Vienna Honors Life Saving Officers

County’s Budget Plan Faces ‘Robust Conversations’

Fairfax Readies for Public Employee Collective Bargaining
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How to Provide Input on the FY 2022 Budget

- To learn more about participating in the budget public hearings, call the Clerk to the Board’s Office at (703) 324-3151 (TTY 711) or to access the form at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form
- The public can send written testimony or communicate with the Clerk’s Office by email at: clerknotice@fairfaxcounty.gov.
- Residents can also provide testimony by phone or submit video testimony. In-person testimony will not be allowed if the Board meetings are held virtually.
- The entire FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan and the FY 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program are available online at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget

县 Budget Plan Faces ‘Robust Conversations’

Focuses resources in targeted areas.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

"W"hat a difference a year makes," said Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill.

On Feb. 23, Hill presented his FY2022 Budget Plan to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The fiscal year will run from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

The FY2022 Advertised Budget is not a done deal; it is the county executive’s recommendation. The final FY2022 Adopted Budget will happen May 4 after what Chairman Jeff McKay called “robust conversations with the community in order to prioritize funding.”

Hill’s proposed plan builds on the County’s success to utilize federal stimulus funds, most notably the $200.2 million CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund.

“I THINK IT’S CLEAR that we won’t be able to do everything we want to do, just like our residents and businesses can’t do these unprecedented times," said Chairman McKay. "And obviously, we wish that we had better certainty about what the year ahead is going to look like, but clearly, nobody does... It’s prudent for us to plan for this year to continue to be spav and to be able to pivot and respond to what’s happening just as we have done through this last year in a really successful way.”

Hill’s recommendation includes reducing the Real Estate Tax rate by one cent. In 2021, the tax rate was $1.15 per $100 of assessed value. In Hill’s Message to the Chairman and Board, he said, “I recognize that many of our homeowners may be struggling... Fairfax County’s unemployment rate stands at 4.4 percent - far greater than the 1.9 percent we saw one year ago.”

According to Hill, with the proposed reduction in the Real Estate Tax rate, additional revenue available to the County for FY 2022 is $42.23 million – an increase of only 1.51 percent over the current FY 2021 estimate.

Highlighting other Advertised Budget areas, it recommends a $20 million unappropriated reserve for economic recovery. It includes an overall increase for County and Schools of only 0.55 percent, excluding reserves.

The plan provides a $14.13 million increase over FY2021 for School Operating, far short of the School Board’s approved request on Feb. 18 of $104.40 million additional.

No funding is allocated for employee pay increases in FY22.

While the Budget does not make broad investments in pre-COVID goals proposed last year, resources are recommended to focus on more targeted areas. According to Hill, they are “modest investments” in Board and community priorities, such as expanding funding for criminal justice programs and mental health and addiction treatment. Examples are public safety staffing, Diversion First, opioid use prevention efforts, and environmental initiatives. Previously approved initiatives, such as body-worn cameras and health department positions funded initially with stimulus funds, are proposed to include baseline funding. An increase of 109 positions is proposed primarily for the continuation of previous initiatives and new facilities.

Concurrent with the Budget’s release, Hill made available a revised draft of the Countywide Strategic Plan at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan for consideration by the Board and our residents.

LOOKING AHEAD, the Board will advertise a tax rate at its March 9 meeting. Various district meetings will occur in February and March, and the Board will hold public hearings from April 13-15.

McKay said that for FY20-22, the County expected revenue loss to approach $300 million to the General Fund. He said that while appreciative of prior stimulus money, and hoped additional stimulus money was on its way to the County, “hope is not really what you base a budget on; it’s reality.”

Vice Chairman Penny Gross (D-Mason District) discussed nonresidential real estate. The amount of empty office space increased to 18.5 million square feet out of 119.2 million square feet.

“It does tell me that we need to go gang-busting on our repurposing of vacant buildings,” Gross said.

Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) said that Fairfax County is one of the thousands of jurisdictions across the country that Congress members watch, which is why he appreciated the prudent proposal Hill released. “I think if we had a budget proposal that showed us with a lot of new spending initiatives or dramatic pay increases, it would have made our job more difficult as we’re making the necessary case for additional federal support for state and local governments at this point.”

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said he hoped to see a “flat tax bill,” especially given the pandemic. “I expect things, especially in the commercial real estate world, will probably get a lot worse next year. But this budget still represents a 3.4 percent tax increase on our residents... I believe we have a lot of work to do.”
A Progressive State if We Can Keep It

By Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum
STATE DELEGATE (D-35)

T
o paraphrase Benjamin Franklin who when asked at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia what kind of government had been formed replied, “a republic if we can keep it!” As the General Assembly concluded the work of its annual session this past weekend the same kind of question could be posed as the changes in the Commonwealth’s laws and governance have been so profound. The answer I believe is a progressive state measured not by southern standards but by comparison to all the other states. At the ballot box the state over the last several years has gone from red to purple to blue. All statewide elected officials are Democrats, and both houses of the General Assembly have been controlled by Democrats since the elections in 1999. Far more meaningful than the partisan labels of elected officials are the changes that have taken place in the laws of the Commonwealth. In the regular and a special session of the General Assembly last year, historic legislation was passed including ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and lifting of barriers to abortion. Jim Crow era laws were repealed, and the Virginia Values Act prohibiting discrimination in housing and employment was passed. Bills to reduce gun violence were passed as were bills to reduce school to prison pipeline. Criminal justice and policing reform bills were passed. And more. In the session that just ended, criminal justice reform continued. The death penalty was abolished, and criminal defendants and civil litigants were granted an automatic right to appeal that exists in every other state. My bill that would end excessive fines and prison time for petit larceny passed. Criminal records for many non-violent offenses will be expunged under a new law. And more. Details for both sessions are at https://jis.virginia.gov.

All of these changes along with record levels of funding for COVID-19 relief and pay raises for teachers, police and other essential workers have led to references about Virginia being the leader among states in progressive legislation. The first ever woman Speaker of the House of Delegates Eileen Filler-Corn said that the House Democratic majority elected in 2019 “has kept its promise to protect families, keep Virginia healthy and rebuild our economy stronger.”

As one who served during years when the news coming from Richmond was not so good, I am aware that these reforms passed with barely a majority of Democratic legislator votes and a rare and scant few of Republican legislator votes. Attention is already shifting to the fall when the governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general will be elected along with all 100 members of the House of Delegates. The progressive reforms will be on the ballot: do we build on them in the future or do we turn back the clock? Already a former governor, two Black women, and a self-avowed socialist are running for the Democratic nomination for governor and a self-proclaimed “Trump in high heels” and a staunch opponent of abortion rights are among those seeking the Republican nomination. There is likely to be a record number of candidates running for the House of Delegates. The voters in November will ultimately decide if we keep our progressive state! 

Brain Injury Awareness: A Personal Story

By Katy Schnitger

In 2007, my kids and I were at a fireworks show in Vienna that was so grand we were in awe of each burst. But then there was a misfire and a three-inch mortar shot through the crowd and exploded on us.

The force of the explosion turned buttons from my shorts into projectiles that were surgically removed from my left thigh.

I spent 12 days in the burn unit at Washington Hospital Center. I was released from the hospital to recover at home with a nurse. I cried a lot and didn’t want to get out of bed, but my kids needed me.

I focused on taking care of my family. It soon became apparent that my own mental health and cognitive capabilities were suffering. I struggled to do things I used to do so easily as a stay at home mom. I could not manage our family’s schedule, grocery shopping was impossible, and I could no longer do simple math. I was diagnosed with depression, but I knew I was struggling with more.

In December 2008, I met Dr. O’Shanick’s team for physical and occupational therapy. I also discovered Brain Injury Services (BIS), a nonprofit based in Northern Virginia that serves adults and children with TBIs. BIS empowered me to feel whole again. I joined a monthly support group and did not feel so alone. I began public speaking with their Speakers Bureau. That gave me purpose, confidence and independence that opened the door to employment.

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. I share my story to help others who have experienced trauma to the brain to help them and their caregivers recognize some of the signs of a TBI. According to Dr. O’Shanick, common indicators of a TBI are loss of balance, inability to track with the eyes, sensitivity to sound, and difficulty with executive functions. All of these challenges can lead to frustration, anxiety, and isolation. But know you are not alone. There is a community at BIS who see you and support your transition to live your best life.

Katy Schnitger is the Office Manager and Outreach Specialist at Brain Injury Services. Katy has been involved with BIS since 2010 as a client and as a volunteer with the Speaker’s Bureau. She has been employed at Brain Injury Services since 2015. She has lived in Vienna, Virginia for over fifteen years.

Descano to Address AAUW McLean Branch

The McLean Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will host a presentation by Steve T. Descano on Law Enforcement Reform and Equity in Virginia on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Descano, Commonwealth’s Attorney for Fairfax City and Fairfax County, is a veteran former federal prosecutor. He served as a federal prosecutor under the Obama Administration for six years specializing in complex financial crimes of both national and international scopes.

A West Point graduate, Descano was a helicopter pilot and U.S. Army Officer before putting himself through law school and becoming a federal prosecutor. After his work in the Justice Department, he went on to serve his community as a board member for NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia as well as the Fairfax County NAACP’s first nominee to the County’s Police Civilian Review Panel.

Since taking office in 2020, Descano has embarked on a groundbreaking reform agenda. He has implemented policies that make our community safer while addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities in our criminal justice system, stemming the tide of mass incarceration, and elevating a holistic, values-based approach to prosecution over a reflexively punitive one. To join the program, visit http://mclean-va.gov and send in a request for the link to the meeting, under Programs.

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On Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021, The Town of Vienna honored MPO Kenny Smith and Officer Dale “Chip” McElhattan for their life-saving effort during their encounter with a driver who had been in an accident. While the officers discussed the accident with him, the male driver collapsed on the pavement, in cardiac arrest, not breathing. MPO Smith and Officer McElhattan immediately jumped into action, rendering CPR and re-establishing a pulse and breathing. Shortly after, the driver stopped breathing again, and officers worked tirelessly administering CPR until EMS arrived on the scene and took over the life-saving care. The driver was transported to an area hospital where he was cared for and stabilized.

Vienna Police Chief James Morris and Town Manager Mercury Payton presented the officers with the life-saving awards. Attending the event were H.R. Director Michelle Crabtree, H.R. Assistant Conor Duffy, colleagues, friends, and family.

MPO Smith and Officer McElhattan have also been nominated for the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce Valor Award, which recognizes public safety employees’ actions beyond the call of duty.

Vienna Police Department Honors Life Saving Officers
The following summary contains various incidents of general interest as well as vehicular crashes handled by the Town of Vienna Police Department from Feb. 19 – Feb. 25, 2021.

INCIDENTS
Animal Case – Quarantine 600 Block Yeonas Drive, SW
Feb. 12, 12 p.m.
The Health Department reported that a resident was playing with her neighbor’s puppy when the dog playfully bit her. The puppy was placed on a 10-day quarantine.

Vandalism-- 300 Block Church Street, NE
Between Feb. 14 at 10:00 p.m. and Feb. 20 at 1:57 p.m.
A resident reported damage to his vehicle while it was parked in his driveway. There have been three separate times that he has noticed the damage which includes a broken windshield, a shattered rear window, and various marks that may have been caused by a projectile.

Animal Case – Quarantine -- Hope Advanced Veterinary Center 140 Park Street, SE
Feb. 16, 12 p.m.
On Feb. 19, the Health Department notified ACO Barker that a technician was bitten by a cat during a procedure. The cat was placed on quarantine at the veterinary center.

Animal Case 21--- 200 Block West Street, NW
Feb. 19, 2:41 p.m.
A resident reported an injured
Vienna Police Highlights

fox in her yard. An officer found the fox was in grave condition and euthanized the animal.

SUSPICIOUS EVENT— Mathnasium 328 Maple Avenue, East
Feb. 19 between 3 p.m. and 11:40 p.m.

An employee reported that when she got into her vehicle to leave work, she noticed an interior light was on in the car and thought someone had entered her vehicle. Nothing appeared to be missing from the vehicle.

Assault 21-- 600 Block Frederick Street, SW
Feb. 20, 2:51 a.m.

Officers responded to a residence for an on-going dispute between a landlord and tenant. The landlord reported that the tenant punched him. The landlord then threatened the tenant with pepper spray. Both parties were advised of the warrant process should they wish to pursue charges.

False Report and Missing Person -- 900 Block Olympian Circle, SW
500 Block Kingsley Road, SW
Feb. 21 between 8:21 p.m. and 9:31 p.m.

At 8:21 p.m., a crisis hotline reported an individual was stating that he shot himself in the area of the 500 block of Kingsley Road, SW. While officers were responding, the hotline received additional information that the individual had moved to an abandoned home in the 900 Block of Olympian Circle, SW. Officers searched both locations and were unable to locate any injured person and found nothing suspicious. It was determined the call was a false report.

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In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at the same time.
Fairfax County Readies for Public Employee Collective Bargaining

Holds collaborative meetings with union reps to write rules.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

Most Fairfax County public employees who provide vital services in education, safety, healthcare, and sanitation like others in counties, cities, and towns across the Commonwealth will gain a new right on May 1, 2021. It is the right to engage in collective bargaining. Passage of Virginia HB 582, introduced by House Delegate Elizabeth Guzmán (D-31), who represents parts of Fauquier and Prince William counties, opened the door to legislative action leading to the bill’s approval on April 22, 2020. The bill authorized collective bargaining with labor unions on behalf of public officers and employees. Governor Northam postponed the date on which HB 582 would become effective until May 2021 due to concerns over COVID-19.

Before the approval of HB 582, Virginia Code said no state, county, or municipality had the authority to recognize or collectively bargain with any public employee’s labor unions. HB582 did not define, though, how public employees engage in collective bargaining. The state left that up to individual jurisdictions to write their own rules.

ON FEB. 25, Fairfax County Supervisor and Vice Chairman Penny Gross (D-Mason District), Chair of the Fairfax County Collective Bargaining Workgroup, opened the second meeting between Fairfax County leaders and union representatives. The meeting was meant to solicit input toward the writing of collaborative labor-management policies. School Board Chair Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District), School Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon), and other County leaders attended the meeting.

“This is our day to hear from our employee groups as to what you think the key discussion points need to be,” Gross said. She asked one representative from each employee organization to share its perspective on four suggested decision points - the scope of collective bargaining, the number and definition of the bargaining unit(s), the process for employees to select exclusive bargaining representatives, and the employee/labor administrative official/body to administer collective bargaining.

Dr. Anderson said she looked forward to hearing ideas and questions. “We probably will not have answers to these questions today, but it will help to determine how we move forward in this process that we’re developing together,” she said. Each group kept comments to three to five minutes.

Brad Caruthers, Fairfax County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 77, maintained that the process should be slow. “We need to do it right; obviously, other jurisdictions are embarking in the same discussions; some too rapidly,” he said. The scope certainly needed to cover pay benefits and the grievance process. For the police department, what will the bargaining units look like for rank and file - one for supervisors and then a separate unit for command.

Becca Ferrick, of Association of Fairfax Professional Educators, said that the process must also be taken “logically.” It should allow direct input from many different perspectives in terms of the bargaining scope. “We prefer more limited scope, benefits and pay, perhaps safety and health,” she said. Ferrick added that the Association would like the lowest number of bargaining units and allow specific definitions either by wage labels or levels and types or by purpose and intent. Like many others, Ferrick urged that the process for employees to select exclusive bargaining should be done by secret ballot, and the administration should be an independent, non-political counsel.

Fairfax County Professional Firefighters & Paramedics - Local 2608 President Ron Kuley echoed his “sisters and brothers” in labor. He stressed clarity on a couple of items in collective bargaining, saying it would enhance every family’s safety in the County, providing firefighters a real collective voice...for training professionals on the best way to meet the needs of residents in an emergency. Kuley reiterated that the law said they could negotiate on anything related to our employment.

“We don’t want or need proposals that are so narrow and restrictive to the process of collaborative problem-solving. They would just be counterproductive,” Kuley said.

Tammi Wondong-Ware, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 512, urged that Fairfax County adopts a collective bargaining ordinance that provides bargaining over wages, benefits, and working conditions, especially in light of COVID-19. She said that workers are concerned about workplace health and safety, workloads, career advancement, and equity.

“We need a real voice and a seat at the table,” she said.

Regarding the number of bargaining units, Wondong-Ware said one for general county employees, one for uniform Fire and Rescue employees, and one for police officers. She said they believed a separate ordinance would cover school board employees.

Wondong-Wares noted that a limited number of bargain units would create a more manageable union election and collective bargaining process. She urged that the bargaining unit include workers who may be more senior but do not have hiring and firing authority.

Wondong-Wares maintained that the County should adopt mail ballots, and once the bargaining representative is certified, the representative should have access to county employees for representation purposes.

WHEN COMMENTS CONCLUDED, Gross clarified that the law said they could not do anything until May 1. “But that doesn’t mean we have to have an ordinance in place by May 1,” she said.

Dr. Anderson said she saw a lot of common ground regarding the scope of bargaining and heartened by the consensus to take time, do this correctly rather than rushing, which may have negative consequences.

School Board member Karen Corbett Sanders said the natural resources of Fairfax County are its people. “We have gems everywhere we look because of the experience people bring to the table...It takes all of us to collectively develop and flesh out the way we are going to do this but also educate our colleagues.”

Gross said they would be in touch if a third meeting were deemed necessary, and she felt that a third meeting would be beneficial.

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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

Her 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 whimsical 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 a 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 prefer them,” said 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 pledging 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.”

“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
An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

- Werner Heisenberg

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Giant Food Administers COVID-19 Vaccines
In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and the District of Columbia, Giant Food Pharmacies in D.C. have been selected to receive an initial supply of the COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna) to be administered to healthcare employees who work in senior group home settings covered under Phase 1a. The D.C. Department of Health will be determining eligibility and scheduling appointments for those healthcare workers at one of the new immunization clinics set up at Giant Pharmacies.

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

MONDAY, MARCH 8
Volunteer for the Environment. 5-6:30 p.m. Online. Join the Sierra Club Great Falls Group for a free online event to learn and share ideas to protect the environment. Activists will hold short presentations about the threat of gold mining and pipelines in Virginia, then they will share information about the Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS) in NoVa and the work to ban polluting gas-powered leaf blowers. Visit the website: https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013p0000001kxtAAA

THURSDAY/MARCH 11
Shape of the Region Conference. 12:30-2 p.m. Virtual. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is hosting its 2021 Shape of the Region Conference. The theme this year is: Co-Creating a New Northern Virginia: An Emerging Vision of a More Inclusive, Sustainable, and Equitable Region. This event will explore the collective efforts of Government, social, philanthropy, and private sector actors to bring more inclusivity, sustainability, and equity across our region. The event will feature brief stories and a panel discussion to highlight recent cross sector collaborations that have helped promote a more equitable and inclusive region. To register for this event, visit www.cfnova.org/shape-region.

YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
Virginia State Parks is seeking qualified candidates to fill Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer residential service opportunities across the state. Two three-week programs will be offered this summer. YCC crews will assist Virginia State Parks staff with a range of operational projects including trail maintenance, habitat improvement, and campground construction and restoration. Room and board is provided to all YCC crew serving at Virginia State Parks. Those interested can visit https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/youth-conservation-corps to learn more and apply.

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Shape of the Region Conference. 12:30-2 p.m. Virtual. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is hosting its 2021 Shape of the Region Conference. The theme this year is: Co-Creating a New Northern Virginia: An Emerging Vision of a More Inclusive, Sustainable, and Equitable Region. This event will explore the collective efforts of Government, social, philanthropy, and private sector actors to bring more inclusivity, sustainability, and equity across our region. The event will feature brief stories and a panel discussion to highlight recent cross sector collaborations that have helped promote a more equitable and inclusive region. To register for this event, visit www.cfnova.org/shape-region.

YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
Virginia State Parks is seeking qualified candidates to fill Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer residential service opportunities across the state. Two three-week programs will be offered this summer. YCC crews will assist Virginia State Parks staff with a range of operational projects including trail maintenance, habitat improvement, and campground construction and restoration. Room and board is provided to all YCC crew serving at Virginia State Parks. Those interested can visit https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/youth-conservation-corps to learn more and apply.

GIANT FOOD ADMINISTRATES COVID-19 VACCINES
In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and the District of Columbia, Giant Food Pharmacies in D.C. have been selected to receive an initial supply of the COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna) to be administered to healthcare employees who work in senior group home settings covered under Phase 1a. The D.C. Department of Health will be determining eligibility and scheduling appointments for those healthcare workers at one of the new immunization clinics set up at Giant Pharmacies.
MARCH 1-29
“Life in Historic Virginia.” At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Part of the Park Authority’s new series of “Field Trips for All” that are designed to supplement classroom and online lessons. Parks provide an experience not easily duplicated in the classroom, and these field trips offer parents a unique opportunity to provide their kids with real experiences while applying the concepts required in the Virginia Standards of Learning. This history program is designed for students in grades one through six. Life in Historic Virginia is offered on Mondays, March 1, 15, 22 and 29. The 45-minute programs at Sully Historic Site run at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and the cost is $4 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

MARCH 1-13
The Show Must Go On. The McLean Art Society presents “Larger than Life.” At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. The show includes painting styles that will be available for viewing and purchase. Visit the website: https://thebizex.net/dcvirginia-franchise-show-march-6-2021/

MARCH 6-7
Franchise Show Chantilly. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Ctr. Chantilly. The community is invited to The Franchise Show at the Dulles Expo Center from March 6 – 7, 2021. Full-time, part-time business opportunities from every industry, at every investment level. Visit the website: www.thebizex.net/dcvirginia-franchise-show-march-6-2021/

SUNDAY/MARCH 20
Menu at Hidden Pond
11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. It's sugaring time at the historic sugarhouse. Enjoy a maple syrup boil down, learn how to boil sap into syrup, and taste syrup and cornbread baked with cornmeal ground at Hidden Pond. Call 703-631-0013.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20
Birding for Beginners. 9-10:30 a.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Downtown Reston program will help you begin birding at Lake Fairfax Park and gain some basic identification skills to help you get started on birding. The program begins with a bird identification discussion. The cost is $12 per person. This program is designed for bird-lovers age 12 to adult, but children ages 6 to 12 must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-471-5414.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20
Maple Syrup Boil Down. 11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. It’s sugaring time at the historic sugarhouse. Enjoy a maple syrup boil down, learn how to boil sap into syrup, and taste syrup and cornbread baked with cornmeal ground at Colvin Run. Call 703-759-2771.

SUNDAY/MARCH 21
Fairfax Genealogical Society Spring Fair - “Power Up Your Family Research with DNA”. Virtual meeting. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Genealogist Karen Stanbury will present this one-day program featuring tips and tools for using DNA data to aid your family research. Registration ($50 for non-members; $30 for members of FGS) at https://fgs2021.imrar.eventbrite. com or on the FGS web page, www.fgsx.org/2021springfair. Details of the program and other FGS activities on the web site, www.fgsx.org or by calling 703-644-8185.

FAIRFAX COUNTY ACTIVATES CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER
Emergency Information Blog (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center – The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends.
Residents may also text FXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19. Text FFCOVID to 703-549-0004 for advertising information

COVID-19 TEXT MESSAGES IN SPANISH
As part of its efforts to provide coronavirus-related information and assistance in multiple languages, Fairfax County now provides COVID-19 text alerts in Spanish. To sign up, text FXCOVIDESP to 888777.

Back to Abnormal
By KENNETH B. LOURIE
Well, those last two weeks were kind of fun (comparatively speaking), to the dozen or so previous weeks. ‘Fur’, when you’re a cancer patient experierinng effects, even minor ones, is a moderation, absence even of said effects. My recent two-week break from taking my thyroid medication was no exception to those side-effect free weeks. Mentioned in a previous column, I was having balance and dizziness issues. In short, I couldn’t walk or drive – for that matter, in a straight line. After consulting with my oncologist who referred to the oncology pharmacist who’s been monitoring/adjusting my medication dosage, it was agreed that I should continue to take the medication at the same dose/level 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 minimal).

Actually, these last two weeks of being side-effect free was more than just a break in the action. It was a revelation of sorts. The infirmity/muscle weakness I was having was not due to the older age I have become. It was 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 pull up the 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/existence, any indication that your body functions are performing “within normal parameters,” to quote Lt. Comm. Doolittle from “Star Trek: Next Generation” is somewhere between reassuring 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 pretend that death/disability is not fast-approaching. Moreover, it’s 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: papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, to go along with my pre-existing non small lung cancer, also stage IV. One has to fight emotional/and to keep from getting lost/going down that rabbit hole. Any good news/can’t expect unexpected reaction to your disease, like your mind and body returning to pre-cancer normality is about as good as it gets. So even though I’m back on the med, I feel empowered, upbeat, hopeful even. To that end, I am going to worry until the reduced dose will allow my tumors to grow. I’m just not going to go there. What would be the point? I’ll find it 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 grab 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/unexpected/not corroborated by science, has to be compartmentalized. As with Jerry Seinfeld, you have to put it in the vault and almost throw away the key. Allowing negative possibilities or unstable scenarios to take root in your brain really does a disservice to your potential survivability. Ever 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 pilling on. If and when my life becomes more challenging/difficult, I don’t need to make it worse by pilling on. If and when my life becomes more challenging/difficult, it’s hard to portend that death/disability is not fast-approaching. Moreover, it’s 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: papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, to go along with my pre-existing non small lung cancer, also stage IV. One has to fight emotional/and to keep from getting lost/going down that rabbit hole. Any good news/can’t expect unexpected reaction to your disease, like your mind and body returning to pre-cancer normality is about as good as it gets. So even though I’m back on the med, I feel empowered, upbeat, hopeful even. To that end, I am going to worry until the reduced dose will allow my tumors to grow. I’m just not going to go there. What would be the point? I’ll find it 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.

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VIENNA/OAKTON / MCLEAN CONNECTION  ◆ March 3-9, 2021  ◆ 11
125 Park Avenue, Falls Church City

*GORGEOUS* 5BR/4.5 Craftsman-Style home on 3 finished levels in sought-after Falls Church City location! Inviting front porch; sparkling hardwood floors; fabulous, open, gourmet island kitchen with granite counters and stainless steel appliances with breakfast area; family room with gas frpl and walkout to deck; light/bright walkout basement with rec room, wet bar, bedroom and full bath plus storage; upper level owner’s suite with tray ceiling, hardwoods and luxury bath; beautifully landscaped yard with mature trees, deck, patio and pergola. Falls Church City schools!

Offered for...$1,625,000

1566 Great Falls Street, McLean

*FABULOUS* 4BR/4.5 BA colonial home on 3 levels with a loft in sought-after Hunting Ridge location! This beautiful home includes wonderful gourmet kitchen with brand new stainless steel appliances; freshly painted; refinished hardwood floors; lovely deck off the kitchen - perfect for entertaining; large LL rec room with new carpeting, plus guest room, full bath and storage; gorgeous owner’s suite with luxury bath featuring quartz counters, separate shower and soaking tub; upper level laundry; 2-car garage; super location - McLean HS pyramid!

Offen for...$1,550,000

809 Balls Hill Road, McLean

*BEAUTIFUL* and *EXPANSIVE* 5 BR/3.5 BA colonial home on 3 finished levels in sought-after RIVER OAKS location! Sparkling hardwood floors; updated kitchen with granite counters and stainless steel appliances plus sliding glass door walkout to fantastic deck - perfect for entertaining! Family room with fireplace and deck access; elegant living and formal dining rooms; lower level rec room with gas fireplace, bedroom and full bathroom; upper level with lovely owner’s suite with 3 closets and MBA with jetted tub. Close to Beltway; easy access to DC. Langley High School pyramid!

1933 Freedom Lane
Falls Church, 22043
$1,095,000

1916 Foxhall Road
McLean, 22101
$1,240,000

813 Green Street
Alexandria, 22314
$725,000

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