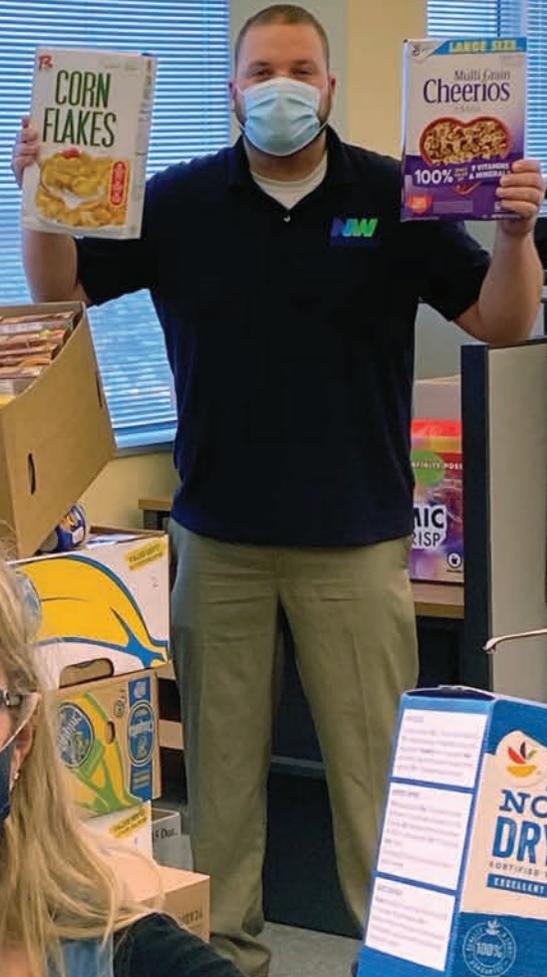


# CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

## Promoting Food Security for Area Children

NEWS, PAGE 5



## 'Every 75 Minutes, a Child Is Abused or Neglected'

NEWS, PAGE 2

## Reston Author Finds Napoleon on St. Helena

NEWS, PAGE 8

NWFCU Foundation sets a collection goal of 40,000 non-perishable food items. Pictured from left: Executive Director of the NWFCU Foundation, Kaycee Childress, Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation, Karen Foust, and Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation Jordan Flegler.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

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**Town Center Parkway Underpass Study  
Fairfax County**

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Wednesday, April 7, 2021, 7 p.m.  
[www.virginiadot.org/TownCenterParkway](http://www.virginiadot.org/TownCenterParkway)

Find out about a study assessing an extension of Town Center Parkway below the Dulles Toll Road (Route 267), the Dulles International Airport Access Highway and the Metrorail Silver Line aimed at reducing congestion on adjacent roadways and improving accessibility and connectivity to Reston Town Center for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. The project team is analyzing the extension, about a half-mile, from Town Center Parkway's current southern terminus at Sunset Hills Road to Sunrise Valley Drive via an underpass, with the new road aligning west of the CoreSite building on Sunrise Valley Drive.

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/TownCenterParkway](http://www.virginiadot.org/TownCenterParkway). 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 703-259-2599 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **May 7, 2021** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Mr. Dan Reinhard, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov). Please reference "Town Center Parkway Underpass Study" 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: 7414-029-422, P101, P102  
UPC: 114452  
Federal: STP-029-9 (016)

*In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held  
Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at the same time.*



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**NEWS**

**'Every 75 Minutes, a Child Is Abused or Neglected'**

Detective discusses sexual, physical abuse of children.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Child abuse happens in Fairfax County, just as it does throughout the U.S. So Det. Courtney Young, with the county police department's Child Abuse Squad, recently gave some details about it.

Now in her 21st year with the department, she recently addressed a virtual meeting of the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee. She said her squad comprises 11 detectives plus a supervisor, and two of those detectives are on call, 24/7.

"In 2019, we worked 472 cases," said Young. "We deal with sexual abuse and felony physical abuse." The latter involve fractures, burns, severe lacerations, life-threatening injuries and internal injuries.

"Sexual offenses include those committed on a child less than 13 by a known offender, kid on kid, and those committed by a caretaker on a child less than 18," she explained. "We also work on sex-abuse cases that happened a long time ago."

Young also presented some sexual-abuse statistics:

- ❖ 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused by age 18.
- ❖ Only 38 percent of child victims disclose sexual abuse; some never do.
- ❖ It's rare for child sex-abuse victims to become perpetrators as adults.
- ❖ Child sexual abuse is the strongest predictor of adult sexual victimization.

"Nationwide, the majority of sexual abuse is done by people the child knows – a family member, coach, teacher, etc.," said Young. "Ninety percent of child victims know their abuser; 30 percent are abused by a family member or someone the family trusts. Fabricated reports account for only 4-8 percent of these cases."

**WARNING SIGNS** of a child's sexual abuse include emotional and behavioral changes, alcohol and drug usage at an early age, and sexual language/behavior that isn't age appropriate.

Regarding physical abuse, Young said these cases are "extremely under-reported because, for example, the child knows the family depends on Dad for food and shelter. Or children worry that no one will believe them."

Warning signs of physical abuse include: Frequent hunger, inappropriate clothing for the weather, frequent/suspicious bruising or injuries, inappropriate sexual behavior, lack of adult supervision, drug or alcohol use, frequent running away from the home environment, and truancy from school.

Sadly, said Young, "Every 75 minutes in America, a

child is abused or neglected. And every 14 days, a child dies from mistreatment."

Teachers, daycare workers, doctors, nurses, mental-health professionals, social workers, athletic coaches, and anyone 18 and older associated with organizations responsible for the care of children are mandated by law to report their suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected.

"In Fairfax County, a child-advocacy center handles our interviews with child victims," said Young. "They can talk to kids under 13. As a detective, I watch from the other room – and the child is told that. The parents don't see the interview, but we meet with them afterward and tell them about it. And I and some others are specifically trained to do these interviews."

She also said children may not always know the exact dates their abuses took place. "For example, we had a case where a child was abused, several times a week, by her stepdad, while her mom was at work," said Young.

She said authorities want a child to only have to tell his or her story once – and not have to relive it, over and over. So the police have a multidisciplinary team in place and work in conjunction with Child Protective Services (CPS). And, she added, "If we get a referral or a police report [about possible child abuse], we don't need parents' consent to talk to [the victim]."

"We've done forensic interviews with kids as young as 3 years old," continued Young. "We also find out if the child has any disabilities, so we can figure out how best to communicate with them. We never lie to the child, and we tell them they don't have to talk, if they don't want to. It can take time, and we need to build up trust with them. And whatever word the child uses to call specific body parts, we use that, so they feel comfortable."

**THE POLICE** receive reports of potential child abuse from a variety of sources, such as the victim, doctors or hospital personnel, CPS, school personnel, neighbors, other children, and parents – who are interviewed separately. And, stressed Young,

"The person reporting it can't be sued."

CPS conducts civil investigations of child abuse and neglect. Anyone wishing to report suspected cases may call 703-324-7400. For more information, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/report-child-abuse>.

Young advises parents to talk to their children early about body safety, sex and boundaries. "Use proper names for body parts and tell children which ones others should not touch," she said. "Teach them they have the right to say no to unwanted or uncomfortable touching. The younger that kids know what's not appropriate, the better. That way, they'll know when it's wrong – for example, if someone touches the parts their bathing suit covers. And don't force your child to hug someone they don't want to."



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION  
**Det. Courtney Young**

**"Teach them they have the right to say no to unwanted or uncomfortable touching. The younger that kids know what's not appropriate, the better."**

— Det. Courtney Young



Artist's rendition of the entrance to The Lodge at Autumn Willow in Centreville.



Site plan of the senior, independent-living apartments and their courtyard.

## 'A Place for Residents to Enjoy the Outdoors'

### Supervisors approve affordable, senior apartments in Centreville.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he Lodge at Autumn Willow is envisioned as a place where senior citizens may live in a lodge within a peaceful, natural setting in Centreville. Also making it appealing is that these apartments will be something they'll be able to afford.

The 150 independent-living units will be built at the intersection of Stringfellow Road and Autumn Willow Drive, near Route 29, and will be restricted to people earning 60 percent or less of the Area Median Income (AMI). That means, for example, that a senior couple would be able to purchase a two-bedroom unit for \$50,000-\$60,000.

The wooded, 20.5-acre site comprises two parcels south of Autumn Willow. And the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recently approved this project, which is a partnership between Michaels Development Co. and

the Fairfax County Redevelopment Housing Authority (FCRHA), which owns 10.9 acres of the property. (The county Park Authority owns the other 9.6 acres).

Following a public hearing, the Supervisors also authorized the FCRHA to issue a \$4.45 million Housing Blueprint Loan to finance this development. First, though, attorney Brian Winterhalter, representing Michaels, made a presentation to them.

Calling Michaels Development a "national leader in residential real estate," he said it specializes in senior, affordable and student housing. "It's built over 55,000 units in 45 states," said Winterhalter. "But this is Michaels's first project in Fairfax County, and we're extremely excited to be partnering with the County Redevelopment Housing Authority on it."

**PLANS** include a serenity studio, a basement-level, gathering spot at the end of each residential wing, plus an accessible ramp

leading to the front entrance. The site will have 81 percent open space. A courtyard is intended to be used as a reading cove and recreation area, and an existing trail running west to east will be maintained in place so residents may walk to nearby retail stores.

In addition, new, widened sidewalks will run along Autumn Willow, where the entrance will be. A canopy in front of the two-story, brick-and-siding building will provide a covered walkway for drop-offs and pickups in the arrival plaza. The site – which will have 135 parking spaces – is also located near two fire stations, a hospital and shopping areas.

"The primary, design objective was to preserve the trees and the wooded character of the site and minimize grading and land disturbance, as much as possible," explained Winterhalter. "As a result, the building is designed to nestle into the site and maximize tree preservation."

The units will be offered in three tiers of

AMI – 30, 50 and 60 percent. And if all goes well, the developer hopes to break ground in early 2022.

"The entrance will be by a turn-around loop off Autumn Willow Drive, with pedestrian connections along Autumn Willow to connect to the existing, pedestrian network in the area," said Winterhalter. "Plus, there'll be a paved connection to the existing Park Authority trail that runs through the property."

"The outdoor courtyard between the building's two wings will have a reading cove and recreation zone for both active and passive recreation and relaxation," he continued. "It'll just be a nice place for the residents to enjoy the outdoor natural environment."

**THE SITE** borders the Sully District, but is technically within the Springfield District, so Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield) made the motion for approval, which was seconded by Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) and then approved unanimously.

"I think we've got a nice product here," said Herry. "It'll fit nicely into the community."

#### AREA ROUNDUPS

### Car Crash at 7-Eleven Kills Centreville Man

Murvin Withers, 61, of Centreville, died March 21 from injuries sustained after a vehicle crashed into him, March 4, in a convenience-store parking lot. Fairfax County police say officers responded, that day, at 5:32 p.m., to the 7-Eleven at 14515 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. in Chantilly.

Crash Reconstruction Unit detectives determined that Withers was walking across the parking lot when the driver of a 2020 Jeep Gladiator accidentally hit him. The driver remained at the scene. Withers was taken to the hospital with serious injuries and passed away, a few weeks later. Detectives determined that neither speed, nor alcohol, were factors in the crash, and no charges are anticipated.

### Herndon Spring Clean-up April 21-23

The annual spring clean-up will take place throughout the Town of Herndon April 21-23. Spring clean-up provides an opportunity for residents to place large or bulky items curbside for pick-up on their scheduled trash collection day. Items can include:

- ❖ Appliances (remove doors)
- ❖ Furniture
- ❖ Vehicle parts and plumbing fixtures (all under 50 lbs.)
- ❖ Tires (maximum 2 per household)
- ❖ Limited amount of building materials (approximately one cubic yard, lengths not to exceed 4 feet)

Loose yard waste, auto parts in excess of 50 lbs., large quantities of building materials, brick & block, electronics (including televisions, stereos, computers & peripheral) and household hazardous waste will NOT be picked up.

Items should be placed curbside by 6 a.m. on your trash day only, but no earlier than 24 hours prior to pick-up. Please place items away from containers used for regular trash collection.

Residents may contact the Department of Public Works at (703) 435-6856 or email [public.works@herndon-va.gov](mailto:public.works@herndon-va.gov) for more information, or visit the town's website at [herndon-va.gov/MyTrashDays](http://herndon-va.gov/MyTrashDays).

### Child Car Seat Inspections

Police officers will inspect car seats, Thursday, April 8, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the Sully District Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Seats should already be installed so they're ready to be inspected and properly reinstalled, if necessary. Parents will also learn how to properly install the seats, themselves. Inspections are done first-come, first-served. Wear a mask and adhere to social distancing.

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## OPINION

# Ending State Executions

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

Virginia made history last week: The Governor of Virginia Ralph Northam signed the bill that made Virginia the first state in the south and the 23rd state in the nation to end the death penalty! I made the nearly four-hour trip to the Greensville Correctional Center in Jarratt where the "death chamber" is located to be at this momentous occasion when another of my legislative goals was realized.

While some have justified the death penalty as an appropriate "eye for an eye" punishment and a deterrent for other crimes, the history of the death penalty is much more complex. Virginia executed more people than any other state having executed 1,390 people over its 413 years. Its uneven application among the states and within the state itself is astounding. Virginia executed 94 women over its history, twice as many as the state with the next most executions of women. Of those, 78 were Black, 11 were White and five were of unknown race. Sixteen children below the age of 18 were executed including a slave girl about 12 years old who was hung in 1825. In 2005 the United States Supreme Court declared that the execution of those under the age of 18 at the time of their crime was cruel and unusual punishment and hence unconstitutional. It followed an earlier decision in a Virginia case that found that executing an intellectually disabled person as the state was poised to do was unconstitutional.

Until the first electrocution in 1908, executions in Virginia were carried out by hanging making them not unlike the lynchings of Blacks that had occurred



COMMENTARY

throughout the South. From 1900 until the U.S. Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional in 1977 for crimes in which no one was killed, Virginia executed 73 Black defendants for rape, or attempted or armed robbery that did not result in death, while no White defendants were executed for those crimes.

Other numbers show how the death penalty was more an act of White supremacy than for public safety. Between 1900 and 1999, there were 377 executions and of those 296 were Black persons and 79 White persons. For murder there were 304 executions, 223 Black and 79 White persons. For rape 48 Black persons and for attempted rape 20 Black persons executed, and in both instances no White persons were executed.

One of the most unbelievable stories in the history of the death penalty in Virginia was the execution of five Black defendants on Feb. 2, 1951, and the execution of two more Black men on Feb. 5, 1951, accused of raping a White woman. An all-White jury meted out the punishment after trials that lasted one day per defendant.

We cannot rewrite this dark chapter of Virginia's history, but we must learn from it. Too many laws in the past were written to maintain White supremacy rather than protect the public equally. The General Assembly has made major strides at ridding the Code of Jim Crow laws. We can see the repeal of the death penalty as a major step in moving Virginia forward as a more just state.

# Springtime Promising Renewal

BY JOHN LOVAAS  
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND FOUNDER OF  
RESTON FARMERS MARKET

Spring is finally and officially here. Spring, a time of renewal. Renewal seems a particularly attractive concept this year, doesn't it?

Just think what our area and, indeed, the entire country have been through in the last couple of years and, arguably the last four! We've experienced a public health nightmare few of us ever imagined possible; social discord resulting in division and often violence; staggering failures of leadership at many levels; dysfunction rampant in our proud democratic institutions; and, a resulting shattered economy with tens of millions out of work while a handful of the very wealthy soak up billions more from the wreckage!

We have a long way to go to recover and rebuild from these blows, but with Spring's arrival there are indications of renewal. A pivotal key to recovery, of course, is dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic. There is much good news on this front. The Biden administration has pulled out all the stops to produce and distribute remarkable new vaccines. Already nearly 60 million Americans are fully vaccinated and another 2.5 million doses are injected each day. Slow rollouts in Virginia and Fairfax County appear behind us. All teachers and public health personnel and nearly all those over 65 are fully inoculated.

As Spring ends, we should be getting near herd im-



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

munity. Inoculation resistance seems to be declining, but the problems of politicized resistance to simple preventive measures (mask wearing, social distancing) and surprising stupidity among too many Americans remain, although less so in Reston!

And we are starting to see renewal in our daily lives. Old folks get to see, hug grandchildren; family and friends are getting together again. Attendance at events (e.g., March Madness college basketball lost altogether last year, and baseball with Nats games starting this week!) is now possible on a limited basis. Hopefully, arts and entertainment venues will soon follow, not to mention County government and Reston community organizations meetings key to civic involvement, another casualty of the pandemic and leadership not quite capable of managing a calamity of this magnitude.

Some of our favorite family-owned restaurants are re-opening (but some will not, I fear). With the advent of the American Recovery Plan, access to sorely needed soft loan financing for restarting costs is a reality for others. Perhaps most important of all, we are finally seeing public education, Fairfax County Schools and other systems around the country return our kids to the classrooms. Many of us believe children have suffered most from this pandemic and

SEE LOVAAS, PAGE 7

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# Promoting Food Security for Area Children

**NWFCU Foundation sets a collection goal of 40,000 non-perishable food items.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**N**orthwest Federal Credit Union Foundation set the bar to an unprecedented high for their 2021 Food for Kids Drive. With hunger remaining unabated for some local children as the COVID-19 pandemic played havoc on their families' incomes and households cut down on the quantity and quality of food, the Foundation stepped up their efforts. For 2021, they increased the collection amount from 33,000 non-perishable food items in 2020 to 40,000 in 2021 and reduced the drive from five months to two.

Six weeks in, the Foundation had collected more than 65 percent of what they accumulated last year in about five months, according to Program/Fundraising Coordinator of NWFCU Foundation, Karen Foust. People also donated at the credit union branches, and those items would be coming in at the end of the month.



**Executive Director of the NWFCU Foundation, Kaycee Childress, Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation, Karen Foust, and Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation Jordan Fleger**

PHOTO BY  
MERCIA HOBSON/  
THE CONNECTION

"We're confident we're going to exceed that number in the two months. We have the best members ever ...so generous and caring. We've all been blown away," said Executive Director of the NWFCU Foundation, Kaycee Childress.

A critical component to the success of last year's drive and indeed for this year was that the Foundation worked again with NWFCU's corporate sponsor, Giant Food Stores. The

Foundation increased the number of participating stores in Fairfax and Loudoun counties from 13 to 17, including stores in Oakton, Herndon, Chantilly, and Centreview.

While public schools throughout Fairfax and Loudoun counties will be recipients of the drive, Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation, Jordan Fleger, said, "Dogwood Elementary in Reston is a big partner, and Hutchison is the one in

Herndon." The Neighborhood Resource Center in Herndon and INMED's Family & Youth Opportunity Center in Sterling are significant beneficiaries.

Foust said more shelf-stable milk would be appreciated, as would protein bars. Chef Boyardee Beef Ravioli is always a favorite and goes fast. Children can warm it up in the microwave when their parents are working. "It's not ideal, but it's food in their bellies and self-fixing," said Childress.

The Foundation will be back at it again, undertaking a different drive from April 1-May 31, collecting diapers in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Diaper Bank. To donate, purchase and send diapers online through their Diaper Drive Amazon Wish List. For the shipping address, select "Northwest Federal Credit Union Foundation's Gift Registry Address" at checkout.

"This pandemic has placed an immeasurable strain on families across the region for over a year now. With food and diaper supplies of critical need, we're pleased to be able to help with ongoing donations from our Northwest Federal Foundation," said President and CEO of Northwest Federal Credit Union, Jeff Bentley. "A cornerstone of credit unions, and particularly Northwest Federal, is 'people helping people,' and there is no time more important to embody that than now."

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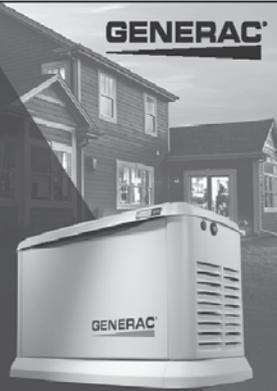
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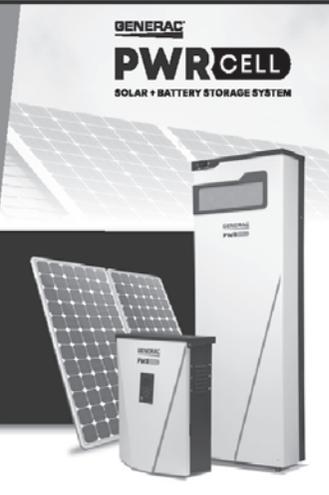
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**Announcements**

**Be a part of our:**

**Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

**Senior Living**, fourth week of every month.

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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

# Car Crash Kills Centreville Man

A Centreville man died following a vehicle crash, early Monday morning, at the intersection of Arlington Boulevard and Javier Road in Merrifield. The victim was identified as Dashdavaa Zambalgarav, 49.

Detectives from the Fairfax County Police Crash Reconstruction Unit preliminarily determined that he was the lone occupant and driver of a 2008 Lexus RX. They say he was traveling west on Arlington Boulevard, on March 29, before 4 a.m., when his car drifted into the center median and crashed into a traffic pole at Javier Road.

Zambalgarav was taken to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. De-

tectives continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding this incident, but they initially don't believe speed or alcohol were factors.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting FCCS plus the tip to 847411, or going to <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>. Tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000 for information leading to an arrest.

— BONNIE HOBBS

## Strength in Diversity: Open Letter by Centreville Immigration Forum

Dear Friends,

The vision of Centreville Immigration Forum (CIF) is a community that provides acceptance and opportunity for all immigrants. As such we are deeply saddened at the rise in anti-Asian violence that culminated in the murders of 6 Asian American women in Atlanta, Georgia. The 150 percent rise in anti-Asian incidents across our country is directly related to the racist and hateful language that inaccurately blames the Asian community for the origin of COVID-19. This has led to heartbreak and fear for our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) neighbors.

CIF passionately believes that we are

one community that is made stronger because of our differences. We hope that by working together we can support each other and create an environment of respect, equality, and safety for all.

Please take a moment to share some words of support with your AAPI friends and neighbors and the two critical chambers of commerce whose messages are linked below.

[centrevilleimmigrationforum.org/news/chambers-of-commerce-state-ments-on-anti-asian-violence/](http://centrevilleimmigrationforum.org/news/chambers-of-commerce-state-ments-on-anti-asian-violence/)

In solidarity,  
The Board and Staff of the Centreville Immigration Forum

## Lovaas

FROM PAGE 4

educational administration simply not up to the tasks of devising quality alternatives to the classroom to meet systemic demand or promptly planning the return of kids to classrooms. The result is that kids in K-12 have lost the better part of a full academic year. To my knowledge, there is not an approved plan for making up the loss. Will kids in FCPS be credited with completing the year nonetheless, or will they have to repeat the equivalent or ... ?

Another growing indicator of renewal is the rush hour phenomenon. Rush hour traffic virtually disappeared with the pandemic, but it is well on the way back. Would it be fair to call the absence of rush hour in Reston one pandemic benefit?

So, we can see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, and a glimmer of the same for the return of millions of jobs and economic growth, albeit inequitably. The social divisiveness is showing few signs of going away, but the tone and direction from the top attempt to turn down the temperature. But, Americans need to realize how

frightfully close we came to shattering our democracy culminating with the violent attempt on Jan. 6 to overturn the outcome of a perfectly free and fair presidential election last November. When will the adults return and get together to repair our now shaky political system?

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## Good News Travels Slowly



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Sure enough, the email from my oncologist didn't arrive in my inbox before we left for the weekend away on Friday. It wasn't ideal, but as a long time cancer patient, I've learned to make the best of a bad/potentially bad situation. As it turned out, the time away was invigorating, and there was very little mention of the elephant in the room: Kenny's cancer. Friends can be good like that. Once we got home on Sunday, after a two-hour wait at Six Flags to get my second covid-19 shot, I was rewarded. The email from the radiologist had arrived and the news was good, or so it seemed.

What it is that I typically receive is an automated release of the radiologist's report which is likewise forwarded to my oncologist. Granted, I can only understand half of the words, and those are generally the prepositions; much of the report is written by a doctor for a doctor, not for the doctor's patient. Nevertheless, the process is what it is. It's rare anymore that one receives a call from their doctor with scan-type results. Usually, my oncologist amends this first email with a simplified interpretation of the report: "scan looks good," as a hopeful example. So far, and this is Tuesday afternoon after the Wednesday scan, I've not yet received an amended report, the one where the oncologist offers his summary/opinion. We do have a follow-up video appointment with him on Thursday so perhaps he's saving himself/his comments until that meeting. Perhaps not. Regardless, I should have heard something more definitive by now. Presuming I can figure out the true meaning of the radiologist's report is a bit presumptuous. As a cancer patient, I don't want to have to figure anything out. I want to be told. I shouldn't have to live with any unnecessary uncertainty. I have more than enough uncertainty already. And in case anybody can't guess: uncertainty does not improve my quality of life, one that's already fragile. A "terminal" diagnosis will do that and tends to put a patient ill at ease, morning, noon and night. That's what I call a "post-diagnosis existing condition."

That reaction/disappointment being expressed, from what few words and meanings I could grasp from the report: "no new lesions," no significant change," "stable disease," I can say with all the limited knowledge at my disposal, that I'm probably OKAY. In fact, I would say that my warranty has been extended for another three months, until we wash, rinse and repeat in another three months, per the cycle I've mostly been on since 2009 when I was first diagnosed.

However, I'd be foolish to fuss too much because if my interpretation of the radiologist's report is correct, I really can't complain about good news. I mean, what goes around, comes around, and I'm not about to tempt fate and ruffle karma's feathers. These reports, which typically are the first and surest indication that the patient is in trouble - or not, are a lifeline us patients cling to. A good/stable disease report is sort of like a "life preserver" until you actually talk with the oncologist and get a more official interpretation. Of course, to receive good news earlier would be a lot better. But when the news is good, as this report was, anytime you receive it: "it's all good," as so many say.

Naturally, I'd rather hear it directly from the oncologist. Moreover, given that not all the words written in this report are familiar/known to me, especially in the context in which they're written ("medicalese"); obviously, I'd rather hear the assessment of the scan from the oncologist in person/so to speak, and not leave anything to chance - or misinterpretation by yours truly. In spite of these irregularities, which I can't do anything about (I've tried), my modus has been to roll with the punches and take the good, bad and ugly in stride. So I'm not mad. I'm glad. Life goes on. Thank God!

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

# Local Author Finds Napoleon on St. Helena

Margaret Rodenberg launches a new book of historical fiction.

BY CHRISTINA TYLER WENKS

Years of research and travel culminate in an adaptation of a romantic novel started by a young Napoleon Bonaparte. “Finding Napoleon” is not a war story, but a glimpse into the mind of the military leader as a writer and father as well as a few of the strong women he loved.

Creating Reston resident Margaret Rodenberg’s work of historical fiction is a lifelong story in itself. A childhood in France cultivated a curiosity that led to travel throughout Europe to learn histories, working with the Napoleonic Historical Society, and visiting the California home of David Karpeles, who owns the world’s largest private manuscript library, and reading an original copy of “Clisson et Eugénie,” written by 26-year-old Napoleon.

In the semi-autobiographical “Clisson et Eugénie,” Napoleon illustrates Clisson as an idealistic man who grew into his potential and during his last years reflects on his acts of genius and mistakes. After being stripped of power and exiled, Clisson must accept what he was and who he is.

**RODENBERG** set out to finish the love story that Napoleon started, which meant she had to learn how Napoleon would have finished the tale himself.

In 2011, Rodenberg traveled from Cape Town, South Africa, via a British mail-transport ship to the South Atlantic’s St. Helena Island where Napoleon lived before he died. The remote volcanic island had no airport at that time and required a five-day journey, providing fertile territory for the novelist’s imagination.

“I was quite surprised to feel a presence there ... that I could not have found in Paris or Corsica or his school,” said the first-time novelist about being alone in the house where Napoleon lived and among his belongings. “I could feel what it was like and the great sad spirit of what this person was at the end of his life.”

Napoleon’s years on St. Helena provided time for introspection and reversing wrongs. The twice-exiled emperor wrote his memoirs, which Rodenberg considers a cathartic attempt at rehabilitating his reputation. His writings helped Rodenberg see the military leader’s personality strengths, flaws, and contradictions.

Rodenberg researched characters of the people around Napoleon, such as merchants Saul Solomon and William Balcombe, as well as Napoleon’s last lover, Albine de Montholon, whose husband betrayed the exiled leader.

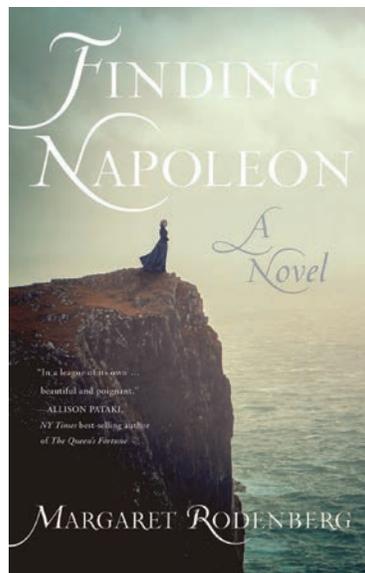
“I was very fond of the character, Albine, who bore him a child,” said Rodenberg. Albine’s husband is suspected to have poisoned Napoleon. “I filled in motivation and created action within holes where there is no historical validity,” said Rodenberg.

Another historical character is Toby, a slave gardener with whom Napoleon spoke often on the Balcombe’s property. Rodenberg’s research found that Napoleon gave Toby 20 gold coins and tried to set him free.



PHOTO BY BERT HELFENSTEIN

Margaret Rodenberg will share her research and the editing and publishing process with the Great Falls Writer’s Group on April 8.



The book will be released on April 6 — a month before the 200th anniversary of the emperor’s death.



PHOTO BY BERT HELFENSTEIN

At the California home of David Karpeles, who owns the largest private manuscript library, author Margaret Rodenberg reads the original handwritten manuscript of “Clisson et Eugénie” by Napoleon Bonaparte.

“Finding Napoleon’ is a glimpse inside the mind of an exiled emperor who was a writer, father and lover”

— Margaret Rodenberg

“I hope in some small way my novel gives voice to St. Helena’s enslaved population who are too often forgotten in Napoleonic stories,” said Rodenberg.

“Finding Napoleon” is written from three perspectives — Napoleon, Albine, and Clisson.

Rodenberg said that Napoleon took “Clisson et Eugénie” to St. Helena and intended to finish his novel, but did not. The original manuscript ends with Clisson’s death. In Rodenberg’s novel, Napoleon rewrites the ending to the book.

**THE BOOK** will be released on April 6 — a month before the 200th anniversary of the emperor’s death.

Rodenberg will share her research and the editing and publishing process with the Great Falls Writer’s Group on April 8.



PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

Mikal Legall rushed for three touchdowns in Westfield’s 56-12 win over Oakton.

## Bulldogs Beat Cougars, Reach Season Finale

The Westfield Bulldogs and the Oakton Cougars played in a Concorde District game on March 26 in Chantilly: With the 56-12 win Westfield improved to (3-2) (2-1), and Oakton fell to (1-5) (0-4). Westfield will play in Chantilly on Friday in the season finale. Oakton has a bye week and their season is complete.



Kashantis Anderson #8 ran this kickoff back for a touchdown but a Westfield penalty negated the score.



Owen Thomas recovered his blocked punt in the endzone.