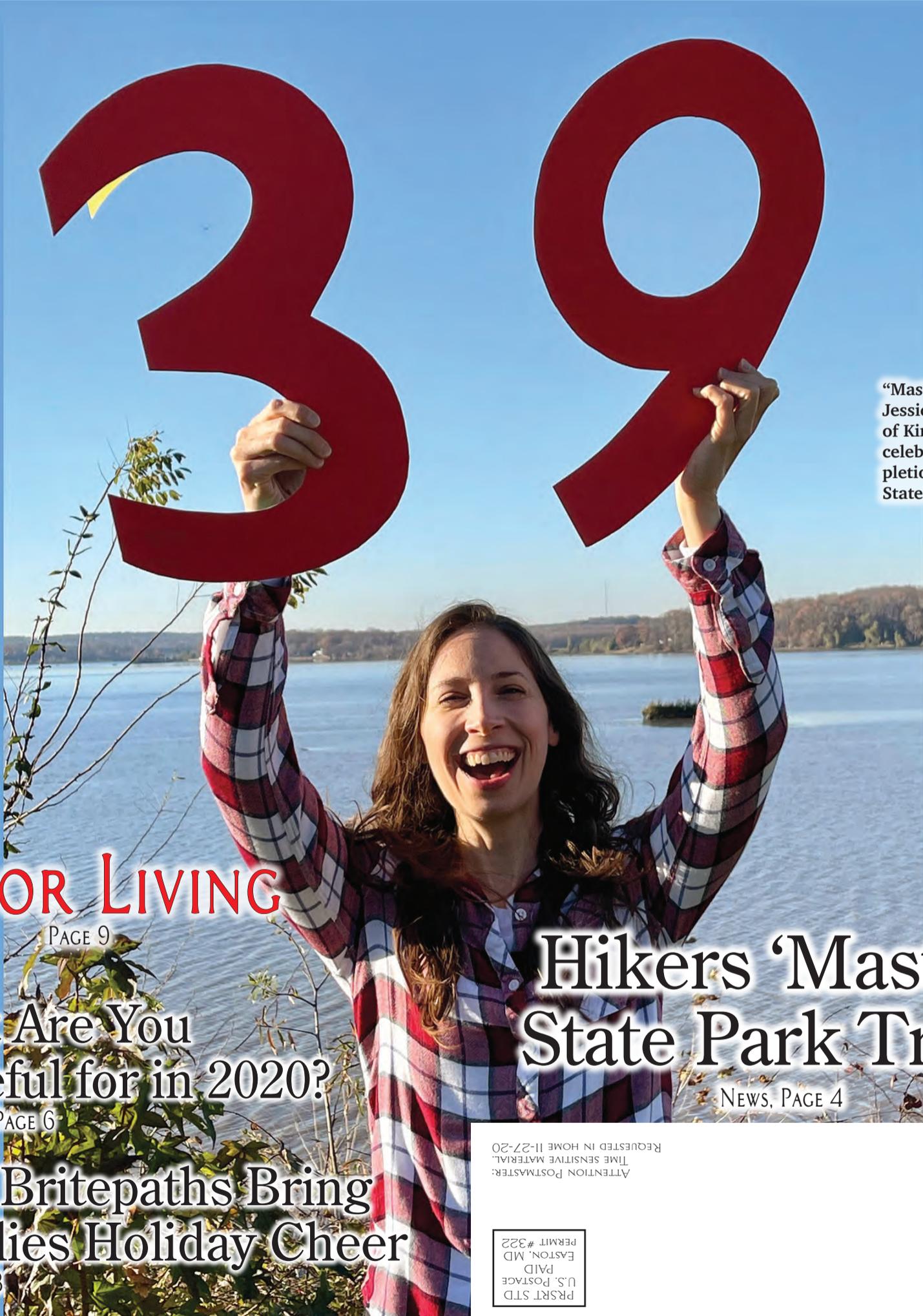


CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station



“Master Hiker”
Jessica Bowser,
of Kingstowne,
celebrates com-
pletion of her 39
State Park quest.

SENIOR LIVING

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OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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NEWS

Currently the Liberty View signs are still at the corner of Beulah Street and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway, although the mixed-use project is not happening and Monument Realty does not own any of the land anymore.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/
THE CONNECTION

Land Acquired Near Springfield for New Inova Medical Campus

Changes coming to area close to the metro and town center.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

A piece of land that was slated to be a housing area called “Liberty View,” is now the property of the Inova Health System and they are planning a 21-acre medical campus to serve the residents of Franconia, Springfield, Mount Vernon and Lorton. The spot for the new hospital is a parcel of unoccupied land between the Inova Healthplex – Franconia/Springfield, and Beulah Street, providing proximity to the metro, the Franconia-Springfield Parkway and I-95.

Monument Realty owned 12 acres of the land, and had plans underway for a mixed-use development consisting of five buildings for the property, but as the economy developed this year the way it has, Inova looked toward expanding their health care facilities. They acquired the remaining twelve acres of land from Monument Realty and its New York-based partner, Atlas Capital Group.

THE ACQUISITION of the additional real estate is part of Inova’s emerging plan to enhance services, thereby more fully meeting the growing healthcare needs of the eastern region of Northern Virginia, including Franconia, Springfield, Mount Vernon and Lorton in Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria. While Inova is committed to continuing to provide emergency and inpatient services in Alexandria and Mount Vernon, the expansion of the Springfield site affords a unique opportunity to serve the broader region more comprehensively.

“This additional land provides unlimited opportunity for programs, services, and facilities that support our mission to provide world-class healthcare to every patient we have the privilege to serve,” said J. Stephen Jones, MD, FACS, Inova President and CEO. “We are steadfast in our commitment to serve our communities, and we are confident that increasing the availability of care in our eastern region is an important next step for our patients, our region, and for Inova.”

The Healthplex facility, which is a few hundred yards away from the site, “will continue serving the community through the development of this project,”



Circled here is the 21-acre site that Inova recently purchased.

said Melissa Poretz Riddy, the Inova Government & Community Relations Director for the Eastern Region. Riddy did not say what will happen to the Healthplex when the new medical campus is up and running in a few years.

Details on the new medical campus, including program and facility scope and size will be finalized in the coming months, Inova said. While initial concept development is underway, Inova anticipates the facility planning, regulatory, and construction processes will take place over the next several years. Inova will be filing land use applications with Fairfax County next year to seek approval for the project. It is located in Lee District, and county Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) is supporting any improvements in that area. “I am committed to working with both INOVA, as well as the surrounding community, to address any necessary infrastructure improvements that might be identified as this development progresses,” Lusk said.

TRANSPORTATION to the new medical campus will be spearheaded by the proximity of the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station, but for those who are walking, it is about a 20-minute hike. A shuttle service, or an extension of the TAGS buses to operate on a more frequent schedule could be the answer here but it is too early to tell at this point. Supervisor Lusk wants TAGS to be a part of it. “As this project advances, I will insist that the existing service is expanded to include additionally developed locations,” Lusk said. Inova is on board with that too. “We’re in the beginning phases of this project and we will work collaboratively with Fairfax County on the transportation and access considerations for the site through the development process,” said Riddy.

Help Britepaths Bring Families Holiday Cheer

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

For people struggling to pay for food and rent, it’s tough to think about the holidays without a sense of sadness. So Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths is doing what it can to help, but it needs the community’s assistance to make Thanksgiving and Christmas a happy one for 500 local families in need.

Due to the pandemic, Britepaths and the social workers who refer families needing help won’t be able to directly deliver food and gifts to the recipients. So instead of people sponsoring families, as in past years, Britepaths is requesting donations of money and gift cards.

It will mail an average of \$100 in gift cards to each family referred to it, enabling these families to purchase food for Thanksgiving and the December holidays, as well as buy gifts for their children. And monetary contributions in any amount will help Britepaths purchase these cards. For more information – or to arrange for gift-card delivery to the office – contact Vanessa De La Rosa at vdelarosa@britepaths.org or 703-273-8829, ext. 888.

Donate at <https://britepaths.org/civicrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=6>. Checks payable to Britepaths may be mailed to Britepaths, 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. Write “Holiday” on the memo line. Or mail gift cards to Britepaths that may be used at Walmart, Target and major grocery stores such as Aldi, Safeway, Giant and Lidl.

“The holidays will be so different for all of us this year, and especially challenging for families who are struggling from lost income, illness and other effects of the pandemic,” said Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel. “It’s a heartwarming feeling to know your act of kindness can make such a big difference for our neighbors at a profoundly difficult time.”

Staff at Fairfax County Public Schools with which Britepaths



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Lisa Whetzel

“The holidays will be so different for all of us this year, and especially challenging for families who are struggling from lost income, illness and other effects of the pandemic.”

— Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel

partners referred families needing assistance. Locally, these schools include Lanier Middle, plus Daniels Run, Providence, Fairfax Villa and Eagle View elementaries.

“Donations of funds or gift cards are greatly needed to ensure that all families will receive assistance,” said Whetzel. “We hope community members will be inspired to make the season brighter for hardworking families who may otherwise go without holiday meals and presents for their children.”

Britepaths is in its 36th year of providing help and a way forward for individuals and families, throughout the county, who’ve fallen on hard times. Whetzel said the organization is grateful to the Walmart in Fairfax City for sponsoring its Holiday Program efforts in the local area.

Hikers 'Master' State Park Trails

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Love our parks and being outdoors? Looking for a fresh air challenge? The Virginia State Park's "Trail Quest Program" could be the adventure for you.

Participants earn levels of recognition by accumulating unique state park visits, leading to the title "Master Hiker," by completing visits to all 39 Virginia state parks. Nancy Heltman, Director of Visitor Services for Virginia's Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, found "...the program gets people to new places," exploring beyond the nearest park that they might visit often.

Under the "Quest" program, registered participants earn badges after visiting their first, fifth, tenth, and twentieth state park. Completing a visit to all the parks earns the final badge and the designation "Master Hiker." There is no time limit on the amount of time taken to complete visits. A few people have done all visits in the same year, like Eileen Loftus, who visited all 38 parks in 2019. Some, like

Jessica Bowser, Kingstowne, have spread visits over a longer period. Jessica completed her final visit, to Holiday Lake State Park, in the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, on Nov. 17, about five years after beginning her challenge.

Bowser began her park quest at nearby Mason Neck where eagles are plentiful, and completed her quest hiking around Holiday Lake, enjoying the trail around the lake and being celebrated by park staff. Her favorite park? She acknowledges the difficulty of choosing as they are all different, but names New River Trail State Park in Southwestern VA, for its 57 mile trail along the scenic and historic New River, with tunnels and numerous bridges adding interest. How does it feel to complete the quest? Bowser described feeling bittersweet...elated but a bit sad that the 39 park adventure is finished. She adds, "The good news is that there are more state parks coming... it's not over."

Since the program's inception in 2010, 132 people have attained the "Master Hiker" level. The 43 hikers who completed the program in 2020 was double the 2019



Eileen Loftus attained Master Hiker status in 2019, when there were 38 State Parks in the system.

number. Heltman attributes the increase to the "surge of individuals we found enjoying visits to the outdoors."

Those interested in joining the 7,145 registered participants can sign on at www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/trail-quest. And perhaps start by planning to OptOutside as



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Virginia's newest Master Hiker, Jessica Bowser, of Kingstowne, reflects on her journey through 39 state parks.

an alternative to shopping over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, when the state parks offer a photo

contest sweetener (see <https://vasp.fun/2020Optoutside> for Nov. 26-29 contest information).

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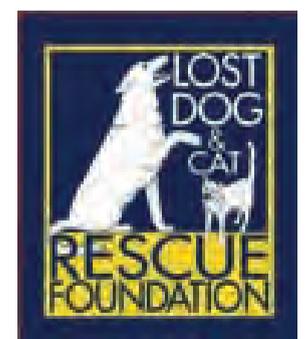
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Fairfax City's Elf Hunt for Small Business Saturday

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Small Business Saturday is this coming Saturday, Nov. 28 – and the City of Fairfax is showcasing its small businesses with a citywide Elf Hunt. But this year, instead of hiding the elf inside their stores, business owners will incorporate them into their storefront window displays.

Each participating business will have an elf and QR code displayed in their window, and the code can be scanned to verify the elf was “found.” The code also links to those businesses’ Websites and will provide ways to support them online, plus information on specials.

Residents and visitors will have from Nov. 28 through Sunday, Dec. 13, to find 10 or more elves. People doing so will have their names entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of five \$100 gift cards to the Fairfax City business of their choice.



second year. Its Office of Economic Development and Economic Development Authority are partnering on this effort with the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce and the Old Town Fairfax Business Assn.

The City’s traditional, hard-copy Elf Hunt cards will be available for those who visit participating businesses in person, since many will be offering in-store specials for the day. These cards will list the businesses; and after each in-store visit, the business will stamp the card confirming the customer’s elf find.

The cards will be available at Fairfax City’s welcome station, this Saturday, from 10 a.m.-noon, at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. There, people may also pick up morning treats and hot cocoa and receive a free Small Business Saturday canvas tote, stickers and more.

Stressing the importance of shopping local during a time when many small businesses are hurting, Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jennifer Rose said her organization is “happy to once again partner with Fairfax City’s Office of Economic Development to encourage patronizing our local businesses and bringing our businesses and community together.”

“Our businesses in Old Town have invested in our community and support our activities,” added Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. Executive Director Shannon Duffy, “We are here to support them; they are our champions.”

THIS IS AN OUTDOOR EVENT, but visitors who’ve been diagnosed with COVID-19, are awaiting test results or show any symptoms of the virus are asked to stay home. To ensure the health and safety of the public, the Fairfax City Economic Development Office will be implementing comprehensive COVID-19 protocols to mitigate the spread of the virus.

There’ll be temporal temperature checks upon entering a store, plus limited occupancy, and attendees are asked to wear face coverings. Hand sanitizer will be available, social distancing between patrons will be required, and the entrances and exits will be monitored for one-way traffic.

For more information about Fairfax City’s Small Business Saturday Elf Hunt, go to fairfaxcityconnected.com/elfhunt2020.

“Our businesses in Old Town have invested in our community and support our activities. We are here to support them; they are our champions.”

— Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. Executive Director Shannon Duffy

“Because of the pandemic, Small Business Saturday is more important than ever,” said Assistant Economic Development Director Danette Nguyen. “While this day brings attention to the importance of shopping local, it has never been more needed.”

“Supporting small businesses is about supporting our communities,” said Nguyen. “We urge everyone to get out to shop and dine at City businesses. And when residents do that, they help ensure the survival of our City’s small business community and directly impact City neighborhoods.”

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY is celebrated annually on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Founded by American Express, it’s a nationwide event that began in 2010 to encourage people to patronize their local, neighborhood businesses and bring more holiday customers to them.

Fairfax City is participating for its

Fairfax Water

NOTICE OF WATER RATES AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

December 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

At 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2020, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water’s offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA. The meeting will also be available online for remote attendance. For more information, visit fairfaxwater.org/meeting-schedule.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2021, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,320 to \$4,400[†].
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$18,030 to \$19,610.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,370 to \$1,430[†].
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$14.40 to \$14.85[†].
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.20 to \$3.33 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.85 to \$3.90.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$49 to \$50.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and the Peak Use Charge.
- A decrease in the Overhead Charge for Labor from 104% to 102%.
- An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$39 to \$40.

[†]Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8” residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$196 million budget for calendar year 2021*. Water sales are expected to provide \$168.9 million and the remaining \$27.1 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

– \$1,000s –		
Category	2020	2021
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$59,083	\$61,352
Power and Utilities	10,730	10,815
Chemicals	7,869	7,928
Purchased Water	5,014	8,364
Supplies and Materials	5,507	5,784
Insurance	1,230	1,100
Fuel	535	700
Postage	586	620
Contractual Services	13,779	14,102
Professional Services	1,336	1,298
Other	2,296	2,452
Sub-Total	107,965	114,515
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(10,313)	(10,763)
Total	\$97,652	\$103,752

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$42,358,365
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$38,400,000

* Fairfax Water’s Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes can be viewed on our website at fairfaxwater.org/rates.

Those wishing to speak at this hearing (in person or remotely) or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Karen Barnette at 703-289-6029. Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting

Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 6-8 p.m.

www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting

You are invited to participate in a virtual joint public meeting held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). According to Virginia Code, these organizations shall conduct a joint public meeting annually for the purposes of presenting to the public, and receiving public comments on, the transportation projects proposed and conducted by each entity in Planning District 8 (Northern Virginia).

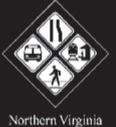
The virtual meeting will begin with a brief presentation followed by a public comment period. During the presentation you can learn about various transportation initiatives, including:

- Virginia's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- VTrans Draft Mid-term Transportation Needs
- NVTA's FY2020-2025 Six Year Program; TransAction; COVID-19 analysis; and the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia
- NVTC's Commuter Choice program

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the meeting will be posted at www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting. The team of VDOT, DRPT, OIPI, CTB, NVTA, NVTC and VRE representatives will make a presentation beginning at 6 p.m. highlighting their transportation programs and receive public comments about Virginia's transportation network for about an hour after the presentation.

Give your comments during the joint meeting after the presentation concludes or submit your written comments by **January 4, 2021** by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.



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OPINION

What Are You Grateful for on Thanksgiving 2020?

By MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Jeff McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

"In 2020 I'm grateful for the residents of Fairfax County, who have shown so much compassion and empathy during these difficult times. We are lucky to live in Fairfax County and part of that is because of the people who live here. A lot has changed since I first took office at the beginning of year, but care for the community wasn't one of those changes. Residents stepped up to support their neighbors and so many volunteered their time this year. 2020 has been challenging, but I have so much hope for the future."



Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield)

"This Thanksgiving, I am very grateful for the health of my family and me. I am also thankful for the heroes in our community, the police, fire and first responders that are working to keep us safe in challenging times, those serving at home or abroad, our County staff who continue to re-



spond to COVID, the teachers that are doing the best they can for our children, and our residents for their support of our businesses and those in need as they struggle to make it through the pandemic. I wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving whether you are celebrating it with family or virtually."



Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock District) with wife Yvette and newborn son Mateo.

"While 2020 has been a trying year, I feel enormously privileged to have so much to be thankful for. On Sept. 30, Yvette and I welcomed our first child, Mateo. Both mom and Mateo are healthy and doing great! I'm also thankful for the solidarity and community spirit displayed by my constituents in the Braddock District throughout the pandemic. It has been incredible to see the generosity they have displayed to help those in need, especially during our record-setting Stuff the Bus food drives!"



Supervisor Daniel Storck (D-Mt Vernon) with his family

"I am grateful for the many friends I love and have loved. The places I have seen and can see, even if I can't visit now. People who love without judging and care for others that do. On a personal note, I am grateful for my amazing wife with her beautiful blue eyes and smile, my two healthy and entertaining grandbabies, getting to spend time with my spunky and earthy mom, and for family and friends who are there for each other no matter what. I am also thankful for the earth, our communities, neighbors and, of course, my staff, who sustain me and support all of us."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Supervisor Pat Herry participating in the Stuff the Bus campaign.



Karen Corbett Sanders, Fairfax County School Board Member Mt. Vernon District

Thanksgiving 2020 is bittersweet. The year has been filled with loss, uncertainty, and disruption for our students, families and staff. During these unprecedented times, it's more important than ever to reflect on what we're grateful for. This Thanksgiving, I'm thankful for the incredible dedication our teachers, administrators, and staff have demonstrated since March. I'm also thankful for our dedicated community and non-profit leaders who have come together and supported our families in need.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Laura Jane Cohen, Fairfax County School Board Member Springfield District

This year has been a reminder of how easy it is to take the familiar for granted. This year I am grateful for: The sound of my kids running down the stairs; The way my youngest stands next to me just to see how much taller he is; My kids' teachers; Patience, grace, and kindness from unexpected places.

PHOTO BY FCPS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Megan O. McLaughlin, Fairfax County School Board Member Braddock District

This year, more than ever, I am deeply grateful for the love of family and friends and the opportunity to serve such a highly engaged community. These two things fuel my strong conviction that 2021 will bring brighter days, and collectively our community will solve its most pressing challenges.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

What Are You Thankful for on Thanksgiving 2020?

The Connection asked people encountered outside, just enjoying nature or waiting in line for services: "What are you thankful for in 2020?" As you think about how you would answer, does it surprise you that "family" was a recurrent theme in the answer we heard from your neighbors?

— SUSAN LAUME



Tom Storer, insurance agent, Lorton: "My family's health."



Thomas Lee, engineer, Centerville: "That I'm alive and healthy and my family is all healthy."



Tia, Therapy Dog, Springfield (thru interpreter): "Having my human with me almost all the time, and a lot more time in the parks. Although I miss reading with kids at the library and other work, I've noticed how glad people are to greet me outside on the trails this year."

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Grace Musser (right), college student, Alexandria; with sister Kate, high school student: "Definitely family. That we can still be together even though we are distanced. And Joe Biden."



Lillian B, IT manager, Springfield: "Life. For my family though we're separated. That pandemic should bring people closer to friends, family, and even strangers since we're all going through it together. To have my job which wasn't affected by Covid. Just for life."



Marie D., nurse, Lorton: "That people appreciate their neighbors more. Health care workers are much more appreciated. That 150 million people votedand wish people would pay more attention to that."

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Park Authority Area 4 Maintenance Operations crew members, Roger Bundt, driving dump truck, and Jai Worthery, operating the bobcat cab, team up.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/
THE CONNECTION

Teamwork in the Park

Weekend volunteers removed invasive vines from around a historic building at Laurel Hill Park's Central Green (see Connection, Nov 19, 2020). Then, Park Authority Area 4 Maintenance Operations removed the piled debris from the park on Nov. 18. Natural debris from yards and parks is processed at the landfill into mulch, either leaf or wood mulch, which is available free to county residents for use in yards and gardens.

— SUSAN LAUME



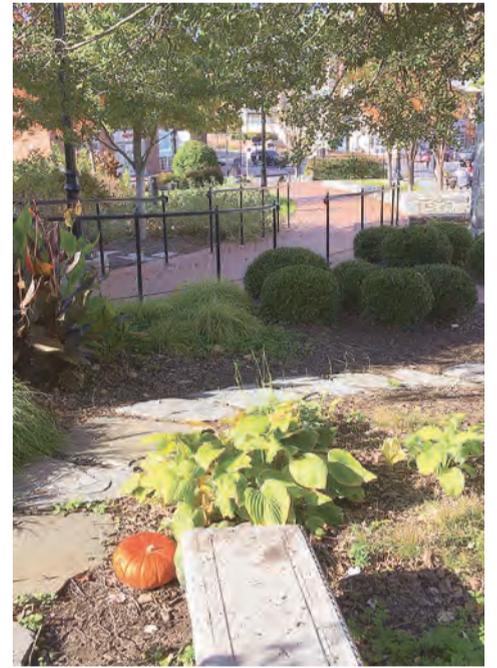
Volunteers gathered invasive vine pulled from fencing and trees into debris piles large enough to obscure bobcat equipment.



Jai Worthery skillfully maneuvers debris into a truck bed for Bundt's transport to the nearby landfill.

A Peaceful Garden with Vibrant Colors

The Kitty Pozer Garden, next to Fairfax City's Old Town Square, was named after the avid gardener and longtime resident of the oldest house in the City. Adjacent to the garden, it's 208 years old and now a museum called the Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House. Both Historic Fairfax City Inc. and the Fairfax Ferns Garden Club preserved and revitalized Pozer's garden.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



AREA ROUNDUPS

Firefighters Collecting Toys for Tots

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department is participating in the National Capital Region Fire and EMS Departments' 2020 Toys for Tots campaign. Fire stations are now accepting toy donations through Sunday, Dec. 13. Because of the pandemic – and to minimize contact with the firefighters and paramedics – collection boxes will be outside every station's front door, each day, until 8 p.m. for toy drop-offs.

Gifts must be new and unwrapped; toys used as weapons will not be accepted. Checks or money orders must be made payable to Toys for Tots. Toddlers through youths age 17 will receive gifts. Because of COVID-19, the need is even greater this year, than usual, so the firefighters are hoping the community will be as generous as possible.

Help Britepaths Feed Local Students

During COVID-19, nonprofit Britepaths is working with staff and volunteers at its partner schools to help them provide food for students in need. In Fairfax, it's feeding children at Daniels Run, Providence and Little Run elementary schools, Front and Lanier middle schools and Fairfax High. But it can't do it without the community's help. Cash donations are the most useful and allow Britepaths to provide gift cards to assist schools actively providing food support to their families in need.

To donate, go to <https://britepaths.org/civircrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=14> or mail checks, payable to Britepaths, to Britepaths, 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. Write "Food4Thought" and the designated school's name (if any) on the memo line.

SENIOR LIVING

Seniors and the Flu

Getting vaccinated can reduce hospital visits and admissions during anticipated shortage due to COVID-19.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

While shopping for dinner on a recent Wednesday afternoon, Roger Whitehead spotted a sign near the pharmacy of a grocery store near his home in Alexandria.

"It was easy. Once I'd picked up my groceries, I stopped by the pharmacy before I got in the check-out line," said Whitehead, 65. "I filled out some paperwork and rolled up my sleeve. It took about 30 seconds."

To stave off an onslaught of emergency room visits as a result of both the flu and COVID-19 cases, particularly for the elderly, local health officials, are underscoring the importance of the flu vaccination. While it differs from year-to-year, flu season is typically at its peak from December through February. Getting a flu shot can reduce the risk of being hospitalized.

"Older people with certain health conditions, in particular, are at high risk of serious flu complications," said Kurt Larrick, Assistant Director, Arlington County Department of Human Services. "The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated."

It's not too late to receive a vaccine and an option for seniors is Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent, licensed only for those over the age of 65. "It is es-



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

pecially important this year," said Dr. Travis Gayles, Montgomery County health officer. "[It] can also save health care resources for the care of patients with COVID-19."

Those over 65 are especially likely to get dangerously ill from catching the flu. "The flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 are both spreading disease this flu season," said Shauna Severo, Director of Fairfax County Health Services. "As the incidence of COVID-19 increases the healthcare system could be overwhelmed treating both patients with the flu and patients with COVID-19."

Local jurisdictions launched campaigns to facilitate access to the flu vaccine and to increase awareness among those who have not yet received it. "Arlington has partnered with other Northern Virginia jurisdictions on the Stay Well Nova Campaign, which is providing education, outreach, and resources around flu vaccine," said Larrick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu every year, especially people who are at high risk.

FOR MORE FLU INFORMATION

- ◆ Fairfax County: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/flu>
- ◆ Alexandria: alexandriava.gov/Health
- ◆ Arlington: Stay Well Northern Virginia Campaign <https://www.staywellnova.com>
- ◆ Inova Flu Services <https://www.inova.org/our-services/inova-well/medical-wellness/immunizations>
- ◆ Montgomery County, Md.: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/resident/flu.html>
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Holiday Celebrations COVID Style

Dealing with separation from family and friends.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The decision to spend holidays away from loved ones can be a necessity during the coronavirus pandemic. For those who're accustomed to celebrating the season with large family gatherings, the solitude that comes with COVID-19 can be a difficult adjustment.

"First, acknowledge that this is going to be a different kind of holiday," said licensed psychologist Denise T. Dewhurst, Ph.D., Professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "Reach out to someone else you know who is also alone. Even a brief phone call benefit both of you."

A little forethought into how one's time will be spent will offer structure and can help manage feelings of loneliness, advises Dewhurst. "For some, this may be watching television, or reading. For others, it might be a hobby or craft."

"Work on creating something, maybe baking, art projects, family genealogy project, a journal about your life," added therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

"Take a virtual tour of somewhere you would like to visit."

Practice gratitude, suggests Dewhurst. "Remind yourself of things you do have to be thankful for," she said. Connect with family members virtually. Talking to one person or one group at a time might allow for better conversations, she said.

Video conferencing with family and friends, particularly during a meal, can allow one to simulate being together in person. "Talking and seeing others' faces is second best to being there and definitely will feel more like you're part of things than not," said psychiatrist Gail Saltz, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the NY Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell School of Medicine. "Make a dish that matches the dish of where you would normally be going. Eating the same food, while having conversation increases the enjoyment and sense of being together."

Put on a mask and take a socially distanced walk or other outdoor activity, says Saltz. "It may not be the sit-down meal, but a safe masked, distant outside walk can provide some time together," she said.

Reminisce about past holidays and envision those that lie ahead. "Spend a part of the day looking at photos privately of those you love and remembering fun and close times you have had together," said Saltz. "Keep in mind that when this is over, you'll resume making more memories together."

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-Werner Heisenberg

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-Werner Heisenberg

SATURDAY/NOV. 28
Small Business Saturday Elf Hunt.
Fairfax City's Office of Economic Development, Economic Development Authority, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, and the Old Town Fairfax Business Association are partnering together to rally the city to support and celebrate small businesses on Small Business Saturday. Instead of hiding the elf in stores, businesses will incorporate them into their storefront window displays. Each participating business will have an elf and QR code displayed in their window that can be scanned to verify the elf was "found". When the QR code is scanned, not only will it verify the elf was found but links to participating business websites will be included along with ways to support them online and information on specials. Traditional hardcopy Elf Hunt cards will also be available for those who visit participating businesses in-person, as many of them will be offering in-store specials for the day. The traditional Elf Hunt cards will list each participating business and when you visit in-store, the business will stamp the card confirming your "find". Traditional Elf Hunt cards will be available at our "Welcome Station" on Saturday, November 28 from 10:00 am to noon at Old Town Square, 10415 North Street. Residents and visitors will have from Saturday, November 28 through Sunday, December 13 to find ten or more elves. Participants that find 10 or more elves, will have their name entered into a drawing for the chance to win one of five \$100 gift cards to their Fairfax City business of choice. Visit fairfaxcityconnected.com/elfhunt2020.

STARTING JAN. 26, 2021
On-Line ESL Classes. 7-9 p.m. Free on-line ESL classes will be offered Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9 PM, from January 26 to April 1, 2021. Must register online December 10, 2020 at www.lordoflifeva.org. Class size limited. Free.

DEC. 1 TO JAN. 21
Citizenship Test Preparation. 7-8:30 p.m. Free On-Line Citizenship Test Preparation classes. Register at www.lordoflifeva.org. We will use ZOOM software. For permanent residents who are eligible for citizenship. Sponsored by Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax and Centreville.

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CALENDAR

NOW THRU THE HOLIDAYS

Santa at Springfield Town Center. Santa and his reindeer will be arriving at Springfield Town Center on Nov. 6 to kick-off the holiday season. In an effort to create touchless experiences and accommodate varying levels of visitor comfort, Santa will be available at Springfield Town Center via numerous experiences and offerings: Picture with Santa; Virtual Experience; Family Pet Photos on Mondays; Family Photos and Visits with Santa. Reservations are required for all Santa and photo offerings.

SATURDAY/NOV. 28

PlayaBowls Reston Opening. 12-8 p.m. At Reston Town Center, 1820 Discovery Street. Reston, next to PR Barbers. The first 50 people who order will get their bowls on us! So make sure to line up early. Visit the website: playabowls.com

SUNDAY/NOV. 29

Home for Holidays. 2-5 p.m. Online sponsored by Unity of Fairfax. This year's holiday season is going to be different. How do we create a holiday season that's meaningful and joyful... even if we spend it alone? In this 3-hour retreat, they explore this together. Cost: \$45 (or sliding scale). Visit the website: <https://home-for-the-holidays-2020-11-29.eventbrite.com/?aff=cnnews>

NOV. 29 TO DEC. 3

Virtual Chanukah Bazaar. 8 to 10 p.m. Treasures Judaica Gift Shop is offering a virtual catalog of Chanukah products. Extending through the end of Chanukah, this site will capture your contact information and order. Pay by credit card directly through the website safely. Contactless pick-up will be by appointment in the Temple parking lot. Visit the website: <https://sisterhood-treasures-judaica-shop.shoplightspeed.com>

NOW THRU DEC. 15

BUMC Holiday Marketplace. Burke United Methodist Church is hosting an online Holiday Marketplace. Proceeds will benefit our Cambodia ministry and the preschool. Includes links to many local crafters. Visit www.burkeumc.org

MONDAY/NOV. 30

UFC 4 Challenge. 3:30-6:30 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. In the octagon, there can only be one winner. The OFC is hosting a UFC 4 challenge and McLean's best fighter will win a UFC-themed prize! Show us your MMA skills and may the best fighter win. To register, call MCC at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711 or visit: www.mcleancenter.org.

DEC. 4 AND DEC. 11

Centrestage Spotlight. 6-8 p.m. Virtual Event. Centrestage Spotlight is a virtual show that will feature songs, monologues and scenes performed by Theatre Centreville students. Audience members will receive a link so the show can be enjoyed virtually. The first show can be viewed between Dec 4th and Dec 7th. The second show can be enjoyed Dec 11th through Dec 14th. To purchase tickets, go to <https://www.theatrecentreville.com/wpa/>

FRIDAY/DEC. 4

Holiday Drive-In Movie. At Tysons Corner Center. Friday, December 4 – Elf from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. Each night, the fun will kick-off at 5 p.m. (movie starts at 7:30 p.m.) and will last until the movie has concluded with food available from participating eateries as well as some live entertainment, trivia, and music prior to the show. Tickets for Elf will be released the week of November 23rd. Reservation required, with a donation of \$10 or more to Food for Others, a local nonprofit providing food to neighbors in need.

DEC. 4-6

Capital Craft Fair. 12 to 5 p.m. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. A Showcase of Artistry and Craftsmanship - The Capital Craft Fair will feature

works of art and fine crafts presented by more than 100 juried artists. Artists will offer a wide variety of handmade art in several mediums. Cost: \$10 Adults (in advance) \$12 (at the door). Visit the website: <https://hubs.la/H0y-gJs0>

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. 3 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, CenterStage, Reston. Cost is \$5 Reston/\$10 Non-Reston. Mark Brutsché brings his unique spin on this childhood favorite that will be fun for the whole family. Visit the website www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Cookie Cutter Creation - 3D Printing Workshop. 10-11:30 a.m. Online. Get into the holiday STEM spirit and explore the world of 3D design to create your very own cookie cutter. In this virtual workshop, the STEM educators will take you through the process of designing a 3D cookie cutter on TinkerCad. Cookie cutters will be printed on the Children's Science Center 3D printer and available for pick up on Friday, December 18 from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday, December 19 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Cost is \$25. Visit the website: <https://www.childsci.org/events/diy-workshop-cookie-cutter-creation>

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Pancake Breakfast. 9:30-11:30 a.m. At Turner Farm, 10609 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Turner Farmhouse Foundation invites the community to come to its Pancake Breakfast and Fundraiser. Come tour the grounds, visit the milk house and enjoy pancakes, coffee, tea and hot chocolate. They are raising funds to work on the Retreat House, and will start construction once the Special Exception application is approved. Contact Sarah Kirk, skirkbtr@gmail.com, 703-403-3072.

DEC. 5 AND 6

Festival of Nativities. 5-8 p.m. At Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6219 Villa Street, Franconia. Celebrate Christmas at an open house event to view nativities from around the world. This will be a wonderful way to focus on the true meaning of Christmas as the holiday season begins. To promote the health and safety of volunteers and guests, they ask that you sign up for a window of time to attend. Details and the registration link can be found at: www.festivalofnativities.com

DEC. 5 AND 6

McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival. The 2020 McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival, produced by the McLean Community Center, is being broadcast live this year at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, and Sunday, Dec. 6. Founded in 1982, the popular juried show features an exceptional group of regional artisans. Admission to the show is free; however, registration is required. This year's festival includes high-quality, traditional handcrafted works by established and seasoned artisans as well as innovative concepts by a number of new artists who are exhibiting. There will be pottery, glass, jewelry, holiday decorations, mixed media, fashion accessories, wood, fine art, artisanal foods, and more, all on display and all for sale—just in time for the holidays. Call the center at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711 or visit the website at www.mcleancenter.org/special-events.

DEC. 5 AND 6

Festival of Nativities. 5-8 p.m. At Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6219 Villa Street, Franconia. Celebrate Christmas at an open house event to view nativities from around the world. This will be a wonderful way to focus on the true meaning of Christmas as the holiday season begins. To promote the health and safety of volunteers and guests, they ask that you sign up for a window of time to attend. Details and the registration link can be found at: www.festivalofnativities.com

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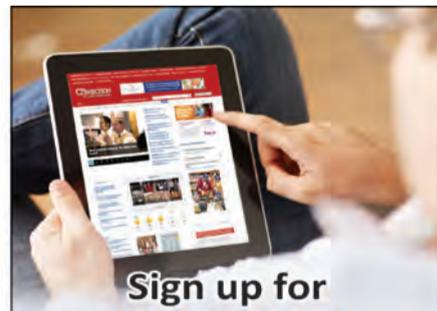
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A Question of Time



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Let us presume, for the sake of this column, that I only have papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, and that my years as a non small cell lung cancer patient, also stage IV, are over. If true, it begs the question, which I have been asked twice since this recategorization has become - in my circle anyway, public knowledge: how does it make me feel (to no longer be one scan result away from having months to live to now having years to live)? As obvious an answer as it should be: I can't exactly get my mind around it. I keep hearing that "If it's too good to be true, it isn't" advisory in my head. I realize medicine is different, and that's what scares me.

Well, I can't really say I feel as if I have my life back because I never really lived like it was gone. I pretty much - treatments and side effects notwithstanding - tried to maintain my normal life and to continue my routine as well. I didn't stray too far from my well-established dos and don'ts. I didn't write down a bucket list and therefore spent no time pursuing long-standing goals. I just did what I have always done. I didn't want to be controlled by my cancer; doing things, taking trips, etc. just because I had a "terminal" diagnosis. To my way of thinking, that would have been akin to reinforcing a negative: a cancer that was likely to kill me sooner rather than later so I better do such and such or else. Instead, I just lived my regular life and felt no pressure to cross off items on a bucket list before I died. In spite of living life not as if I was dying, but as if I was going to be living, (unlike the country music song that expresses a different sentiment) I survived beyond my wildest timeline: so far, 11 years and nine months after initially being given a "13 months to two years" prognosis.

Fast forward to the most recent - and amazing news: I hadn't miraculously survived non small cell lung cancer after all, I had merely survived a very survivable and slow moving thyroid cancer (that has - or had previously, metastasized to the lung). Though my oncologist still thinks I have two types of cancer, my endocrinologist thinks I only have - and have had, one type, thyroid cancer. The Lombardi Cancer Center head and neck cancer specialist also feels like I have one cancer: thyroid. Her reasoning, after reviewing my medical records was a bit more direct: "if you had lung cancer diagnosed 12 or so years ago, we wouldn't be here having this discussion. You wouldn't be alive." So being alive is proof, a type of proof I suppose, that I've had thyroid cancer all along and never had lung cancer.

Not that I want to be thick-headed but after nearly 12 years of being told that I had lung cancer and living scan to scan every two to three months and anxiously waiting as well for my lab results every three weeks

I find myself unable to let go of the worst case scenario that has been my life since Feb., 2009, and embrace this amended diagnosis. I can't seem to turn off my internal anxiety/fear clock. In fact, it's still stuck in its original position. I'm like an ocean liner headed out to sea. It can hardly turn on a dime and neither can I. Certainly I want to believe it and I don't really doubt the thyroid cancer opinions I've received, but it just seems that having your wildest dreams come true after almost 12 years of trying to accept the reality of your cancer situation/early death is too much good fortune for anyone to imagine/realize. It's the opposite of normal. As much as one might want it to happen, it's just not the way it generally works. I don't suppose doctors hand out terminal diagnosis before giving it extra ample thought. And yet, I'm about to be living proof.

Nevertheless, every day, the shock of it begins to wear off and I can contemplate my future once again. No more will I count the days between scans. No longer will I dread reading my lab work and wondering what it all means. Oddly enough, what it all means is that I'll probably continue/resume my previous life, boring and mundane as it was because, well, it worked for me then so I imagine it will work for me now.

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

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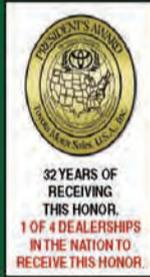
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Includes: Install Genuine Toyota front brake pads, inspect front & rear rotors & drums, check tire condition and inspect all hardware. Pads only.
MACHINE ROTORS ADDITIONAL

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 11/30/20.

BG VITAL FLUID SERVICE
10% OFF YOUR FIRST SERVICE
15% OFF YOUR SECOND SERVICE
Power Steering • Automatic Transmission • Brake System

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OIL & FILTER CHANGE
\$24⁹⁵ NON-SYNTHETIC
\$34⁹⁵ SYNTHETIC

Includes: Genuine Toyota oil filter, up to 5 qts of conventional oil*, inspect windshield wipers, check tire condition, check battery (with print-out), inspect and adjust all fluid levels, inspect air & cabin air filters.

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NEW HOURS SPECIAL!
DROP OFF YOUR VEHICLE BETWEEN 6AM & 7AM
WITH A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT & RECEIVE 12% OFF ANY ONE REPAIR.

MAXIMUM DISCOUNT, \$150
NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA PARTS CENTER ONLY. GOOD THRU 11/30/20.

Jack Taylor's
ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

TRUESTART™ BATTERIES
\$129⁹⁵

Includes: 84 month warranty, 24 month free replacement, 24 month free roadside assistance. Does not apply to hybrid batteries.

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 11/30/20.

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