

Great Falls CONNECTION

SENIOR LIVING
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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Turner Farm Foundation, led by resident curator Sarah Kirk who resides at the Turner Farmhouse located at 10609 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, received the green light of approval from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for a Special Exception. The Foundation will be able to move forward in the process to provide meeting space for groups and individuals for programming related to grief and bereavement support.

Special Exception for Bereavement Meeting Space Approved

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Delta Variant Has Room to Run Rampant

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Brightview Explores Plan For Leesburg Pike Facility

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NEWS



BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

(From left) The Turner Farm garage is located behind the main farmhouse. It will be used as a public benefit association facility providing meeting space for grief and bereavement programs.

Special Exception For Bereavement Meeting Space Approved

**Daytime and overnight retreats
on a portion of Turner Farm Park.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Following a public hearing on the matter, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved on July 27 Special Exception SE 2020-DR022 (Turner Farmhouse Foundation) (Dranesville District)] to permit applicant Turner Farmhouse Foundation to operate a public benefit association facility on a 4.95-acre of the Turner Farm Park property and modify a front yard setback of the existing house. Sarah Kirk is president of Turner Farmhouse Foundation.

In her staff presentation on the special exception, Tracey Strunk, Zoning Evaluation Division, Department of Planning and Development

said Fairfax County Park Authority owns the property for its Resident Curator Program. It is designed to preserve and rehabilitate underutilized publicly-owned historic properties through long-term lease agreements with private entities or persons. Applicant Turner Farm Foundation leases the property. The applicant intends to provide meeting space for groups and individuals for programming related to grief and bereavement support and operate primarily out of the existing garage structure. Access to the property would be off Georgetown Pike.

“These would be daytime events during the week with overnight retreats on some weekends,” Strunk said. There would not be any

SEE EXCEPTION, PAGE 5

Waivers Requested

Waiver of the transitional screening and barrier requirements along the northern lot line.



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approve Special Exception for Turner Farmhouse Foundation.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Food trucks, raffles, and games make getting the COVID vaccine fun and allows people not to travel distances or find child/elderly care.

RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE COVID-19 VACCINE DOSE*

757,376

Count

76.1% of people 18 years and older

64.0% of all Fairfax Health District residents

* People vaccinated with one dose of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single dose vaccine.

FULLY VACCINATED**

686,784

Count

69.5% of people 18 years and older

58.0% of all Fairfax Health District residents

** People vaccinated with two doses of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single dose vaccine.

All vaccination data are from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) - Virginia Immunization Information System. Numbers differ from the VDH vaccination dashboard, which reports data separately for Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

As of Aug. 1, 2021. 64 percent of All Fairfax Health Districts residents received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and 58 percent of all Fairfax Health District residents are fully vaccinated.

Delta Variant Has Room to Run Rampant

Removing invisible vaccine barriers for communities in Fairfax County.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Jump on a moon bounce, grab an empanada from a food truck and get a Covid vaccine. That's right. The Fairfax County community is scrambling on multiple fronts in a war against Covid's Delta variant as the County recorded 124 new Covid cases Sunday, Aug. 1. The County is doing whatever it takes to increase the number of vaccinated to reach the gold medal of herd immunity. Fairfax Health District reported on Aug. 1, 58 percent of all Fairfax County Health District residents were fully vaccinated; 64 percent received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Some local agencies are easing the way for people to receive on-site vaccinations at places like their apartment complexes and holding vaccine and family fun days. Some individuals are masking up indoors to protect others and themselves. New data released on July 30 in the UVA COVID-19 Model provided by the University of Virginia Biocomplexity Institute and released by the Virginia Department of Health and the CDC's data made public the same day on the spread of the Delta variant are causing concern.

According to the UVA model, the key take-aways are that the Delta variant poses a "significant public health concern" based on the current course of the pandemic. The Delta variant is dominant in Virginia, seeing case growth with 10 of 35 Health Districts experiencing surges. One reason for the surge is

that the Delta variant has room to run primarily among unvaccinated people. Vaccination rates are still below herd immunity levels, and many Virginians are returning to normal.

ON FRIDAY, the CDC released evidence that the Delta variant was easily contagious and those vaccinated less protected than they may think. Vaccinated people infected with the Delta variant carry similar viral loads in their noses and throats as the unvaccinated. While they can spread the disease, they are rarely hospitalized.

Delta is here, though, in Fairfax County. The UVA model reports over 70 percent of all new COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth as the Delta variant and predicts this figure will reach 90 percent by mid-August.

The Delta variant is considerably more transmissible and causes more severe cases than prior variants. Studies suggest that it may be nearly "twice as likely to cause illness requiring hospitalization compared to earlier variants...Delta is also more likely to cause reinfections in those who have previously had COVID-19 and recovered," according to the UVA COVID-19 Model Weekly update.

Vaccines remain the best defense against the Delta variant to reduce the risk of infection and severe disease. While the Delta variant is "more capable of causing breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated individuals than prior strains... confidence in the efficacy of these vaccines remains high," according to the UVA model. People who do get infected are less likely to experience severe illness requiring hospitalization. "The vaccinated individual may feel few or no symptoms of illness, but still be infectious to others," according to the UVA model.

On July 27, the CDC issued guidance if a person is fully vaccinated, "to reduce the risk of being infected with the Delta variant

and possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission." According to the CDC, new data shows that unlike other Covid variants, people vaccinated and infected with the Delta variant can still get high viral loads and could spread the virus.

"Unlike the Alpha variant that we had back in May, where we didn't believe that

if you were vaccinated, you could transmit further, this is different now with a Delta variant," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said.

Jessica Gutierrez-Lugo is a Community Organizer with Opportunity Neighborhoods. On Saturday, July 31, Gutierrez-Lugo helped manage a Healthy Family Fun Day with a
SEE BARRIERS, PAGE 6

Fairfax County Holds County-wide Vaccine Equity Clinics

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Bringing the COVID-19 vaccine to the people rather than relying on them to find their way to a site is one option to get people vaccinated and slow the surging Delta variant.

In May 2021, the Fairfax County Health Department began to review vaccination data across the county regularly. "Using land parcel population estimates and vaccination data, our epidemiologists have identified some neighborhoods that are under-vaccinated," said Sharon D. Arndt, Director & ALOFR COVID19 Response High Risk Task Force Leader Community Health Development Division Fairfax County Health Department.

"Working with community partners and residential management companies, we have established pop-up clinics in many of these neighborhoods to offer the vaccine and to improve vaccination rates," Arndt said.

"We have recently begun to deploy vaccine navigation teams to neighbor-

hoods to help connect residents to nearby vaccine appointments that can be found on staywellnova.com," she added.

According to Arndt, their Vaccine Equity Clinics began in early February. They held clinics in FCPS schools, community centers, board offices, libraries, retail space, homeless shelters, houses of worship, and residential management companies.

"We work with different anchor vaccinators to deliver the vaccine - such as Safeway, Neighborhood Health FQHC [Federal Qualified Health Center], Mason and Partners Clinic, Healthworks FQHC [Federal Qualified Health Center], and the Health Department's own field vaccination team," said Arndt.

Specific for the in-the residential-neighborhood vaccine events, Arndt said they held neighborhood clinics in the Mt. Vernon area at the Audubon, Creekside, and Lafayette communities; Lincolnian area at Lerner Towers; Springfield area with Springfield Neighborhood Resource Center; Herndon area at Berkdale Apartments; and Chantilly area at Meadows of Chantilly.

OPINION

TJ Parents Welcome Most Diverse TJ Class in History

... and denounce the anti-CRT division.

We are parents of students and graduates of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ), and are greatly concerned about recent events and growing misinformation surrounding the changes to the admissions process and anti-racism discussions at the prestigious school we love and respect.

We, TJ parents, have a wide variety of opinions about the particulars of the TJ admissions policy and procedures; there are likely as many opinions on the “ideal” admissions policy for TJ as there are parents, students, and alumni, but we believe in working together, coming to a compromise, and finding resolution.

Most importantly, while some members of the community have spoken loudly and negatively, we here all agree that the members of the newly announced incoming Class of 2025 fully earned their acceptances to the school, and we look forward to welcoming them all into our community. Although some of us did not agree with how

the admissions changes were handled, we are pleased that this new class is the most diverse class in TJ history, with a majority of Asian American students and a substantial increase in the number of historically underrepresented minorities.

This is about TJ maintaining academic excellence while being more open and inclusive, promoting social emotional learning, and preparing our students for 21st century skills like teamwork and critical thinking. It’s also about including students from low-income families, which will represent 25 percent of the incoming class, as opposed to the usual 2 percent. We wholeheartedly believe that this increased diversity will enrich our school community even more and we welcome the Class of 2025 with open arms.

We also feel strongly that many of the actions and words of members of the “Coalition for TJ” have inflamed, distorted, and confused the issues, often alienating the community. The Coalition has for months now waged a divisive, false, and negative campaign, insisting that any changes are “anti-merit,” “racist,” and specifically designed to “purge Asians,” as one of its most outspoken members declared in a recent Washington Post Op-Ed.

The Coalition leaders’ many appearances in numerous me-

dia outlets have made them the public face of TJ parents—but they absolutely do not represent our community. They have used these platforms to make constant calls for the resignation or firing of the school’s principal and FCPS superintendent, and for the recall of members of the School Board. This spring, the Coalition became synonymous with the campaign against so-called “critical race theory,” and its proponents have even targeted our school’s PTSA and want it to be fully engaged in the “fight against CRT.” False and cruel attacks were launched against the new PTSA president — who notably was the first Chinese-American president of the TJ PTSA — because she wanted the PTSA to focus on its usual student-centered and welcoming activities for students, parents, teachers, and staff — regardless of anyone’s political views — rather than on CRT and admissions changes. Who would have imagined that that would become controversial? These toxic attacks finally led her to resign on July 28.

Why is this fight at TJ relevant to the rest of Fairfax County and perhaps the rest of our region? Because TJ is the proverbial canary in the coal mine. The demonization and manipulative weaponizing of “CRT” by Coalition leaders, conveyed in a manner which does not promote unity, and combined

with their bullying and censoring tactics, are clearly attempts to silence alternative views and crush efforts to promote diversity and belonging. This in turn threatens to tear our school community apart, which is the complete opposite mission of a school PTSA. That same toxic playbook is already happening in Loudoun County, with School Board meetings so contentious police have had to be called in. The attempted hijacking and perversion of an institution that historically has enabled volunteer parents of all political stripes to work together in support of our students and teachers — the PTSA — needs to be contested and reversed. We hope more parents in Northern Virginia will come to recognize and push back on the divisive tactics we are experiencing at TJ, because only together can we demand civility, and ensure the safe, tolerant, inclusive, and welcoming schools all our students deserve.

Brian Anderson, Caiyi Li, Justine Byun, Natalie Lorenz Anderson, Kate Carey, Elaine Maag, Steve Chang, Chaya Thyagaraja Merrill, Dana Cibulski, Sujatha Narayan, Julie Cox, Parvathi Rachakonda, Penny Dunlop, Yvette Soliz Rivers, Susan Essman, Dorian Rivers, Michelle Gilles, Chris Rodriguez, Brian Heller, Sanjita Sethi, Stacey Heller, Mae Ybanez-Uy, Khurram Khan and Yan Yuan.

COVID Relief

BY KENNETH R. “KENN” PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

The General Assembly is meeting this week and possibly a few days next week to appropriate the federal COVID-Relief fund made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). It is somewhat ironic that these funds are being appropriated at the same time there is a surge in infections mainly from the Delta variant and almost totally among eligible persons who have refused to be vaccinated.

ARPA made \$9.0 billion in federal funds available to Virginia and similar amounts to other states based on the guidelines that accompanied the monies. Although these are federal monies they must be appropriated by the General



Plum

Assembly in a budget bill passed by a majority in both houses and signed by the governor. HB7001 as the budget bill is designated is available for review at lis.virginia.gov. You should know in advance that it is some heavy going that might be best as bedside reading.

Included in ARPA are monies for State and Local Fiscal Relief Funds (SLFR) that total \$4.3 billion for Virginia. Other federal funds that are provided for specific programs include Child Care Development, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants and federal unemployment benefits. There are no state general funds that are included in this budget bill as the General Assembly will meet again in five months at its regular session when surplus monies from state revenues will be appropriated. The budget bill is a consensus document worked on over many weeks among legislators and staff

and executive branch staff and is not likely to be amended.

Highlights of the budget bill, many of which have already been announced by the governor, include \$716 billion for broadband expansion. The pandemic demonstrated conclusively that broadband is essential to everyone in commerce and in education when children have to learn at home. Schools will receive \$250 million for ventilation improvements that became obvious during the pandemic.

Public health initiatives total \$120 million, and programs of public safety to reduce community violence will receive \$114.5 million. Mental health and substance abuse programs are proposed to receive \$238 million. The unemployment compensation program will be replenished with \$862 million eliminating the need to raise unemployment fund tax rates among employers. An additional \$73.6 is being provided to the Virginia Employment Commission to update their technology and increase their staff size as major

deficiencies were identified and citizens were poorly served during the pandemic.

Food access programs will receive \$25.6 million to ensure that Virginians do not go hungry during these challenging times. Small businesses including the tourism industry will be able to apply for relief from a fund totaling \$76.5 million. New data from the U.S. Treasury shows that Virginia leads all other states on the distribution of rent relief monies, and that program will continue.

While these new monies from the federal government will provide relief to many citizens and to many programs that respond to community needs, the ultimate in COVID relief rests with the broader community. I do not expect that the legislature will mandate vaccinations or the wearing of masks. Both, however, may be the best way to realize relief from the ravages of pandemic. Let’s work in our community to ensure that all know the importance of getting vaccinated and wearing masks in crowds.

Great Falls
CONNECTION

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Special Exception Approved

FROM PAGE 2

changes to the existing farmhouse or vegetation along Georgetown Pike, nor would additional screening be necessary alongside the Pike.

The Retreat Center would operate Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. through 5 p.m., with weekend events running from Friday at 3 p.m. through Sunday at 5 p.m. The applicant proposed new exterior stairs and a ramp to the garage to improve accessibility. Additionally, a new deck and elevator were shown on the SE Plat along the rear elevation of the garage, along with upgrades to the septic system. The maximum number of guests for Retreat Events would be ten. A caretaker and a maximum of two additional staff members would be permitted during a Retreat Event.

DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING, Kirk said that they had a tragedy in their family eight years ago. "Our daughter Becky Love died by suicide, and death became really real to my family and me...But I realized just how difficult a process that can be." Kirk said they found a lack of facilities to help people in Northern Virginia and the Great Falls area.

Jennifer Falcone spoke on behalf of the Great Falls Citizens Association, in her capacity as chair of the Land Use and Zoning Committee. "We have closely monitored the progress of this special exception application and have actively engaged with the community, the neighbors who surround the Turner Park Farm to ensure their expressed concerns related to the nature of the retreat program could be examined, and its objectives and terms of service fulfilled."

Falcone acknowledged that the initial application provoked several concerns among neighbors. Ten listening sessions, community workshops, and discussions led the focus back to the program's original intent. That was to provide "grief and bereavement support due to the death of a parent, sibling or primary caregiver, family member, spouse or child, or significant person."

Consequently, GFCA believed, Falcone said that there was a "balancing of interests." The applicant volunteered to publish a separate calendar identifying Resident Curator events and update social media to the retreat uses. Lighting concerns associated with the retreat house abated; lights would not interfere with the adjacent Observatory Park.

Falcone said the GFCA wished to stress

the importance of maintaining community oversight, engagement, support, as well as "oversight by the appropriate Fairfax County organizations to ensure the initial and continued success of the Resident Curatorship and the proposed Retreat House."

"GFCA recognizes the challenges in bringing a program like this into fruition and that to be successful, it requires the support of the community. We believe that this program will fulfill an important need in offering support to a target group who experienced loss by providing services and a welcoming environment," Falcone said.

Tom Hixon is President of the Foxvale Farm Homeowners' Association, a community at the southwest corner of Georgetown Pike and Springvale Road in Great Falls. Hixon said he was happy to see mental health professionals help develop the programs and check in to see how they were doing. There had been a question of liability since the Park Authority owned the property. He was glad the program would be run in such a way as to minimize problems.

SUPERVISOR John Foust (D-Dranesville) lauded Kirk for her vision of a facility to help people in the grieving process, and for community members helping to work out the details. "Everyone was supportive. It was just one of the nicest things that I've been associated with that we've done in the Dranesville District since I've been on the board," Foust said.



Jennifer Falcone,
Chair Land Use
and Zoning,
Great Falls Citizens Association



Tom Hixon
President of the
Foxvale Farm
Homeowners'
Association



Tracey Strunk,
Zoning Evaluation
Division,
Department of
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Site area fronting Georgetown Pike.

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Scooters Now Another Mode of Transportation in Fairfax County

County okays 600 of these “shared mobility devices.”

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

There are a couple of localities in Northern Virginia where scooters are running rampant, and soon Fairfax County will be included in that unofficial club. Recently 600 e-scooters are now approved to operate in Fairfax County and will soon hit local pavement. Like bicycles, e-scooters can be used on a highway, sidewalk, shared-use path, roadway, or crosswalk, but cannot operate above 10 mph, the county said.

Scooters actually fall under an ordinance regulating shared mobility devices, to include motorized scooters, that was approved in 2019 and went into effect Jan. 1, 2020. Operators are allowed an initial maximum fleet of 300 devices per operator permit that can be increased to 600 devices per operator based on usage, so the 600 in this first program are divided between two companies, Link and BIRD.

Scooters are a common site in Arlington, the City of Alexandria, and on George Mason University campus, and scooter parking in these locations has become somewhat of an issue. The rules seem to be bending in many cases in these locations. In Fairfax County, once riders reach their destination, they should leave the device parked in an area that does not impede normal car or foot traffic. If an e-scooter is parked in an inappropriate place or left on private property, it falls upon the random resident to contact the device operator listed on the e-scooter and the operator must remove it.

Some residents chimed in on social media about this when the county announced it. “Most riders just abandon scooters on sidewalks or park trails... So annoying...,” Facebook user slavagamol posted. “Do you have to take a safety and awareness test to rent these?” asked suzrejo.

“City of Fairfax has scooters left all over the sidewalks and a lack of safety toward pedestrians,” they said.

Fairfax County staff will create a process for complaints about e-scooters and SMDs related to improper use or abandonment. Staff will coordinate implementation of the complaint process with bordering jurisdictions and present a summary in the first year of SMDs in early 2021.

Fairfax County staff will also in-



A scooter spot on campus at George Mason University.



At GMU, there is a list of rules but they seemed mostly focused on where to ride and park the scooters. No scooter etiquette on this list.



GMU alumna Thomas Lippincott likes the idea of scooters on campus.

take complaints about e-scooters and SMDs related to improper use or abandonment. In order to report any issues related to scooters and other shared devices, emails can be sent to consumer@fairfax-county.gov.

Scooter Mania

Scooters started out as basically a skateboard with a handlebar, but now it's moved into the electronic, high tech mode of transportation that does take some balance, skill and a set of nerves. A helmet is recommended when riding a scooter, but it's only a recommendation. The helmets may seem like a no-brainer but “Fairfax County does not have the authority to regulate helmets although many companies do that voluntarily,” they state on the website.

Bird is an international scooter company that claims the “Bird 3” is “the world’s most eco-conscious scooter,” but on the website, it takes a lot of digging to find out the details, like how to pay for it? An app and a credit card, of course.

The Washington Area Bicyclists Association has even chimed in, supporting this mode of transportation, saying “scooters provide a low-emission, affordable and on-demand travel option and an alternative to private or shared cars.” They also state that users “must not use any cellular telephone, text messaging device, portable music player, or other device that may distract You from operating the Vehicle safely.”

According to the Bird rules, riders must be at least 18, physically fit to ride it, assume all risks for injuries, and obey all helmet laws. At

GMU, their rules are posted at several scooter parking spots around campus, but any helmet rules are not stated on the posted sign.

Payment to use a Bird scooter is through “credit card, debit card, or another agreed payment method,” which limits the use to only card holders. This could limit county scooters to the upper end of the economically advantaged too.

Over at Link, it's much of the same although Link scooters go up to 15 miles per hour, and the rule in Fairfax County is 10 miles per hour.

According to Rebecca L. Makely, Consumer Services Division Director at Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services “permittees are encouraged to provide a cash-based or non-smartphone mechanism to access Shared Mobility Devices,” although it is not clear if Link or Bird have other payment methods.

For any issues related to scooters and other shared devices email consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Masks are the norm.

Removing Vaccination Barriers

FROM PAGE 3

moon bounce, games, food trucks, and raffles at the Berkdale Apartments in the Town of Herndon. However, the event's purpose was an enticement, an intentional outreach to the community enabling adults and children 12 years and older with parental permission to get vaccinated. No barriers, no travel, no child care needed.

“We are providing the Pfizer vaccine. This is a collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, Fairfax County Health Department, and Health Works for Northern Virginia,” Gutierrez-Lugo said. “In this area of Herndon, the numbers for adults to be vaccinated are very low. So, we are trying a more intentional outreach in these communities.”

According to Gutierrez-Lugo, what they did before didn't work, registering people to send them to sites on a particular day and time. Many of the people in this part of town worked two jobs while balancing childcare, eldercare, food-sourcing, and life. If something happened, that became their priority, not the vaccine.

“It's just not our culture. We are in survival mode,” Gutierrez-Lugo said.

In her role with Opportunity Neighborhood, Gutierrez-Lugo recalled that she had asked people if they were vaccinated in June. For most, the answer was no, but they were thinking about it. “I asked them if the vaccine was available to them at their apartment complex would they get it, their answer changed to yes,” Gutierrez-Lugo said. “That's when we decided something had to change... This is what we have to do so that we can get out of this pandemic.”

GUTIERREZ-LUGO said that the day before, a twelve-year-old agreed to get the vaccine. On Saturday, she stood in line, without her mother, paper in

hand, excited to get immunized because she was going to middle school. However, when told she needed her mother there for permission, she felt overwhelmed and ran back to Gutierrez-Lugo, saying, “It's too much. I can't do it. Mom needs to be with Grandma.” Gutierrez-Lugo arranged for one of the Opportunity Neighborhood ambassadors to stay with the grandmother. The mother arrived, and the young girl received her vaccination.

“It's barriers like that for our people, even little barriers. It's just overwhelming, and she's twelve. Maybe for you, maybe for me, we can overcome the barriers. But not for these people who have been through trauma more than once in their lives, and they are survivors. Little things like that, it's just overwhelming,” Gutierrez-Lopez said. “We have to carry these communities until they are self-sufficient until they are empowered. Just a little push, that's all they need.”

On the day after the event, Gutierrez-Lopez said, “Only 42 people vaccinated. We ran out of vaccines, sadly. At least 20 people didn't get the vaccine; they were referred to CVS.”

Town of Herndon Vice Mayor Cesar del Aguila stopped by the Berkdale Apartments. According to del Aguila, the event's intentional outreach to a community primarily under-served and struggling appeared a success. “Vaccinations are critical, and this population is at greater risk and therefore in much need of these services. Schools open in three weeks, and we must vaccinate as many residents as possible,” del Aguila said. “We need to bridge the cultural, economic, and income divide in our town,” he said.

A little over a mile in the sought-after historic district of the Town of Herndon, vehicles lined up throughout the morning, waiting for COVID-19 testing.

By MERCEA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

SENIOR LIVING



PHOTO CREDIT: E. DAVID LURIA

Encore Sentimental Journey Singers performed a concert in Fairfax, Virginia. The Sentimental Journey Singers program is a chorus for those who have been diagnosed with early or beginning moderate Alzheimer's and other memory impairments.

Music for Singers Alzheimer's Disease

New choral program gives those with Alzheimer's and other memory impairments the gift of music.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Peter Midgley and his wife went on their first date, they discovered their mutual love of music. In fact, they were both members of the same choir. When the couple married and had children, melody-making became a major part of the family's everyday life. Though Midgley has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, the tradition of music is still a part of his life thanks to his adult daughter Debbie Caramella and the Sentimental Journey Singers program, a chorus for those in the early or beginning moderate Alzheimer's and other memory impairments.

"We learned of SJS through the adult day center my dad was attending. It seemed like the perfect fit for us because music has been a part of our family story since before we were a family," said Caramella who, as her father's caretaker, is also part of the choir. "Besides the benefits of the physical, social, and cognitive engagement that the choir provides, we have discovered that when we sing together, Alzheimer's loses its grip, and we are just a dad and a daughter enjoying what we have all our lives."

The program is part of Encore Creativity for Older Adults, a choral program for singers 55 years of age and older. Sentimental Journey Singers will begin operating in September in Montgomery and Fairfax counties.

"Music brings pure joy no matter where we are in life, but when there is a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another memory impairment, music taps into another part of the brain and it's one of the last things to

go," said Anita Irvin, Executive Director, Insight Memory Care Center. Insight clients have joined Sentimental Journey Singers. "There are so many mental and social benefits from music and we saw such a positive experience from our participants that joined the choir. They very much looked forward to the rehearsals."

The season begins in September with rehearsals for the group's holiday concert. Singers and their caretakers will sing in three-part harmony. Group members will enjoy the social aspect of choral singing while learning healthy vocal technique skills.

"Alzheimer's is a very lonely disease. It's usually you and your caregiver, so when these singers come out every week, the social interaction means a lot to them," said Jeanne Kelly, Founder and Artistic Director of Encore Creativity. "The experience will offer teamwork, confidence, a lot of fun and incredible joy."

Tuition for 15 weeks of rehearsals is \$190 and includes sheet music, rehearsal CD, and a December concert performance for family and friends that is free and open to the general public. There are no auditions and Encore is hopeful that all care partners will also sing. There will be 15 rehearsals led by Mary Ann East, Ph.D., an Encore conductor who is also the music director at Community

of Faith Methodist Church in Herndon, Va. and the Co-Founder and Director of the Capital Harmonia Community Women's Chorus.

"We have discovered that when we sing together, Alzheimer's loses its grip, and we are just a dad and a daughter enjoying what we have all our lives."

— Debbie Caramella

For More Information

Anyone who is interested in the Sentimental Journey Singers program, or other Encore choral programs, can visit encorecreativity.org to learn more and to register.

Sentimental Journey Singers Strathmore
Mondays - 10:00-11:30 am - beginning September 13
Strathmore Music Center, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, MD

Sentimental Journey Singers Fairfax
Wednesdays - 10:00-11:30 am - beginning September 8
Community of Faith UMC, 13224 Franklin Farm Road, Herndon, VA

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Brightview Explores Plan for Leesburg Pike Facility

Senior Living reps hold two community engagement meetings with Vienna, Great Falls neighbors.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Brightview Senior Living has resumed community engagement for its proposed Continuing Care Facility project at 9439 Leesburg Pike [Route 7] Vienna.

Plan Amendment 2019-II-MI for the 6.72-acre parcel has been in the works for three years but paused due to the pandemic. On July 30, 2019, Fairfax County authorized the consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment for 9439 Leesburg Pike and requested staff to “consider a continuing care facility with 172 beds and a density of up to .65 FAR [Floor Area Ratio] for the subject property,” according to Plan Amendment 2019-II-MI as reported on the County’s Planning Division website. FAR is the measurement of a building’s floor area to the size of the lot/parcel that the building is located on.

The proposed concept plan, an Illustrative Site Plan for the facility as seen on the County website, details a proposed GFA [Gross Floor Area] of 190,286 square feet, 129 parking spaces, and height of 52 feet as defined by the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. The proposed project is in the McLean Planning District, Dranesville Supervisor John Foust. Suburban neighborhoods surround two sides of the irregular-shaped site adjacent to neighboring Wolf Trap Fire Station #42, located at the intersection of Leesburg Pike (Route 7) and Beulah Road.

THE SITE’S EXISTING ZONING is R-1 but currently occupied by Wolf Trap Nursery. It is planned for 1-2 dwelling units per acre and would need to be rezoned to PCC (Planned Continuing Care Facility).

David Holland, Vice President of Brightview Senior Living said in an email to the Connection on July 29, 2021, “We are excited to explore this opportunity to bring our award-winning care and service to Vienna’s seniors.”

Brightview operates several fa-

ilities in Fairfax County, Brightview Great Falls-Senior Assisted Living & Memory Care, Brightview Fair Oaks-Senior Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Brightview Woodburn-Senior Assisted Living & Memory Care in Annandale.

Holland said he recently had two meetings with the neighboring homeowners’ associations, The County Place HOA hosted by Great Falls Citizens Association [July 15, 2021] and Ciara Estates Association HOA [July 25, 2021]. “The practice is customary for all proposed Brightview communities. We partner with the surrounding neighborhoods to provide them the opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns about our projects,” he said. According to Holland, people have questions about traffic volume, size of the building, hours of operation, exterior lighting, how much of the community will be visible from their houses, etcetera.

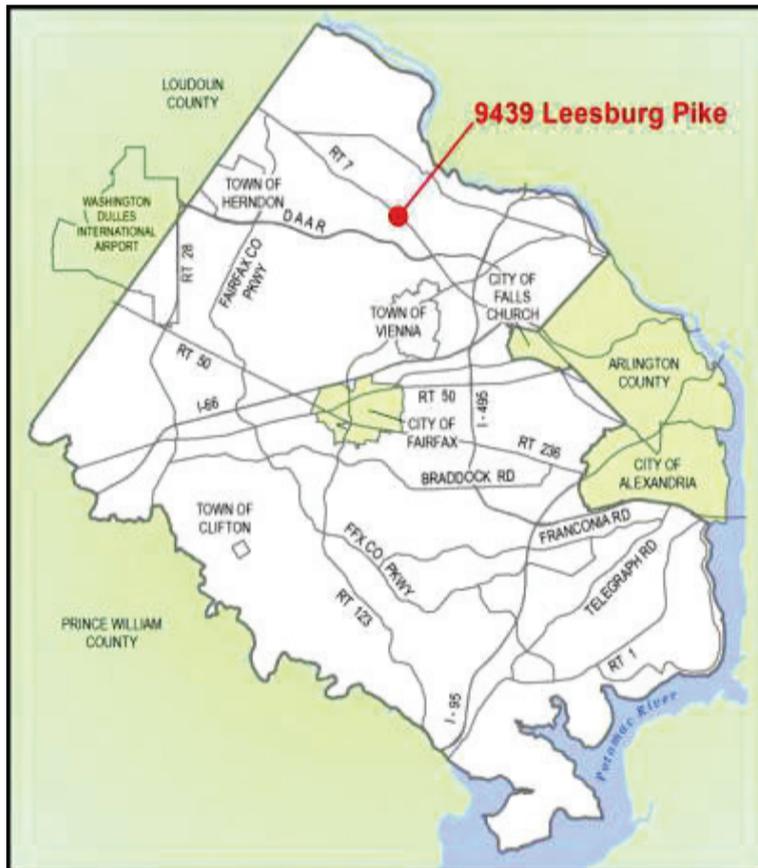
“Brightview takes measures with our building designs to ensure that we do not change the residential feel of the neighborhood. Additionally, many of the residents at our current Brightview communities once lived in the neighborhoods adjacent to our communities,” Holland said. “Hence, it is important to us to establish good relationships directly with the neighbors early on.”

Since Brightview is still in the exploratory stage and working on potential plan designs, once they redesign the original proposal, Holland said they wanted to give neighbors the benefit of seeing any revision first.

Jennifer Falcone is the Chair of GFCFA’s Land Use & Zoning Committee. The organization hosted the July 15 Zoom meeting with representatives from Brightview, homeowners of HOA The Country Place, and GFCFA members. In her official GFCFA report on the



Location of proposed Brightview Senior Living facility on Leesburg Pike, currently occupied by Wolf Trap Nursery.



Map location of the proposed Brightview Senior Living facility at 9439 Leesburg Pike.

meeting, Falcone said the meeting showed neighbors the latest plan revisions. They included the proposed purchase of vacant land surrounding the fire station, a redesign of the facility’s building, and

alignment of the parking areas. “There are proposed deed restrictions that would create a perpetual “green space” buffer in perpetuity and no further development of the parcel,” Falcone said in the report.

According to Falcone, “most neighbors in attendance at the GFCFA Zoom were vocally opposed to the plan. “A GFCFA Board member stated that the Comprehensive Plan states there should be no commercial development between the Dulles Toll Road and the Loudoun County line. But among the many options in the Zoning Ordinance, it should be noted that the County qualifies this proposed use as “residential” and not “commercial,” said Falcone. Fairfax County website shows the Plan Amendment for 9439 Leesburg Pike (2019-II-M1) with a community meeting held on November 20, 2019: “Staff presented an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and details about the proposed amendment.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT for the Continuing Care Facility is to provide different levels of support for older adults as their needs change- Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care. “Zoning Ordinance allows intensities up to 0.40 FAR for properties planned at 1-2 du/ac [dwelling units/acre]. The proposed amendment would add an option for a continuing care facility at a density of up to 0.65 FAR, with conditions.”

Considerations would involve transportation - Route 7 Corridor Improvements Project, design - Memory Care located at the back of the property, and environment-noise and environmental studies.

A Trip Generation Analysis cited the Current Plan (1-2 DUs per acre) at 159 daily trips: Alternative Plan A (0.40 FAR) at 252 daily trips and Alternative Plan B (0.65 FAR) at 413 daily trips.

The County cites Community Engagement Upcoming Meetings: TBA, Public Hearings Planning Commission: Deferred Indefinitely and Board of Supervisors: Deferred Indefinitely.

Resources are available at the Plan Amendment (PA) Work Program, which lays out the review schedule for current Comprehensive Plan amendments and special studies, which includes minor plan amendments that involve smaller geographies such as a small consolidation of properties or a land unit like 9439 Leesburg Pike (2019-II-M1). Questions can be emailed or directed to Stephen Waller at 703-324-2771.

Trip Generation Analysis

PA 2019-II-M1 Development Type	Quantity	Unit	Daily	Weekday AM			Weekday PM			Saturday			Sunday		
				In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Existing Development															
Nursery - Garden Center (817)	6.4	KSF	436	27	24	51	26	28	54	427	427	854	340	340	680
Total			436	27	24	51	26	28	54	427	427	854	340	340	680
Net (versus Current Plan)			277	24	14	38	16	22	38	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current Plan (1 - 2 DUs per acre)															
Single Family Housing (210)	13	DU	159	3	10	13	10	6	16						
Total			159	3	10	13	10	6	16						
Net (versus Current Plan)			0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Alternative Plan A (117 KSF - 0.40 FAR CCF)															
Continuing Care Retirement Community (255)	105	DU	252	11	9	20	13	13	26						
Total			252	11	9	20	13	13	26						
Net (versus Current Plan)			93	8	-1	7	3	7	10						
Alternative Plan B (191 KSF - 0.65 FAR CCF)															
Continuing Care Retirement Community (255)	172	DU	413	17	15	32	22	22	44						
Total			413	17	15	32	22	22	44						
Net (versus Current Plan)			254	14	5	19	12	16	28						

A Trip Generation Analysis compares the Current Plan (R-1) 1-2 dwelling units per acre at 159 daily trips, versus two Alternative Plans, Plan A (.40 FAR CCF) at 252 daily trips and Plan B (.65 FAR CCF) at 413 daily trips. The Existing Development, a Nursery, generates 277 daily weekday trips.

OPINION

Kudos for Fairfax Fire and Rescue

To the Editor: On the afternoon of Aug. 2, we had 400 gallons of propane catch on fire in the woods next to our house. The fire burned tree tops and melted shutters but gratefully no one was hurt. The response of our Fairfax Fire and Rescue was rapid and exceptional. At one point there were 8 fire trucks (all of which would have been needed if the woods had been dry and a tinderbox) and 2 rescue vans. One cannot overpraise these professionals. I write this letter of praise and affirmation with a grateful heart.

Shirley Bloomquist
Great Falls

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/AUG. 14

OCob Flea Market. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Oakton Church of the Brethren, 10025 Courthouse Road, Vienna. The Flea Market is back! There will be handmade and resale items as well as food items to snack on while you shop. Entry is free. Vendors table is \$15. Visit the website: oaktonbrethren.org

SATURDAY/AUG. 14

Friends of the W&OD 10K Run & Walk. 6 p.m. On the W&OD Trail in Vienna. Can your organization sponsor the 14th annual ACE Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine Institute W&OD 10K, or exhibit at 4 to 8 p.m. at the pre-race College of the Environment? ACE Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine Institute W&OD 10K is a 6.2-mile footrace from Vienna Town Green, 144 Maple Avenue East, Vienna,

where Maple Avenue (Route 123) meets W&OD Trail, to Hunter Mill Road and back. The race benefits Vienna-based Friends of the W&OD Trail and educates the community about the importance of W&OD Trail and its preservation and improvement and also about broader environmental causes. Friends of the W&OD Trail pays for benches, fountains, and gardens on the trail, assists in rebuilding storm-damaged bridges, sponsors Eagle Scout projects, directs W&OD Trail Patrol, and provides volunteer labor to maintain W&OD Trail. From 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on race day, they host College of the Environment at Centennial Park near the old red caboose, free to the public, with displays by environmental organizations and sponsors.

FREE CYBER TRAINING

The Virginia Cyber Skills Academies (VCSA) is a state-sponsored training program for NOVA residents financially impacted by COVID-19 that provides free cyber training to residents ready to start or boost a

career in cyber. VCSA was recently launched to help current cybersecurity professionals with upskilling and those wanting to enter the sought after cybersecurity field with reskilling. The program is only open to citizens who are stationed in or permanent residents of Northern Virginia and is only funded for this year, so applicants should apply as soon as possible. Applicants can earn certifications from the SANS Institute, a highly regarded and well-recognized cybersecurity learning platform. Visit the VCSA website at www.vacyberskills.com.

ONGOING

In-Person Worship Begins. 10:15 a.m. The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. In-person worship services will resume with some restrictions. Details at: https://faithconnector.s3.amazonaws.com/goodshepherdva/files/revised2_in_person_worship_begins_june_13.pdf

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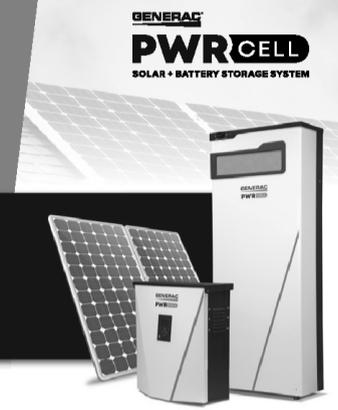
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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 4

Yogapalooza. 10:30 a.m. At Wolf Trap's Children's Theatre-in-the Woods, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Catch a concert in Popular kids' yogi Bari Koral presents Yogapalooza at one of her first in-person, full-band concerts in more than a year. Backed by her band, Bari will take kids and families on the rockin' music and movement adventure she's known for. The Wolf Trap audience will learn popular yoga poses with a dancing bear, pop like popcorn, "sleep" like a pony in the barn, fly like a rocket ship, run with a gingerbread man, relax under the stars, and much more. Yogapalooza is an interactive concert packed with award-winning music, good vibes, and great times. All ages and levels of yoga experience are welcome, including beginners!

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 4

The Alte Kameraden German Band. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Rutherford Park, 4710 Guinea Road, Fairfax. Since its founding in 1977, the "Old Comrades" have introduced American audiences to the lush, spirited festmusik played by Bavarian bands. The ensemble is an authentic Blaskapelle wind band that performs the music played by alpine village bands.

RCC SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

♦ Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet
Thu., August 5 • 7:00 p.m.

Summerbration Fab Fridays: Alfredo Mojica & Friends
Fri., August 6 • 7:00 p.m.

Family Fun Entertainment Series: Groovy Nate Sat., August 7 • 10:00 a.m.

Family Picnic Day: Temporary Road Pavilion Sat., August 7 • 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Art in the Park: The Four Seasons by Vivaldi
Sun., August 8 • 7:00 p.m.

FRIDAY/AUG. 6

Friday Night Live. 6:30 p.m. At Herndon Town Green, Herndon. Popular free outdoor concert series returns to regular performances. This will be the 27th season for the concert series which is produced by the Herndon Chamber of Commerce.

Schedule

Aug 6 -- Social Call;
Aug 13 -- It's All Good;
Aug 20 -- JunkFood;
Aug 27 -- All-Star Band;
Sept 3 -- Shake the Room;
Sept 10 -- keeton + 8 Track Jones;
Sept 17 -- The Reflex;
Sept 24 -- Screaming Mönkeys.

WOLF TRAP PERFORMANCES

At Wolf Trap Farm Park, McLean.
August 4 – Straight No Chaser
August 5 – Lindsey Stirling with special guest Kiesza
August 6 – Renée Fleming with National Symphony Orchestra, Patrick Summers (conductor)

SATURDAY/AUG. 7

Library Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Friends of the Centreville Library invite you to its first post pandemic book sale. Find gently used adult fiction, children's books, CDs, DVDs, and more.

SATURDAY/AUG. 7

Mexilachian Dance Music. 7:30 p.m. At Ossian Hall Park, 7900 Heritage Drive, Annandale. Lua Project brings its unique mix of Mexilachian dance music to Ossian Hall Park. Lua is a cultural pollinator, bridging together musical styles from different continents and different centuries that draw on the musical traditions of their own families' past. The mu-



Renee Fleming and the National Symphony Orchestra will appear at Wolf Trap on Aug. 6.

sic is inspired by Mexican Son, Appalachian song forms, Jewish and Eastern European tonalities, baroque melodic ideas, and Scottish-Irish narrative storytelling approaches.

SATURDAY/AUG. 7

Music of Ray Owens. 10 a.m. At Burke Lake Amphitheater, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. The music of Ray Owen's Animal Odyssey is a tuneful animal kingdom adventure. The show is a journey through a land of rousing songs, down a river of rollicking stories, through a rolling valley of wide-eyed surprises to a sea of kids' comedy. Featured highlights include a great farm animal impersonation competition – a zany Chicken Karaoke contest for kids.

SATURDAY/AUG. 7

Favorite Opera Arias and Duets. 7 p.m. At Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Music by Mozart, Rossini, Bellini, Berlioz, Verdi, Delibes, Puccini, Charpentier from "Hearts of Four." Cost is \$35 online; \$45 at the door. Tickets are available at restoncommunitycenter.com. No cash or checks.

SATURDAY/AUG. 7

Memorial Ride for Raymond Gerard Buza. 10 a.m. Meets at Virginia Run Elementary School, 15450 Martins Hundred Dr., Centreville. The Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) is hosting a memorial ride in honor of Raymond Gerard Buza, who was killed while riding his bike by a driver at Hidden Canyon Rd. and Blue Ridge View Dr. on May 21, 2021 in the Centreville section of Fairfax County. Contact Bruce Wright, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling at bikecommuter@gmail.com, or 703-328-9619.

SUNDAY/AUG. 8

Saving the Kids. 2-3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Hosted by the Cold War Museum in Vint Hill, VA. You've got a cargo plane full of Vietnamese orphans escaping from Saigon. At 23,000 feet you lose half the hydraulic systems and most of the

flight controls. Game over? Not with Pilot Bud Traynor and his crew in charge. Cost is \$20. Visit the website:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/saving-the-kids-the-operation-baby-lift-plane-crash-in-the-vietnam-war-tickets-156189869103>

SATURDAY/AUG. 14

Bricks by the Lake Event. 3-5 p.m. The Reston Historic Trust & Museum is hosting the first annual Bricks by the Lake event. The community is invited to Lake Anne Plaza to create Lego creations based on the themes of live, work, play and memories. Attendees enjoying the day can view the Lego builds being created on the plaza as well as a Master Build creation inside Reston Community Center's Jo Ann Rose Gallery. Awards will be given for each age bracket. For more information, visit: <https://www.restonmuseum.org/bricks-by-the-lake>.

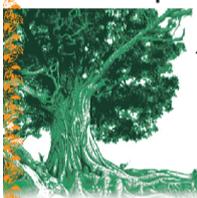
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Sill Bedridden in Burtonsville



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though not nearly so much as last week. Improving for sure, but "slowly and painfully," as the Emergency Room doctor predicted. "Weeks, not months," she replied in response to our "How long?" question. Now back to Gate A17 in Houston:

"Would you mind if I said a healing prayer for you?" I looked over at Dina, and we both said "No, not at all." The lady, Solange was her name, motioned for a male companion standing a few feet away to come over to where she and I were sitting. She explained to him the reason and within a few seconds, they both began praying for me. Though their words were not identical, they both invoked "God, Jesus Christ, the father, his children, died on the cross" and so forth for about 15 seconds in a sincere attempt to heal my burns. After her companion walked away, I looked back over to her and said: "Actually, my feet are not the worst problem I have. I have cancer." Which prompted her, this time alone, to invoke similarly powerful references on my behalf. When she completed her healing, we both thanked her. She asked if we lived in Houston and told us of her church where healing, as I witnessed today, is a regular element and she assured me that some of her fellow parishioners have been healed. Who am I to question the power of God? Nobody, that's who. Praise the Lord and pass the percolator.

Now I'm sort of looking forward to my next recurring quarterly scan scheduled for mid-September to see what happens. My last few scans have been characterized as "stable." Shrinkage would be a change and a welcome one at that. However, after being given a terminal, stage IV non small cell lung cancer diagnosis in Feb. 2009 with a "13 month to two year" prognosis, 12 and one half years later, I have learned to embrace "stable." It may not cure, but neither will it kill. Nor is it ideal, but it's a living for which I'm extremely grateful.

Anyway, back to real-time. It's now a bit more than two weeks since "the burning." I am sort of ambulatory but only by using a "walker," and infrequently as possible. The more I stay off my feet, the less damage I will do to the skin as it heals from the inside out; the main reason the recovery is so slow and arduous. But I am able to "walker" now to my in-home office from my den where I've been laid up, literally, approximately 30 feet, where I can access my desktop computer and type this column, email and on-line bank, et cetera; a distance which would have been too painful to 'walker' even a few days ago. So yes, progress indeed.

In an odd confluence of circumstances, ever since I burned my two soles, I haven't really thought much about my underlying, overriding condition: cancer. "The burning" seems to have taken over my subconscious. Rather than compound the daily grind of living with cancer, the burns and subsequent at-home care have done just the opposite: they replaced whatever medical preoccupation I had/have about my cancer with the difficulties and challenges caused by these second degree burns. In a weird way, it's been an easier last few weeks, emotionally, as so much of my focus and treatment has been on this new/temporary problem instead of the existing permanent one: stage IV, papillary thyroid cancer. I wouldn't say it's been a relief and certainly not a reprieve, but it's definitely been a break in the action, if you know what I mean? Nevertheless, I'll be happy when I'm back to abnormal and can walk again without any assistance. And the next time I'm at the beach, I'll be the one wearing sneakers and socks all day. You can be sure I won't walk barefoot ever again.

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



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