

# CONNECTION

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Volunteer Michelle Baidoo removing invasive porcelain berry vines at Laurel Hill Park. Virginia House and Senate just passed a resolution on invasive plant species proposed by Del. David Bulova and supported by Sen. Dave Marsden.

## How to Stop Plant Invaders?

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

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## Is it ‘A Solution Looking for a Problem’?

### City of Fairfax enacts new firearms ordinance.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Virginia recently adopted legislation allowing localities to enact ordinances prohibiting firearms and ammunition in and on certain public properties or at permitted public events. And last week, Fairfax City took advantage of this opportunity to do just that.

But it didn't do it lightly or without careful consideration of the new law's possible ramifications. City Council members discussed the ordinance at an October work session, a January meeting and last Tuesday's public hearing.

They also read emails from City residents expressing their opinions on the issue, listened to more citizen comments during the Feb. 9 hearing and consulted with City Attorney Brian Lubkeman. And even then, they still disagreed on some points and made amendments to each other's motions.

But in the end, they came together and passed an ordinance they believe will be in the best interests of the City and its residents. It prohibits firearms in buildings owned or used by the City, in the City's public parks, and in any recreation facility or community center owned or operated by the City.

This ban includes trails, sidewalks, and parking areas within public-park boundaries. And while there are certain exemptions, there are none for people holding concealed-carry permits. Violators of this ordinance could be convicted of a Class 4 misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250.

The new City ordinance is effective immediately, but full enforcement won't happen until the appropriate notices and signs are posted, where required. Go to <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/> for a list of all the locations where the firearms prohibition will apply.

**AT THE OUTSET** of the public hearing, Councilmember Sang Yi had questions about whether the ordinance would apply to color guards. "Their rifles are blank, but could be readily converted to live ammunition," he said. "And I doubt that anyone wants to prohibit them."

He also wondered if the responsibility for security measures, such as installing metal detectors inside public buildings, would rest solely on the city manager. His questions were among a multitude asked by the Council members. For example, Yi also wanted to know if the City's police officers are trained to detect concealed weapons on people.

Police Capt. Natalie Hinesley replied that the officers get this training "through experience and observation." However, she added, "Police couldn't approach them about [having a possible, concealed weapon] unless there was suspicion of some other crime." She also noted that police would require training on the new ordinance.

Over the past 10 years, Fairfax police re-



Discussing the firearms ordinance during the virtual meeting are (top row, from left) Sang Yi, Janice Miller and Brian Lubkeman; (middle row, from left) So Lim, Jon Stehle and Joe Harmon; and (bottom row, from left) Mayor David Meyer and Tom Ross.

ceived 109 total calls for service dispatched as "weapons violations or brandishing a firearm." Six of them gave the location as City-owned buildings or parks, and four listed Lanier Middle School.

But, explained Hinesley, "The majority of the 109 calls weren't weapons violations. At Lanier, two of the calls were about BB guns, one was a social-media post and the other was a verbal threat. But they all came out as 'weapons violations.'"

Councilmember Janice Miller asked if, besides City buildings, the ordinance would include, for example, the City Hall and Sherwood Community Center grounds. Lubkeman said it would not include those outdoor areas.

In the proposed ordinance, asked Councilmember Jon Stehle, "If I have a license to carry concealed and I'm walking on the sidewalk around Old Town Square, I'm not in violation of the ordinance?"

"That is correct," answered Lubkeman. "But [doing that] during a public event might put you in violation." Stehle then asked how people would know what's in and out of the gun-prohibited area, and Lubkeman said, "You'd have to have a number of temporary signs."

Councilmember Tom Ross asked if the ordinance could be passed with a "sunset provision, with a specific date for a review, to see if the ordinance is working." Lubkeman said the Council could do that for either a review or repeal of the ordinance.

Parks and Rec Director Cathy Salgado said the City issues a dozen or more permits/year for large, special events, such as the Fall Festival, Rock the Block and the Fourth of July Parade. In addition, it issues hundreds of permits annually for picnics in the City's park pavilions, plus 20-30 more permits for church and nonprofit gatherings at Old Town Square and other City locations.

"These special-event permits are reviewed

drew Pratt said the ordinance would be of no benefit. "If someone wants to commit a criminal act with a gun, no law is going to stop them," he said. The result, said Pratt, would be citizens losing their right to protect themselves against criminals.

**VIRGINIA'S ENABLING LEGISLATION** would have allowed Fairfax to bar weapons and ammunition "in any public right of way used by or adjacent to an event requiring a permit," such as large festivals and parades. It would have also charged violators with trespassing – a Class 1 misdemeanor punishable by a year in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine.

Doing so, said Andrew Pratt, could impact that person for life. "We'd lose our permits and never be able to get them back," he said. "There's no provision in the ordinance for asking concealed-carry holders to leave the premises, instead of charging them with trespassing."

Judy Fisher, however, asked the Council to vote yes to prohibit guns in public areas and during large City-sponsored events, calling it crucial to ensure attendees' safety. "The naïve idea and wishful thinking that concealed-carry permit-holders provide a measure of safety has no basis in fact," she said. "We have virtually no control over who obtains [these] permits, and they're not always responsible gun owners."

"More guns don't make us safer; that's obvious by the number of guns in the U.S. and the level of gun crimes. Pass an ordinance which enhances our safety – as several of you have acknowledged that the majority of Fairfax City citizens favor. I urge you to respect the will of the people."

Ethan Kauffman said the ordinance "makes it difficult for the average gun holder to travel through the City when he may come across an unexpected event, such as a protest. Agreeing, Mark Graff said such people with no criminal intent could end up accidentally violating the law. Trice Burgess also said the ordinance isn't needed in Fairfax, and Matt Greenfield said the ordinance needed overall clarification.

Miller then made a motion to adopt the ordinance, but Stehle amended it to delete the section barring weapons from public rights of way adjacent to public, City-managed events, and Councilmember Joe Harmon seconded, citing this section's ambiguity. Agreeing were Councilmember So Lim, Yi and Ross. Leaving it in, said Lim, "would make innocent individuals – in the wrong place at the wrong time – be unlawful."

Yi also made a motion to change the trespassing penalty in this context from a Class 1 to a Class 4 misdemeanor, with no jail time and a smaller fine, and the Council approved this measure, as well. In addition, Miller made a motion to exempt from the ordinance educational events and programs, historical re-enactments, color guards, plus events involving weapons unloaded or loaded with blanks. This motion passed unanimously.

**“Pass an ordinance which enhances our safety – as several of you have acknowledged that the majority of Fairfax City citizens favor. I urge you to respect the will of the people.”**

— Judy Fisher

by City staff and police to determine the level of service they'd need," explained Salgado. "They include, for example, the Ride of the Patriots or a CROP walk."

Ross asked if the ordinance would apply to these smaller events, as well. "We'd need to look at large City-managed events vs. smaller, private events and see how it applies," said Lubkeman. "But it would apply to events within City Parks."

During the public hearing, eight callers phoned in to the online meeting to give their views. The first speaker, Richard Burns, opposed the ordinance. "You're attempting to solve an imaginary problem that doesn't exist," he said. "It's an infringement of our basic rights. People who have guns have already been vetted, and you don't have the right to revoke that right."

"Oppose this misguided ordinance and don't proceed," said Christina Pratt. She wondered "why, all of a sudden, there's a problem," and contended the City would be punishing "responsible, legally permitted, law-abiding citizens. This ordinance is a solution looking for a problem and is totally unjustified."

Describing himself as a military veteran and a concealed-carry permit-holder, An-

## Finding Solutions in the General Assembly

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL  
(D-36)

Both the Senate of Virginia and the House of Delegates have released proposed budgets and we will vote on the budget soon. We are also working to resolve some complex bills and to accelerate vaccinations.



### Vaccination Progress

Health care providers have administered over 1.2 million covid-19 vaccinations in Virginia as of Feb. 12, nine of ten available first doses. As of last week, that means that Virginia ranked seventh among states as a proportion of our population. The state also announced a unified vaccination scheduling system although Fairfax County chose to opt out. Virginia is now receiving 129,000 doses per week which is up 23 percent from our initial allocation. We have also expanded the vaccination program to 36 CVS drugstores around the state. We expect the pace to pick up once the Food and Drug Administration approves the new single-shot vaccines.

### Back to School, River Farm, Mason Neck

On Wednesday, both chambers announced amendments to our two-year budget. Fortunately, revenues have been better than anticipated. The Senate budget includes a three percent raise for teachers and a requirement that school systems hold in-person instruction during the

2021-22 school year. We also included language to prevent local school systems from losing funding if families have removed their children from the public schools.

Sen. Adam Ebbin and Del. Paul Krizek secured funding in both the Senate and House budgets to provide at least \$2 million to help purchase River Farm.

My \$1.6 million amendment to fund a public water connection for Mason Neck State Park was accepted. Delegate Kathy Tran secured the same provision in the House which is promising.

### Managing Criminal Records

Because the minority (Republicans) refused to extend our "short" session to 46 days, we had to formally move legislation from the regular session to the special session. This forced us to take two days off which gave us some additional time to collaborate to resolve some important disputes. On Tuesday, I met in the Governor's Office with approximately ten legislators and the Governor's policy staff to resolve an impasse on the expungement or sealing of convictions and records relating to certain dismissals of criminal charges.

I am very optimistic that we will be able to announce a compromise that will provide hope to the 1.6 million Virginians who have a misdemeanor or felony conviction but served their sentence and have long since moved on and led

law-abiding lives. Enacting this bill will help people move beyond their past and support their families, and will also give employers a bigger pool of employees.

The Senate also accepted my amendment that requires Virginia's Compensation Board to revamp staffing formulas for the state's Commonwealth's attorneys. Today, staffing is determined solely based on felony counts indicted and convictions obtained which incentivizes prosecutors to overcharge and over convict people. My amendment will set new standards.

The Senate also agreed to increase and retain about \$35 million that I requested to fund the computer infrastructure necessary to facilitate the expungement and sealing reforms, and my initiative to expand the Court of Appeals of Virginia by seven judges. Virginia is the only state in America in which litigants do not have a right of appeal after a civil or criminal case and more judges are necessary to help with the new cases.

Our budget also prioritizes \$136 million to extend rail service to the New River Valley in southwest Virginia. This means you might be able to take a train to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg soon. The budget also reallocates \$3.9 million per year saved from abolishing capital punishment to a public defender office for Chesterfield County and new public defender appellate positions. A public defender will help provide thousands of people with enhanced legal defense instead of just a handful of people.

Please continue to respond to my constituent survey at [www.scotturovell.org/survey](http://www.scotturovell.org/survey). It is an honor to serve as your state senator.

## Virginia's Budget Focuses on Recovery

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

Last year was my first on the influential Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, where I was glad to gain direct experience in the allocation of funds and the tweaking of expenses which together create our state budget. At the time, the economic outlook was strong, and we reported an incredibly bold, progressive budget. Within a month of its adoption it was clear many of our lofty funding goals would need to be put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Comparably, Virginia has weathered the economic storm well, and we were able to restore some of these funding priorities this year, as well as take important new steps to begin the process of rebuilding our economy.

Last week the Senate and House reported our respective amendments to the second-year appropriations of Virginia's biennial budget. The differences between these versions will be reconciled in the coming weeks by the joint budget conferees. The Senate budget prioritizes repairing the damage COVID has done to our students' ability to learn, bolsters our education system, protects small businesses, expands access to broadband, increases affordable housing



opportunities, and funds growing vaccination efforts as well as directing aid to at-risk medical patients.

In healthcare, we made prudent decisions to increase federal matching dollars for children's healthcare and foster care, and secured a large amount of federal funding to support a statewide vaccination program. Since my last column, Virginia has become

one of the most successful states in vaccine distribution, and this funding will help us further advance that mission while saving nearly \$100 million for other priorities. We also appropriated dollars to add slots for Developmental Disability Waivers to support those vulnerable residents most impacted by COVID-19.

Virginia's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which funds short and long term projects to reduce barriers to ownership and renting of affordable housing, as well as projects reducing homelessness, has been funded at or around \$5 million a year since its inception. That was simply not enough, and I am glad the Senate budget takes the issue seriously by allocating \$110 million to the Trust over the biennium. We also allocated significant federal relief dollars for rent and mortgage relief. As this year has proved, access to the Internet is not a com-

modity, but rather a necessity. To address this reality the Senate included nearly \$50 million for broadband infrastructure grants. We also included expansive tax breaks and small business loans to protect and bring back small businesses and jobs in the coming year -- a major priority for members of the Senate Finance Committee.

Everyone has suffered during this pandemic, but especially of concern are Virginia's children, who have been uniquely affected during their formative years. The Senate budget moves to address those concerns in order to get kids back into even better schools than the ones they left, with more support and a higher chance at life-long success. We increased salaries for hard-working educators, and also allocated significant dollars in order to add three additional support staff (including mental health counselors and nurses) per 1,000 students statewide. We also increased per-pupil funding for the Virginia Preschool Initiative to level the playing field, so that disadvantaged early learners have a better shot at success.

Despite economic struggles, I am glad that the Senate did not adhere to austerity economics as was done during the 2008 financial crisis. This legislative session has been one to address needs, not wants, and I am glad to support a budget that addressed those needs aggressively and responsibly. With the funds allocated in this year's budget, Virginia will recover.



# Virginia Study of Plant Invaders Set

**Del. Bulova's resolution on control of invasive plant species unanimously passes both House and Senate by voice vote.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**E**cologists advise that invasive plant species grow at the expense of our ecosystem and our pocketbooks. Without any natural biological deterrents, plants and trees not native to our area are able to grow unrestricted, choking out the native plants and trees upon which our native insects, birds, and animals depend upon for food and habitat.

Local county governments, and individual home owners too, annually expend considerable time, effort, and dollars on management of a number of common invaders that are without natural pests and enemies here. Fairfax County runs a staffed Invasive Management Area (IMA) volunteer program and has an Urban Forestry Department with responsibility for controlling invasive species in the park system and providing information and support to citizens county-wide.

Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program Manager, Patricia Greenberg, new to the position this year, oversees more than 2,000 volunteers and site leaders, and a fiscal year budget of \$250,000 granted by the County's Energy and Environment Fund.

Greenberg indicates volunteers are working on 61 active sites, with the most prevalent invasive being multi-flora rose, English ivy, and porcelain berry. Those plant names and other invasive plants and tree names are likely familiar to readers, including: Bradford pear (Callery pear), Japanese honeysuckle, Mimosa, and Norway Maple, to name a few of the 90 on Virginia's invasive plants list.

**THOSE PLANTS** and other non-natives are often still sold in area plant nurseries across the Commonwealth, even though significant sums are spent each year to try to control their growth and eradicate them. In an effort to manage this plant-and-destroy circle, Del. David Bulova (D-37) introduced his invasive plant species joint resolution (HJ527) in the Virginia House of Delegates. As Bulova testified before the Senate Rule Committee, "Arlington County spends about a quarter of a million and Fairfax County about a third of a million dollars on removal efforts each year." Bulova's resolution, supported by Sen. Dave Marsden's (D-37) budget language, creates a work group to study the sale and use of invasive plants. Varied interest groups will join to discuss and make recommendations on possible statutory and regulatory changes to reduce or eliminate non-native plant and tree sale and use, in favor of the sale and use of native plants. Possible strategies could include labeling plants as invasive at point of sale, taxing invasive species and using revenues toward their removal and restoration of native plant habitats, adding invasive plants to the Commonwealth's noxious weed list, supporting education and outreach for better public understanding of the damage done to the ecosystem, and increasing the use of native plants on government properties.

**BULOVA'S RESOLUTION**, which unanimously passed the House, and Senate by voice vote, now awaits signature. [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Volunteer Oluwaseyi Alabi removes invasive English ivy from park trees.



Callery pear and its cultivar, Bradford Pear, escape area yards and grow in dense groupings in nearby forests, crowding out native trees

nature by the Governor Northam. If enacted by the Governor the work study recommendations will be due in November 2021 for potential action by the 2022 General Assembly.

Meanwhile, invasive plants keep growing at a fast pace. Those interested in learning more about planting natives or volunteering to help with managing invasive's growth in Fairfax County are directed to the County's IMA page at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/invasive-management-area](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/invasive-management-area).

## Little River Turnpike and Guinea Road Intersection Improvements Fairfax County

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Monday, March 1, 2021, 7 p.m.

[www.virginiadot.org/LittleRiverGuinea](http://www.virginiadot.org/LittleRiverGuinea)

Inclement weather date: Thursday, March 4, 2021

Find out about planned improvements at the intersection of Little River Turnpike (Route 236) and Guinea Road (Route 651). The improvements include creating a free-flow right-turn lane from northbound Guinea Road to eastbound Little River Turnpike, adding a refuge island for pedestrians crossing Guinea Road, and creating a new through/right-turn lane via restriping on eastbound Little River Turnpike between Guinea Road and Old Hickory Road.

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at [www.virginiadot.org/LittleRiverGuinea](http://www.virginiadot.org/LittleRiverGuinea). The project team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

Review project information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2409 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **March 11, 2021** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Ms. Jessica Paris, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov). Please reference "Little River Turnpike and Guinea Road Intersection Improvements" in the subject line.

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# New Police Station and Animal Shelter Planned for Lorton

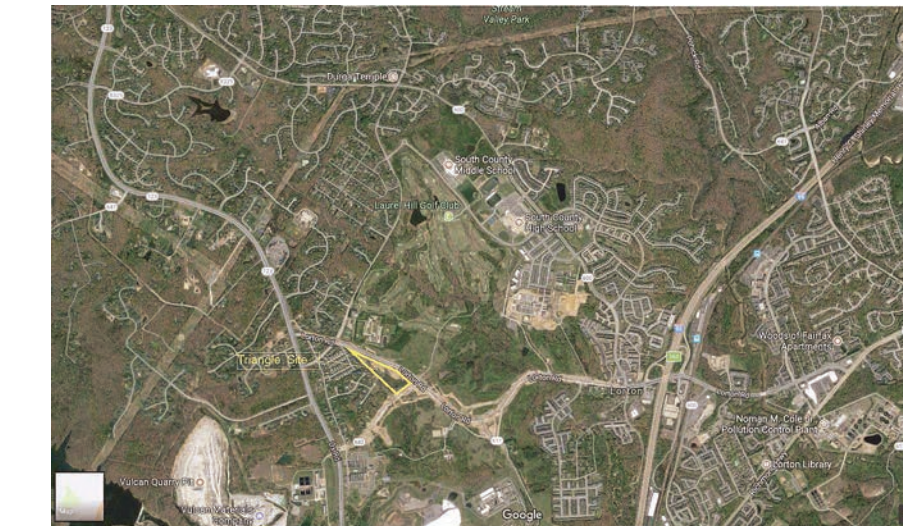
As the South County area grows, facilities are needed to meet the demand.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The Lorton-South County area will take another step away from being in the country when the future South County Police Station and Animal Shelter is built on a parcel of land on Lorton Road, just east of the Ox Road intersection. This area of the county is now patrolled by units from the Franconia and West Springfield District Police Stations, which are some distance away, so the additional police station will allow the department to organize smaller patrol areas and decrease response times throughout the county, Fairfax County said.

The new station will be in the Mount Vernon District, which is under Supervisor Dan Storck, who has been behind the project since the early days when the money was allocated for the station in 2015. Construction on the project should begin in March, but due to COVID restrictions, Storck's office is holding off on the groundbreaking ceremony with the community until later this year.

The new facility includes an approximately 34,000 square-foot police station and an approximately 23,000 square-foot animal



This aerial map shows the location for the proposed facilities.

shelter, the county said. The station includes space for the Animal Protection Police and a community room. The site will also include 20,000 square-foot of outdoor space for the animal shelter, a fuel island to support fleet vehicles, and associated parking. There will be a need for 15 new officers to run the station.

Funding for the South County Police Station and South County Animal Shelter was approved in the 2015 Public Safety Bond

Referendum that was \$151 million. Citizens voted overwhelmingly to approve the needed projects (74.5 percent voted yes). The new facility is projected to cost \$30 million to design and construct.

In a presentation the county made to a citizen group in June 2018, they talked about an 8-member steering committee that was involved from surrounding HOA's, So Co HS and So Co Federation. Money from Nov 2015 Public Safety Bond Referendum, 2013

Police Master Plan. In site selection, there were 6 county owned sites looked at from around that area. Facilities will be similar to the size of other county buildings that house similar entities, and there will be a community room. One plan has three access entrances off Lorton Road and one access from Workhouse Road.

The planners are looking at a "cut-off lighting" plan to "reduce impacts of glare, light trespass and overlighting," while still offering safety and energy conservation, it states in the presentation. In the artist renderings, the design influences on the brick buildings and pitched roof are similar to the existing Workhouse buildings, which were originally the Lorton Prison, built in the 1930s. Construction was originally planned to start in 2020 and end in mid 2022, but with the pandemic impacts on the schedule, the construction contract has recently been awarded to Forrester Construction and construction should begin near the end of this month, the county said.

The parcel of land borders Workhouse Lane on one end, and has a portion sectioned off, which is labeled as historically significant on the county website. It is part of the historic overlay district related to the Lorton Prison. There is a historic house on the property, noted as the historic area, that was the Physician's house that served the Lorton Prison.

# Roof is Raised on Indoor Riding Arena in Clifton

The indoor facility will expand the success for the Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program will spread their program indoors this spring when they open a 17,000 square foot Jean and Ric Edelman Indoor Riding Arena, where they can provide therapeutic riding for many that are in need of riding therapy.

One mother, Mara Sibley, noted the value of the riding program with her son Carson, who looked forward to riding day every week. "Riding at NVTRP is so much more than just a riding lesson. NVTRP helps Carson focus and concentrate; it provides a sense of comfort and inclusion; it gives him an opportunity to do what he has so much confidence doing, and to thrive in such a welcoming environment," she said. The indoor riding ring will expand his riding season options.

The roof was recently raised on the indoor riding arena.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Omy Emami's husband was introduced to NVTRP in 2016 through programs provided by Ft Belvoir clinics and Wounded Warrior Project. They participated in family events, and now Emami hopes that with an indoor arena, they'll be able to do that throughout the year. "He gained so much during his time at NVTRP that he sought ways to get our family involved," she said.

The therapy on horseback works too, said Olivia Taylor, NVTRP Program Director. "The tranquil farm atmosphere and non-judgemental horses creates an ideal atmosphere for learning and practicing new

skills," she said, adding that the therapy delivers in a few different ways. "Through riding and horsemanship session goals, our clients work on increasing strength, balance, motor planning, confidence, and emotional regulation," Taylor said.

In order to meet the growing demand for NVTRP services, and provide an enhanced experience for current riders, their families, and volunteers, they are conducting a whole scale capital improvement project that will unleash property's full potential. Phase I, including the new, lit outdoor Trefry Riding Arena, expanded parking, acces-



At past "Clifton Day," festivities, NVTRP provided rides to children in a small arena.

## NVTRP History

Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program was started in 1980 by a small group of people in Clifton who saw the dramatic improvements that students living with special needs were making at a nearby equine-assisted activities and therapy facility. NVTRP founders sought advice on starting a therapeutic riding program in the community of Clifton and initially obtained permission from the Park Authority to operate in South Run Park.

Money was tight in the first years, but Clifton neighbors lent horses and time, and the program grew over time. Many of the original volunteers are still involved. Rita Dunn was a driving force behind the early development of NVTRP and she was involved until 2001.

In January 2012, NVTRP purchased Little Full Cry Farm, a 17-acre farm that had a barn fire in 2007, and in 2016 Little Full Cry Farm became O'Shaughnessy Farm in honor of the O'Shaughnessy-Hurst Memorial Foundation, the largest donor to support the purchase of the property for NVTRP.

sible Kristen P. Cabbage Memorial playground, and extensive foundation and infrastructure work needed to prepare the site for the indoor riding arena. Cabbage is the late wife of long-time NVTRP Board member and Building Committee Chair, Gary Cabbage. Gary and Kristen have two daughters, Caroline and Emma; who have benefitted from the program.

According to NVTRP, the new space will allow current riders to ride year-round, regardless of the weather, and also allow services to increase by 60 percent, hopefully eliminating the typical one year waiting list.

# CALENDAR

## SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Sing the Bay Fantastic. 7-8:40 p.m. Online. Hilarious and poignant songs about the people who live on America's waterways featuring Janie Meneely (Chesapeake Bay), Lee Murdock (the Great Lakes), and George Ward (the Erie Canal and upstate New York). Visit the website: <https://fsgw.org/event-4147590>. Concert is also a stealth publication party for Janie's new book, "Sing the Bay Fantastic", which highlights the music, history, and culture of America's waterways.

## TUESDAY/FEB. 23

Search for Winter Waterfowl. 10-11 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Burke Lake Park is teeming with wildlife, even in the coldest months of winter. See what birds are calling the lake home this season with the park's "Waterfowl" program. During the program, you will walk the shores of Burke Lake in search of winter waterfowl. Be on the lookout for birds, such as loons, lesser scaups and ring-necked ducks. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather.

This program is designed for participants age 12 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-323-6600.

## THURSDAY/FEB. 25

Voices of Woodlawn: A Reckoning by 4 Poets of America's Slave-Holding Past. 12-1 p.m. Virtual event. Hosted by the Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. In Voices of Woodlawn, four poets give voice to the erased lives of the enslaved at Woodlawn, a Fairfax, Virginia former plantation that is now a historic site. Maryland Poets Diane Wilbon Parks, Patrick Washington, Sylvia Dianne "Ladi Di" Beverly and Hiram Larew confront the sadness, anger, injustice, and confusion of such a past and its haunting legacy. They are joined by poet and harmonica player, Cliff Bernier, in a powerful program of witness. Visit the website: <http://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/voices-of-woodlawn>

## SATURDAY/FEB. 27

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 4 p.m. Via Zoom. The speaker will be Christine West, with a talk called "The Mayflower and Early New England Immigration." They will go beyond local history this month to recognize the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's landing in November 1620. (OK, a few months late, but what's a few months versus 400 years?) The presentation, originally developed by the New England Genealogical Society, will summarize some of the major events leading up to—and following—the Mayflower voyage. Visit [burkehistoricalsociety.org](http://burkehistoricalsociety.org).



St. John's United Methodist Church – Springfield, VA is offering a complimentary series of finance education classes on ZOOM. Brad Duty, an accredited and experienced financial counselor, will lead these informal and informational classes. To register for these classes, go to [www.saintjohnsumc.org](http://www.saintjohnsumc.org) and click on the icon for Personal Finance Management Seminars.

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Stretching Your Money

Tue 9 Mar 7-8:15 pm  
Developing Your Spending Plan (AKA the Budget)

Tue 16 Mar 7-8:15 pm  
Take Control of Your Finances...Managing Credit and Debt

Tue 23 Mar 7-8:15 pm  
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# Inspiring Young People in Creative Learning Activities

## Fairfax Symphony named a Dominion ArtStar.

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

With more than five decades as an honored symphony, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) adds 2021 Dominion Energy ArtStar to its accolades. FSO received the ArtStar award for its innovative music-learning program, “Link Up,” in partnership with Carnegie Hall. The award was received at the Virginia Commission for the Arts “Art Works for VA” virtual conference.

FSO was one of five organizations from Virginia that received the ArtStars award for inspiring people in creative endeavors. The organizations represent Virginia organizations with annual operating budgets under \$1 million. Each received a \$10,000 grant to support their winning arts or cultural education program.

“These organizations show ways the creative spirit continues to thrive – whether through outdoor, virtual or digital programming,” said Hunter A. Applewhite, president of the Dominion Energy Char-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Students in Fairfax Symphony Orchestra “Link Up” 2019 music program

### Where and When

To learn more about the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra partnership with the Carnegie Hall “Link Up” program and other Fairfax Symphony education programs, visit [www.fairfaxsymphony.org](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org). Additional support for the Fairfax Symphony “Link Up” program provided by ArtsFairfax, The Rea Charitable Trust, and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

itable Foundation. “Virginia is very fortunate to have these talented organizations.”

“The Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) congratulates all the ArtStars Award recipients,

including the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra,” said Janet Starke, Executive Director, VCA. “This award affirms the good work being done by the FSO, and their peers from across the state.”



Fairfax Symphony Orchestra Bassist Aaron Clay

tion program virtually this year,” said Jonathan Kerr, Executive Director. FSO. “Our commitment to our community is stronger than ever, only strengthened by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. By sharing our concerts and education programs virtually, we are filling a critical need for quality arts programs to entertain, educate, inspire, sustain, and unite the communities we serve. This prestigious award furthers our work to provide unique, innovative, and uplifting arts experiences for thousands in Fairfax County and across our region.”

For Aaron Clay, “as a bassist, who performs both classical music and jazz, I’m particularly excited to be part of the FSO “Link Up” program. It’s wonderful to see students exploring what happens when jazz and classical music come together. Studying composers including Florence Price, Duke Ellington, Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, and Courtney Bryan, students are learning concepts of rhythm, form, improvisation, and communication and how they contribute to that magical moment in the orchestra when jazz and classical music comes together to really “swing!”

Developed by the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall, FSO’s “Link Up” program provides a unique opportunity for students in Grades 3-5 to come together for a shared cultural experience.

“We are thrilled and honored to be a Dominion ArtStar in recognition of our work to serve teachers and students by implementing our much-needed “Link Up” educa-

# County Department of Public Works, Environmental Services Wins Eight Awards

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control wastewater treatment plant was recently recognized for their “Tertiary Filters Rehabilitation Project,” and “Rehabilitation of Three Equalization Basin and Ancillary Facilities,” by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) in its annual Mid-Atlantic Region awards.

The Noman M. Cole Jr. plant was among eight Fairfax County’s Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) facilities awarded by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the APWA in its annual Mid-Atlantic Region awards. Five of the awards were for Project of the Year and three honorable mentions.

“Having Mid-Atlantic APWA recognize the work of DPWES and our partners with these awards acknowledges the excellence in the building and



Fairfax County Wastewater Management

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**One scene from the county wastewater video was filmed on the banks of Gunston Cove where the clean water is successfully put back into the ecosystem.**

enhancement of the county’s infrastructure,” said DPWES Assistant Director Juan Reyes.

Reyes was featured in the county video documentary that focuses on the water cycle, and the activities at the Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control wastewater treatment plant. They discuss the process and focus on the clean water going back into the waters of Gunston Cove “clean enough to sustain

life,” one of the officials said. Maureen Gable, the science department chair at Lake Braddock Secondary School, uses examples from the plant to teach students in her AP Environmental Science class.

Noman M. Cole Jr might be best known for his efforts to improve the water quality in the Potomac River. He was principal author of the 1971 Occoquan Watershed Policy, which prompted establishment

of the Upper Occoquan Sewage Authority and the creation of one of the world’s most advanced sewage treatment plants. Cole died in 1997 at age 63.

The following projects were selected for 2021 awards. Each winning project was completed by either the Wastewater Design and Construction Division, the Building Design and Construction Division or the Utilities Design and Construction Division. All three divisions are in the DPWES Capital Facilities business area.

Winner - Backlick Run Gravity Sewer Emergency Abandonment Project - Project of the Year Award for the category of Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair Less than \$5 million

Winner - Tertiary Filters Rehabilitation Project at the Noman M Cole Pollution Control Plant - Project of the Year Award for the category of Environment \$5 - \$25 million

Winner - Reston Community Center Aquatics Facility Renovations - Project of the Year Award for the category of Structures \$5 - \$25 million

Winner - Scotts Run Trail Project - Project of the Year Award for the category of Transportation Less than \$5 million

Winner - Innovation Center Station Parking Garage Project - Project of the Year Award for the category of Structures \$25 - \$75 million

Honorable Mention for the Rehabilitation of Three Equalization Basin and Ancillary Facilities - Project of the Year Award for the category of Environment \$5 - \$25 million

Honorable Mention for the Department of Vehicle Services West Ox Facility Renovation - Project of the Year Award for the category of Structures \$5 - \$25 million

Honorable Mention for the Mclean Metro Gravity Sewer Capacity Improvements Project - Project of the Year Award for the category of Environment Less than \$5 million

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the awards will be announced during a virtual ceremony. The date is pending.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ERIN MOLEK



DEZ Zambrano painted Batman on this cleat.



Famed artist DEZ Zambrano with his mural of star athletes.

## Fairfax Academy Students to Hear from the Pros

The Fairfax Academy's 3rd annual Career Experience Expo is next Monday, Feb. 22. This fully virtual event for all current Fairfax Academy students will begin at 9:30 a.m. with keynote speaker, David "DEZ" Zambrano, followed by three, 45-minute workshop sessions led by a wide variety of industry professionals. During this full-day conference, students will choose which three workshop sessions they'd like to attend.

The sessions include: David Zobell and Matt Strote from Signature Theatre; Fairfax City Cultural Arts Manager, Megan Dubois; iContact Coaching owner Julie Johnston; Academy alumna and Oklahoma Admissions Counselor, Monica Brown; Academy alumna and textile designer Sarah Dowell; Longwood University Associate Professor, Ryan Stouffer; Academy alumni Brian Rose and Sarah Heaton from Movoly Productions; music director, conductor and pianist, Jose Simbulan; Encore Ballroom Couture owner, Julie Wilson; Dance Instructor, Andrew Black; Director and Choreographer from J.A.M. the Revue, Jeremy

McShan; Rob Sanchez and Marc Collier from Xtended Reality Junkies; Deliberately Designed College and Career owner and Marshall Academy Counselor, Niki Hauber; Academy alumna and U.S. State Department employee, Bebe Tran; and movie director, Hyung Tae Kim.

As for Zambrano, he was raised in Northern Virginia and draws inspiration from his life experiences. His love of art began with graffiti. Later, while riding the Red Line between Virginia and Maryland, he was captivated by the incredible artwork he saw covering the walls as the train went by.

Self-taught, Zambrano became an accomplished, custom-airbrush artist, muralist and canvas artist, using mixed media to create a visual masterpiece. He's garnered wide acclaim for his custom artwork on footwear and has created commissioned work for athletes including Steph Curry, Tom Brady, Julio Jones and Steve Smith Sr.

— BONNIE HOBBS

## More Performance Dates for CFTC's Magic Show, 'Spellbound'

Due to popular demand, the City of Fairfax Theatre Co. (CFTC) has added extra performance dates to its production of "Spellbound," magician Lars Klores's

one-man show celebrating the art of magic. Using Zoom in ways no one has previously imagined, audience members will discover the mystery and shock happening right in their own homes, via their own hands.

The new performances will be held Friday-Saturday, Feb. 26-27, from 8-9:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 28, from 3-4:30 p.m. A Zoom

link will be emailed to ticket holders, the day of the performance they've chosen to attend.

Each show will run about 80 minutes. They're intended for adults, but are also appropriate for supervised children, 8 and older, with an interest in magic. Buy tickets at [www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org/spellbound.html](http://www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org/spellbound.html). However, tickets for all performances must be purchased by Monday Feb. 22, at 6 p.m., so mystery packages integral to each show will have time to arrive.

Only one ticket is needed per

household – and shows are selling out fast, so potential attendees are encouraged to buy their tickets quickly. For questions and further information, contact Artistic Director Amanda Snellings at [cftcartisticdirector@gmail.com](mailto:cftcartisticdirector@gmail.com).

"Spellbound" is a reality-bending, virtual performance featuring astounding acts of magic and mindreading, with effects that happen in your own home," said Snellings. "This show will manipulate your eyes, your mind and even your hands, altering perception until you won't know what to believe."

— BONNIE HOBBS

### AREA ROUNDUPS

## Walkinshaw to Host Virtual Covid-19 Town Hall

Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) will host a Virtual COVID-19 Town Hall with Fairfax County Health Director Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu on Monday, Feb. 22 at 7 p.m. Dr. Addo-Ayensu will join Supervisor Walkinshaw to discuss the County's COVID-19 vaccine rollout, vaccine distribution strategy, and answer Fairfax County residents' questions live. The town hall will be televised on Channel 16 (COX Channel 1016); Verizon/Comcast Channel 16) and will be live streamed both on Channel 16's website and Supervisor Walkinshaw's Facebook Profile.

Residents are encouraged to send questions before the program to [Braddock@Fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Braddock@Fairfaxcounty.gov) and use "COVID TOWN HALL" in the email subject line. Residents can also submit questions via Supervisor Walkinshaw's Facebook Live Comments Section or by calling Channel 16's live phone line at 703-324-1114 during the event.

## Herrity to Host Virtual Teen Job Fairs

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) will be hosting two Virtual Teen Job Fairs on Saturday, March 13 from 2-5 p.m. and Saturday, March 20 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Normally, he hosts 5-6 fairs at local high schools. With the limitations of the pandemic, this year's fairs will be hosted virtually through Brazen, a professional virtual job fair platform. The fairs will be open to all teens in Fairfax County looking for employment, volunteer opportunities, or tips on building their resume. Free online booth space will be provided to businesses and organizations to advertise their available positions. They will also host resume and career building sessions with their Chamber of Commerce partners. Visit the website: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TeenJobFairRegistration>

## Springfield Church Offers Free Finance Management Seminars

St. John's United Methodist Church in Springfield is offering a complimentary series of finance education classes on ZOOM. Brad Duty, an accredited and experienced financial counselor, will lead these informal and informational classes. To register for these classes, go to [www.saintjohnsumc.org](http://www.saintjohnsumc.org) and click on the icon for Personal Finance Management Seminars:

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Developing Your Spending Plan (AKA the Budget)

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**-Werner Heisenberg**

**Obituary**

**Obituary**

**Obituary**

**Celebrating Our "Happily Ever After"**

**A Tribute to Ravi Panth**  
**April 13, 1952-January 28, 2021**

February 2021

Dearest Ravi,

When we met February 14, 1991, we never imagined the incredible journey we would start together. It all began, the night before Valentine's Day, when my neighbor, who was about 75 at that time, had been insisting I accompany her to one of her social events. She had asked me so many times, that I always felt bad turning her down. However, this time I decided to accompany her, not knowing that my world and yours would forever change.



Who would have known? We both had relocated to Virginia from countries that are thousands of miles away and with different cultural backgrounds. We never imagined the incredible miracle that was about to occur when the Puerto Rican woman and Indian man would start their "Happily Ever After" on this special, unforgettable and magical Valentine's event.

We were blessed indeed. The connection and chemistry was present from the very beginning. I remember you standing at the corner of the room near the food table holding a diet Pepsi and nibbling on some of the finger foods. You were wearing the olive green casual jacket (that memorable olive green jacket that I have been searching for unsuccessfully for years), over the white shirt and tie. You looked so stylish and so well put together. This jacket and its story has always been one of our favorite topics of conversation, especially on Valentine's Day. Our faces would light up as we relived those moments. Well, I would give anything to find that olive green jacket, and, who knows, as we both have come to realize during our journey together, everything is possible.

That evening our eyes met, and it was a mesmerizing experience. You walked slowly towards me with what you call your "John Wayne" walk and in your unique tone of voice asked, "Can I place my jacket here behind your chair?" My shy manner did not allow me to say anything but, "Yes, of course." My face blushed as my heart beat so, so fast.

Then, you asked me to dance and turns out that you were talented even at that. You held my hand and lead me to the dance floor. I found out that you loved all kinds of music, whether slow, rock and roll, country, line dancing, or Latin. On occasions, further on in the relationship, you even tried dancing merengue and salsa. You loved it all, and you certainly were a natural turning an eye or two as your charming-self let loose with the rhythms on the dance floor.

There was something about you. It was a glow, a special glow that certainly lit up a room and you definitely stood out with that beautiful smile of yours, laughter and charming personality. Years later, when I asked the meaning of your name, you told me that "Ravi" in Hindi meant "Sun". Well, that explains the glow. You were a ray of sunshine in the lives of so many.

We finally had a chance to find a quiet sitting area and you immediately pulled out a picture from your wallet. It was a picture of your son, Avishek as a toddler. Your daddy love was evident as your eyes sparkled sharing stories about him. You also talked fondly about your mother, father, brothers, and your career as an Engineer.

My attraction towards you went beyond your handsome physical features and charisma. I knew that night, from that first encounter, that you were a loving, kind, caring and devoted father, son and brother. Those incredible traits were confirmed as our relationship slowly flourished, and we got to know one another better. With the passing of the years, I witnessed first-hand your sensitivity, compassion, creativity and wonderful sense of humor.

Your talents manifested themselves in so many other areas. They extended to math, writing, and technology. You would not rest until you mastered a new computer program or when you attempted to explain some math problems to me and I would say, "I can't get it." And you with your calm self would say, "It is OK. Not to worry."



Even through your health struggles, we supported and leaned on one another and as you would put it, "Together always through thick and thin." I thank God each day for allowing us to cross paths because we are indeed what some identify as "soulmates." We have lived life under our own terms, and regardless of what society identifies as a "normal relationship," ours was the most normal, unique and fulfilling of all. The type of relationship that comes ONLY once in a lifetime.

Our "Happily Ever After" started from the day we met. From that moment on, our lives were enriched as we were destined to help one another grow in so many incredible ways. Our love, commitment and support towards one another will always be present as a unique, incredible and memorable love story that will live on forever.

Our positive energy radiated in balance and harmony as it all flowed naturally and effortlessly. During our journey, I never heard you raise your voice, or be confrontational and you never ever said anything negative or rush to make judgements about anyone. This positive energy has always been present. It has been reflected in the way you have taken care of your mother getting her medications ready, taking her to appointments, making sure she ate well, and your final tribute to her spending countless hours creating her 90th birthday book of memories which I consider a true masterpiece.

I cherish all of our memories together but especially those simple and caring tender moments when you held my hand in the car and the protective way you held my wrist when crossing a street. I cherish our quiet movie nights and the way you would recite the script from one of the scenes of the Bruce Lee movie, *Enter the Dragon*. You had watched that movie so many times that you knew it inside out.

I remember in detail how you stroked my lips and hair, and the way you cut in half the last shrimp on a plate and shared it with me. I cherish the first time you had a "bacalaito" (codfish fritter) during one of our trips to Puerto Rico. I cherish the moments of finding a Kit-Kat chocolate bar (my favorite) in some area around the house. And, who can forget that Valentine's Day when you showed up with 45 of them in a gift box.

I cherish our shopping trips together, the moments of listening to relaxation music or Julio Iglesias, one of our favorites, and the aroma therapy with Tiger Balm on our temples and tips of our nose.

I cherish the long time ago moments when you were still driving back and forth home from work. You would call me daily to let me know you were about to cross the bridge. You knew me so well that you knew it would be the first thing I would ask you because crossing the bridge back from office indicated you were almost home safe and sound.

I cherish your career milestones especially

when you joined the Navy as a civilian and continued to contribute to the country with your talents as an Engineer. You loved those Navy aircraft carriers so much. I cherish your plaques, letters of recognition of service and your excitement and commitment when working with your team on a project.

I cherish all of your office friends and your daily interactions with them and who I got to know by your sharing of office events like a retirement, new hire, marriage, passing of a family member or when you contributed to an office activity with your own homemade "mango pie" which was certainly popular. And, I cherish the moments when Avishek, who was enlisted in the Navy at that time, showed up at your office to have lunch together with you.

I cherish your rich cultural heritage, your childhood stories, like the one when you relocated to India from Burma around the age of twelve, and the stories of your classmates from that time period in your life. But, in particular, I cherish the story of your arrival to the United States in 1978 with just a couple dollars in your pocket and your stories about when you settled in New York.

And my love, I cherish the story of how you slowly worked hard to bring all of the family members to the United States and build a brighter future for all. These stories and anecdotes are so unique and inspiring that I encouraged you to write about them and you were excited and close to doing so.

Furthermore, I also cherish your love for Michelle, Omar, Javier and my four grandchildren as you gained their trust as we moved on in our relationship. You have been instrumental in their lives influencing them in a positive way with your examples, giving them advice, guiding and supporting their own journey in life.

I cherish our moments with Avishek and the way you would always end a phone conversation with him saying, "I love you Babo." I thank God for having Avi in my life and acknowledge the incredible job you and his mother Bhadrach have done in co-parenting him. Avi has certainly evolved into a reflection of you. He has all of the unique qualities needed to navigate life with a purpose as he continues making a difference in people's lives. And, just like you, his caring and sensitive nature and love for family and country will impact many.

Avi has been instrumental taking on so much during this difficult time and has pulled us ALL through. He is destined for many more great things and with the ongoing support of Sonali, he will continue to make us all proud.

I thank everyone who has supported our journey and our struggles especially during this challenging time living with this horrendous pandemic and the loss of life. That includes the 911 operators, paramedics, nurses, doctors and staff at Inova Fairfax Hospital. They are the ones in the front lines sacrificing daily in service of others. And let's not forget, that the memory of those lost MUST always be kept alive.

In conclusion, I find myself these days remembering it all, looking at photos, your videos, and rereading the messages on the collection of cards you sent me during our life journey together. In doing so, I found a Valentine's Day card with a message that summarizes our love and reaffirms our "Happily Ever After." May you rest in peace and until we meet again.

Loving you always,  
**Ivette**

**I Love You**

I love you because you dream with me and you know how to make me laugh. I love you because your hugs warm me and your kisses make my heart skip a beat. I love you because you're not only my partner but also my best friend. I love you because you're there when times are tough and you make the good times even better. I love you because no matter what, you love me too. Happy Valentine's Day and Anniversary my love.

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## If Michael Corleone Had Lung Cancer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"Just when I thought I was out ... they pull me back in." And just when I thought I had a month off from cancer-related appointments, infusions, scans and lab work, et cetera, I experienced a new symptom the other day which warranted an unexpected brain MRI. Though I delayed a few days in sharing my new symptom, on Thursday I emailed my oncologist. Within the day (not nearly soon enough for my wife, Dina), I received a call from my doctor. After a brief conversation during which I described my symptoms in more detail, a diagnostic scan was scheduled for the next day (fortunately an appointment opened up while we were talking. Otherwise, it might not have occurred so soon). According to my oncologist, what I was experiencing is called "disequilibrium." I couldn't walk a straight line. Had a police officer been present, I would have been cited for walking while intoxicated.

Amazingly I received the results from the MRI within a few hours of my appointment. The report from the radiologist was extremely thorough since I had been given "contrast," an infusion which provides better detail for the radiologist. (Given my pre-existing kidney issue, there are certain products which I cannot tolerate, ones which are filtered through the kidney, specifically "contrast.") But this time, my oncologist wanted the clearest picture/assessment possible. (Infusing "contrast" results in a kind of clarity, like the difference between viewing color and black and white.) So receiving an "unremarkable" (no metastasis, "no infarct, no hemorrhage, no intracranial abnormality," no anything) report was particularly encouraging. Now I can breathe again, except for another side effect caused by the lenvima (my thyroid cancer medicine), but that symptom is more par for the course I've been on for the last four months or so. "Disequilibrium" not so much.

Going forward, I am experiencing less balance/dizziness issues. But I'm also no longer - for the moment, taking my thyroid medicine, which I can't imagine is a good thing. However, I'm not going to worry about that in the short term. In the long term, not taking the best possible prescribed treatment for the treatment of papillary thyroid cancer is hardly reassuring to my presumptive life expectancy. Nevertheless, if I've learned anything in my nearly 12 years as a cancer patient, it is that nothing (drugs, side effects, miscellaneous treatment/protocols) lasts forever. Heck, sometimes treatment and all doesn't even last a month. It's best to sit tight and try to be patient. Getting ahead of one's immediate circumstances is unhelpful and could be much ado about nothing (at least that's been my modus).

That being clear to me, anytime I can get a month where I have no scheduled lab work, infusion, injection, diagnostic scan or appointments is to be acknowledged and celebrated almost. Presently, I am, or rather was in the middle of just such an interval until this "disequilibrium" manifested. It's sort of like being called in to work on your off day. Mentally, it really upsets the apple cart, and more specifically your peace of mind. And any time a cancer patient can get some piece of mind, it's extremely valuable. It's mind over something that's the matter.

With a month off from cancer-related activities, one can almost ('almost,' not quite though) live a cancer-free, normal-type life. It's not as if you forget your circumstances however, but it allows a certain mental break which believe me, all us cancer patients need. Without all the constant reminders, one can almost back-burner the whole cancer existence. Unfortunately, this kind of existence is also characteristic of the ups and downs and all-arounds that cancer patients experience. Granted, it's not ideal, but it's still a living, thank God!

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



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