After nearly a year of virtual learning, Alexandria City Public Schools began the process of returning students to the classroom with a hybrid learning plan that began March 2.

“We have been looking forward to this day since last year,” said Mount Vernon Community School Principal Liza Burrell-Aldana as she welcomed teachers and students back to the school for the first time since March 13, 2020.

Just watching the kids, seeing them learning safely today is everything. To all of us teachers and administrators, it’s just been a great day.”

At MVCS, 63 percent of the staff have returned for the hybrid learning model that separates students into two groups for alternating in-person classes two days per week.

“We have been looking forward to this day since last year.”
— MVCS principal Liza Burrell-Aldana

“Our pre-k students have returned for either Tuesday-Wednesday or Thursday-Friday classes with anywhere between six and nine kids in each classroom,” Burrell-Aldana said of the only dual-language school in the ACPS system.

Burrell-Aldana said that 21 of the 39 MVCS classrooms have a regular teacher in place with others using teachers via classroom monitors.

“This has been a one-year process,” Burrell-Aldana said. “Our teachers have done a great job educating our children through this virtual learning experience and making sure they are still learning despite all the odds and the distance.”

Nine-year-old Luis Aleman was excited to return to school for the first time in a year.

“It’s been tough studying at home all year,” Aleman said. “I have two siblings who don’t let me do anything so it’s good to be back here.”

Aleman said that the students are staying six feet apart, washing their hands and practicing social distancing.

“A banner welcomes students back to Douglas MacArthur Elementary school March 2.”

ACPS Superintendent Gregory Hutchings visits with fourth grade students at Mount Vernon Community school March 2.

“We can’t play on the playground because it’s not social distancing.”

Fourth grade MVCS teacher Emily Porterfield was excited to be returning to the classroom.

“It’s an incredibly proud moment to be back here today,” said the 23-year ACPS veteran. “It was 351 days ago that we really had to pivot as teachers, but we remained flexible in collaborating and working with each other to keep schools open the entire time. Now we are just opening the physical classroom space.”

“Vice President Kamala Harris visited Fibre Space, a woman-owned small business in Alexandria on Wednesday, March 3, to talk about passing the American Rescue Plan, getting the pandemic under control, getting relief to those who need it, and supporting women in the workforce.”

“Greetings from Alexandria, VA where the @VP is visiting Fibre Space, a beautiful woman-owned small business, to hear how they are managing to get through the pandemic,” said Peter Velz, press operations director for the Vice President, in a tweet.
Manor House in Prime Old Town Location!

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Advocates call on the governor to legalize marijuana as soon as possible.

**By Michael Lee Pope**

Gazette Packet

The debate over legalizing marijuana is about to light up, putting Gov. Ralph Northam at the center of a budding controversy. At issue is a question of timing. Should he agree with lawmakers that legalization should wait until New Year’s Day 2024, giving the commonwealth enough time to stand up the new Cannabis Control Authority? Or should he amend the bill the General Assembly put on his desk to legalize weed now to prevent communities of color from being overpoliced in the interim?

“The governor has been talking about reparative justice for the communities and individuals harmed by the war on drugs and racially biased policing,” said Asha Khanha, legislative director for the ACLU of Virginia. “A way to make that lip service reality would be to enact these changes now and stop the harm of marijuana prohibition.”

Last weekend, lawmakers emerged from a closed-door conference committee with a compromise bill that has angered many of the governor’s allies. Crafted in secret, the conference report put legalization on hold until a new regulatory agency can be created and commercial licenses issued. Advocates have been calling on lawmakers to separate the date of legalized possession and the start of commercial sales, but lawmakers who were part of the conference committee disagreed.

“There’s no legal marketplace. It would just be the illicit market,” said state Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30). “We want to create a marketplace that has products that have been tested and not have additives and make sure that the people we’re selling to have been ID’d to make sure they’re 21 and older.”

**THE ALEXANDRIA DELEGATION** is at the center of the debate. The two lawmakers leading the secret talks over the weekend were Ebbin of Alexandria and House Majority Leader Charniele Herring, who also represents Alexandria. Members of the conference committee determined that the best course of action would be for marijuana to remain illegal for now, still subject to civil fines and penalties. They also slapped a re-enactment clause of the regulatory parts of the bill, forcing lawmakers to consider any way he sees fit, and he has until the end of this month to take action. That means he’s now being lobbied heavily by advocates for criminal justice reform to legalize marijuana as soon as possible instead of waiting for the business dynamics to materialize.

“I’m extremely disappointed that we legislated business before justice,” said Chelsea Higgs Wise, executive director of Marijuana Justice Virginia. “The governor said that this bill was supposed to prioritize racial equity but it’s clear that it only prioritized a cannabis profit industry.”

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY session began with Northam calling on lawmakers to legalize marijuana, building on momentum from the decriminalization bill he signed into law last year. During his State of the Commonwealth address, the governor framed the move as an acknowledgement that Virginia’s criminal justice system treats people unfairly. He used his speech to spotlight some statistics showing Black people are three times as likely to be convicted of marijuana crimes and four times as likely to be arrested.**

“It’s time to join 16 other states and make marijuana legal, and end the current system rooted in inequality,” said Northam in a speech delivered in a House chamber that was mostly empty because of pandemic precautions. “We’ve done the research, and we can do this right away, leading with social equity, public health and public safety.”

But the legislation the governor sent to Ebbin and Herring did not call for action right away. Instead, the governor’s timeline called for legalization to wait until commercial sales begin. Advocates who worked with lawmakers during the tense negotiations said the governor’s office maintained that position throughout the process, leading to an end result that delays legalization until New Year’s Day 2024. That means that the governor is now hearing from people urging him to change his position on the timing of legalization.

“He certainly does have the power to make that or any other recommended amendments, however the administration is the most ardent supporter of keeping those two things connected,” said Jenn Michelle Pedini, executive director of Virginia NORML. “The date of legalization, meaning personal possession and personal cultivation, need not be tied to the date of retail sales. That’s been our position throughout, and that’s still our position today.”

**CRIME STATISTICS** show worries about disproportionate policing is not an academic concern. According to the Alexandria Police Department, 64 percent of people arrested in Alexandria for drug arrests in 2019 were African American. Almost half of those arrests were Black males. Despite comparable usage rates, Black people are 3.4 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession, according to a recent report from the American Civil Liberties Union, which also found that arrests for possession of marijuana make up about 52 percent of drug arrests.

“Even the thought of business before justice is hard to stomach,” said Del. Cia Price (D-95). “Some of my constituents are in jail right now and more may be sent to jail while we are establishing a regulatory authority for the business pieces.”

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**BULLETIN BOARD**

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com](https://www.connectionnewspapers.com). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

**THURSDAY/MARCH 11**

2021 Women’s Leadership Forum.
8:30-10:30 a.m. The Chamber’s Professional Women’s Network will host its signature event, The Women’s Leadership Forum, virtually via GoToWebinar. After almost a year full of the unexpected and the unprecedented, this forum will bring together women at all stages of their careers for an interactive discussion filled with inspiration and insight, centered around this year’s theme of resilience, and learning how to find the opportunities amidst the challenges. Cost is $25 for Members | $40 for Prospective Members. Visit the website: www.thechamber-alx.com.

**ROTYLCLUB**

**ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT PROGRAM**

The Rotary Club of Alexandria is accepting applications for the 2021 Grant Program. The Rotary Club of Alexandria is accepting applications for the 2021 Grant Program. The See Bulletin, Page 5

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News

Celebrating Purim

Observance marks the saving of Jews from execution in Persia.

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

Students at Agudas Achim Congregation donned their best costumes Feb. 26 to celebrate Purim, the holiday marking the saving of the execution of Jewish people in 5th century BC in Persia.

"Purim is when Queen Esther saved the Jewish people from being executed and exiled from Persia," said preschool teacher Charlotte Buckhold. "One of King Ahasuerus's advisors, Haman, wanted to get rid of the Jewish people because they were not bowing down to him. That was going to happen until Queen Esther came in and saved the day."

Buckhold’s kitah sagol, or purple class, students gathered outdoors to shake their groggers, used to make loud noises to drown out the name of Haman. The traditional three-cornered food of hamentashen, or "oznei Haman" (Haman’s ears) were shared.

The story of Purim is related in the biblical book of Esther. The ritual observance of Purim begins with a day of fasting the day preceding the actual holiday. On Purim Jewish people are enjoined to exchange gifts and make donations to the poor.

― Agudas Achim preschool teacher Charlotte Buckhold

Hamentashen, the traditional three-cornered food of Purim.

― Agudas Achim preschool teacher Charlotte Buckhold

“Purim is when Queen Esther saved the Jewish people from being executed and exiled from Persia.”

― Agudas Achim preschool teacher Charlotte Buckhold

“Mishloach Manot is the tradition of giving gifts of food,” said Buckhold, adding, “it’s very Jewish to give people food.”

By MaryAnne Beatty
Senior Services of Alexandria

Spring is in the air and Senior Services of Alexandria is excited to be hosting its Spring Senior Academy virtually via zoom starting in April. This 4-week free course will meet every Wednesday morning starting April 7 from 10 to 11:30 am and continue April 14, 21 and 28. The Senior Academy is for Alexandria residents 65 and older or those who work in the City to learn about how the city operates including programs and services for older adults.

Each Wednesday morning session will feature speakers including a welcome from Mayor Justin Wilson, presentation by the City Manager’s Office as well as other departments including Transportation, Planning, Office of Housing, Alexandria Health Department and the Division of Aging and Adult Services.

Attendees will also hear from our first responders, Police, Fire and Sheriff.

Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions and receive a lot of great information on city programs and how to get engaged.

To register go to www.seniorservicesalex.org or contact Lindsay Hemphill at admin@seniorservicesalex.org or MaryAnne Beatty at communications@seniorservicesalex.org.

Register Now for the Spring “Virtual” Senior Academy Session Begin Wednesday, April 7

CORRECTION: Volunteers in the page 4 photo of the PawTheiv Partners story in the Feb. 25 issue of the Alexandria Gazette Packet were misidentified. Pictured from left to right are: Lynda DiValentin, Sarah Rasmussen, Ginny Richards and Marta Ishmael.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com
News
Inside Guest House
By Shirley Ruhe
Gazette Packet

Kari Galloway, Executive Director of Friends of Guest House in Alexandria, says, “It’s hard. Our clients feel like they just got out of prison and then they come here and get quarantined for two weeks. At Guest House, we have the only residential women’s facility for recovering non-violent offenders in northern Virginia, and the largest in the state. Currently it serves 30 women in the six-month residential program and 17 in the transitional after Care.

Loneliness is a real enemy of addiction recovery, says Galloway. Women can feel desperate and isolated. Usually the strong support system at Guest House helps pull people through, but during COVID the therapy sessions, case work and AA meetings are all on Zoom and for the first two weeks they are quarantined. “We know the prisons and jails they come from are hot spots.”

Shauna Creek, a case manager at Guest House explains that addition, under normal times we have a strong support system of alumni who come back to mentor, take clients out for a cup of coffee and find a sponsorship to help them keep clean. This is a serious and delicate relationship. But nobody is coming in because of COVID.” There are Zoom meetings but it’s not the same.

Galloway says, “Human connection is so critical for our women.”

Creek says most of the women in the After Care program lost their jobs when COVID hit. “I had three women relapse. They couldn’t handle the time without being busy; they needed constructive outlets. Losing their jobs distressed them.”

Creek continues, “Relapse is a part of recovery but without support they feel so alone trying to get their lives together.”

Liz Royall says she had just graduated from the residential program a couple of weeks before COVID hit. She went into After Care where she had a job at the front desk at Hampton Inn. Royall got laid off when COVID hit. “I had three women relapse. They couldn’t handle the time without being busy; they needed constructive outlets. Losing their jobs distressed them.”

Royall had entered Guest House after her fourth parole violation for using fentanyl. She was facing prison time. She says it is great at Guest House; it’s like a big family. But she says you have to change everything about yourself at once and there is a completely new structure. “It’s hard juggling it all.”

She adds, “There is so much wreckage from my past. I got overwhelmed all at once and there were a lot of days that were really hard. It seemed better to go use and stop the emotional pain.” But she feels like all of the support changed everything. But now the support is on Zoom and while helpful, it isn’t the same.

There have been ups and downs and days when she didn’t think she could make it. Royall just got her license’s driver’s license back. “That’s huge.”

“Time heals and distance puts you further away. People are starting to trust me again,” and most important she can see her son Grayson unrecognised. “I was confused about it. He just wanted his mom.”

Galloway says Guest House scaled back the After Care program by about half at the height of COVID. Then slowly they added back from 15-17 women. Now they are full again with no open beds anticipated until June or July.

During that time revenue was off and in addition women in the After Care program lost their jobs and had to seek rental assistance. Help came from a number of sources such as the City of Alexandria, ALIVE! and the Federal government.

Two-thirds of Guest House funding comes from the Virginia Department of Corrections and the remainder from grants and community support. “We are doing pretty well. We always need some things and with more money we can do more. But the community has been supportive and generous.”

Galloway says they have had only a few relapses.

Guest House “Writing and Rhythm” class on Mondays gets everyone going for the week. In-person classes have just started again with social distancing.

Today Creek is on the way back from the food pantry with three of her After Care clients. “They are in need. They still have to be responsible for feeding themselves and most still don’t have a job back. Ninety percent of my clients had to get some kind of rental grant.” Other days, Creek may be visiting the transitory houses to check in on the women who live there. “I may do a urinalysis or a quick case meeting to check on how they are doing with their goals. I check to be sure they are on track, their finances.” Or there could be an immediate need for medications that they can’t pick up after work.

Creek continues, “My heart has been broken into pieces so many times but just because you fall down doesn’t mean you have to stay down. Can you make better choices?” She tells them, “As long as you fight, I’ll fight with you.”

Galloway adds, “We want so much for the women to see the possibilities they don’t see in themselves.”

Bulletin Board
FRONT PAGE 3
Rotary Club of Alexandria Grant Program provides financial support to nonprofit organizations that advance literacy for children and adults and/or improve the lives of children, youth, seniors, and others with special needs within the city limits of Alexandria. The Rotary Club of Alexandria provides funds for specific programs and activities that strengthen core programs; provide seed funding for new programs, program elements or initiative; or support capital expenditures. Collaborator projects with other nonprofits are accepted, with a single grant awarded to the lead organization. Usually, grants for ordinary operating or maintenance expenses are not considered. Applicants are encourage to include how last year’s gift helped your organization deal with the effects of COVID-19 and how it has helped shape this year’s request. Applications should be filed no later than March 5, 2021, and grant decisions will be announced on or about May 1, 2021. Contact the Contributions Committee at alexotarygrannts@gmail.com.

SEEKING COMMUNITY INPUT The City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will redesign the existing Colonnado Pool, closed since 2010, at 2700 Mount Vernon Ave. The City has selected and hired a design team led by LSG Landscape Architecture through a procure- ment process, which concluded at the end of 2020. The City invites the community to provide input on the project through a virtual meeting on Thursday, March 4 at 7 p.m. Input received at the meeting will be used to direct the project, which will go through an iterative community design process.

COLLECTING FOR GEORGE FLOYD’S MEMORY In the wake of the tragic murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, the Alexandria Black History Museum put out a call to the local community to record their feelings, thoughts, artwork, photographs, and objects. The Museum sought to document the legacy of the community’s response to this tragedy and the wave of peaceful protests and vigils, posters, signs, and sidewalk messages that appeared across the region, to preserve this story for the future. The Museum staff received and collected objects, such as Black Lives Matter masks, pins, signs, artwork and t-shirts. They also received a large volume of digital photographs capturing vigils, marches, signs, and the empty plinth of the Appomattox statue that was removed from the City Center. The collecting initiative is still active and as we reach the anniversary of George Floyd’s murder, the Museum encourages the public to submit digital photographs and images of possible donations to the Museum’s collection via the online form available on the website. Visit alexandriavirginia.gov/BlackHistory.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA STREET SWEEPING PROGRAM Each year towards the end of the win- ter, City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will redesign the existing Colonnado Pool, closed since 2010, at 2700 Mount Vernon Ave. The City has selected and hired a design team led by LSG Landscape Architecture through a procure-ment process, which concluded at the end of 2020. The City invites the community to provide input on the project through a virtual meeting on Thursday, March 4 at 7 p.m. Input received at the meeting will be used to direct the project, which will go through an iterative community design process.

Collecting for George Floyd’s Memory In the wake of the tragic murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, the Alexandria Black History Museum put out a call to the local community to record their feelings, thoughts, artwork, photographs, and objects. The Museum sought to document the legacy of the community’s response to this tragedy and the wave of peaceful protests and vigils, posters, signs, and sidewalk messages that appeared across the region, to preserve this story for the future. The Museum staff received and collected objects, such as Black Lives Matter masks, pins, signs, artwork and t-shirts. They also received a large volume of digital photographs capturing vigils, marches, signs, and the empty plinth of the Appomattox statue that was removed from the City Center. The collecting initiative is still active and as we reach the anniversary of George Floyd’s murder, the Museum encourages the public to submit digital photographs and images of possible donations to the Museum’s collection via the online form available on the website. Visit alexandriavirginia.gov/BlackHistory.

Inside Guest House
Challenges posed by Covid add to tough road to recovery.
Marijuana Legalization Can Reduce School Inequity

By Rob Krupicka

M

arijuana legalization, which was just passed by the General Assembly, presents a rare opportunity for society to right decades of wrongs. When Governor Northam proposed legalization he included a bold idea to fix generations of inequity in the Commonwealth by requiring that forty percent of the tax revenues be used to fund Virginia’s popular, but underfunded early childhood education system.

As a former legislator, member of the state board of education and local official, I know all too well that economically disadvantaged children are more likely to show up to kindergarten underprepared for school. New data from the University of Virginia tells us how much of a challenge this is.

In northern Virginia, as many as 49% of Alexandria kids, 31% of Arlington kids, 46% of Fairfax, 33% of Loudon, and 44% of Prince William County kids all show up to kindergarten unprepared for success. Outside of Northern Virginia the numbers are similar, rising up to 59% of Richmond City kids and 66% of Northampton kids not being ready. The state average is a depressing 44%. We also know that a disproportionately number of economically disadvantaged families come from black and brown communities.

These children all lack key literacy, math, and social skills to excel in school. They are at a considerable disadvantage to their peers from more well-off families. No child’s potential for success should be governed by their economic status. Yet, strikingly, there are over 20,000 young children and families who need support to enter school with all the tools they need to learn.

Young children of economically disadvantaged households carry their lack of Kindergarten readiness throughout their school careers perpetuating a cycle of inequity and academic set-backs that continue to plague our economy and society.

With legalization slated to start in 2024, the new market for marijuana is slated to provide the funds that can help right the wrong of systematic school readiness failures. For years voters in Virginia have told pollsters that we need high quality early childhood education. The political challenge has always been how do we pay for it. Well, once the market place is established, we will have a way.

Thanks to Governor Northam’s leadership, legalization comes with a potent policy answer to one of the most glaring areas of injustice in our education system. Patroned by Senators Lucas and Ebbin as well as Delegates Herring and Scott, SB1406/HB2312 provides a framework for legalization. Now that the bill has been sent to the governor to amend or sign, the question is not whether we will ever legalize in Virginia, the question is will we do it soon enough to change the academic trajectory of babies being born right now.

Rob Krupicka is former Virginia State Delegate, Virginia Board of Education Member and Alexandria City Councilman.

OPINION

Overfounding Alexandria’s Stream Projects by Several Million

According to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), no longer allows default calculations for phosphorus to be used in pollution reduction crediting. Since late 2019, Virginia now requires all stream “restoration” projects to use sediment and phosphorus calculations based on actual soil samples collected instream locally. (Phosphorus is highly concentrated in human and animal waste and fertilizer vs. phosphorus-poor stream bank soils and is probably the main natural channel design projects to use natural channel design projects that bear no semblance to actual stream “restoration” projects to use sediment and phosphorus calculations based on actual soil samples collected instream locally. (Phosphorus is highly concentrated in human and animal waste and fertilizer vs. phosphorus-poor stream bank soils and is probably the main nutrient of concern affecting water quality downstream.)

Density: Source of Problems

For this and other reasons, it was recognized several years ago that natural channel design projects were not cost-effective nor were they providing the greatest pollution reduction benefits and required ecosystem improvements ("uplift"). Therefore, effective July 1, 2021, the stream construction industry will be regionally phasing out this outdated approach in favor of alternative methods for reducing pollutants.

What does all this say for transience, density, and account ability with the public one serves when City staff is heard repeatedly selling their stream projects at the “now or never” price of $16,000 per pound of phosphorus removed? This steal of a deal, in fact, is based on the bogus, highly inflated figure of 1.05 lb. phosphorus per ton of sediment from soil samples collected in phosphorus-rich agricultural district streams near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Stream bank soil samples expertly taken and analyzed show the actual cost per pound of phosphorus removed along the Taylor Run project footprint to be $77,000! Virginia and Alexandria taxpayers in effect have overfunded the 3 current City of Alexandria projects many millions of dollars based largely on highly inflated calculations that bear no semblance to actual phosphorus levels.

City staff never once tried to adjust this flawed cost analysis for factual and adherence to scientific integrity, despite knowing full well of the impending new crediting requirements and cost ineffectiveness of natural channel design. Nor did they disclose any of this information to the public at meetings and project websites. Such behavior is little different than a car dealer knowingly selling vehicles compromised with safety recalls yet not providing full disclosure to the buyer.

Rod Simmons, environmental scientist and ecological restoration specialist, Arlington

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Budget Passed
Enormous number of measures baked into budget to address critical needs in an unprecedented year.

By Delegate Paul Krizek

The 2021 session of the Virginia General Assembly came to a close on Monday, March 1st, which really concluded with a long two-hour floor session on the Saturday that included the final passage of the Budget bill, and tax conformity legislation that included a critical $100,000 threshold for PPP expense deductibility for 2020 for all businesses in the Commonwealth.

The budget was not just one of our final bills passed, but one I played a significant role in as we wrapped up this special session. The budget allocates state funding to our legislative priorities, maintains our AAA bond rating, and promotes fiscal responsibility by adding an additional $250 million to our total of $920 million into our Revenue Reserve Fund — to help rebuild our economy and put our Commonwealth on a path to come back from this pandemic better than before. In my position as one of the seven Subcommittee Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee, I was instrumental in the passage of many important amendments to the budget, and in assisting my colleagues in getting their critical budgetary priorities included in our final product.

COVID

The budget employs new and existing federal dollars to address critical needs such as COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, and disease surveillance and investigation. $98.3 million non general funds (NGF) over the biennium is allocated for mass vaccination efforts, maximizing new federal dollars. It provides $6.1 million GF and $40.9 million in new federal funds for state agencies to support disease surveillance and investigation, testing, and contact tracing. The new funding supports 47 epidemiologists and communicable disease nurses across the Commonwealth’s 35 local health districts and 3.5 program managers in the central office.

Education

This budget has a big focus on education, adding $446.8 million for education over the biennium,

restoring over 95% of funding removed since the onset of the pandemic. These funds are critical as students and teachers begin returning to in-person learning. Initiatives include learning loss supplemental payments, which provide $40 million GF monies in FY 2021 to support local efforts to address COVID-19 learning loss. These funds may be used for extending the school year, summer school, tutoring, remediation and recovery, counseling and student supports, and certain facility modifications. This also permits school districts to carryover funds from FY 2021 to 2022, with no local match required.

$26.6 million will fund additional school counselors bringing our counselor to student ratio to 225:1. $49.5 million provides for funding three specialized student support positions per 1,000 students, including school nurses, school social workers, school psychologists, and behavioral analysts. $62.1 million will be used to temporarily expand family eligibility for the child care subsidy program to assist families affected by the pandemic.

Compensation

Within our final budget, we have included a much-needed 5% salary increase for state employees and state supported local employees, which includes teachers and law enforcement officers. Correctional officers will receive a $1,000 bonus, and our state police will receive an additional 3% salary increase plus an additional $100 per year of service to address salary compression.

Unemployment

The budget contains $18.9 million in one-time funding for the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to forgive no-fault overpayments of unemployment insurance benefits. Many unemployment claimants around the Commonwealth, some of my own constituents, have experienced receiving invoices from the VEC to return money paid out to them due to clerical errors, so this change was critically necessary. Skilled game revenue from this year will add $25 million to the Rebuild Virginia program, bringing total support for the small business assistance fund to $145 million. But come July 1st, those skill game machines will be illegal and need to be removed from all public locations, mostly found in restaurants, convenience stores, and truck stops.

Elections

The budget authorizes the Department of Elections (ELECT) to use about $1 million in remaining funds appropriated during Special Session I, 2020 General Assembly for the reimbursement of postage on absentee ballots. It also adds language to extend absentee voting-related policies, such as ballot drop boxes and my initiative for prepaid postage on the return of absentee ballots until new laws formally codifying these changes take effect on July 1, 2021. Language is also included to create uniformity in collecting petition signatures for state and local offices during the COVID-19 pandemic. $300,000 is included in FY 2022 for ELECT to educate voters on changes made to election law in the 2020 and 2021 General Assembly Sessions.

Healthcare

The budget adds $129.9 million in state and federal funds to increase Medicaid personal care rates. It also provides $6.9 million in state and federal funds in FY 2022 for up to 40 hours paid sick leave for personal care attendants. $91.4 million in state and federal funds to provide a $15/day add-on payment for Medicaid nursing home patients, including $4.4 million GF in FY 2022 to increase the Auxiliary Grant rate by 10 percent to support individuals in assisted living facilities. 435 Developmental Disability waiver slots will be added, bringing the total to 985 slots in FY 2022, with the goal of eliminating the waiver slot waiting list in coming years.

Locally, we were able to include $5 million for the National Museum of the United States Army; and, provide $200,000 to the Lor- ton Community Action Center; $500,000 to United Community; $200,000 to Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services; $250,000 to FACETS; $200,000 to Roino- nia; and $200,000 to BritePaths in FY 2022 from the TANF block grant to provide services to low-income families in Northern Virginia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, our efforts resulted in $2 million towards the purchase of River Farm, and $1.5 million for Mason Neck Park’s drinking water supply. My amendment of $1 million will increase enforcement of unlawful direct shipment of alcohol to Virginia to curb the negative effects of unlicensed alcohol shipments on lawful Virginia businesses and allow Virginians to recoup lost tax revenue from

See Budget Passed, Page II
His Name Lives On – Charles Hamilton Houston
By Char McCargo Bah
Gazette Packet

Before 1965, Alexandria, Va. had separate schools for African Americans in the Alexandria school system. The last segregated graduating class from Parker-Gray High School was the class of 1965. In September 1965, Parker-Gray opened their doors as an integrated middle school. The fight for equality and integration was the initiative of one man who trained a group of lawyers to end segregation.

Charles Hamilton Houston, Esquire, was a Washingtonian lawyer who trained many African American lawyers at Howard University to dismantle the Jim Crow laws that existed in the United States prior to 1965. Some of Houston’s students were Thurgood Marshall (Baltimore, Md.), Joseph C. Waddy (Alexandria, Va.) and Oliver Hill (Richmond, Va.). On the other hand, Samuel W. Tucker (Alexandria, Va.) attended Howard University when Houston was a professor, was influenced by Houston.

Under Charles Houston’s guidance, his students received training to secure civil rights for African Americans. After those students graduated from Howard University, Charles Hamilton Houston left Howard University in 1935 to serve as the first special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He developed a strategy to attack segregation at the public education facilities. Houston exposed the inequality that existed in the separate-but-equal doctrine dating from the Supreme Court’s decision on Plessy v. Ferguson (1897). He won one case after another; he was modeling for his students from Howard University how to dismantle the racial laws of their time.

His method inspired his followers, especially Thurgood Marshall and Samuel W. Tucker.

Charles Hamilton Houston was born on Sept. 3, 1895 in Washington, D.C., to a middle-class family. His father, William was a son of a former slave. William was an attorney who practiced law in D.C. for four decades; and Charles’ mother, Mary was a seamstress. Houston attended segregated schools in D.C., graduating from Dunbar High School. He attended Amherst College in 1911 and graduated in 1915. He returned to D.C. where he landed a job at Howard University and taught English. When World War I began, Houston enlisted as an officer. After World War I, he attended Harvard Law School. He earned his bachelor of law in 1922 and he was admitted to the D.C. Bar in 1924. He joined his father’s practice prior to becoming a professor at Howard University.

Houston played a role in nearly every civil rights case that reached the United States Supreme Court between 1930 to the 1950s. One of Houston’s most historic cases that made it to the Supreme Court was Brown v. Board of Education (1954). Unfortunately, Houston did not live to see the Supreme Court ruling on this case that he helped to propel to the Supreme Court.

His former student, Thurgood Marshall was the lawyer that presented the case to the Supreme Court that overturned the separate but equal law in the 1954 ruling. Houston’s students Samuel W. Tucker and Oliver Hill would go on to fight civil rights cases throughout Virginia. Houston’s student Joseph C. Waddy became a D.C. Judge; and, Thurgood Marshall became a Supreme Court Justice.

The entire African American race was on Houston’s shoulders, he fought in the courts for their rights. On April 22, 1950, Houston at the age of 54 died from a heart attack. The African Americans in Alexandria mourned their national lawyer and hero. They named the old Parker-Gray School located at Wythe Street, Charles Houston Elementary School after their National Civil Rights lawyer.

Today on the old site of Charles Houston Elementary School stands the Charles Houston Recreation Center – Houston’s name lives on.


Save the Date for Maury PTA Fundraiser

It’s time to get ready for Mariner Madness Saturday, March 6. Grab a bagel and coffee while the kids play at this year’s PTA fundraiser at Maury Elementary School. Then log on to a virtual magic show at 11 a.m. by clicking on Maury Update tab and head to an online auction with a cocktail master class at 7:30 p.m.

Bagels will be provided by Bagel Uprising with Coffee from St. Elmo’s, and a pre-ordered art kit can be picked up at the same time. The virtual free magic show will be presented by Joe Romano from the Ultimate Magic Academy.

The main fundraising event will be Mixology Master Class with Jon Schott from the People’s Drug and King’s Ransom. Cocktail kits and nibbles “just to put you in the mood for the auction” can be purchased along with the General Admission ticket. They will be delivered to your home the day of the auction, but it is also possible to buy a General Admission ticket without the cocktail kit.

Auction teasers include Murphy’s Irish Pub champagne brunch for 10, five nights at Deep Creek Lake luxury bed and breakfast retreat, celebration of spring with a luxury picnic and a two-night stay at Tide’s Inn Resort.

— By Shirley Ruhe

Local Republicans To Hold Candidate Information Session

Local Republican party Chairman Pete Benavage announced that the party is planning an information session on March 6 for local Republicans interested in running for office. The session will focus on the rules for filing to run, fundraising, the party’s primary process, and tips for candidate messaging.

The Alexandria Republican City Committee’s (ARCC’s) leadership sees opportunity in the 2021 local elections. They say there is widespread dissatisfaction with the current Democrats in office on a variety of local issues including housing density, transportation congestion, inadequate flood control, rising taxes, overcapacity-underperforming schools, and proposals to co-locate housing on school property.

Benavage says “The local Republican party is actively encouraging local moderates and conservatives to step up to the plate. We will call on the experiences and expertise of elected Alexandria Republicans, former Vice Mayor Bill Cleveland, former City Councilman Frank Fannon, and others in shaping our infor-
A plant-based bakery is coming to Del Ray, not quite next month but close. Mel Gumina, a local author, freelance writer, and lawyer and hero in our community, is bringing her dream of opening a bakery to reality. Gumina’s dreams of opening a bakery became closer to reality once she realized that “cottage business” – that is, businesses run without a public storefront – are a perfectly viable way of operation. “Eating the food that was put out there by other plant-based cottage businesses showed me that it is more doable than I thought,” she said, noting that other vegan restaurants and eateries have been incredibly generous with their time and expertise to help get Le Petit Grump up and running. “This is not something that has been in the works for years and years,” she said. “The idea came to me one day, and I just had this really good feeling about it and I ran with it.” And the region’s vegan and vegetarian circles are abuzz with excitement about the bakery’s progress – and opening. “I was really fortunate for the outpouring of love I’ve received from the vegan community,” she said. “And about the bakery’s name, Le Petit Grump: It’s a reference to Marcus, Gumina’s 12-year-old pup. “He is the most lovable little grump,” she said. “He was my inspiration to transition to vegan lifestyle in the first place.”

Gumina intends to start small, both in terms of menu items and orders. At this point, she’s eyeing a system of opening up a finite amount of orders each week, culminating in specific pickup times on the weekends.

“My plan for right now, because my kitchen is so small, is to keep it very simple,” she said. At first, she’ll be primarily offering croissants in multiple flavors – plain, chocolate and the like. But as the business grows, so will her offerings. And in the meantime, she’s putting the finishing touches on practice runs, perfecting her recipes and oven. “We are more than ready to open our doors,” she said. “I hope that we can feed everybody that wants to eat!”

Hope Gumina is the author of "Clas- sic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, www.kitcheneccentricism.com. Email her any time at hope@kitcheneccentricism.com.
River Farm Offer Falls Short of Asking Price

NOVA Parks and partners made an offer but the farm remains on the market.

By Mike Salmon

The Gazette

In an attempt to keep the property open to the public, the NOVA Parks, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and their partners recently made an offer to buy River Farm in Mount Vernon, but the American Horticultural Society board of directors has voted to decline their offer, looking for their original asking price of $32,900,000 that they say they need to keep the society in operation.

“We deeply appreciate the interest of NOVA Parks in River Farm and their proposal to purchase an option on the property, which if exercised, would involve payments to AHS over several years. We deliberated carefully over the proposal and its terms and concluded that their offer as currently written simply does not meet AHS’s needs. So, with thanks to them for their interest, the board declined the offer,” noted AHS Board Chair Terry Hayes.

Paul Gilbert, the executive director of NOVA Parks, said their offer was “based on the appraised value,” and noted that the $32 million price is an unsupported value constructed on “completely unrealistic expectations,” he said.

Officially Speaking

Locally, elected officials have supported the purchase of the farm to keep it undeveloped. Earlier this month, Senator Adam Ebin (D-Alexandria) and Delegate Paul Krizek (D-Mount Vernon) were behind a successful effort by both the Virginia Senate Finance and Appropriations and House Appropriations Committees to come up with the money. This included $2 million in funding to preserve River Farm in its proposed budget, and another $5 million in combined funding for the preservation of both historic Chickahominy tribal lands and River Farm.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck (D) is anxious to preserve the farm too. “While disappointing, AHS’s decision is unsurprising,” Storck said. “We all remain committed to working with AHS to find a way to preserve this beautiful place of history nestled within the Mount Vernon community. I, personally, see this as part of the process you would find with any real estate sale. I remain hopeful that the AHS Board will support the criticality of preserving this historic property for the public and future generations. We know this commitment has been a long-standing mission of the AHS Board and its members,” Storck said.

The AHS Board says they will continue to review and consider offers and would prefer that the buyer of the property would maintain it for single use and not subdivide it, continuing to allow the public to access the property as much as possible. “The Board welcomes further dialogue with NOVA Parks to the extent they are interested in submitting a different proposal,” the Board said.

Gilbert said that NOVA Parks and the AHS Board are still keeping the dialogue open on the purchase. If NOVA Parks buys the farm, it will remain undeveloped and open to the public. “That’s what our proposal does,” Gilbert said.

Still For Sale

Local agent Sue Goodhart of Compass Real Estate Group in Alexandria has listed the farm, calling it a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own 27 plus acres of riverfront property in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.”

“Imagine owning an estate renowned for its unobstructed views of the Potomac River and impeccably maintained gardens,” the listing states.

With the pandemic impacting everything for the last year, the AHS feels that they need this sales price to expand their national impact. They will find another site for their headquarters said Bob Brackman, Interim Executive Director, “Once River Farm is sold, AHS will determine the best location for its headquarters to serve and build our national audience.”

See the listing https://www.thegoodhartgroup.com/a-once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity-at-river-farm/

Steeped in History

River Farm, located just off the George Washington Memorial Parkway, has a long history, starting with Giles Brent Jr., and his wife, a princess of the Piscataway tribe, who owned it in 1653 or 1654, the listing states.

Then George Washington bought it and made it part of his plantation. Malcolm Matheson bought the property in 1919 and remodeled the home, and in 1973, American Horticultural Society (AHS) board member and philanthropist Enid Annenberg Haupt provided funds for the AHS to purchase the property, the listing states. The grounds now house the offices of AHS and are used for weddings, events, and gardening.

Haupt intended for the property to remain open to the public.

Historic Overlay District?

The County is currently considering the creation of an Historic Overlay District (HOD) for the River Farm property. New state legislation recently approved by the House and Senate will allow the county to protect the land by permitting inclusion of a provision in our historic preservation ordinance that would allow public access to “an historic area, landmark, building, or structure, or land pertaining thereto, or providing that no subdivision shall occur within any historic district unless approved by the review board or, on appeal, by the governing body of the locality as being compatible with the historic nature of such area, landmarks, buildings, or structures.”

“I remain hopeful that the AHS Board will support the criticality of preserving this historic property for the public and future generations,” Storck said in a community email. “We know this commitment has been a long standing mission of the AHS Board and its members.”

www.saveriverfarm.com/
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-developement/plan-amendments/river-farm-hod
Alexandria Police Arrest One For High-Speed Race On I-495

The Alexandria Police Department arrested one driver in connection with a high-speed race vehicle this weekend on I-495.

On Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021, around 11:15 p.m., an Alexandria supervisor on patrol in Old Town observed and heard several vehicles with loud exhaust systems accelerating and slowing on I-495. Upon receiving an alert from Virginia State Police about vehicles racing in the area of I-495 and Telegraph Road, Sergeant Ryan Waple positioned himself to observe three to four vehicles traveling in a group, positioning themselves to race. The drivers of two vehicles, including a silver Mustang GT, then revved their engines and accelerated. Sergeant Waple followed with due regard for safety, as the vehicles reached speeds of 100 MPH. At that point, he activated his emergency equipment and successfully stopped and apprehended the driver of the Mustang GT.

Mr. Edgar Lovos Granados was charged with Racing (46.2-865) and Reckless Driving by Speed (46.2-862). The Mustang GT was impounded by the Police department.

“This type of behavior is dangerous to anyone these drivers are sharing the road with and will not be tolerated,” said Chief Michael L. Brown. “We want to commend Sergeant Waple for his effort to stop this reckless behavior.”

APD has worked in coordination with Virginia State Police to address the speeding and racing issues with numerous speed education and enforcement efforts. We recognize we still have more work to do to stop this dangerous behavior.

The Police department also understands the community’s concerns and frustrations with the loud noise caused by altered vehicle exhaust systems.

However, under Virginia House Bill 5058 and Senate Bill 5029, law enforcement officers are now prevented from initiating traffic stops for a variety of offenses, including vehicles with altered exhaust systems.

For media inquiries, contact Amanda Paga, Senior Public Information Officer at amanda.paga@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.6600.

12 Weeks of Street Sweeping

Each year towards the end of the winter season, the City of Alexandria begins its annual street sweeping program. Crews increase their efforts to clean City streets, helping to keep neighborhoods and commercial corridors clean and protecting waterways. Litter, debris, and leftover grit from winter road maintenance can clog storm sewers and pollute streams and rivers.

This year’s effort begins Monday, March 1 and will take approximately 12 weeks to complete one pass of cleaning the City’s 560 lane miles of streets. The street sweeping program includes three major groups: commercial sweeping, no parking sweeping, and residential sweeping.

As a reminder, all street sweeping-related “No Parking” restrictions are back in effect as of March 1, 2021. Please refer to the signs for specific hours and days of restrictions. In the event of inclement weather, street sweeping will not occur; however, parking restrictions still apply, as Parking Enforcement follows the ordinance, not the weather.

Residents can help by cleaning the curb in front of their homes and ensuring that nearby storm drains are not blocked. Street sweeping debris can be discarded during the regular trash collection. Residents may also request additional street sweeping on their block by using Alex311 or calling 703.746.4311. For questions or concerns about street sweeping, please email street.cleaning@alexandriava.gov.

Budget Passed

These products. Also, included was my amendment for funding for the Department of Environmental Quality to test the effectiveness of certain plants to remove road salt from impervious surface stormwater runoff, and money for DMAS to convene a workgroup to develop strategies to finance health care services for undocumented immigrant children to ensure that all children living in the Commonwealth have access to quality healthcare. And, I was able to help secure an additional $10 million towards NOVA localities’ FY22 obligation to WMS&X’s capital and operating programs to ensure that public transit keeps Northern Virginia moving.

It was a busy session!
**Notice**

**Abandoned Vessel**

Notice is hereby given that the following vessel has been abandoned for more than 60 DAYS on the property of: Washington Sailing Marina. 1 Marina Dr. GWM Parkway, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Description of Vessel: 16’ Prindle Sailboat “No Worry’s” white hull with description of vessel: 26’ Macgregor GWM Parkway, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Description of Vessel: 26’ Macgregor Sailboat “No Worry’s” white hull with daggerboard Registration: VA 6492 BJ Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with section 29.1-733.1 of The Code of Virginia if this vessel is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of the notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with questions.

**Abandoned Vessel**

Notice is hereby given that the following vessel has been abandoned for more than 60 DAYS on the property of: Washington Sailing Marina. 1 Marina Dr. GWM Parkway, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Description of Vessel: 17’ Thistle Sailboat Blue hull with red stripe Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with section 29.1-733.1 of The Code of Virginia if this vessel is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of the notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with questions.

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Notice is hereby given that the following vessel has been abandoned for more than 60 DAYS on the property of: Washington Sailing Marina. 1 Marina Dr. GWM Parkway, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Description of Vessel: 16’ Prindle Sailboat Catamaran White and blue hull HIN: SUR08108M85E Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with section 29.1-733.1 of The Code of Virginia if this vessel is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of the notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with questions.

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Description of Vessel: Description of Vessel: 16’ Prindle Sailboat "No Worry’s" white hull with description of vessel: 26’ Macgregor SUR08108M85E

Description of Vessel: 21’ Clipper Sailboat “The Seaway” white hull with blue deck Registration: VA 5856 BX HIN: CLM009450573 Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with section 29.1-733.1 of The Code of Virginia if this vessel is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of the notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with questions.

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**Wellbeing**

**A Schedule Can Anchor Your Day**

How creating a daily routine can ease anxiety during times of uncertainty.

**by Marilyn Campbell**

The Connection

Erin days were overwhelmingly stressful. Holly Platt, a Bethesda mother of two, was preparing to sell her home and searching for a new one, homeschooling all while running her full time math tutoring business. She often ran late to appointments or missed them entirely. A friend suggested that she create a daily routine for herself that included blocking off specific time each day to complete tasks.

“Even morning, I pull up my daily calendar and enter yoga for 30 minutes, making and eating breakfast, and walking my dog Leo,” she said. “Covid has been hard for everyone, but I hear a lot of people saying now that they are scheduling a specific time for daily activities to force them into a routine.”

Platt is not alone in her strategy. Creating a routine – even for those who consider themselves to be whinsmial and balk at the idea of strict scheduling – can benefit from setting aside a specific time to complete at least one or two activities each day.

“Creating a daily routine is fundamental in developing a healthy relationship with one’s own needs,” said Jennifer Ha, Ph.D., Visiting Professor of Counseling at Marymount University. “Without this regular and intentional mindful attention, your mood and overall mental health can deteriorate, sometimes without one even realizing it.”

Part of protecting mental health is having a sense of stability. “As human beings we thrive with a degree of predictability and certainty,” added Diana Fuchs, Ph.D., a retired clinical psychologist based in Springfield. “We want to know that we have some control over our lives and what’s going on around us, especially when we have major world pandemic that makes us feel as if the fabric of society is being unraveled.”

In fact, studies show that undertaking some activities on a schedule helps to reduce stress during negative life events, including one study found in the Occupational Therapy Journal of Research. “Daily routine gives us a sense of predictability, decreases anxiety related to uncertainty and provides a comfort that no matter how difficult the day might be, some things will be predictable and as we

“Covid has been hard for everyone, but I hear a lot of people saying now that they are scheduling a specific time for daily activities to force them into a routine.”

— Holly Platt

Create a daily routine which includes walking her dog Leo has given Holly Platt a sense of order and peace.

“We should not hesitate to schedule our lives,” Platt said. “I have heard people say now that they are scheduling a specific time for daily activities to force them into a routine.”

By Dr. Gail Saltz, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the NY Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell School of Medicine. "This may be especially true for people that find change anxiety-producing and find transitions difficult.”

From improving sleep quality to planning to drink more water each day, a routine can improve one’s overall wellbeing. "An exercise routine is healthy physically, but also mentally by decreasing stress and improving mood," said Saltz. "Having predictable work hours, separate from other hours, decreases… likelihood of burn out.”

The end result might be similar for most people, creating a routine is a highly individualized process, said Fuchs. “It can be helpful to visualize our day by writing out our daily routine,” she said. “For example, ‘At 3pm I get to leave work and see my son. At 8pm, I get to snuggle up with a cup of tea and read a good book.”

Treat a routine like a medical appointment that you schedule in advance and commit to keeping, suggest Fuchs. “No doubt most of us already have some form of routine when it comes to self-care, brushing teeth and taking a shower, for example,” she said. “Break down your day into small manageable time frames. Ultimately you want to construct a time frame that works best for you.”

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.com
In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to StJude.org or FeedMore.org. A memorial service for Cheryl will be announced at a later date.

She will be remembered for her gentle spirit, sweet smile and her welcoming heart and home. Cheryl is preceded in death by her first husband, James E. Collins; mother, Phyllis Ann McDonald; 2 brothers, John Branch McDonald and James Daniel McDonald; sister, Pat Lins; 5 nephews, 1 niece, 11 grandchildren and her father, Henry Clarence McDonald, Jr.

Cheryl is survived by her loving husband, Ronald Lee Watson, Sr.; sons, John Wesley Collins and Ronald L. Watson, Jr; daughters, Ashby Ann Collins, Julie M. Watson Peniche and Heather Obomsawin; brothers, John Branch McDonald and James Daniel McDonald; sisters, Kathryn Lee McDonald Conway, Melissa Cable McDonald Gallant and Susan V. Col li; 5 nephews, 1 niece, 11 grandchildren and her father, Henry Clarence McDonald, Jr. A memorial service for Cheryl will be announced at a later date.

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Alexandria Gazette Packet ◆ March 4-10, 2021 ◆ 13
ACPS Superintendent Gregory Hutchings March 2 outside Mount Vernon Community School.

By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Well, those last two weeks were kind of fun (comparatively speaking), to the dozen or so previous weeks. ‘Fun’, when you’re a cancer patient experiencing side effects from treatment, is a moderation, absence even of said effects. My recent two-week break from taking my thyroid cancer medication was due to those side effects. Mentioned in a previous column, I was having balance and dizziness issues. In short, I couldn’t walk or drive – for that matter, it’s a straight line. After consulting with my oncologist who deferred to the oncology pharmacist who’s been monitoring/adjusting my medication dosage, it was agreed that I should cease and desist until my symptoms subsided. As of this past Thursday, my symptoms had mostly disappeared so I have resumed my treatment, albeit at a lower dose.

This will be the second reduction in my dose since we’ve been trying to find the sweet spot where the tumors are stable and the side effects are manageable.

Actually, these last two weeks of being side-effect free was more than just a break in the medication. During this past fortnight, I began to feel like myself again. I could get in and out of chairs without pacing myself. I could roll over in bed and play covers without a fuss. And of course, I could walk and drive a straight line. It was wonderful. When one is in the midst of a cancer diagnosis, a cancer treatment, the indication that your bodily functions are performing “within normal parameters,” to quote Ltc. Comm. Data from “Star Trek: Next Generation,” is a cornerstone between reassurance and life affirming.

Generally speaking, we all know that cancer doesn’t make its diagnoses big and strong. Realistically speaking, you’re happy with normal. Conversely, when ‘normal’ isn’t how you feel, it’s hard to portend that death/disability is not fast-approaching. Moreover, it’s an especially slippery slope when one has been given a “terminal” diagnosis originally and more recently had that diagnosis modified to include a second type of cancer. I apparently have stage IV, to go along with my pre-existing not so small lung cancer, also stage IV. One has to fight emotional to keep from getting bogged down by that bub- bit hole. Any good news/unexpected positive reaction with your disease, like your mind and body returning to pre-cancer normalcy is about as good as it gets. So even though I’m back on the medicine, I feel empowered, upbeat, hopeful even. To that end, continuation of life, I am not going to worry yet that the reduced dose will allow my tumors to grow. I’m just going to go there. What would be the point? I’ll find out soon enough, a few days after my next CT scan in mid-March. Until then, I am going to bask in my semi return to glory.

Speaking of ‘glory’, as a cancer patient, one has to grasp and hold on to anything of emotion, physical, psychological or spiritual value. In addition, what information you receive which is not particularly positive, in that it’s premature/unproven/not corroborated by science, has to be compartmentalized. As with Jerry Seinfeld, you have to put it in the bucket and almost throw away the key. Allowing negative possibilities or unpalatable scenarios to take root in your brain really does a disservice to your potential survival. Even since I was diagnosed with a ‘terminal’ form of cancer, I’ve tried not to put the cart in front of the horse, if you know what I mean? The diagnosis was bad enough on its own. I didn’t/ don’t need to make it worse by piling on. If and when my life becomes more challenging/more cancer centric than it is now, I’ll deal with it. I don’t need to bring it on any sooner than is absolutely necessary. I’ve had 12 years I wasn’t expecting since receiving an initial “13 month to two” year prognosis. Twelve years later, I don’t see any reason to change my approach.

Kenny Lewis is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.
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www.AnnDuff.com

**Fairlington Meadows | $575,000**
Jen Walker 703.975.1566
www.JenWalker.com

**Lorton | $425,000**
Beautifully updated 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath townhome conveniently located in Pohick Village. Hardwood floors on main level, updated kitchen, & spacious primary en-suite bedroom. Lower level features wood-burning fireplace. Relaxing patio. 7581 Aspenpark Rd.
Heidi Burkhardt 703.217.6009
www.RealtorHeidiB.com

**Wellington Estates | $705,000**
Welcome to 7954 Bolling Drive, the ideal investment property for a buyer to truly make it their own home. Opportunity to work with the current builder or bring in your own. List price includes plans & permits ready to be issued. Have a brand new home in Wellington Estates!
Jillian Keck Hogan 703.951.7655
www.JillianKeckHogan.com

**Burke | $688,000**
Carefully maintained split level in a lovely tree-lined neighborhood. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, screened porch, deck, stone patio, and lovely backyard garden for outdoor entertaining. Primary bedroom with sitting room. Close to Burke Lake Park. 7308 Outhaul Lane
Mason Montague Bavin 703.338.6007
www.MasonBavin.com