

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

SENIOR LIVING

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Dairy-Box Distribution Helps Local Families

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Steve Kim, with the Centreville Volunteer Fire Department, Station 17, is about to place food into a vehicle. 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.

The Need for Food Knows No Boundaries

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'Be Twice as Good, Work Three Times as Hard'

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

AUGUST 26 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



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COMMENTARY

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.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

HERNDON COMMUNITY CENTER PHASED RE-OPENING

The Herndon Community Center re-opened on Thursday, August 20. Temporary hours of operation will be in effect Thursday, August 20-Friday, September 4. The HCC will operate Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. and closed on Saturday and Sundays. The pool is open for lap swimming and water walking and fitness area is limited initially to a maximum of 10 users for a 60-minute timeslot. A reservation is required. The locker rooms,

spa, sauna, racquetball courts, and drop-in fitness classes are not available during this phase of re-opening. Personal training services are available. To learn how to make a reservation, please visit Herndon-va.gov/recreation, email parksandrec@herndon-va.gov or call 703-787-7300 between 8 a.m.-4 p.m. To learn more about the Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department, visit us at herndon-va.gov/recreation, or call 703-787-7300.

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 26

Racial Justice: A Car Rally. The Martin Luther King Jr. Christian Church along with fellow faith-based congregations acknowledge our country's persistent and pervasive

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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(From left) Mount Olive Baptist Church volunteers Sandra Chew, Roland Williams, Rubin Cuffee and Tony McGhee with food boxes to distribute.



Volunteer Jason Adams carries a box of dairy products to a vehicle.



CERT member Michelle Minstrell (green shirt) hands food boxes to the volunteers.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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 orga-

nized 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

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



People in cars, on foot, and even on bicycles arrive to receive free boxes of food at the 7-Eleven in the Town of Herndon distributed by volunteers and members of Heritage Fellowship Church.

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 communi-



A mother takes a box of food from Rev. Dr. Dustin B. Sullivan, Pastor Heritage Fellowship Church as her son watches and waits.

ty," 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

SEE FOOD, PAGE 8

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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NEWS



Artist rendering of the proposed building design for The Floris Conservatory of Fine Arts & Music.

Threatening Snag On Herndon Arts Build

Large group of investors pull out.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

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 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



Five years after courting and securing investor funding and going through the processes for County approvals, construction on The Floris Conservatory of Fine Arts & Music appears in jeopardy as major investors pull out and a sign is on the property.

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."

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 mementos and planning future adventures, and venturing out for picnics in the park," she said.

"Without overbooked schedules and quick dinner 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, these are the very 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 Outpatient Addictions 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."

Older adults have a higher risk of serious COVID-19 complications, and safety measures are critical. But wearing a mask and maintaining a 6-foot distance is a

likely obstacle to romance at a certain point.

"COVID-19 is not a sexually transmitted disease, [but] it is spread through respiratory droplets when someone with the virus coughs, sneezes or talks," said Dr. Benjamin Schwartz, M.D., Division Director of Epidemiology & Population Health for the Fairfax County Health Department. "It can be spread by touching someone's eyes, nose and mouth."

While researchers at the Mayo Clinic encourage abstinence among seniors who are a greater risk for a serious illness because of pre-existing medical conditions, Lorente believes in creating a healthy balance.

"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

"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 folks, particularly those who live alone and have been practicing physical distancing as encouraged by the CDC, are experiencing feelings of depression, isolation, and cheerlessness," she said. "Sure, staying in your own bubble in your house is the best way to protect yourself from the virus, but the negative impact of [depression and isolation] is real too."

It's possible to maintain a romantic and intimate relationship while also maintaining a safe social distance. "Many of my older clients are also quite comfortable using technology such as Zoom and Facetime to connect too," said Lorente. "I've been doing talks over Zoom where people can attend and meet and are way more intimate than let's say a big lecture hall. Interestingly, we may see a move toward longer courtships in order to build trust, which may be really fun." In fact, those video conferencing platforms allow partners to dress up and go on virtual dates, watch movies or listen to music together. "I have encouraged my clients that physical distancing is not social distancing," said Lorente.

"I have a client in her mid-sixties who lives by herself," Lorente said. "Last session I was checking in with her, worried about possible isolation. She sounded energized." The client had just finished playing a game of bocce ball in the morning with her new friend.

A 67-year-old widower who lives in Old Town, met a woman who is divorced and 65. They met on eHarmony, getting together before COVID. Both were looking for someone their own age who was healthy, active, attractive and interested in a relationship. They hike and bike together in Rock Creek Park and Great Falls. They traveled together until COVID, and were supposed to go to Italy this summer. They've been together for a year and divide their time between her place and his, but they do stay together during COVID-19. They say that they couldn't imagine being alone and socially isolated during this period.



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VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Hunter Mill Road over Colvin Run Bridge Replacement Fairfax County

Virtual Design Public Hearing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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State Project: 0674-029-358, P101, B643
UPCs: 110499, 110433
Federal: STP-BR09 (295), BR-5B01 (164)

LETTER

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 -- Harlon 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 avidly 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 merit. It is very unfortunate that the Fair-

fax County Democratic Party is insinuating itself into the upcoming Town election.

Shame on those seeking the party's endorsement.

Walter (Jay) Hadlock
Herndon

Announcements

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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

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/per-](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances)

formances, select the date on the calendar for this performance, and click on the links for the livestream video.

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

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Announcements

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Legals

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Homewood Suites Reston, LLC trading as Homewood Suites, 1735 Business Center Dr. Reston, VA 20190-5300. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Warren Thompson, Chairman. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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

NEWS

Reston Hospital Center Achieves Two Healthgrades Excellence Awards™ for Women's Care

Reston Hospital Center is a recipient of the Healthgrades 2020 Labor and Delivery Excellence Award™ and the 2020 Obstetrics and Gynecology Excellence Award™ for the fourth consecutive year.

The Labor and Delivery Excellence Award distinction places Reston Hospital Center in the top five percent of all hospitals evaluated and recognizes the exceptional care of mothers during and after labor and delivery, according to Healthgrades, the leading resource that connects consumers, physicians, and health systems.

"We are delighted to be recognized by Healthgrades again this year," said John Deardorff, president and chief executive officer of Reston Hospital Center and HCA's Northern Virginia Market. "Our care team is committed to providing women in our community with the highest quality of care, close to home. We are also proud to partner with the nation's leading neonatology providers from Children's National Hospital to offer top-tier newborn care. We work hand-in-

hand to be our community's trusted health provider for women and growing families."

"Today, 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 officer, Healthgrades. "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 outcomes for all of our patients. Our team of doctors, nurses, and care professionals work collaboratively every day to achieve this goal. This is an exciting recognition of their efforts."

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

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

racial inequities that have led to violence and discrimination against people of color. They will be holding a Car Rally on Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2020 from 6-7 p.m. at the St. Thomas a Becket Congregation parking lot, 1421 Wiehle Ave., Reston. For more information, contact Amanda Andere: amanda.andere@gmail.com

THURSDAY/AUG. 27

NOVA B2G Matchmaking Conference. The 8th Annual Northern Virginia B2G Matchmaking 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, and prime contractors. Participants can visit the virtual Small Business EXPO showcasing services uniquely geared towards helping government contractors succeed. Do not miss the chance to hear guidance 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 virtual event. Veronneau is an award-winning band who have performed live on the BBC and CBC, and collecting 6 WAMMIES for best jazz vocals, band and recordings - for their 3 Top 10 jazz and world charting albums. They will perform an intimate show in duo format at the Lake Anne Wine Bar. To view a livestream concert, go to the Fairfax County Park Authority's Summer Entertainment Series main page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances, select the date on the calendar for this performance, and click on the links for the livestream video.

SUNDAY/AUG. 30

Ambassadors & Spies. 2-3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Sponsored by Cold War Museum. Ambassador Charles Ray describes how embassy

diplomats and intelligence people get along -- when it works, and when it doesn't, based on his experiences. Cost is \$20. Email: jason@coldwar.org. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ambassadors-spies-how-us-ambassadors-deal-with-intelligence-agencies-tickets-116920687925>

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 tomatoes, canned corn, vegetable oil, sugar, flour, tomato sauce, boxed pasta, canned fruit, shampoo/conditioner, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, and feminine pads.

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The Doggone Truth



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't remember much substance from my freshmen-level, psychology 100 class at the University of Maryland in 1972 except that the lecture hall sat approximately 600 students, tests 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-wise, I remember Pavlov's dog, B.F. Skinner, behavior modification and conditioned reflex (something to do with saliva). And that's about it. Oh, and I received a "D," 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 predicted to behave after my wife, Dina, does out my daily Nestles Crunch bar allotment. As you regular readers may recall, due to the pandemic and my status as a primary Covid risk: over age 65, 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, for the first time in 40 or so years, I am not doing the in-store shopping. My wife, Dina is. Moreover, she is ordering our food on-line, rather than risking her own exposure - and mine indirectly, by shopping in store since it's unlikely we'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/need, or 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, 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, she claims, for weeks now, and try as I most definitely have, I can't seem to find it.

Now back to Pavlov and Skinner and the dog. Every day, in the morning, before I get up and walk downstairs to the kitchen to begin my morning pill routine, Dina will have placed two Nestles' Crunch fun-size bars in an empty candy dish in the dining room, same time, same place as the day before. So I know where and when to look and I do every day. To invoke these famous psychologists, a conditioned response has been created. I have anticipated her behavior and accordingly I walk into the dining room and reach for these two Nestles Crunch bars. My behavior has become absolutely predictable. Moreover within a minute or so of finding them (more like 10 seconds), I will have unwrapped and eaten them - without fail. My reaction is as reliable/instinctive almost as if I were hit on the front of my knee with a mallet. Just as the knee reflexively jerks forward, so does my mouth pop open ("Oh boy") in anticipation and confirmation of the candy allocation.

However, this has not been any kind of controlled experiment. Dina is not learning anything about my behavior that she hasn't witnessed first hand dating back to 1978. She's not portioning out these hidden treats to see how I'll react. She knows. If I don't get my candy, I'll fuss about it (that's a polite description of my reaction). Rather she is attempting to manage my behavior/chocolate consumption (even though to quote my brother, Richard: "The weight looks good on me") because I'm pre-diabetic and have already been diagnosed with two types of cancer: non small cell lung cancer and papillary thyroid, both stage IV - in a pandemic, no less, and in consideration of the fact that it's unhealthy for me to maintain my present pace.

Dina may not be able to exactly set her watch by my appearance in the dining room, but she certainly knows it's only a matter of time before I'll grab the bars; time she hopes she's helping to guarantee that I'll have after the candy has been eaten.

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

'Be Twice as Good, Work Three Times as Hard'

Centreville High grad is now a singer-songwriter in NYC.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

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 “Panic! 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-songwriter Lexis Yelis has now released two songs.

singer also used her cancer as the catalyst for her to finally make the move from behind the scenes to center stage.

“I was done with 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 indie, romcom fantasy. And there's a good reason for that.

“The song is actually about meeting the love of my life, Couchsurf, on Vans Warped Tour and all 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



Lexis Yelis was known as Alexis Acar at Centreville High.

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 full of 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, hippie, 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/>.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEXIS YELIS

Food for Neighbors in Need

FROM PAGE 3

blessed to provide,” said Sullivan. The recommendation was made to travel to the 7-Eleven convenience store in Herndon. After seeing the need that day, church members decided to add the site to their food distribution ministry permanently.

In June, the congregation raised \$15,000 to ensure quality boxes of food could be provided to 500 families throughout the community, including families and individuals coming to the 7-Eleven in Herndon.

“We were amazed this time (in June) to have the support of Herndon Councilmember 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.

ly?” 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.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION