

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

'Morale Boosters' for The Local Community

NEWS, PAGE 12

K Scarry of Herndon, Community Director of The People's Supper, and Jimmy Cirrito, owner of Jimmy's Old Town Tavern in Herndon, discuss a new initiative that needs no funding "to get all of our neighbors and local businesses through to the other side of the pandemic."

SENIOR LIVING

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Providing Hope to Neighbors Facing Eviction, Homelessness

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Questioning Racially-Biased Gang Database

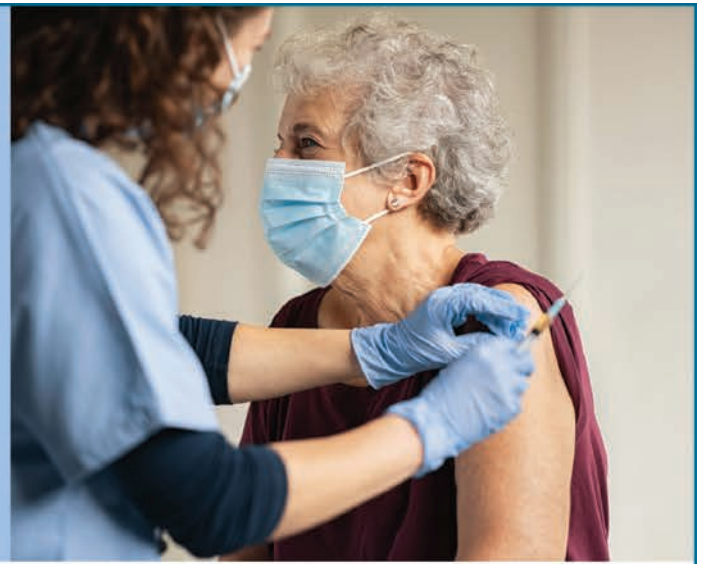
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PHOTO BY JENNIFER HEFFNER

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Questioning Racially-Biased Gang Database

Activists: Residents can be entered into GangNet merely for living in neighborhoods where gang activity takes place.

Part one of a two-part series.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

With no recourse for review, a nebulous definition of gang membership led an activist, an immigration advocate, and a Virginia legislator to fight for change.

Kofi Annan, president of The Activated People, sent a letter to Jeffrey McKay, Chairman Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Rodney Lusk (D-Lee District), Chairman of the County Public Safety Committee, James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock District), Vice-Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, and Col. Edwin Roessler, County Chief of Police. Annan detailed concerns about individuals wrongly labeled gang members and nominated by law enforcement at Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) into the national database repository, GangNet, used by the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, and accessible to its FCPD officers as a participating jurisdiction in the Task Force. According to Annan, the criteria were “highly questionable and potentially discriminatory.”

“Residents can be entered into GangNet merely for living in neighborhoods where gang activity takes place or for their style of dress, and they may not even be notified that they were entered into the database. An officer’s observation about attire, tattoos, activity or affiliation can set a life-altering legal process in motion,” said Annan.

GANG MEMBER categorization, Annan said, is “part of a longstanding campaign to stigmatize black and brown communities and expedite deportation of members of the Latinx community.” According to Annan, the campaign encourages FCPD officers to engage in racial profiling. It reinforces racial bias against mostly Black and brown men.

Annan said that the criteria, with the exceptions of “self-admission” or “in-custody classification,” were highly subjective and created “opportunities for law enforcement to inadvertently or erroneously mislabel individuals as gang members and violate their Constitutional rights and the rights of those around them.”

According to the Department of Justice, Privacy Impact Assessment for GangNet, GangNet is an off the shelf system “in support of A.T.F.’s missions in reducing violent crime and protecting the public.” It contains identifying data on alleged gang members, including but not limited to the individual’s photos, street names, addresses, date of birth, phone numbers, known associates, uses of gang hand signs and symbols, and images of their tattoos. Information on individuals is based on suspected criminal involvement or as witnesses or victims in

criminal case investigations and law enforcement concerns.

The information gathered and added to the system is within the Privacy Act exemption scope for law enforcement records outlined in 5 U.S.C. 552a (j) (2). GangNet purges subjects from the database after five years of inactivity.

“The ‘gang member’ label that federal authorities rely on is not based on a court’s determination, and therefore, no due process applied,” Annan said. “There is also no current mechanism by which to challenge one’s placement in GangNet.”

Annan added that being identified as a gang member emboldened “federal agents to selectively carry out deportation procedures” and allowed prosecutors to call for “sentence enhancements.”

Annan urged the Board of Supervisors to prohibit FCPD participation in the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force until the Task Force “adopted more stringent criteria” and improved “transparency by expanding residents’ right to receive a notification” when they were nominated to be entered.

“The ‘gang member’ label that federal authorities rely on is not based on a court’s determination, and therefore, no due process applied.”

— Kofi Annan,
president of The Activated People

“Anything less fails to uphold the principles of due process on which our immigration and criminal justice systems depend,” Annan said.

ANNAN did not hear back from the addressees named in his letter until Dec. 29. Chairman McKay emailed then, and two days later, on Dec. 31, Jay Lanham, Executive Director of the Gang Task Force, reached out. Annan provided copies of the correspondences.

McKay wrote that he confirmed with Chief Roessler “that the task force’s director (Jay Lanham) is working to suspend its use of GangNet.”

Lanham said, “I have suspended our use... We only have three senior detectives trained to use GangNet, and they have not used it for many years...The Task Force does not and has never maintained a Gang Database.”

Confused, Annan asked Lanham: “Wouldn’t GangNet be considered a gang



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Falsely labeled gang affiliation can ultimately lead to a person being wrongly detained.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kofi Annan

database? ...Is there any other database besides GangNet that FCPD officers use to submit/nominate the names of individuals suspected of being involved in gangs?”

Lanham said GangNet was a database, operated and maintained by HIDTA (Baltimore/Washington High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) “which falls within the Department of Justice.” “HIDTA makes it available to agencies that wish to access it. Those wishing to access it must be trained and approved to make entries in the system.” Lanham said, “I do not have knowledge of which agencies have access to GangNet, nor am I aware of any agencies that maintain such databases.”

On Jan. 7, 2021, Annan said, “I am glad that the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force will formalize their practice of not using GangNet. I’m also proud that our County Police Department does not use this

flawed software.”

Supervisor Lusk echoed Annan’s statement. “I’m pleased that the Fairfax County Police Department does not currently use GangNet Software,” Lusk said.

Kelly White Senior is Program Director of the Detained Adult Program at Capital Area Immigrants’ Rights (CAIR) Coalition. White shared a copy of testimony by Jocelyn Cazares, Senior Attorney, Detained Adult Program (CAIR), to the Fairfax Delegation of the General Assembly Jan. 9, “In Support of Transparency in Policing: Overinclusion of People of Color in Gang Databases in Virginia.”

Cazares testified, “I regularly represent people who are detained by I.C.E. and are denied liberty or even credibility because of police over-inclusion in gang databases.” Cazares said “John,” a Fairfax County resident applied for asylum and while the application was pending, found “himself accused of gang membership in ways that still affect him today.”

According to Cazares’ testimony: “There was no evidence of John’s gang membership, yet the accusation of John’s gang activity was ultimately entered into evidence in John’s immigration case. John, therefore, found himself having to fight gang accusations with no basis.”

A copy of the interview transcript between “John” and CAIR, provided by White, “John” said he did not know he was in a gang database until arrested. “The first time was when I.C.E. arrested me... I learned from the local authorities and I.C.E. I didn’t realize, I was surprised.” Asked about the consequences “John” said, “Affects so much, and it is false information in that database.”

White said that according to the Center for Popular Democracy’s Access to Counsel Report, “Every year, nearly 4,000 people in Washington, D.C. metropolitan area courts, Arlington, Virginia, and Baltimore, Maryland, face deportation in civil immigration court without the assistance of a lawyer.”

A PROPOSED BILL relating to criminal street gang reporting; notice and process for contesting information into shared gang databases has reached the Virginia House of Delegates 2021 session for consideration.

On Tues. Jan. 11, Virginia House Delegate Kaye Kory (D-38) said, “I am the chief patron of legislation which eliminates the lack of transparency and due process in the criminal street gang database currently in use by law enforcement in Virginia. Names are entered into this database by law enforcement officers who have only an unverified ‘reasonable suspicion’ of an individual’s gang affiliation and without notifying the individual. This creates a database riddled with racial bias and inequities without the slightest opportunity for oversight or accountability, which can lead to selective actions by state and federal law enforcement against those in the database.”

We Still Need Your Help

Thank you to hundreds who have supported us financially, and with warm words of encouragement.

BY MARY KIMM

In 2009, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and after a year-long journey of surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, I have been fine. Sometimes I will run into someone (well, I haven't actually been out to run into anyone since March) or talk to someone who will ask, "How are you?" with a tone of concern, and I realize they are wondering about my cancer. (Yes, I did go out for my mammogram. More than a decade cancer-free, thank you!).

2009 was also the onset of steep declines in newspaper advertising revenue, and that has been a pernicious and persistent problem.

Right now, when I hear that tone of concern (or something a little more ominous) with the "And how are the papers doing?" this person is asking about the GoFundMe, and whether we anticipate that we will survive the pandemic.

At the end of 2020, the Connection Newspapers shared a GoFundMe drive that would help all of our papers, including our flagship, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing since 1784, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Arlington Connection, Great Falls Connection, McLean-Vienna Connection, Centre View-Chantilly, Reston and Herndon Connection, and the Burke, Springfield, Fairfax, Fairfax Station, Clifton, Lorton Connection plus the Potomac Almanac.

We set a goal of \$50,000, and thanks to community support, in a month we have topped 50 percent of that. Thank you so much.

There is no deadline. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-americas-oldest-newspaper>

How did we get here (I keep asking myself)?

We are facing an existential threat in the combined crises of a long-running decline in newspaper advertising, plus the onset of the pandemic and the economic shutdown that has come with it. (Newspaper advertising revenue overall fell more than 60 percent from 2008 to 2018, well before the pandemic.)

In the first week of the shutdown in March, the drop in revenue for us, and everywhere, was breathtaking.

Fortunately, some long time advertisers have stayed the course and kept our revenues from moving actually to zero.

But many restaurants, retailers and others are also facing an economic crisis that could lead to extinction. We are not the only ones. Businesses, families and individuals floundered for months after early federal help, desperately in need of more help. Now we know more federal help is on the way, but is not here yet.

More than 160,000 businesses in the US closed just between March and August of last year due to the pandemic, and that number is

likely vastly underreported. While local newspapers were already suffering from advertising declines, the loss of thousands of local businesses as potential advertisers is a setback, and not just for The Connection. Event advertising, a mainstay, has disappeared.

Community support has come, through GoFundMe, and other means — many have mailed checks payable to their favorite newspaper, to 1606 King Street, Alexandria, Va. 22314, and others have purchased ads as a way to lend financial support. Words of encouragement and appreciation have also meant so much to all of us here.

So what is the plan? Our GoFundMe, as it continues to grow, will allow us to bridge the operational gaps between a deep valley and the arrival of the funds from the Paycheck Protection Program (through local banks). And that will give us time to grapple with the question of how to reinvent ourselves and create an organization and revenue stream that will sustain us. Our writers and others connected to us are full of ideas. I'm sure our readers, advertisers and supporters are also. Please let us know.

We are experts at cost-cutting, and that has been a painful, ongoing process.

Now we will embrace a combination of solutions, because just one source is unlikely to unravel the tough situation that we face.

More thoughts next week.

Changing Images of Virginia

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



On the east side of Capitol Square near the Executive Mansion in Richmond is the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial featuring 16-year-old Barbara Johns who led the student walkout that resulted

in a civil rights case before the Supreme Court as part of Brown v. Board of Education that found racially-segregated schools to be unconstitutional. With her on the memorial are statues of attorneys Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson who argued the case and representations of persons who faced repression throughout Virginia's racist history.

On the west end of Capitol Square, near where the new General Assembly office building is being constructed, is a lone statue of Harry F. Byrd—Senator, VA (1933–1965), Governor of Virginia (1926–1930), and Virginia State Senator (1924–1926).

Barbara Johns is about to receive an additional recognition as a civil rights pioneer. A sculpture of her will join a copy of the Houdon sculpture of George Washington in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol representing Virginia and replacing the one of Confederate General Robert E. Lee that has already been removed.

A resolution making its way through the cur-

rent session of the General Assembly directs that the Harry Byrd statue be removed. Byrd held political office for many years and dominated Virginia politics for nearly four decades as head of what was called the Byrd Organization that in any other state would be called the Byrd machine. He stayed in power through racist voter

suppression laws that were some of the most effective in keeping Black voters from the polls and kept Virginia with the lowest voter participation among the states. He was known for his fiscal conservatism as governor and senator, and Virginia remained near the bottom of the states in funding for public schools and health and social services programs while he and his machine controlled state government. While states moved towards racial desegregation of their schools, a Byrd-devised "massive resistance" ploy delayed school desegregation in Virginia by more than a decade amid about forty or more lawsuits. In the process, some public schools were closed, and some children stayed home for as many as five years because of Byrd's resistance.

As a teenager I worked "up on the mountain" from my home in Page County at Skyland Lodge on the Skyline Drive. As a room clerk I was told not to rent the best room we had until after 6 p.m. in case Senator Byrd wanted to come for the night. He was extended this courtesy for the

pivotal role he played in establishing the Shenandoah National Park. His biographer Professor Ronald L. Heinemann in Harry Byrd of Virginia (University of Virginia Press, 1996) pointed out that while as governor he modernized state government for the time, his conservative economic and social policies held the state back. He was a product of the Jim Crow era, and he could never get beyond it.

Barbara Johns as a young woman took a big risk standing up for what she knew was right. She played a pivotal role in Virginia moving from a civil rights back-water to the progressive state it is now becoming. She reflects the image I want our state to have!

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
reston@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Community Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Contributing Writer
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
[@MaryKimm](mailto:MaryKimm)

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



PEOPLE

Reston Teen Named a Candidate in U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

Kaleena Roeva, 18, of Reston, a graduating senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, has been named a candidate in U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

Kaleena is one of more than 4,500 candidates, selected from nearly 3.6 million students expected to graduate from U.S. high schools in the year 2021.

Inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Scholars are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program



Kaleena Roeva

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

was established in 1964 by Executive Order of the President to recognize some of the nation's most distinguished graduating seniors for their accomplishments in many areas: academic success, leadership, and service to school and community. Annually, up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars are chosen from among that year's senior class, representing excellence in education and the promise of greatness in America's youth. If circumstances permit all Scholars are invited to Washington, DC in June for the National Recognition Program, featuring various events and enrichment activities and culminating in the presentation of the Presidential Scholars Medallion during a White House-sponsored ceremony.



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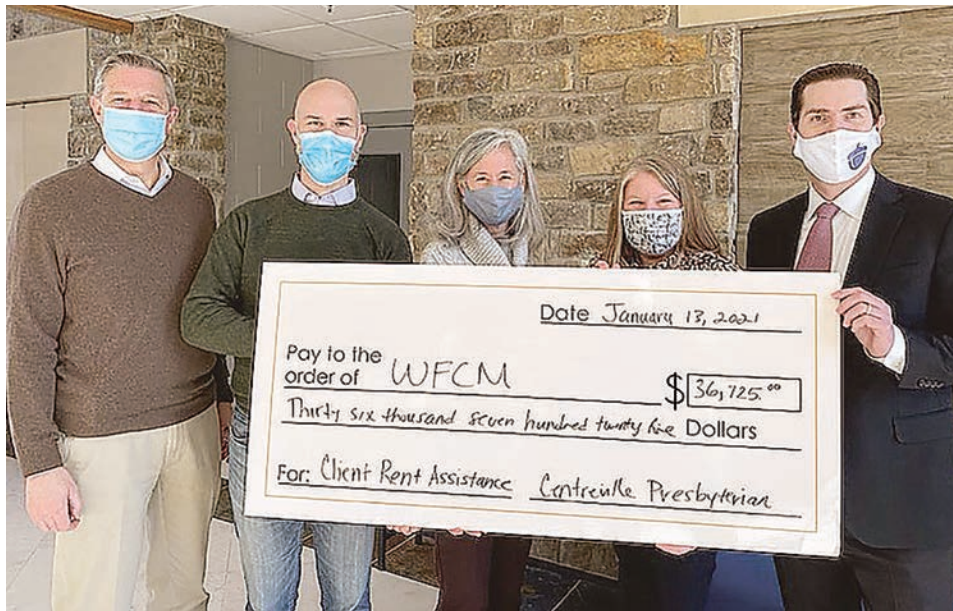
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Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association
And many more...



Providing Hope to Neighbors Facing Eviction, Homelessness

Centreville Presbyterian Church raises rent-relief funds for WFCM.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION



(From left) Rob Bromhead, Aaron McMillan and Sharon Hoover, of Centreville Presbyterian Church, present the rent-relief check to WFCM's Harmonie Taddeo and Andrew Casteel.

THE CHECK PRESENTATION from CPC to WFCM was held at the church; and at that same event, Dan Dolan from Supervisor Kathy Smith's (D-Sully) office read a proclamation from Smith. The document acknowledged the church's efforts and praised and honored its members for their generosity.

It stated, in part, "Whereas, 39 percent of WFCM client households have unemployed individuals struggling to pay their rent during the COVID-19 pandemic; and whereas, the collective impact of church members and leaders makes the Sully District a better place to live:

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Sully District, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of all Fairfax County residents, does hereby commend Centreville Presbyterian Church for making Fairfax County a better place to live."

Thankful for CPC's fundraising campaign, Taddeo recognized everyone at the church for the "amazing missions-offering they contributed to WFCM." She said the money is

sorely needed because "We have clients who lost their jobs back in April 2020 and have still not recovered."

"The generosity that you guys are showing is unbelievable," added WFCM Vice-President Andrew Casteel. "And it's that light that, I think, is going to really help us get through this time and on to better times. Thank you, Centreville Presbyterian Church, for all \$36,725. Every, single one of those dollars will go directly to our neighbors in Fairfax County who are in need in this critical time."

"After talking with Harmonie last fall about the impact of the COVID pandemic, the need for housing assistance became apparent," explained Hoover. "Rent/mortgage costs far exceed food and utility costs. Families struggling to pay bills face difficult choices. WFCM serves to help them bridge these gaps, but housing assistance can use significant amounts of funds.

"I shared this need with our staff and

Missions Ministry. We then decided to make WFCM's housing assistance the focus of a Christmas Mission offering, and our church family gave abundantly."

After all, said Hoover, "WFCM clients live in our community. We believe, through God's grace, that we have a responsibility to care for the vulnerable among us. We wanted to give hope to our neighbors who face eviction and homelessness. WFCM is most connected with these needs, and we are delighted to continue partnering with them to serve others well."

AS ONE OF THE 12 churches that founded WFCM in 1987, said Taddeo, "Centreville Presbyterian Church has been a great partner to WFCM for the past 34 years. It's provided operational assistance and has also supported our food pantry and holiday food programs."

"During this time of unprecedented need, CPC's leaders and members made a special donation for rent assistance that will help keep 61 families housed this winter."

— WFCM Executive Director
Harmonie Taddeo

Taddeo stressed that WFCM intends to remain open, every day – as it's already been doing – providing food and funds for people in need. And, she said, "The way we do this is through our partners, such as Centreville Presbyterian Church."

AREA ROUNDUPS

Help Stuff the Bus, Jan. 30, Feb. 6

To help fill Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' (WFCM) food pantry, local residents are asked to donate to two upcoming Stuff the Bus food drives. They're slated for Saturday, Jan. 30, and Saturday, Feb. 6. Both days, a CUE Bus will be parked, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly and at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive in Centreville.

The most-needed items are: Soup, canned pasta, macaroni and cheese, canned vegetables, canned beans, bags of dried beans, brown or white rice, instant potatoes, canned tomatoes, canned fruit (in light syrup or juice), peanut butter, jelly, pancake mix and syrup, hot and cold

cereal, healthy snacks (raisins, granola bars) and canned tuna, salmon or chicken.

When dropping off food donations, people are asked to wear masks and follow posted guidelines.

Bridge Beam Work: I-66 West, Fair Oaks

I-66 west in Fair Oaks will be closed at Route 50 during the overnight hours, through this Wednesday, Jan. 27, to allow for the continued installation of bridge beams for the new Route 50 east bridge over I-66. The I-66 west ramps to and from Route 50 will also be closed. Traffic will be detoured using Route 50 and West Ox Road.

The I-66/Route 50 Interchange is being rebuilt to add Ex-

press Lane access to and from the east and to construct a new, shared-use path. It's part of the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project. All work is weather-dependent and will be rescheduled if inclement conditions occur.

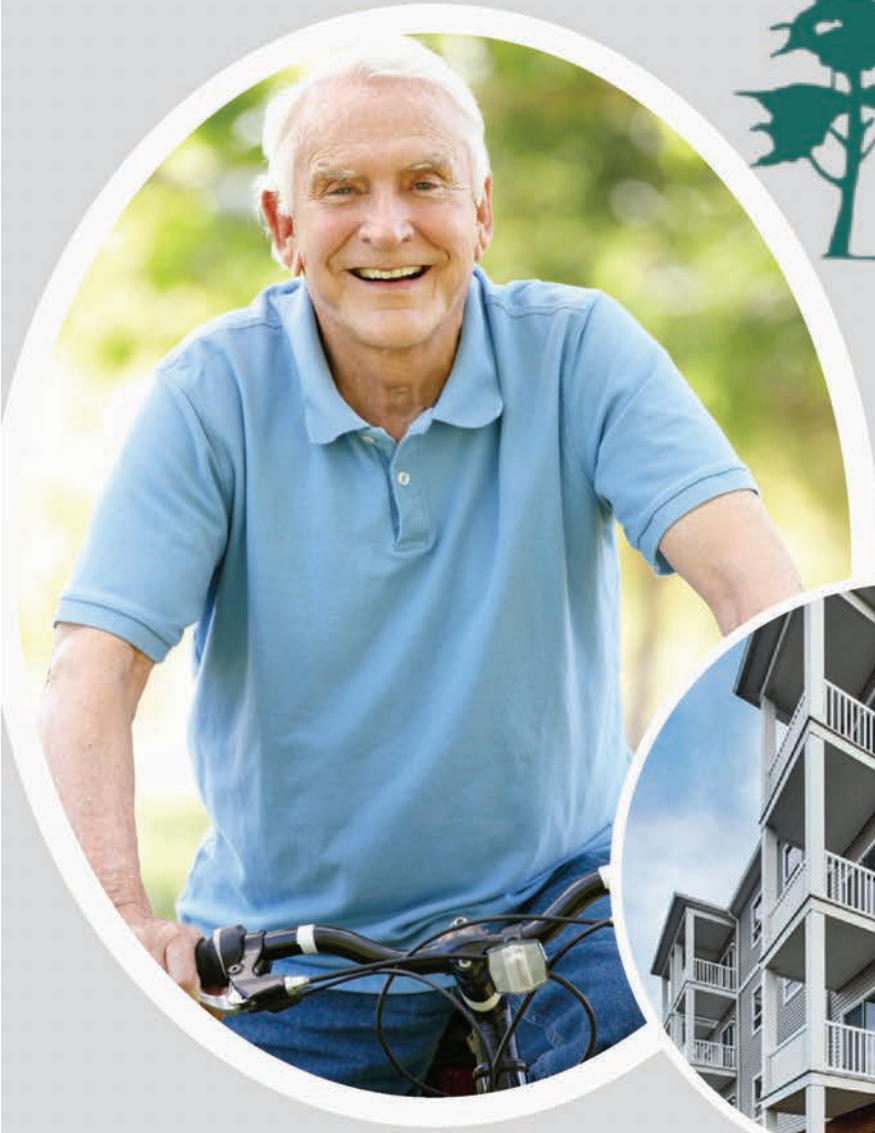
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Inova Blood Donor Services is currently experiencing a critically low supply of O+ blood and is asking the community to help by donating this type of blood. In addition, all successful blood donations are now being tested for COVID-19 antibodies. For more information, and to make an appointment to donate blood, go to www.inovabllood.org.



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Sorority Sisters Celebrate Vice President Kamala Harris

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Wearing their sorority's signature strand of pearls and clothing in shades of pink and green, Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority members, Martha Coleman and Shirley Dickerson Taylor were filled with awe and jubilation as they watched their sorority sister and fellow Historically Black College and University (HBCU) alum Kamala Harris, sworn in as Vice President of the United States.

Both women are decades-long members of the sorority and are now part of the Zeta Chi Omega Chapter, which is made up of women from Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax counties. Local members supported Harris' election and say their emotions include pride and optimism, for older members as well as younger.

"As someone who participated in the Civil Rights movement of the 60s, I get emotional just thinking about this huge accomplishment and how far we as a people have come," said Coleman, who has been a member for 53 years. "The idea that a woman of color, who attended an HBCU, and who was raised by a single parent is now our Vice President is mind boggling."

"I was overcome with joy and happiness to witness this historical day," added Taylor, who has been a member for 63 years. "The tears flowed as I watched Soror Kamala take the oath and become the Vice President of the United States."

"I witnessed something that I never thought I would witness in my lifetime, said 68-year old Linder Gibson who lives in Montgomery County. "I was overwhelmed. "This lets me know that my little granddaughter can grow up and become anything she wants to be, even President."

Those who joined AKA at Howard University felt a special connection.

"She has been an inspiration for many, said Linda Elaine Newman, who has been an active member for 43 years. "I was doubly proud because I am also a graduate of Howard University. Her positive accomplishments have given good recognition to HBCUs and our beloved sisterhood."

"From the standpoint of being a black and Asian woman it was a monumental moment," added Patricia Wallace, who has been a member for 55 years. It was astounding since, in both these cultures, women were deemed to be on the bottom rung, thought of as property and second-class citizens. Now the glass ceiling has broken."

The Arlington/Alexandria chapter has been in existence for more than 60 years. "Tears of joy flowed down my face as I watched the first woman, the first woman of color and my sorority sister take the oath of office for the Vice President of the United States of America," said Robin McCoy, who is a 40-year member and serves as the chapter's president.

Many felt a sense of optimism about the possibilities that would be conveyed to the young women and girls



PHOTO BY ROBIN MCCOY

Robin McCoy, is a 40-year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and serves as the chapter's president.



PHOTO BY TIA SMITH

Tia Smith wore pink and green on election day to celebrate Vice-President Harris' victory. Both women are members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA

"Golden" members of the Arlington/Alexandria chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, who joined the sorority before and during the Civil Rights Movement, shed tears of joy as they witnessed the historic swearing-in of Vice President Kamala Harris.

in their families.

"The swearing in of my soror Kamala Harris filled me with sadness, joy and delight," said Margarete Peterson, who was initiated in 1959. "Joy came to my heart to know that my granddaughter would continue to grow up in a better world. ... I was filled with sadness because it has taken so long for a black woman with outstanding qualifications to be recognized. I dried my tears and took a picture ... proudly in my Golden Soror tee shirt."

"I thought of my 10-year-old granddaughter's future in a country that has elected the first woman as Vice President, who happens to be Black, who happens to have been shaped by our founders at Howard Uni-

versity, and who happens to have been the recipient of the unflinching support from women all over America," said Tia Johnson. "My granddaughter's future was looking brighter. Vice President Harris' election provides the answer that all things are possible."

The Arlington/Alexandria chapter includes older members that range in age from 60 to 90. Many thanked a higher power for the victory.

"I was overcome with a flood of emotions and ... a tremendous feeling of gratitude that God allowed me to live long enough to witness this historic moment: the first woman, the first Black, the first Asian American, the first HBCU graduate and the first AKA to become Vice President of the United States of America, a heartbeat away from the most powerful office in the world," said Lula McLain Hicks who was initiated in 1968. "In that moment, Vice President Harris represented every member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and our 113 years of service to humankind."

Wanda Smith, who joined the sorority 42 years ago, said the swearing-in underscored the lyrics of the official hymn of AKA: "By merit and culture we strive and we do things that are worthwhile. And with a smile we help each other for we know there's no other like our sisterhood," she said. "Yes, I cried and thanked God."

For Aretha Marable Cunningham who was initiated in 1973, the ceremony offered optimism. "I feel extreme joy, relief, excitement, and hope for our country, the United States of America."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FELLOWSHIP HOUSE

Lake Anne Fellowship House resident Steve McAvoy, 71, receives his long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine from a mobile health team with CVS pharmacy.

The First Shots to Knock Out COVID-19

Fellowship Square's Seniors inoculated.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Lake Anne Fellowship House residents Steve McAvoy, 71, and Jin Liu, 84, of Reston were among the first of seven hundred anxious older adults at one of the three senior affordable housing communities operated by Fellowship House in Reston and Woodbridge who were inoculated last week against COVID-19. Vaccinations began Jan. 18.

"We are so happy and appreciate this so much," said Jin Liu of Reston, who lives with his wife, Geeta. "There are long waits, long lines, and it is so cold outside."

Following many weeks of planning with health departments and local pharmacies, Fellowship Square began bringing

the vaccines directly to residents' doors.

"With an average age of 78, Fellowship Square residents are

in the high-risk category for COVID," said Christy Zeitz, CEO of Fellowship Square. "Working with Walgreens and CVS teams, (we) are thrilled to be able to bring the vaccine to our residents' doorsteps."

A spokesperson for Fellowship Square said that the follow-up doses are scheduled. The mobile vaccine clinics will return to deliver the doses in the same door-to-door fashion. "Thank you for coming to our home to get us the vaccine," said Vajihel Rohani, 85, of Reston.

On the same day Fellowship Square seniors began receiving the vaccination, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University, the U.S. surpassed 400,000 total Covid-19 deaths, with a quarter of those coming over the previous 36 days.



Prakash Chumble, 75, and Geeta, 71, were the very first residents at Lake Anne Fellowship House in Reston to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

A Year Like No Other

Reston Real Estate Market comparison: 2020 to 2019 to 2010.

By JENNY
McCLINTOCK



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The first year of the decade has been a year like none other, and the Reston real estate market annual review is no exception. Year over year there has been marginal improvement in the number of homes sales, with a total count of 1400 in 2020 compared to 1359 in 2019, an increase of 3 percent. Compared to one decade ago in 2010, there is more significant an increase as sales are up 23 percent over that time frame.

The greatest impact in 2020 has been the upper bracket homes priced over \$1M. There were 39 homes that sold over \$1M across all 3 zip codes in Reston compared to the previous year of 21, an improvement of almost 39 percent. Homes over \$1M in Reston are most often for single family homes that offer the advantages of more physical space for interior living as well as outdoor areas, which was at a high premium in 2020. Of the 39 homes sold in the upper brackets, 12 were Lake fronted properties and 3 were condominiums in the Reston Town Center.

Homes in good show condition and priced correctly for the market are in low supply. With strong buyer demand and low supply, many segments are experiencing price appreciation for the first time in over a dozen years. The low supply is most likely attributed to the stay-at-home orders due to the global pandemic from March through June, which is the traditional spring selling season. During that time frame, homes were not going on the market at the pace of a typical selling season. It was mostly vacant properties and sellers who were really motivated who listed their homes for sale. These market conditions are advantageous for sellers considering a move.

The average sales price in Reston saw a significant increase in price appreciation from 2019 to 2020, especially in zip code 20194 which ended the year with an average price of \$617,433, up 9.2 percent over 2019. Over all 3 Reston zip codes, the price appreciation was 7 percent, with an average home sales price of \$526,862.

The real estate community continues to serve customers and clients safely by following CDC guidelines. More than ever during the pandemic, people have sought the security of home as a safe haven. To meet this need, agents continue to list houses for sale, show houses to buyers, write contracts and settle on transactions. Technology is cutting edge in the real estate arena offering virtual tours, Zoom meetings, secure digital document execution as well as online notary cam and drive through closings. Traditional in person meetings are available following safety protocols.

Looking forward to the first quarter of 2021, if the weather remains mild the traditional spring selling season is likely to begin mid to late January. There is still considerable pent-up buyer demand throughout Reston. Even more so now, home represents the place where people live, work, play, educate their children, as well as enjoy physical activity and entertainment. As our nation and world navigate the impact of COVID-19, people still find themselves in situations where they have a need to make a move!

Jenny McClintock is a Vice President with HBC Group at Keller Williams and an active and experienced Realtor® in the Northern Virginia marketplace. Along with her team, she works with sellers, buyers, investors and builders in all price ranges. We are available to assist with your real estate needs. jenny@hbcgroupkw.com, 703-731-2412, www.HBCGroupKW.com.

I-66 West Ramps Closing this Week

Continued bridge beam installation and overhead bridge work for a new pedestrian bridge for the future, i-66 parallel trail will require closure of the I-66 west ramps to Route 28 north and the Braddock Road/Walney Road overpass, from 11 p.m.-5 a.m. nightly, this Thursday-Friday, Jan. 28-29. Drivers should expect delays and should consider using alternate routes.

2020 compared to 2019 and 2010					
2020 Total Sales: 1400					
Zip Code	\$1M and over	\$750K-\$999K	\$500K-\$749K	Under \$500K	Total # Sales
20190	6	35	143	295	479
20191	10	82	158	347	597
20194	23	76	93	132	324
TOTAL	39	193	394	774	1400
2019 Total Sales: 1359					
Zip Code	\$1M and over	\$750K-\$999K	\$500K-\$749K	Under \$500K	Total # Sales
20190	5	18	139	308	470
20191	7	64	153	371	595
20194	9	54	83	148	294
TOTAL	21	136	375	827	1359
2010 Total Sales: 1078					
Zip Code	\$1M and over	\$750K-\$999K	\$500K-\$749K	Under \$500K	Total # Sales
20190	3	11	49	294	357
20191	2	7	80	370	459
20194	14	56	191	812	262
TOTAL	19	56	191	812	1078

Reston Real Estate: 2020 vs. 2019 and 2010.

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NEWS

Friends of Reston Introduce New Executive Director

Kia Cole-Hines of Reston has been tapped as the new Executive Director of Friends of Reston (FOR), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization for Reston Association (RA). According to FOR's president Carol Nahorniak, the strong ties Cole-Hines has to the community make "a great match for the organization".



MERCIA HOBSON/
THE CONNECTION
Kia Cole-Hines

"This position will further allow me to have a hand in preserving and enhancing the community where I live, work, and play," Cole-Hines said.

"I am extremely pleased that Kia has accepted the offer to be the next Friends of Reston Executive Director, said Reston Association CEO Hank Lynch. "I am certain she will be tremendously successful with this new leadership challenge. The Friends of Reston's mission is to support RA with charitable, educational, and scientific activities. As both the FOR Executive Director and RA's Business Engagement and Sales Manager, Kia will be able to increase awareness of philanthropic opportunities that support projects like Reston Camps scholarships, swimming and tennis for children and various

"This position will further allow me to have a hand in preserving and enhancing the community where I live, work, and play."

— Kia Cole-Hines

environmental and nature activities that benefit the Reston community."

Cole-Hines replaced Katie Shaw who is leaving the position after 16 years. "We were understandably disappointed to hear that she would be stepping aside," said Nahorniak. Shaw will continue her management of Walk-er Nature Center, operated by RA.

— MERCIA HOBSON

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—Werner Heisenberg

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CALENDAR

NOW TO FEB. 7

"Winter's Tales." Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax. Winter can be many things---quiet, simple, elegant, cold, dark and hopeful. Winter's shadows are long and its daylight is precious. It is a season of white and blue, of cold and fire, of hibernation and regeneration. In "Winter's Tales" at the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, the gallery's artists demonstrate in a variety of mediums how they respond to the coldest and darkest time of the year. The exhibit features beautiful paintings, fine art photography, ceramics, exquisite jewelry and fabric art.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

Red Wolves in Virginia. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Online. Join the Sierra Club Great Falls Group for a free online event to learn about proposals to reintroduce critically endangered red wolves to Virginia. RSVP for link: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001kYP6AAM>

FRIDAY/JAN. 29

Family Fun Trivia Night. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. Gather the whole family around the computer or tablet and get ready for some socially distant trivia. Prizes for winning teams. To register for Old Firehouse events, visit: www.oldfirehouse.org or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

FACETS' Free Magic Show. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. FACETS will hosts a virtual free, family-friendly event that features a special performance by celebrity magician Joel Meyers. FACETS' Magic of Community event raises awareness and funds to combat poverty and homelessness in Fairfax County. The online event is free but donations are encouraged. Also during the event, several FACETS' clients will be sharing their courageous stories about homelessness and efforts to overcome it. Attendees will be inspired as they renew their commitment to a Fairfax County where everyone has a place to call home. Register at <http://facetscares.org/register-for-facets-virtual-magic-show-event/>

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Ye Olde Tavern. 4-5 p.m. Virtual. Chase away the pandemic Winter blues and raise a glass and a song to health and happiness in "Ye Olde Tavern." Musical hosts Jennifer Cutting and Steve Winick, along with song leaders from the Washington Revels community, for rousing tunes and toasts to warm your heart. Cost is \$20. Visit the website: <https://revelsdc.org/2021/jan31-winter-pub-sing/>

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Winter Stream Life. 1-2 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Explore Walney Creek with a naturalist to meet some of the small creek critters (macroinvertebrates) that call it home. Learn why so many different types of macroinvertebrates are active in winter streams. Your naturalist will demonstrate winter collecting, and you can help pick, sort and learn to identify these magnificent critters. This program is designed for participants age 8 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-631-0013.

MONDAY/FEB. 1

Making Rope. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Journey back to the 1800s at Sully Historic Site and experience the challenges people once faced in making a rope sturdy enough for their needs. Make a piece of

rope from plants found on the property at Sully and take it home to compare with today's ropes. The cost is \$30 per family. Social distancing and face coverings are required. Call 703-437-1794.

FEB. 1-13

Mardi Gras at the Workhouse. In-Person on Saturday, Feb. 13., 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center is thrilled to present its first-ever Mardi Gras celebration. Join them for two weeks of family-friendly events that will engage, inspire, teach and make you laugh. This mini festival will include: Online workshops on festive mask making; Online Mixology sessions; Online demonstrations on how to make floats or yard decorations; In-person glass bead demonstrations; In-person cooking classes; Parade on the Workhouse Campus; and Drive In Comedy Shows.

TUESDAY/FEB. 2

Romance Scams. 12 p.m. Virtual event. Join AARP for a virtual webinar on Romance Scams. In a 30-minute webinar, they'll discuss the red flags to be on the lookout for anyone engaging in online relationships. Visit the website: <https://aarp.cvent.com/romancescams>

SATURDAY & MONDAY, FEB. 6 & 8

"The University of Wonder & Imagination." 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12 p.m., 12:30 p.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 5 p.m. The University of Wonder & Imagination is now enrolling students of all ages and magical abilities...and there's a place with your name on it! Assemble with your fellow students and journey to the most unusual of universities, where the mysterious Professor Bamberg will send you off to interact with the liveliest of lecturers, choose your subjects of study, enter themed rooms (such as Math, Science, and Art!) and encounter all kinds of problems and puzzles, unlocking your magical powers as you go. The decisions made by you during the event will shape your unique experience. Purchase tickets \$15/\$10 MCC district residents.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Worst Spy Ever. 2-3:30 p.m. Cold War Museum (100 % virtual). Most damaging spy ever? Robert Hanssen. Learn why from the Historian of the FBI. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ultimate-betrayal-robert-hanssen-people-he-got-killed-and-the-lessons-tickets-123410242357>.

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Monte Carlo Night. 6-8 p.m. Virtual event. Join in a two-hour Virtual Social on Saturday, Feb. 13, 6-8 p.m. Create your own Paint and Pour vase or heart-shaped cutting board. Cost is \$40. Visit the website: <https://www.jlnv.org/montecarlonight/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

The Alden in McLean has created a series of family friendly, live virtual theatrical events for families to experience together. The Winter Series performances are: Doktor Kaboom! "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Sunday, Feb 21, and Monday, Feb. 22, 4 p.m. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). "Look Out! Science is Coming!"

"The Joshua Show." Saturday, March, 13, 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). Joshua Holden is a modern-day Mr. Rogers with hipster appeal!

To purchase tickets, visit: www.aldentheatre.org or contact Patron Services Manager Evelyn Hill at evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov or 571-296-8385.

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Reoriented



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Or to quote my high school baseball coach: "Reoriented." A cancer diagnosis, especially a "terminal" one, can cause that. However, what I'm addressing this week is money: what to do with what you have when you didn't expect you'd still have it. And by 'have it,' I mean you're still alive and you still have some control over what to do with it.

What this previous paragraph questions is what to do with the money you've accumulated your whole life after you've outlived your original prognosis, which for my non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, was "13 months to two years." The timer began in late February, 2009. I was aged 54 and nearly a half. My widowed mother had just died the previous December after reaching her 86th birthday. My father had died almost exactly two years earlier, at the age 87. Given my parent's at death, I figured/planned on living into my mid-eighties. That all changed when Team Lourie met the oncologist who has now been treating me going on about 12 years.

All my life, pre-cancer and post-cancer, I've paid attention to money: working for it, saving it, spending it and financially-planning it. As I became older, my needs expanded and so too did the sum of money I needed: college, car, wedding, house and then retirement. Now at age 66, 42 as a husband and 12 as a cancer survivor, the future has unexpectedly, given my prognosis, become my present.

During the early years of my diagnosis, I didn't really know how to spend the money I had saved: on the here and now because I was diagnosed as terminal and saw no future in depriving myself or to simply continue living my life spending/saving money as I always had. I chose the former because to me choosing the latter would have been giving into my cancer diagnosis.

Well, almost 12 years have passed since late Feb., 2009. Much has happened. None more significantly as has been my re-diagnosis to papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV, from the previous non small lung cancer, also stage IV. Though my particular type of thyroid cancer is terminal (the sole effective medication has a three-year-ish effective window than there's nothing available), I do have less of a lung cancer diagnosis hanging over my bank account. And yet, the money issue has raised its ugly dilemma once again. Rather than living with death occurring at any time, I now have a bit of a timeline: three years, but with an indeterminate one to follow. Before I had a definite that turned into a maybe. Now I have a maybe that's sort of turned into a definite. As such, once again, do I spend like I'm dying or spend/save like I'm living? The further complication is I'm basically retired and now having to make decisions which have been a lifetime in the making that for many of those years didn't have to factor in cancer and an adjusted, shall we say, life expectancy. It's challenging to determine how much money you're going to need when you can't predict the future. I mean, I'm living proof.

Being the baby of the baby - of the family, I'm pretty much the end of the line dating back approximately 150 years to Russia. And since we have no children, there's no one to pick up my slack. I can't run out of money because I'm responsible for my own slack. I can't presume that I won't outlive my resources any more than I can predict my cancer-affected demise. A demise and a quality of life that could be enhanced if I were to spend a bit of the money I do have, mindful always of the consequences however.

I realize, more than most, that there's no time like the present. Nevertheless, I still want to believe I have a future. After all, it's worked (kept me alive) for nearly 12 years. Perhaps I still have another 12 left to live. If so, I'm going to try and treat myself a bit more often this time. I don't see any future in depriving myself.

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

‘Morale Boosters’ for the Local Community

Three new initiatives in the planning stages.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

During the early days of the pandemic, K Scarry set up Herndon Cares.org, of First Baptist Church of Herndon. Expanding partnerships with faith organizations, restaurants, and volunteers, the nonprofit provided 10,478 to food insecure Herndon/Reston families in the form of takeout dinners purchased from local restaurants. Scarry organized a GOFUNDME, raising over \$67,000 to pay for the meals.

By mid-summer, the church’s triage food distribution had ended, and Scarry, who happened to be Community Director of The People’s Supper (www.thepeoplesupper.org), began considering a new initiative, one that needed no funding “to get all of our neighbors and local businesses through to the other side of the pandemic.”

Scarry seeks to produce three events a month, two recurring, and the third different. “We’re resting this work on three pillars,” she said. “One is to support local businesses; (the second) to combat isolation, and (the third) to elevate the work of nonprofits who are on the ground, meeting community needs,” she said. Called “morale boosters” by Scarry, people gather at fun events while supporting local businesses and learning more about nonprofits.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

K Scarry of Herndon, Community Director of The People’s Supper and Jimmy Cirrito, owner of Jimmy’s Old Town Tavern in Herndon.

“There’s no better place to be than in Herndon, to get through a pandemic like this.”

— Jimmy Cirrito, owner of Jimmy’s Old Town Tavern in Herndon

Scarry’s plan begins with virtual bingo games and the matching of restaurants with local nonprofits... “The week before the bingo game, when you buy from... a named restaurant, you’ll get a bingo card in your order... The game would be co-hosted by the restaurant and a nonprofit,

giving space for the nonprofit to name ways people could plug-in to support their work,” she said.

“There’s no better place to be than in Herndon, to get through a pandemic like this,” said Jimmy Cirrito, owner of Jimmy’s Old Town Tavern in Herndon. “God bless each and every one of you.”

The second proposed monthly event is movie night at congregation parking lots, matching a restaurant to each location. “It’ll be a chance for us to be together and do an activity that’s COVID-safe,” Scarry said.

Becca Messman is a pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Herndon. She remembered reading about history and wondering what she would have done in World War II or the Civil Rights Movement. “The answer is, What are we doing now, in these crises,” she said. “I want to show my kids that when our turn came, we did everything possible to safeguard and rebuild and comfort our community.”

Scarry said she seeks to kick-off the third planned initiative in mid-February. It is the sale of hand-crafted greeting cards placed at local coffee and tea shops. Artists Natalie Daratony of Herndon and Thomas Winant, a Fairfax County Public School student, hand-crafted the cards.

The People’s Supper is a project of The Dinner Party, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHEPHERD’S CENTER

Pictured presenting Shepherd’s Center’s Certificate of Appreciation plaque to Sherry Maggio, co-owner of Skorprios Maggio’s Greek Family Restaurant, is Erin O’Reilly, left, Operations/Volunteer Manager for Shepherd’s Center.

Shepherd’s Center Honors Skorprios, Café Renaissance

Recently, Shepherd’s Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC) expressed appreciation to Skorprios Maggio’s Greek Family Restaurant owners, Chris and Sherry Maggio, and Café Renaissance owners, Saeed and Soraya Abtahi for their participation in preparing holiday meals for lonely and isolated seniors in the Northern Fairfax County region. SC’s Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Sherry Maggio, co-owner of Skorprios Maggio’s Greek Family Restaurant and Saeed Abtahi owner of Café Renaissance. In all, forty-one meals were prepared and delivered to clients in the Oakton, Fairfax, Vienna, Reston and Herndon areas for Shepherd’s Center.

“Our newly initiated Hol-

iday Meal Delivery Program has been so well received. This program is our way of bringing a bit of cheer into the lives of some of our clients that would otherwise have no outside contact this holiday season. Helping to lessen isolation and the resulting depression is the impetus for all that we do at the Shepherd’s Center. Our vision is Creating a World Without Loneliness,” said Jayne Young, Interim Executive Director, Shepherd’s Center

To volunteer, donate or learn more about how you can help, or how we can help you, visit www.scov.org or, contact the office at 703-281-0538, office@scov.org. Shepherd’s Center is currently in need of volunteer drivers and Development Committee members.



Pictured at Shepherd’s Center’s Certificate of Appreciation presentation are, from right, Saeed Abtahi, owner Café Renaissance and Jayne Young, Interim Executive Director for Shepherd’s Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC).