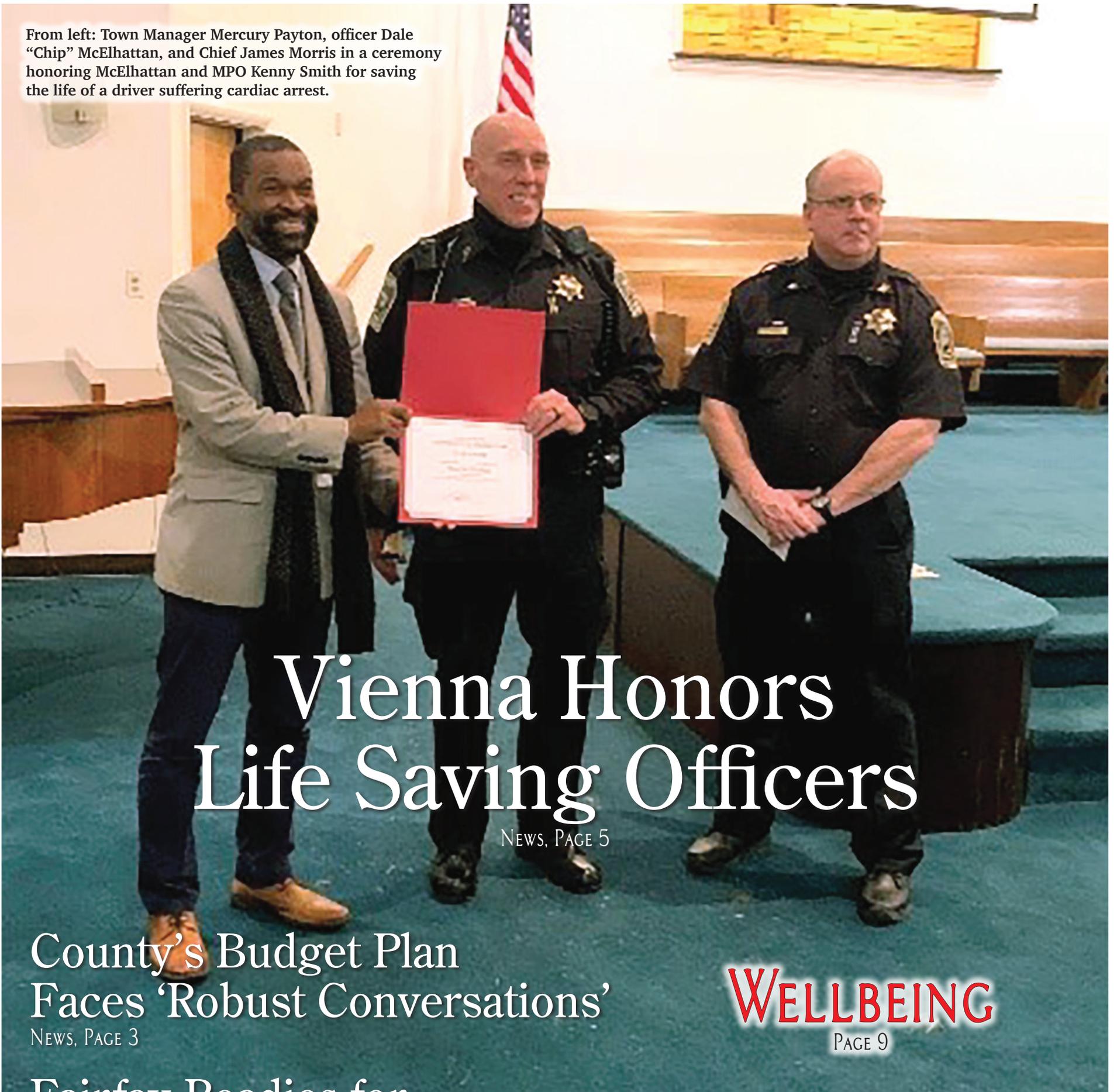


From left: Town Manager Mercury Payton, officer Dale "Chip" McElhattan, and Chief James Morris in a ceremony honoring McElhattan and MPO Kenny Smith for saving the life of a driver suffering cardiac arrest.



Vienna Honors Life Saving Officers

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County's Budget Plan Faces 'Robust Conversations'

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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NEWS

FY 2022 Budget Summary

- Net County revenues increase totals \$42.23 million, with \$13.07 million transferred to support Schools Operating and Debt Service requirements; a net \$11.70 million to support County priorities, and \$20 million held in balance for the Board for Economic Recovery efforts
- Schools support and County requirements, excluding reserves, are both increased 0.55% over FY 2021
- Schools are 52.8% of General Fund Disbursements in FY 2022
- County's reserves remain budgeted at target of 10% of General Fund disbursements

Adjustments included in FY 2022 General Fund Budget

(Amounts shown are in millions, net change over FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan)

Available Revenue Increase			
Revenue Increase at Current Real Estate Tax Rate		\$69.37	
Real Estate Tax Rate Decrease of One Cent to \$1.14 per \$100 of Assessed Value		(\$27.14)	
Net Impact of Transfers in		\$0.29	
Total Available		\$42.52	
FY 2022 Requirements			
County Compensation	County	Schools	Total
County Debt Service	(\$1.97)	--	(\$1.97)
Lifelong Education and Learning	\$0.28	--	\$0.28
Safety and Security	(\$0.01)	\$13.07	\$13.06
Health and Environment	\$11.91	--	\$11.91
Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability	\$9.12	--	\$9.12
Effective and Efficient Government	\$2.92	--	\$2.92
Cultural and Recreational Opportunities	\$2.49	--	\$2.49
Housing and Neighborhood Livability	\$2.18	--	\$2.18
Economic Opportunity	\$0.47	--	\$0.47
Mobility and Transportation	\$0.22	--	\$0.22
Agency Reductions and Savings	--	--	--
Subtotal	(\$15.91)	--	(\$15.91)
Reserve Adjustments	\$11.70	\$13.07	\$24.77
Total Uses			\$22.52
Available Balance to be set aside in Economic Recovery Reserve			\$20.00

How to Provide Input on the FY 2022 Budget

ADVERTISED BUDGET PLAN

- 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: clerktothebos@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-FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program are available online at:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget

Slides displayed during the County Executive's Presentation on the Budget and Countywide Strategic Plan, Advertised Budget Plan, February 23, 2021

How to Provide Input on the FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan

County's Budget Plan Faces 'Robust Conversations'

Focuses resources in targeted areas.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

“What 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, just like our residents and businesses can't in 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 spry 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, bringing the rate from \$1.15 to \$1.14 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 re-



Presentation by The Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D)

duction 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



PHOTO BY FAIRFAX COUNTY
Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill

“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.”

— County Executive Bryan Hill

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 gangbusters on our repurposing of vacant buildings,” Gross said.

Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Brad-dock) 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 Herry (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-36)



COMMENTARY

To 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 2019. 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 the 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 ended 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://lis.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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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. Gregory J. O'Shanick, President & Medical Director at the Center for Neurorehabilitation Services, PC in Richmond. After a 3-hour evaluation, he recognized that I had a blast Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). My feelings were validated that my symptoms were beyond depression. But what did having a TBI mean going forward?

I met with 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 indications 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-vaaauw.net> and send in a request for the link to the meeting, under Programs.

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PHOTOS BY TOWN OF VIENNA POLICE DEPARTMENT



From left: Town Manager Mercury Payton, officer Dale "Chip" McElhattan, and Chief James Morris.



From left: MPO Kenny Smith, Town Manager Mercury Payton, and Chief James Morris.

Vienna Police Department Honors Life Saving Officers

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 ar-

rived 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.

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- Tysons Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Transit Association
- Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
- Arlington Chamber of Commerce
- Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
- Dulles Area Transportation Association
- Reston Chamber of Commerce
- Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance
- Prince William Chamber of Commerce
- Northern Virginia Building Industry Association
- Apartment and Office Building Association
- Virginia Self Storage Association
- Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association
- And many more...



VIENNA POLICE HIGHLIGHTS

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

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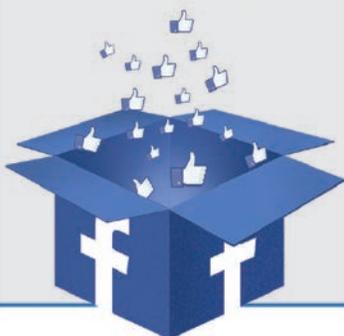
Candidate Petition Packets may be picked up at the Center. Deadline for returning the completed Candidate Petition to MCC: Friday, March 12 by 5 p.m.



VISIT: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MCLEAN-CENTER-ELECTION](https://tinyurl.com/mclean-center-election)

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VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

PUBLIC NOTICE

Proposed Limited Access Control Change Scotts Crossing Road from Jones Branch Drive to I-495 Fairfax County Willingness for Public Comment

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) invites you to review information about a proposed change in limited access control on Scotts Crossing Road between Jones Branch Drive and I-495 (Capital Beltway).

The purpose of this requested change in the limited access line is to allow the construction of a pedestrian connection to the existing eight-foot sidewalk on Scotts Crossing Road near the intersection with Jones Branch Drive. Under the existing condition, the designation as limited access right of way precludes the construction of the pedestrian connector. The width of the proposed break in limited access is 18.7 feet. This project will involve changes in limited access control.

Materials are available for review by contacting the VDOT Project Manager, Mr. Abraham Lerner or the VDOT MegaProjects Administrative Assistant, Ms. Christina Campbell. Please call Mr. Lerner at 703-259-3345 or Christina Campbell at 703-691-6715 or TTY/TDD 711 to review the materials.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board will consider the proposed limited access change at a future meeting.

If your concerns cannot be satisfied, VDOT is willing to hold a public hearing. You may request that a public hearing be held by sending a written request to Mr. Abraham Lerner, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 prior to **March 12, 2021**. If upon receiving public comments it is deemed necessary to hold a public hearing, notice of date, time and place of the hearing will be posted.

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

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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 Freder-

ick 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 pushed 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.



CALENDAR

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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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Vienna Metro Station Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements Fairfax County

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Thursday, March 18, 2021, 7-8:30 p.m.

www.virginiadot.org/ViennaMetroBikePed

Find out about planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the area of the Vienna Metro station. The improvements include constructing shared-use paths along Blake Lane and Sutton Road from the I-66 bridge to Country Creek Road, and adding a two-way cycle track with adjacent sidewalk along Country Creek Road/Virginia Center Boulevard from Sutton Road to the Metro North Parking Lot entrance.

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

Review project information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-1794 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion was prepared under agreement with the Federal Highway Administration and is now available on the project webpage. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is included in the environmental document.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **March 29, 2021** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Mr. Zamir Mirza, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Vienna Metro Station Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements" in the subject line.

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

State Project: EN18-029-423, P101, R201, C501
UPC: 113611

Federal: TAP-5A01 (964)

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 employees' 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



Fairfax County Supervisor and Vice Chairman Penny Gross (D-Mason District), Co-Chair of the Fairfax County Collective Bargaining Workgroup



Fairfax County Professional Firefighters & Paramedics - Local 2608 President Ron Kuley



Brad Caruthers, Fairfax County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 77



The Fairfax County Collective Bargaining Workgroup Session #2 in action.

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 se-

lect 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.

A Schedule Can Anchor Your Day

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

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY PLATT

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

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.”

Though 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 smaller, manageable time frames. ‘Ultimately you want to construct a time frame that works best for you.’”

“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

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

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“The Joshua Show” (Virtual)
Saturday, March 13, 10 a.m.
and 4 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

OFC 5th and 6th Grader Party



Virtual: The Glow Party
Friday, March 19, 7-9 p.m.
\$30 each/\$25 MCC district residents

Old Firehouse Family Event



Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night
Friday, March 26, 7-9 p.m.
\$5 per family (per Zoom invite)

OFC School Break Trip



Indoor Trampoline & Movie
Monday, March 29, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$50/\$40 MCC district residents

OFC School Break Trip



Richmond Safari & Zoo
Tuesday, March 30, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
\$100/\$90 MCC district residents

OFC School Break Trip



Dave & Buster's
Wednesday, March 31, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$70/\$60 MCC district residents



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www.aldentheatre.org

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CALENDAR

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, 2021. The 45-minute programs at Sully Historic Site run at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and the cost is \$40 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

MARCH 1-13

The Show Must Go On. The McLean Art Society in collaboration with The McLean Project For The Arts is presenting a juried painting exhibition in the Atrium Gallery at The McLean Community Center. (1234 Ingleside Avenue in McLean, 703-790-0123). Original art work in a wide variety of subject matter and painting styles will be available for viewing and purchase.

MARCH 6-7

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

SATURDAY/MARCH 6

Geocaching Workshop. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Learn to use hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) units to locate hidden treasure caches within the park. Once you master how to enter latitude and longitude coordinates into a GPS, follow the coordinates to find a hidden object, container or unique geological feature. Bring your own GPS; a limited number are available to borrow from the instructor at class. Cost is \$22 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/MARCH 7

Capital Harmonia's Virtual Women's Choral Festival. 4-5 p.m. Join virtually for the 6th Annual Women's Choral Festival. The festival honors Women's History Month and includes a performance of music written by women composers, interviews with composers Laura Farnell and Susan LaBarr and a conversation with our House of Ruth partner, Director of Development, Elizabeth Kiker. Enjoy the festival on either: YouTube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU2LgVhIF7C9_HbSxZca8JQ

Facebook Live www.Facebook.com/capital-harmonia.

TUESDAY/MARCH 9

Homeschool at the Pond. 3:30-5 p.m. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Hidden Pond will offer a series of classes geared toward meeting homeschool science requirements for students age 6 to 12. The "Homeschool at the Pond" program is based on Hidden Pond's popular Pohick Rangers series and meets every other week. The cost is \$65 per child. Call 703-451-9588; or visit Hidden Pond Nature Center.

MARCH 8 AND 13

Family Outdoor Exploration. Investigate topics, such as Stream Life, Pond Life, Historic Ice Cream, and much more. Once you register, staff from the park will reach out to you to plan the perfect outing for your family. The program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park runs from 10 to 11 a.m. on Monday, March 8, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 13, and from 3 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24, 2021. The cost is \$40 per family, and family members of all ages are welcome to attend. Call 703-631-0013.

SUNDAY/MARCH 14

Birding for Beginners. 9-10:30 a.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. During this program you will learn about birds 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 age 12 to 16 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 mill, so bundle up, brave the weather and watch and learn as sap is boiled down into a sweet syrup over an open fire. While supplies last, sample some of this delicious syrup over cornbread baked with cornmeal ground at Colvin Run. Call 703-759-2771.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

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 FxGS) at <https://fxgs2021mar.eventbrite.com> or on the FxGS web page, www.fxgs.org/2021springfair. Details of the program and other FxGS activities on the web site, www.fxgs.org or by calling 703-644-8185.

FAIRFAX COUNTY ACTIVATES CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER

Fairfax County activated a Joint Information Center in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 13.
Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage - www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus
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. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.
Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.
Twitter - @fairfaxcounty and @fairfaxhealth
Facebook - www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth

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 FFXCOVIDESP to 888777.

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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. '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, in 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 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 bodily functions are performing "within normal parameters," to quote Lt. Comm. Data 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 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: papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, to go along with my pre-existing non small lung cancer, also stage IV. One has to fight emotionally to keep from getting lost/going down that rabbit hole. Any good news/an 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 not 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 emotional, 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 vault 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. 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 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 Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.



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