

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Mother's Day 2021, With Love

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Community Presses Police Chief and Chairman for Answers

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Man Fatally Shot in Chantilly Parking Lot

NEWS, PAGE 2

(From left) Kenci Santamaria of Herndon, her daughter, Jaritza Santamaria, 9, and son, Jefferson Jose, 6, enjoy Mother's Day on the Town Square in front of the Old Town Hall in Herndon. Jaritza Santamaria, 9 - Mom plays with me and takes me to the mall. Jefferson Jose, 6 - I like Mom's eggs.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF ETHAN LUVISIA

Award-winning musician Ethan Luvisia in front of his piano.

Chantilly High Senior Wins Music Contest

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

specifically, because of its harmonic and dynamic capabilities.”

Chantilly High senior Ethan Luvisia has won first place in the Rotary District Youth Music Contest. The 18-year-old pianist represented the Rotary Club of Centreville & Chantilly (RCCC) and his award-winning piece was “Étude Op. 10, No. 12 in C minor.”

He said that, when he plays piano, “I feel as though there are very few limitations – allowing for a boundless, creative experience that I didn’t have when I played trombone and cello before. On my piano journey, I discovered works for the instrument by Bach and Chopin, and performances from the likes of Glenn Gould and Arthur Rubinstein, that really instigated a passion for the piano and the history of western music.”

Also called the “Revolutionary Étude,” it’s a solo piano work composed by Frédéric Chopin, circa 1831. Ethan was declared the RCCC’s winner on March 16 and then performed the Chopin piece virtually for its members on March 30.

“On my piano journey, I discovered works for the instrument by Bach and Chopin, and performances from the likes of Glenn Gould and Arthur Rubinstein, that really instigated a passion for the piano and the history of western music.”

— Chantilly High senior Ethan Luvisia

He now vies against another competitor from West Springfield to determine which one will advance to District level competition. Judging dates have not yet been set. Meanwhile, Wallicia Gill, the RCCC president, said, “We are so proud of Ethan as our local winner.”

Luvisia, who has already been accepted to George Mason University, chose the piano as his instrument to play when he was around 12 years old and listening to Beethoven’s works. “I always was fascinated with his ‘Moonlight Sonata’s’ third movement, and his seventh symphony, and aspired to play the former as my ultimate goal,” he explained.

After that, said Luvisia, “I begged my dad for the instrument and promptly began instruction at a facility called The Music Loft, and it all started there. I like the piano,

As for winning the RCCC’s competition, Luvisia said, “I am grateful beyond words. I heavily appreciate the opportunity the Rotary Club has given to young musicians, such as myself, and I am honored to have been the recipient of the award. Regarding a potential career, I am looking to pursue a higher-level teaching job, or a career in performance – likely in jazz piano – at the Berklee College of Music.”

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Community Presses New Police Chief and Chairman for Answers

Citizens plead FXCO not be part of Davis' redemptive career journey.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On day four in his new position as Chief of Police Fairfax County, the ghosts of Kevin Davis' law enforcement past clung heavily in the County's public arena of the May 6 virtual Community Input Session hosted by Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-large), Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee District). The problem was the community's concerns were no longer confined to the Board's hiring process and appointment of Davis as chief of police. Also, while the non-disclosure of decades-old civil lawsuits with judgments entered against Davis from incidents as a young sworn law enforcement officer, including use-of-force and ruling of violation of constitutional rights was old news community concerns escalated with new findings and reactions the week of May 3.

County residents questioned a litany of recent incidents, 2016-2018, that came to light, this time with Davis employed not as a young cop in 1993 and 1996 but in high-ranking law enforcement leadership roles. These and other matters shook the trust and unhinged for many any possible faith in Davis's ability and transparency as Police Chief of Fairfax County.

Davis shared at the forum three words that held meaning for him-transformation, accountability, and transparency. "I'm all about accountability, both for police officers [and] myself; and people who commit crimes. There has to be a pathway back to success," he said. "My track record of nearly three decades is a journey," Davis said. As reported May 7 by FCPD: "I think 2021 is the perfect opportunity for me to return to what I love. – Chief Kevin Davis"

THE TWO-HOUR VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT on May 6 provided a platform for Davis to share his track record, lay out his vision for policing in Fairfax County, and community speakers to comment and question him and Chairman McKay with immediate response.

McKay said they were aware of Davis' incidents that caused community concern. "We believe in Fairfax County and community engagement, not one session, not one meeting, not one phone call, not one testimony," He added, "No one is perfect. No agency is perfect. We always strive to improve."

Chief Davis opened by saying that he learned the importance and value of community early in his police career, to hear the voices of those telling how they want to be protected.

Davis provided background information by listing his recent accomplishments as police chief in Prince George's and Anne
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MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
Kevin Davis, Chief of Police Fairfax County Police Department at his first News Conference held May 7, 2021.

Arundel counties, Police Commissioner Baltimore City, and recipient of a 2019 fellowship award. According to Davis, he was the fifth police chief in the country to implement Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, "an immediate opportunity for police officers to offer those suffering from drug addictions to break the pipeline to prison."

Davis did not refer or allude to negative incidents, such as lawsuits where juries ruled against him in his role as a sworn police officer, incidents 1993 and 1996.

Davis omitted his six-day lockdown of Black Harlem Baltimore in 2017, resulting in an ACLU lawsuit after African American Baltimore police homicide Detective Sean Suiter was killed with his service revolver. Davis did not say the detective was to testify to a grand jury regarding police corruption.

There was no discussion by Davis about his termination as Baltimore Commissioner by Mayor Pugh, who cited rising crime.

Davis previewed his 100-day plan for Fairfax County. He focused on critical areas the community demanded improvement: use of force-particularly, time, distance, and de-escalation; tactical repositioning of police officers in critical situations; implicit [unconscious] bias training and use of CompStat [Computer Statistics] that gathers real-time information and intelligence. Davis said FCPD would realign with One Fairfax.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS DURING THE COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION Q & A

Alicia Plerhoples of Dranesville testified regarding the County's process in hiring the



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-large) Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Rodney Lusk hosted the May 6 Community Input Session with Chief Davis.

chief. Addressing the Board of Supervisors, she said they must now do the difficult work to ensure racial justice in County policing. She said, "That begins with acknowledging your mistakes in hiring Chief Davis whose past misconduct was not disclosed to the public and possibly to the Board of Supervisors prior to his appointment." Plerhoples called on the Board "to remove Chief Davis from his position and conduct a transparent and thorough search for a new Chief of Police."

Jeremy Monat of Burke addressed the Supervisors, saying while they defended their selection of Davis since incidents [1993, 1999] occurred decades ago, "contrary to the thrust of your statement, those are not the end of Davis's abuses of power." Monat said that in 2016, Davis, as Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, worked secretly with Persistent Surveillance Systems to fly a plane over the city of Baltimore. "[It] continuously transmitted real-time images to analysts on the ground...Even the mayor and the city council had not been told. Davis' response did not take responsibility." Monat said Davis should not be in another position of authority, this time over the people of Fairfax. Davis said, "I've certainly changed, and grown, and learned many lessons throughout the course of my career... I have served communities that not only need public safety, but good public safety, and I look forward to bringing those reform efforts."

Amanda Andere of Reston is the Ex. Director of Funders Together to End Homelessness. She served on Chairman McKay's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity, leading the Equitable Communities Committee. She believed then that the Board embraced the essence of the recommendations in decision-making during the task force, and the Board would use them going forward.

"And so, I felt like my time on the chairman's committee was in vain and disrespected," she said. "I 'hope you understand that how we feel about the process, the result, and your response to our concerns does not



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-large) Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Rodney Lusk hosted the May 6 Community Input Session with Chief Davis.

build trust in communities where government mistrust has been central to our experiences."

Vicki Fishman is the Director of Government and Community Relations for Northern Virginia, Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington. It is the public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community, representing over 100 synagogues, schools, and institutions throughout the region. Fishman expressed disappointment at the lack of transparency by the Board of Supervisors in the hiring process and the need for adequate stakeholder input.

Ron Kuley is the president of the local firefighters' union. He said McKay and Supervisor Lusk conducted countywide meetings to seek community input before the selection. He understood that Lusk put in considerable time meeting with community representatives and employee groups. "As a longtime employee and labor leader, I have faith in Chairman McKay, Supervisor Lusk, and the Board of Supervisors in their process and selection of Chief Davis," he said

Kuley asked, "How do you, Chief Davis, plan on overcoming the negative comments and feedback that we've been hearing this evening and in the last couple of days here in Fairfax?"

Davis responded: "By being the best, Chief of Police, you can possibly be. And that's what I intend to do, and I'm going to put in the work and demonstrate to the entire community that I am the right person to lead this great agency."

Terry Adams said that hundreds of police officers served in Prince George's County who never used excessive force during Davis' years of service. "It is difficult to sue a police officer for the performance of his or her duties... It's even harder because of qualified immunity to find a police officer liable. Mr. Davis was twice found liable for either excessive force or false imprisonment," Adams said.

Challenge for Supervisors AND a New Police Chief

BY JOHN LOVAAS

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND FOUNDER
OF RESTON FARMERS MARKET



INDEPENDENT
PROGRESSIVE

Here we go again! We have another major Fairfax County Police controversy. I had thought our new, more progressive, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors would pay closer attention to police performance and to its role in oversight of the Police Department than its predecessors had. Not so, it seems.

The BOS unanimously approved hiring Kevin Davis as Police Chief after a supposedly thorough, nationwide search process. All of Davis's prior service was within 30 miles of us, a history with multiple incidents of flagrant abuse of black citizens—two resulting in civil litigation which Davis lost in Prince George's County, another resulting in an ACLU suit in Baltimore where as Chief he locked down an entire black neighborhood for 6 days in 2017 after a white detective died, possibly from suicide!

Incredibly, Board members claim to be unaware of these disturbing misdeeds, all occurring very close to home! It seems they were not told by either the candidate, the search contractor or Deputy County Executive David Rohrer who presumably managed the search. This is hardly the due diligence one would expect from Supervisors in considering this sensitive, high profile appointment.

In fact, obliviousness by the entire Board is reminiscent of a prior Board's failure to respond for six months to the 2013 police murder of unarmed John Geer, while FCPD stonewalled the community, refusing to reveal the killer or to ex-

plain what had happened. It took the intervention of a US Senator and mounting public pressure to get the Supes to take action, belatedly forming the Ad Hoc Commission to Review Police Practices on which I served.

What or who is it that somehow prevents Fairfax County's top elected body from doing its job when it comes to supervising the 1,400-man force in blue? How is it that a supposedly nationwide search ends up picking a flawed candidate who'd served only in our back yard. Was he perhaps known to some in the FCPD?

There is a lot riding on this appointment. The troubled Police Department has major structural and policy problems. However, there are solutions within reach if obstacles to solving them are forthrightly addressed by a new Chief ...and if the BOS develops the political will to support him. Here are the critical issues:

First, this force neither resembles nor lives in the community it serves. According to the FCPD's own "Diversity Scorecard" of April 2021, Fairfax County's population is over 35 percent Asian (19 percent) and Latino (16 percent) while the force in blue is barely 13 percent (5 & 7 respectively). Blacks make up 9 percent of the residents, 8 percent of the force. But, if you go a bit deeper, looking at managerial levels, the mix is even worse. Whites make up 78 percent of the force, more at management ranks. And, most officers do not live in the County, although their pay would enable them to do so.

A starting rookie makes over \$50K; many clear \$100K with overtime.

It is a huge challenge for police neither resembling people they serve nor living near them, to develop mutual trust. There are no signs of improvement.

Turning to the framework for transformation of the force provided by a unanimous Ad Hoc Commission, we find key recommendations throughout the report either have been dropped, not been implemented, watered down or still delayed seven years after the report. (To see for yourself, go to the Ad Hoc Commission Report and the last implementation "progress report", April 2021). Pushback from the four police associations (would-be unions) and acquiescence of the former Police Chief have watered down crucial recommendations to improve transparency (see Communications section). Recommendations targeting accountability (see Use of Force and Independent [civilian] Oversight) have been crippled. And, the section dealing with civilian oversight by a new Civilian Review Panel has been reduced to a toothless farce. Look closely at the carefully targeted edits that assure no civilian is allowed behind the steel blue curtain. Police misbehavior will continue to be investigated only by fellow officers.

In sum, what's essential for the transformative reform intended by the Commission is a strong new Chief dedicated to known principles for reform and the backing of a Board of Supervisors with more effort and courage than we've seen to date. Prospects look pretty grim right now. While Fairfax civic groups and residents object and cite chapter and verse of Davis's flaws, Chairman McKay and his colleagues appear content with Davis and with the status quo. Stay tuned.

Unemployment in a Time of Crisis

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



COMMENTARY

The number of unemployed Virginians increased from 145,294 in March 2020 to 482,111 in April 2020 causing unemployment insurance claims to increase ten-fold within a month! In addition to the rising number of unemployed, Congress created several temporary programs to extend unemployment insurance benefits and expand them to many previously ineligible workers. Since those federal programs are administered by the states, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) was overwhelmed with claims. In the fall of 2020 VEC ranked lowest nationwide for timeliness in processing unemployment insurance claims that required further review. Citizens were understandably frustrated and upset with a process that has left some without benefits for many months. My office, along with that of other legislators, was deluged with e-mails and calls from those desperately seeking help. My legislative assistant has put in many extra hours helping constituents with their filings and follow up.

A review of unemployment rates through-

out the Commonwealth reveals that the rise in unemployment was statewide with areas having a high rate of unemployment going into the pandemic getting hit the hardest, but more prosperous areas got hit as well. According to data on the VEC website, the rate of unemployment for March 2021, the last period for which numbers are available, ranged from a low of 3.2 percent in Madison County, an agricultural area in the center of the state, to a high of 12.9 percent in Petersburg City, one of the poorest areas in the state. On the low end of the unemployment numbers, Falls Church City was number 2 with a rate of 3.4 percent, and Fairfax County was 39th lowest at a rate of 4.6 percent. On the high end, Richmond was 7.1 percent, and the cities in the Hampton Roads region including Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Hopewell ranged from 7.1 percent to 10.0 percent, just below Petersburg City.

The COVID-19 relief checks were very helpful in slowing the slide of the economy toward recession levels of unemployment. The additional

funding now being debated in the Congress for infrastructure and additional relief will shore up the economy further until the normal activity of the economy returns with the end of the pandemic. I will leave to economists to debate the amount of stimulus needed to restore the economy, but I can say that the federal money that has flowed into the state has prevented widespread reductions in staff and services that would have been necessary without that funding.

For those who have borne the brunt of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic I can only offer my sympathy and compassion for what you have had to endure. I continue to be impressed with the resiliency of individuals and communities in times of challenge like these. The response of the state government in this pandemic was unsatisfactory. True the bureaucracy was swamped with requests, but we should have been quicker to respond. True our existing technology was not up to the demand, but the technology that was to have been upgraded should have been done years ago. As Chairman of the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission (JLARC), I promise that the results of the study that we are undertaking of VEC will address current concerns and provide recommendations to prevent this kind of situation from arising again!

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PHOTO COURTESY OF OSCAR LAZO

(Front row, from left) are Westfield thespians Chloe Jornales, Adam Mahoney, Kayla Gadley, Kaitlyn Long, Micaela Luster and Elli Vlattas.

(Back row, from left) are Alejandro Cahoon, Anna Moritz, Alison Brown, Brian Purcell, TJ Craypoff and Matthew Krelovich.

Exploring the Connections Between Human Beings

Westfield High presents musical, “The Theory of Relativity.”

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Examining how people are linked through life’s shared experiences, Westfield High presents the musical, “The Theory of Relativity. It’ll be performed outdoors at the school, and also livestreamed, Friday-Saturday, May 21-22, at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$15, in person, and \$10 livestreamed. Both are available at www.westfieldtheatre.com. The cast and crew of 32 had to adapt to performing outside, with masks, but were delighted to be acting together again.

“They’re working hard and are excited to be able to react to an actual person, instead of a camera,” said Director Enza Giannone-Hosig. “We have a wonderful music director, Matt Arnett, and the students learned their music and choreography quickly. They’re so talented and willing to step outside their comfort zones.”

She said audiences will enjoy this show about “how individuals can connect in this fast-paced world. And after months of being away from people, they can experience live theater. We’ve produced shows, all year, and proved nothing can stop us from doing what we love most.”

THIS SHOW has some dialogue, but is mainly songs, plus choreography by senior Ashley Andre. It follows different characters and their perspectives on life, with the ensemble bringing their stories and relation-

ships all together. The actors portray college students on campus.

Senior Alison Brown plays Mira, a nursing major. “She’s hardworking and feels pressured to do well,” said Brown. “But she’s friendly and happy and doesn’t let anything bring her down. It’s fun playing a complex person exploring why she’s so positive in her outlook on life, despite the rough patches she’s been through.”

“Her mom made her promise to remain positive and remember that her life’s a miracle – and no matter what happens – she should stay hopeful and hardworking,” explained Brown. “Her mom said she shouldn’t waste a single day because, before she knows it, they’ll all fade away. Mira’s song, ‘Promise Me This,’ goes through her whole life. And although it’s sad, it ends on an uplifting note, telling people every day’s a blessing, so make the most of it.”

Brown said audiences will learn the importance of “having empathy for everyone in every situation. And the show’s deeper meanings can lead people to re-examine their own lives.”

Portraying student Catherine is junior Chloe Jornales. “She’s OCD and likes everything in order,” said Jornales. “She’s an organizer and a perfectionist with high expectations of herself and others. When her boyfriend bakes her a cake, she’s concerned he’s moving too fast, because she likes being in control. Her immigrant family wants her to graduate college and have a high-paying career, and she wonders what’ll happen if she doesn’t exceed or meet their expectations – or, worse, fail altogether.”

SEE WESTFIELD, PAGE 8

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Employment

The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc. has a position open for a volunteer for our non-profit thrift shop in downtown Herndon VA. A brief description of the job is as follows: The Volunteer Coordinator ensures that the interests of volunteers are served and that the volunteer force remains well staffed. The Volunteer Coordinator will work to actively recruit volunteers for The Closet Thrift Shop. The candidate must be skilled at using various marketing tools, including electronic databases, social media, e-mail, written communications of various types, and outreach events. The candidate must be detail-oriented and organized, requiring work on several projects at once. The Volunteer Coordinator must be outgoing and communicate effectively with a variety of people. The full job announcement is available on-line at our website: <http://theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/job-openings/> Interested applicants should email a resume and cover letter to: Mr. Gene Wiley, President The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc. gwiley106@gmail.com

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

Petition: Recall Davis

FROM PAGE 3

"I am disappointed in the decision of the Board...So, when you are a 21-year-old, you get a badge. You get a gun; you swear to protect and defend the Constitution of your locality, as well as the United States, and you violate that not once but twice there can be personal redemption. Professional redemption cannot be part of that. Not today."

In one of his final statements, Davis said he chooses not to get into public battles about 1993 and 1999 because "the six most important words in the English language are, 'I admit; I made a mistake.'"

"I have learned. I've grown, and I've matured. And I've served elsewhere with distinction," he said.

Chief Davis called his first News Conference the next day, May 7. He retold his background story he shared the night before.

On Sunday, May 9, Diane Burkley Alejandro, ACLU People Power Fairfax reflected on the Public Input Session. "Virtually every-

one who spoke voiced strong opposition to the process used to select Chief Davis and questioned his past misconduct, including the six-day lockdown of a Black Baltimore neighborhood in 2017, which resulted in an ACLU lawsuit. This wasn't a conversation with the community; we were simply allowed to vent. Many specific questions were asked about what happened, but we received no answers at all from Chair McKay and nonresponsive ones from Chief Davis. He now says what's past is past, it is time to move on. We will work with him on police reform and intend to hold him to his progressive words. But this process has shaken community trust in Fairfax, including the Board and the Chief. Unanswered questions and a trust deficit is not a good way to start," she said.

Kelly Hebron Chair, Fairfax Democratic Black Caucus started a petition to Chair, Board of Supervisor Jeff McKay and Rodney Lusk Lee District Supervisor and Penny Gross Mason District Supervisor to recall Kevin Davis as Fairfax County Police Chief. Petition · Recall Kevin Davis as Fairfax County Police Chief · Change.org.

Westfield High Presents Musical

FROM PAGE 5

Jornales connects with Caherine's high expectations. "I first thought she was over the top; but playing her led me to be more chill and accept that my best is good enough," she said. "I learned making mistakes isn't failing; they actually put you on the path to success."

Singing "Great Expectations," Jornales explains that Catherine's parents had different plans for her than she did. So, she said, "I tell both her story and mine, so anyone in the audience feeling that way – following a path they can't reach – will know they're not alone."

"This show relates to everyone, in a way – whether it's expectations, relationships or personal problems," she continued. "It's upbeat, and audiences will also like its contemporary music and uplifting message."

Sophomore Kayla Gadley plays Amy, an art major. "She's stressed about dating a new person and tells how different relationships throughout her life have affected her," said Gadley. "Amy's sweet and cares about others. She's kind of lost, but she's trying to figure out how to move forward with her dating life and take a risk – even though some past dates haven't worked out."

Enjoying her role, Gadley said, "It's been work, getting back into the groove of memorizing lines and interacting with other cast members. We'd been in class online, but this was our first time with each other in person."

HER FAVORITE SONG is "Relativity," a large, group number at the show's start. "We're all singing together," said Gadley. "And it's powerful because it sets the stage for the story to unfold." As for the play, she said, "Seeing us all together is a dynamic that people have missed. And

they'll be able to see themselves in this story about love, connections and perseverance."

Portraying Julie, a recently engaged college student, is junior Elli Vlattas. "She has a bunch of cats and doesn't know her fiancé's allergic," said Vlattas. "She thinks he's just super sensitive. Julie's peppy, always looks on the bright side and puts others, and her cats, before herself. She's also a little shy and doesn't interact with many people."

Vlattas loves playing her because "She's funny and similar to me, and I like having lots of energy onstage. In the number, 'Julie's Song,' I hint at the song's real subject, but don't reveal it until the end. The piano follows my voice, and I can control the tempo – which is freeing. The show's well-rounded, with different subjects ranging from sad to funny. And audiences will feel like the actors are real college students."

Junior Anna Moritz plays biology major Sara. "She's figuring out her friendships and what she wants to do with her life," explained Moritz. "She's nerdy, is fascinated with horses and has a great sense of humor, but others can bring out her sarcasm. It's cool having a role with lots of comedic elements and learning comedic timing. And it's nice working with Micaela [Luster] who plays Sara's friend Jenny."

Their duet, "The End of the Line," chronicles their entire friendship. "In it, Sara transforms from nerd to popular girl, so it's interesting portraying that dynamic with Micaela, who also changes completely," said Moritz. "Overall, audiences will enjoy the connectivity between all the characters. And at the end, they'll see how the monologues and songs are related, too. And that's the point – that humans are connected with each other, even if they don't realize it."

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A False Sense of Security



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As previously referred to in a recent column, even though I am hardly cancer-free; nonetheless, I am cancer interruptus for the next four weeks. That means I have no cancer-related activities: no lab work, no scans, no infusions, no injections, no appointments, no video visits, no interaction whatsoever. Other than taking my daily thyroid cancer pill (the side effects of which are marginal at worst), with which I ingest another 50-plus pills (supplements and so forth), I am, too quote my late father, "unencumbered" by my less-than-ideal circumstances. I wouldn't say I'm actually on vacation, but I'm certainly willing to say, there's a definite break in the action. It's not exactly a "staycation," nevertheless, it is a positive occasion, and one with which I can live.

Not that being diagnosed with "terminal" (originally) cancer and/or still undergoing active treatment is ever fun; tolerable is as grandiose a description as I'll accept. However, four weeks without any involvement with my oncologist and endocrinologist or with any health care-related staff, puts a real bounce in my step; my neuropathy notwithstanding. Though I have difficulty walking and especially running, I am, for the next four weeks anyway, on easy street, figuratively speaking. The psychological wear and tear us cancer patients (especially the ones characterized as "terminal") endure is ever present and any excuse/opportunity to let one's mind wander to a place other than your presumptive demise, is a mental trip very much worth taking.

Oddly enough, a month of not having anything to do with my cancer team/healthcare facility is hardly the norm. Usually, there's more than enough cancer-related activities to keep me preoccupied. In its own unique way, the nothingness is kind of challenging. I keep looking over my shoulder, almost literally, as the great Satchel Page once said ("to see if anybody's gaining on me"), and flipping the pages on my appointment book to see if I've whiffed somehow on some of my usual and customary obligations. I mean: it is so rare to be so disconnected when you've been diagnosed with a "terminal" disease. As you might imagine, cancer treatment is very hands-on. Not much is left to chance. Moreover, cancer is very unpredictable and insidious. Often it is in control, despite the oncologist's best effort. To be thrown into this cancer-centric world after mostly standing still, healthwise, for 54 and a half years, is a fate not worse than death, but one, depending on the type of cancer you have, which could very well lead to a premature death.

After decades of neglect, the last 15 or so years has seen a huge increase in funding for lung cancer research which in turn has led to more than a dozen new drugs - and an entire new class of drugs: immunotherapy, for the treatment of lung cancer. The result has been increased survivability and quality of life for those of us so diagnosed. And very directly, I have been the beneficiary of some of these drugs: avastin, alimta and tarceva having been my life extenders. Where despair once dominated the initial prognosis, now there is hope. It's not so much a cure as it is a way to make cancer a chronic disease, one which requires a lifetime of monitoring, like diabetes, as an example; but it's potentially for a lifetime, not for a life with very little time.

At this immediate juncture, I am being treated, but still living my life - outside, and rarely ever in a medical facility. Not having to endure the ongoing exposure and reminder that I have cancer and a shortened life expectancy to boot, enables me not only to breathe easier, but also allows me to take an occasional deep breath as well. A deep breath which doesn't lead to a coughing fit, a fit which, for us lung cancer patients is never a good sign.

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

Mother's Day 2021, With Love

Motherhood is a messy, complex state of being.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Motherhood comes in all shapes and sizes, not designated by birth or raising another human. It is a state of being, constantly reimagining itself from depths of selfless caring and nurturing. Motherhood knows when to expand and when to trust in its gift of love and step aside.

Kate Janich, the co-founder of Rowan Tree located on the Herndon- Reston boundary, wrote "A Thank You to Moms": "Motherhood is messy, it's complex, it challenges us to define ourselves -- constantly. Some of us have lost a mother. Some of us have lost a child. Some of us didn't have the ideal mom, but that love is still there -- or not. Many women dream of having children, but the universe has a different plan. Some women made a choice to not have children."

"Some mothers aren't women. Some mothers aren't biological or legally mothers but have become a stand-in and a rock for other human beings."

The Connection asked not the mothers but those under their wings what they loved best about their moms.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



(From left) Kenci Santamaria of Herndon, her daughter, Jaritza Santamaria, 9, and son, Jefferson Jose, 6, enjoy Mother's Day on the Town Square in front of the Old Town Hall in Herndon. Jaritza Santamaria, 9 - Mom plays with me and takes me to the mall.

JEFFERSON JOSE, 6 - I LIKE MOM'S EGGS.



(From left) Teresa Vo, mother of Alicia Vo, 15, and daughter-in-law of Suong Vo of Vienna whose adult son, Bao, Teresa's husband, is formerly of Reston, Alicia, and Suong spend Mother's Day at Lake Anne Village Center in Reston. Alicia Vo, 15 - My mom has given me so much advice in my life. Mom is loving, caring, and helps me to be the best I can be in everything I do. Teresa Vo- I enjoy hearing stories from my mother-in-law, Suong Vo. Suong taught me a lot about how resilient she's been over the years. Suong taught me about history and culture, how it relates to life, and how she brought it from Vietnam to the United States.



Rodrigo Torres Sharp, 6, of Great Falls, and his mother, Zulay Torres Sharp, enjoy Mother's Day at the Great Falls Grange Playground. Rodrigo - What I would miss the most is all the kindness because my mom gives me hugs and kisses and presents. I give her lots of kisses and hugs. I like that my mom makes me her salmon rice with lime and ketchup. I chose daisies for my mom yesterday.



(From left) Playing children, Alex Lesnik and McKenzy Hopkins face off against their treasure-hunt competitors, Lucy Sherrier and Tristan Huber.

New Dates for Chantilly High's Children's Show

Offering both virtual and in-person shows, Chantilly High is presenting the children's show, "Judy Moody & Stink: The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt." Tickets are \$8 at www.chantillyhsdrama.com, as is the link to the online version.

It was originally scheduled to be performed May 7-8, but had to be postponed until later. The new show dates are as follows:

Pre-recorded shows will be streamed Friday, May 21, at 5 p.m., and Sunday, May 23, at 5 p.m. In-person shows will be Friday, May 21, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, May 23, at 2 p.m. The auditorium will be 30-percent capacity, and actors, crew and the audience will wear masks.

The story's about third-grader Judy Moody and her younger brother, Stink, whose moms take them on vacation to an island where they find mysteries, surprises and adventure. There's a cast and crew of 35, and the actors will wear see-through masks so the audience can see their expressions.

Sophomore Alex Lesnik, who plays Stink, said both children and adults will enjoy the show's jokes and "out-there" costumes. "People who know this book series will want to see how we do it," she said. "And for kids unfamiliar with it, it'll be something new and fun."

— BONNIE HOBBS

AREA ROUNDUPS

Man Fatally Shot in Chantilly Parking Lot

Detectives from Major Crimes Bureau continue to investigate the fatal shooting that occurred Friday morning, May 7, in the 4300 block of Chantilly Shopping Center Drive. Officers responded for the report of a man lying in the parking lot around 4:41 a.m. Officers found Brian Constanza-Campos, 26, of Herndon, suffering from apparent gunshot wounds to his upper body. Rescue personnel pronounced him deceased at the scene.

Detectives continue to piece together evidence as they work to determine what led to this shooting. Several cartridge cases were discovered at the scene and other evidence is being processed. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the manner and cause of death - police say.

Anyone who may have witnessed the shooting or may have seen someone leave the scene is asked to call Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), by text - Type "FCCS" plus tip to 847411, and by web - Click [HERE](#). Download our Mobile tip411 App "Fairfax Co Crime Solvers". Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1,000 dollars if their information leads to an arrest.

Victim specialists from Major Crimes Bureau's Victim Services Division have been assigned to ensure that the victim's family is receiving appropriate resources and assistance.

This is being investigated as the 7th homicide year to date in Fairfax County.