s plenty of character in this small town.”

At first, only a few people cautiously stepped up to the truck. They were handed a closed box filled with food. Volunteers had to walk across the lot and deliver the boxes to other day laborers lingering on the sidewalks. Within 30 minutes, a line of predominantly working-class Latino families many with small children arrived, some by car and some by foot. Volunteers popped open trunks, loaded boxes of food into the vehicles, and handed boxes to others.

According to Cesar del Aguila, the Heritage Fellowship Church is an example of the kindness and generosity people can have towards a different community. “I can personally tell you their act of compassion with this food drive was well received and has lessened the anxiety in the Latino community,” he said.

This is not the first time members of the church distributed food at the 7-Eleven. According to Rev. Dr. Dustin B. Sullivan, Pastor Heritage Fellowship Church, in May, the Herndon-based church found itself challenged with what to do with a half-full, box truck of food the community generously donated. “Church members literally could not handle the quantity of what we were given,” he said.

See Food, Page 8

Dairy-Box Distribution Helps Local Families

Thanks to the De Lune Corp. of Springfield, last Tuesday, Aug. 18, some 1,400 local families in need received a box of free, dairy products. Each box contained cream cheese, instant milk powder, plain and vanilla whole-milk yogurt, butter and 64 ounces of low-fat milk. Volunteers from churches and other entities loaded the boxes into the recipients’ cars.

De Lune and Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith’s office organized it, and Centreville’s Mount Olive Baptist Church hosted the event in its parking lot. Helping were Fairfax County’s Neighborhood and Community Services, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Human Services Transportation (Fastran) and Medical Reserve Corps. Mount Olive distributed 200 boxes and Mount Pleasant Baptist Church picked up 200 boxes there for its own distribution. The other 1,000 boxes were delivered via Fastran to low-income housing areas for pickup at The Fields of Chantilly and Meadows of Chantilly, the Centreville Regional Library, Lee Overlook Apartments in Centreville, and Cornerstones in Reston.

Bonnie Hobbs

The Need for Food Knows No Boundaries

Neither does the need for a Herndon Labor Support Center.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

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See Food, Page 8
The proposed Floris Conservatory for Fine Arts & Music, a $40M, 48,000 square foot Scimores Academy LLC project for children 4-18 years of age planned for 8.06 acres at the intersection of West Ox and Centreville Roads in Herndon, might not come to fruition. “We are very thankful for the support and appreciation we had received from the county and community. It would be a wonderful addition,” said Hemanth Kumar Balasundaram, Founder and Managing Principal of McLean-based Scimores Corporation. The project is located in the Hunter Mill District of Fairfax County.

According to Balasundaram, investors funded “close to $12.5M to bring the project to the construction phase.” The company’s website reported the project initiated in March 2015, followed by a completed Feasibility Study and Generalized Development-Special Exception Plat.

TWO YEARS LATER, in March 2017, the County Planning Commission approved the Rezoning & Special Exception Application. In June 2017, the Board of Supervisors approved it, and the next month, Scimores Academy LLC submitted the Site Plan to DPZ. In October 2017, Scimores Academy LLC purchased the four parcels of land, two fronting Centreville Road and the other two fronting West Ox. Three historic structures remain on the property. At a Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce event in March 2019, Balasundaram announced the construction of the corporation’s new project would begin that June, “an aggressive build’ with completion by September 2020. Balasundaram said the project would have parking for 250 cars, twenty-five studio spaces for group classes, ten private pods for lessons, a 300-seat auditorium and a 120-seat conference center. The light-filled building would be centered on a courtyard and offer country views. “We will have a music shop, cafe, and a professional recording studio,” he said. Shovels did not hit the ground.

On Jan. 14, 2020, Andrew Painter Esq., acting on behalf of Scimores Academy, LLC, requested the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to approve “Additional Time to Establish Use or Commence Construction for Special Exception SE 2016-HM-007, Scimores Academy, LLC (Hunter Mill District).” Among other things, Painter informed the Board that Scimores Academy, LLC, diligently continued to seek funding. They also terminated outstanding leases on the property, and stabilized and secured its three historic residences.

THE BOARD of Supervisors approved the request for 24 months additional time. Slightly over six months later, a wooden tri-board is erected on Scimores’ building site. It reads: “Pad Sites Available.” Balasundaram said they listed the property in case their group was unable to find the needed funds, someone else could develop the property or joint venture with them, something they actively continued to seek. He said, “Our effort to raise funds for the construction got delayed for a few reasons, and furthermore due to COVID-19. While a group of us are still working to raise the needed funds of about $5M to take this project forward, the larger group given the current uncertainties have decided to pass the baton and exit... Everything stands as approved to date. “ Upon learning of the project’s status, John Boylan, President and CEO of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, said, “We held a recent event on the arts. It reinforced the importance of the arts to the community as well as to businesses.”

Establish Use or Commence Construction for Special Exception SE 2016-007, Scimores Academy, LLC (Hunter Mill District).
Senior Living

For Seniors, Love Is Not Cancelled

This region is a prime location for meeting and dating other singles of all ages safely.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

Even during the current coronavirus pandemic, the need for healthy human emotions like intimacy has not disappeared, particularly for seniors.

The lack of positive social connections, which is linked to physical and mental illnesses, has increased during COVID. In fact, 43 percent of adults aged 60 or older, report feeling lonely, according to a study by the National Academy of Sciences pandemic, particularly by those who are widowed or divorced.

While seniors are often reluctant to use online dating services, this year's pandemic has made finding meaningful companionship a priority, says Barbie Adler, Founder and President of Selective Search, a matchmaking firm. “The restrictions and safety precautions put in place by the pandemic has allowed relationships to evolve at a slower pace,” Adler said, a pace older people are more likely to be comfortable with.

“Our couples are forming strong bonds over Zoom wine tastings, book discussions, sharing past travel memories and planning future adventures, and venturing out for picnics in the park,” she said. “Without overbooked schedules and quick dinners reservations, clients are recognizing their own desire to connect, and are enjoying the process of getting to know someone. The first date-second date-third date playbook is no longer obvious.”

“Moving toward intimate connection requires trust, the ability to be vulnerable, and the courage to try something new. However, during a pandemic, there are few things that we are encouraged not to do.” said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College, Associate Psychologist at Addiction Services in Montgomery County, Md., and a private practitioner.

“The need for romantic and even sexual relationships persist during COVID, says therapist and former geriatric nurse Barbara Rubenstein, LCSW-C. “Many people might be surprised to know that 57 percent of adults over the age of 60 are sexually active,” she said. “Obviously, chronic illnesses, which increase as a person gets older, can affect that figure, but I would say that sex, when practiced safely, will have a positive affect on the mental and possibly physical health of seniors.” — Barbara Rubenstein, LCSW-C

“I have encouraged my clients that physical distancing is not social distancing. When it comes to dating, I’m thinking that getting creative in connecting without putting ourselves at too much risk is the way to go.” — Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., a professor of psychology

Many people might be surprised to know that 57 percent of adults over the age of 60 are sexually active. I would say that sex, when practiced safely, will have a positive affect on the mental and possibly physical health of seniors.” — Barbara Rubenstein, LCSW-C

Several websites and apps are designed to cater to the unique needs of the senior demographic, with features such as filters for age, location, and relationship status. Additionally, some services offer virtual dates, allowing couples to dress up and go on virtual dates, which can be especially appealing given the current restrictions.

One of the most popular online dating platforms for seniors is SilverSneakers, which focuses on connecting those over the age of 50. The platform offers various features, including the ability to search for others based on specific criteria, such as location, age, and interests.

Another option is OurTime, which is specifically designed for people over 50. This platform allows users to create detailed profiles, search for matches, and communicate with others through messages.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, there are still opportunities for seniors to find meaningful connections and form relationships. Whether through online dating platforms or more traditional methods, the key is to remain open-minded and willing to try new things.

Seniors can also benefit from support groups and community events that focus on connecting individuals of similar age and interests. These platforms provide a space for seniors to share experiences, offer support, and form new relationships.

In conclusion, while the current pandemic has posed challenges for seniors seeking romantic connections, there are still ways to form meaningful relationships and find happiness. With the right mindset and approach, seniors can continue to thrive and enjoy the many benefits of companionship and intimacy.

For more information on online dating services for seniors, visit the websites of SilverSneakers and OurTime, or reach out to local community centers and support groups for additional resources.

— Marilyn Campbell

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

Senior Living
Democratic Endorsement Unwelcomed

To the Editor:

In response to your article, “Fairfax County Democratic Committee Calls Virtual Unassembled Caucus” (8/4/20), the Democratic Party endorsement of Herndon Town Council candidates is unwelcomed by many town residents who wish to keep our elections as non-partisan as possible.

Demographically, the town of Herndon is mostly Democratic, so those candidates who seek an endorsement, and therefore whose names will appear on the Democratic sample ballot, have a distinct advantage since many voters who are not thoroughly familiar with the individual candidates simply look at the sample ballot and vote “party line.”

Those endorsed candidates are mostly a shoo-in to get elected.

The candidates who seek this party endorsement know this, which is why they do it.

The disadvantage of this, however, is that any candidate who chooses not to declare themselves to be a Democrat, or who chooses not to seek the Democratic Party’s endorsement, is left out of the process and their names won’t even appear on the party’s caucus/endorsement ballot.

This means that any other good candidates who are Republican, Independent, Libertarian, or who just choose not to seek an endorsement, will have little chance of getting elected. I recall that we have had many very capable, honorable and dedicated councilmen over the years who were Republicans -- Harlos Reece and Richard Downer, for example.

Also, those who get the Democratic Party endorsement know that they have to do little campaigning in order to earn their votes from us.

Diversity of thought on a town council is a good thing. Councilman del Aguila, who avowedly supports the Democratic endorsement process says, “I believe candidates should share their world view.” Conversely, I believe that candidates who choose to serve on town council should have a Herndon-centric view, always thinking of what is best for Herndon, no matter what your party is. This endorsement process is not good for Herndon, but is only good for the individual candidates who seek it.

Barbara Glakas
Herndon

Party Endorsements Unnecessary

To the Editor:

I do not approve of candidates for Herndon Town Council seeking a political party endorsement. The candidate should stand on his or her own two feet. Issues facing the Town government should be decided on their own merits. It is very unfortunate that the Fairfax County Democratic Party is insinuating itself into the upcoming Town election.

Shame on those seeking the party’s endorsement.

Walter (Jay) Hadlock
Herndon

Fun Things To Do

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES
The Fairfax County Park Authority will livestream 25 free summer concert events featuring a mix of nationally known and locally based 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/performancecalendar for this performance, and click on the links for the livestream video.

Schedule
Saturday, Aug. 22 – The End of America's: The Boogie Woogie Years, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 29 – Mount Vernon Nights: Los Texmaniacs, 7:30 p.m.

ONLINE CODING CLASSES FOR KIDS
CodeWizardsHQ is offering online after school coding classes for kids and summer coding classes for kids with a structured curriculum that is comprehensive, developmental, challenging, and fun. Students get to code a project in every class.

Expect the most fun and effective live, teacher-led coding classes for kids with supportive instructors, including live office hours and 24/7 access to their proprietary coding platform. Teachers take a students-first approach to teaching Python, Java, HTML/ CSS, and JavaScripts that guarantees students will reach their potential. Visit www.CodeWizardsHQ.com.
Reston Hospital Center Achieves Top-tier newborn care. We work hand-in-hand to be our community’s trusted health provider for women and growing families.”

“This year, expectant parents are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of hospital quality and understand that it needs to play a factor in selecting where to deliver their baby,” said Brad Bowman, MD, chief medical offices, Reston Hospital. “The 2020 Labor and Delivery Excellence Award recognizes those hospitals that provide high quality care for mothers during labor and delivery, so parents can have confidence in their decision.”

“Our women’s care team strives for excellence,” said Irene Williford, chief nursing officer of Reston Hospital Center. “We want the best possible outcomes for our mothers, babies and families.”

For more information about Reston Hospital Center visit www.restonhospital.com or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.


electronical landscaping

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From Page 2

development and discrimination against people of color. They will be holding a Car Rally on Wednesday, Aug. 26, from 6-7 p.m. at the St. Thom as a Beacon Congregation parking lot, 1421 Wiehle Ave., Reston. For more information, contact Amanda Andre: amanda.andere@gmail.com

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THURSDAY/AUG. 27
NOVA B2G Matchmaking Conference. The 8th Annual Northern Virginia B2G Match- making Conference & Expo will take place on Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020. This premier business-to-government event will include matchmaking, educational breakout sessions, a virtual Expo Hall, and innovative keynotes - all online. More than 350+ small business attendees will have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one matchmaking meetings with federal, state, and local agencies, prime contractors, and prime subcontractors. Participants can visit the virtual Small Business EXPO showcasing services uniquely geared towards helping government contractors succeed. Do not miss the chance to hear insights from government and industry speakers on how to ‘manage through disruption’ in the current landscape. Visit the website: https://novab2g.restonchamber.org/

FRIDAY/AUG. 28
Hunter Mill Melodies: Veronneau. 7:30 p.m. A BBC and CBC, and collecting 6 WAMMIES for her musical soul. She's not portioning the prize around indiscriminately - and not according to my demands either. I'm getting it with strict controls. Controls which involve some of my requirements (chocolate) being out of site, but unfortunately not out of my mind, indirectly, by shopping in store since it's unlike- ly I'll be social-distancing once she's back at home. I Ergo, she is in control of the food, from it's initial order to its ultimate put-away at home. As a result, either I'm not getting what I crave, or I'm getting with strict controls. Controls which involve some of my requirements (chocolate) being out of site, but unfortunately not out of my mind, and then having Dina distributing it very judiciously - and not according to my demands either. Particularly so for the candy. Dina is hiding it - in plain sight, rather than risking her own exposure - and of course, why, if not to feed my dogs, who is the target? Their mouths pop open (“Oh boy”) in anticipation and the candy population is growing. My reaction is as reliable/instinctive almost as if I have unwrapped and eaten them - without fail. In an absolute predictable. Moreover within a minute the dining room, same time, same place as the day after day, year after year, same reflex (something to do with saliva). And that's predictable as Skinner, behavior modification and conditioned reflex. Content-wise, I remember Pavlov's dog, B.F. Skinner, behavior modification and conditioned reflex. He'd trained a dog to salivate in response to a certain stimulus. And when the stimulus was presented, the dog would salivate. This is the same principle that is used in biofeedback and behavior modification. Dina may not be able to exactly set her watch this year, but she's certainly aware of the importance of her behavior and her influence on mine. She knows that if she doesn't get the candy, I'll start to complain. She knows that if she doesn't get the candy, I'll start to complain. And when I start to complain, the next thing you know, she's giving me the candy. This is a classic example of positive reinforcement. It works by increasing the likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future. And when it works, and when it doesn't, based on his experiences. Cost is $20. Emmanuel: jason@coldwag.com. Visit the website: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ambassadors-spies-how-our-ambassadors-deal-with-intelligence-agencies-tickets-11629067925

FILL THE TRUCK FOR WFCM
The Clifton Presbyterian Church Mission Committee will sponsor a Fill the Truck for WFCM on Saturday, Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Clifton Presbyterian Church Parking lot. WFCM has identified the following items most needed in August: Instant mashed potatoes, diced canned, canned corn, vegetables, sugar, flour, tomato sauce, boxed pasta, canned fruit, shampoo/conditioner, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, and feminine pads.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

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The Doggone Truth

By KENNETH R. LOURIE

I don't remember much substance from my freshmen-level, psychology 101 class at the University of Maryland in 1972 except that the lecture hall sat approximately 600 students, everyone were graded on a bell curve (with which I was totally unfamiliar), the professor always wore black leather pants, and he brought his dog to every lecture. Sitting as far away as I did (my choice), I can’t even tell you what kind of dog was at the end of his leash. Content, however, I do remember that Skinner, behavior modification and conditioned reflex (something to do with saliva). And that’s about it. Oh, and I received a “D” in my first-ever below.-C” grade. Still, it is my first-ever memory of classes while attending college. As such, it has stuck with me for years. As has predictable behavior.

What I am referring to is how I can be predict- ed to behave after my wife, Dina, doles out my daily Neslens Crunch bar allotment. As you formal readers may recall, due to the pandemic and my status as a primary Covid risk category 1a, lung disease and compromised immune system (the trifecta of trouble), I am not allowed to go to the grocery store, pharmacy or wholesale outlets and mix with the masses and risk exposure. What this means is that since the time in 40 or so years, I am not doing the in-store shopping. My wife, Dina, is more, she is ordering food on-line, rather than risking her own exposure, and more indirectly, by shopping in store since it’s unlik- ely I’ll be social-distancing once she’s back at home. Ergo, she is in control of the food, from its initial order to its ultimate put-away at home. As a result, either I’m not getting what I crave, or I’m getting with strict controls. Controls which involve some of my requirements (chocolate) being out of site, but unfortunately not out of my mind, and then having Dina distributing it very judiciously - and not according to my demands either. Particularly so for the candy. Dina is hiding it - in plain sight, rather than risking her own exposure - and of course, why, if not to feed my dogs, who is the target? Their mouths pop open (“Oh boy”) in anticipation and the candy population is growing. My reaction is as reliable/instinctive almost as if I have unwrapped and eaten them - without fail. In an absolute predictable. Moreover within a minute the dining room, same time, same place as the day after day, year after year, same reflex (something to do with saliva). And that's predictable as Skinner, behavior modification and conditioned reflex. He'd trained a dog to salivate in response to a certain stimulus. And when the stimulus was presented, the dog would salivate. This is the same principle that is used in biofeedback and behavior modification. Dina may not be able to exactly set her watch this year, but she's certainly aware of the importance of her behavior and her influence on mine. She knows that if she doesn't get the candy, I'll start to complain. She knows that if she doesn't get the candy, I'll start to complain. And when I start to complain, the next thing you know, she's giving me the candy. This is a classic example of positive reinforcement. It works by increasing the likelihood of a behavior occurring in the future. And when it works, and when it doesn’t, based on his experiences. Cost is $20. Emmanuel: jason@coldwag.com. Visit the website: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ambassadors-spies-how-our-ambassadors-deal-with-intelligence-agencies-tickets-11629067925

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For more information about Reston Hospital Center visit www.restonhospital.com or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.
When she attended Centreville High, Lexis Yelis was known as Alexis Acar. But as soon as she graduated in 2012, she moved to New York City to pursue her singer-songwriter career.

It took hard work and hustle, loads of creativity—and the ability to keep going despite serious obstacles. But today, her dream is becoming a reality; and in June, she released her first song, “Canadian Quesadilla.”

Initially, Yelis created “Panific The Musical,” enabling her to segway into the music industry as a ghostwriter and collaborator. She then worked backstage for years as an integral part of the sustainability teams at several major, music events.

“I was the director for sustainability for the Vans Warped Tour ‘17, ‘18, and ‘19 and worked on the green teams for Coachella and Stagecoach,” she said. “Last summer, I had the opportunity to run sustainability at Jiffy Lube Live in Bristow, Va., as well. The job entails working to make sure tours, festivals, venues and concerts are as sustainable as possible through composting, recycling, waste reduction, carbon offsets and education/engagement.”

But then, in 2019, Yelis was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called cutaneous t-cell lymphoma. It’s also referred to as mycosis fungoides (MF), because it actually presents as something similar to ringworm—which is why it took 15 years for doctors to diagnose her properly.

“The rash actually showed up when I was 10 years old,” she said. “MF is actually something I will always have, and which cannot be cured. Although, for the most part, it is not terminal and is something I’ll die with, not from. However, because of how rare it is—along with how hard it is to diagnose—there is limited research. So I also hope to use my music as a platform for activism [regarding this disease].”

IN ADDITION, the scrappy and talented singer also used her cancer as the catalyst for her to finally make the move from behind the scenes to center stage.

“I was doing waiting and, honestly, over the excuses I’d created for myself,” said Yelis. “I’ve learned there’s no better time than the present to go after what you want—and that’s what I’m trying to do, every day. I’ve decided to dedicate my life to making music. And whether you love it or hate it, I’m going to do what makes me happy—and that’s all that matters.”

Recently, she’s mainly been focused on building her brand and, she said, “Writing tons of new music.” The release of “Canadian Quesadilla” showcases her proud, genre-bending songwriting. Available on all major streaming platforms, it features endless anecdotes that bring the listener into an alternate universe. The song is actually about meeting the love of my life, Couchsurf, on Vans Warped Tour and the shenanigans we would get into, on and off the road,” explained Yelis.

“Post tour, we were together long distance for over a year before living in the same ZIP code.”

“The writing of this song was, honestly, a realization that this was the person I wanted to do everything and nothing with, for the rest of my life,” she continued. “And that, for me, was scary to admit, let alone write a cheesy song about.” Couchsurf is a fellow singer-songwriter, and he and Yelis are now engaged and living together.

Before COVID-19 threw a wrench into everyone’s lives, she described herself as “relatively nomadic, traveling around the country, working festivals and writing music. I go where the music is. I was actually working on a new record in Atlanta with Couchsurf and our producer, Aaron Pace, when we got wind that quarantine was imminent. So that kind of changed our game plan for the year. I went from having a year of full sustainability work and touring to nothing.”

But Yelis is making the best of it. “Quarantine has had its ups and downs,” she said. “In the beginning, I felt this pressure to make great art and that I had to always be creating—which caused me some insane stress. I have since gotten in touch with my roots, literally, and have been endlessly gardening.

“I think people don’t realize that this is a traumatic experience that we are all going through, and that you can’t process it fully until it’s over. I’m sure some great art will come out of all of this, regardless. Since I am immunosuppressed, I have just been chillin’, working on this release and taking tons of precautions. I’m hanging in there, for sure.”

WHEN ASKED what impact Centreville High had on her life and if any teachers had a lasting influence, Yelis said her high-school years were “both some of the best and worst times of my life. There were definitely two boss ladies there who changed my life.”

She said Choral Director Lynne Babcock was “one of the first people to put me in my place, so to speak. I think she really helped me realize that there are a ton of people out there trying to be singers, so I have to be twice as good and work three times as hard if I want to get anywhere. Although I only did choir for two years of high school, she is someone I will never forget.”

Yelis’s other high-school hero was her AP environmental-science teacher, Heidi Seig (now Averette). “She was my Eco Queen who showed me that caring about the environment could be a career,” said Yelis. “She was the catalyst for quite a number of my environmental endeavors. And, truly, if she didn’t see the potential in an overeager, hipster, eco nerd, I don’t think I would have ever achieved all that I have as a leader in the event-sustainability world.”

Yelis’s latest song, her second, dropped on Aug. 28. And on Nov. 2, she’ll be part of the largest, digital, music festival ever, called #Ivoted. To access it, people just have to text a selfie of themselves with their “I Voted” sticker, or holding their blank ballot, to #Ivoted. ***

For more information about Yelis, check out her Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/LEXIS_YELIS - Home/lexisyelis/ or follow her on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/lexisyelis/.

Food for Neighbors in Need

“Food for Neighbors in Need” is the name of the organization, was to help the workers seeking to support themselves and their families, the long-term goal was to establish a privately funded, safe, indoor facility. Among other things, the facility would be used for people seeking work to use the modern technology there and inform the community of their availability.

“We were amazed this time (in June) to have the support of Herndon Councillor Cesar del Aguila, police officers of the Herndon Police precinct, a neighboring church of predominantly Korean Americans, along with our previous ministry partners at the senior buildings,” said Sullivan.

Sullivan described how those in need defied the fear of ICE raids because they trusted God had provided a safe haven in the 7-Eleven parking lot. “Could you imagine being so brave, just to satisfy the need of providing for your family?” he asked.

Rodriguez helped distribute the food on Aug. 22. Later, he said while the purpose of the Herndon Labor Support Center, a recently incorporated 501 (c) (3) organization, was to help the workers seeking to support themselves and their families, the long-term goal was to establish a privately funded, safe, indoor facility. Among other things, the facility would be used for people seeking work to use the modern technology there and inform the community of their availability.

Day laborers feel comfortable enough to approach the truck and accept boxes of free food.