

Great Falls CONNECTION

OPINION, PAGE 4 ❖ VALENTINES, PAGE 6 ❖ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

GREAT FALLS GRANGE
NO. 738.

Great Falls Grange, owned and operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, could be the Great Falls community hub for the future.

Ancient Peruvian History In Children's Book

PAGE 5

What's Happening In Real Estate?

PAGE 8

Home on The Grange?

PAGE 3

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
LEE	10832	626	DELVALE RD	N F POWELL RIVER	1/31/2022
LEE	10876	648	ROUTE 648	TOWN BRANCH	1/31/2022
LEE	10897	662	ROUTE 662	SIMS CREEK	1/31/2022
GRAYSON	8912	734	CHESTNUT GROVE RD	FOX CREEK	1/31/2022
WASHINGTON	25100	616	LITTLE WOLF RUN	ABRAMS CREEK	1/20/2022
BUCHANAN	23115	755	STILTNETS BOTTOM RD	LEVISA RIVER	1/19/2022
BUCHANAN	23116	1025	MEETING HOUSE RD	LEVISA RIVER	1/19/2022
WYTHE	19666	610	PEPPERS FERRY RD	COVE CREEK	1/18/2022
RICHMOND (M)	21358	0	COLUMBIA STREET	GOODES CREEK	1/13/2022
FRANKLIN	7902	688	POTEET RD/ROUTE 688	GILLS CREEK	1/11/2022
CARROLL	4780	881	CROSS CREEK RD/ROUTE 881	LITTLE REED ISLAND CR #2	1/11/2022
AMELIA	1235	602	BEVILS BRIDGE RD	APPOMATTOX RIVER	1/6/2022
FRANKLIN	7907	695	ISOLANE RD/ROUTE 695	HATCHET CREEK	1/5/2022
MONTGOMERY	12292	663	WALTON RD/ROUTE 663	CRAB CREEK	1/4/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact, haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

NEWS

Potomac School Senior Top 40 Scholar

Selected based on the “scientific rigor of his project;” mind-controlled 3D arm design earns him top honors.

Ben Choi, a senior at The Potomac School, has been named a Top 40 Scholar in the Regeneron Science Talent Search 2022, the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and mathematics competition for high school seniors. Chosen from a pool of more than 1,800 highly qualified entrants from across the nation, Choi will participate in the final weeklong competition in Washington, DC, this March.

According to Regeneron, Choi was selected based on the “scientific rigor of his project” – An Ultra-Low Cost, Mind-Controlled Transhumeral Prosthesis Operated via a Novel Artificial Intelligence-Driven Brainwave Interpretation Algorithm – and his “potential to become a world-changing scientist and leader.”

Choi is a student in Potomac's selective Science and Engineering Research Center (SERC) program, which offers students the opportunity to do high-level independent research projects. He says that he was initially inspired to develop his non-invasive, low-cost 3D prosthetic solution after watching a documentary about neural interfaces being used to control prosthetic limbs. Choi explains, “I was really impressed by the applications and the technology, but I was also alarmed that these implants required risky open-brain surgery and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. I thought it could be possible to develop a less invasive and more cost-effective approach.”

Choi says his ultimate goal is to make his prosthesis accessible to all – a driving factor in his decision to use 3D printing technology when developing the initial prototype, which he began working on in fall 2020. Since then, he has continued to make advancements to the 3D printed prosthetic arm that he developed. The arm, controlled by a brainwave-detecting headband placed on the forehead, has moved out of the prototype phase and will soon enter clinical trials.

Over the past year, Choi's focus has been on fine-tuning the device. His work has included assessing volunteers, collecting data, and



Potomac School senior Ben Choi displays his winning innovation.

creating neural networks – systems that use AI algorithms to make predictions – to input and verify the data. Through trial and error, he has been able to improve the arm's accuracy of movement to 95% as compared to a natural human arm. Choi works with mentors Dr. Isabelle Cohen, Upper School science teacher at The Potomac School, and Dr. Ji Liu, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering at Stony Brook University in New York.

In addition to advancing to the Regeneron Top 40, Choi has earned a variety of national and international awards for his research and work. They include winning runner-up in the Poly-Spectra “Make It Real” Global Design Challenge (December 2020); MIT THINK Scholar Award (January 2021); U.S. Air Force Special Award for Research (March 2021); IEEE Innovation Award (March 2021); and being named a Microsoft Imagine Cup World Finalist (April 2021).

Pravalika Gayatri Putalapattu who attends Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology is also a Top 40 scholar for her project, DORC: Dynamic Operating Room Companion for Gallbladder Removal Surgical Workflow Verification.

Regeneron Science Talent Search alumni include winners of 13 Nobel Prizes, 11 National Medals of Science, six Breakthrough Prizes, 22 MacArthur Foundation Fellowships, and two Fields Medals. The full list of Top 40 scholars selected by Regeneron and Society for Science can be viewed here. <https://www.societyforscience.org/regeneron-sts/2022-finalists/> www.connectionnewspapers.com

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NEWS



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Great Falls Grange and the Forestville School are owned and operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Great Falls Townhall To Update Residents on Grange Plans

Supervisor John W. Foust and the non-profit Great Falls Grange Foundation will hold a virtual town hall meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 15, at 7 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend. Registration is not required. To participate, use this link: <https://publicinput.com/NQ0868>.

Great Falls Grange members, including Jorge Adeler, president and representatives

from Great Falls Citizens Association, Optimists Club, and Rotary, will brief the community on evolving plans to sign an agreement with the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) to operate the Grange and adjacent historic schoolhouse for private and community events, investing the proceeds in internal building improvements and new landscaping.

FCPA does not have the financial and staff-

ing resources to manage these buildings and other similar historic buildings throughout the county. The public-private partnership between FCPA and GFGF is seen as a prototype for a countywide application that could eventually be a self-supporting community center for Great Falls.

For updates and other details about the meeting, go to <https://gfgrange.org>.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The new logo for the Great Falls Grange Foundation



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

BSA Troop 55B (boys), Troop 55G (girls) of Great Falls represented the Boy Scouts of America in the inaugural parade of Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

Great Falls Scouts March in Inaugural Parade

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Represent all Scout Troops in Virginia.

Based in Great Falls BSA Troop 55B (for boys), Troop 55G (for girls), and Crew 364 of the Powhatan District, National Capital Area Council rep-

resented the Boy Scouts of America in the inaugural parade of Gov. Glenn Youngkin, Virginia's 74th governor according to Scout leader Gary Pan. Great Falls is Youngkin's hometown.

The Troop marched seventh in the parade procession of over twenty units. Held Jan. 15, parade participants represented a wide range of backgrounds, interests, and communities in Virginia.

BSA Troop 55 is supported by its chartering organization, St. Francis Episcopal Church in Great Falls, VA. Scout leaders are Gary Pan (55G) and Jeff Ye 55B. Visit <https://youtu.be/11Oih4Sxxr4> for BSA 55 parade highlights.

Black History Month at the State Capitol

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



For nearly 250 years of Virginia's history Black people in the state were enslaved. Following emancipation there was a denial of the rights of Black people in the state, and Jim Crow laws curtailed their freedom. The Lost Cause movement after the Civil War sought to obscure the treatment of Black people as slaves and downplay any contributions they made to society. Only in recent years with the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter movements have Black people started to receive the recognition they deserve in society and in the state legislature.

Each day in the Virginia General Assembly history is being made as a record number of 18 Black members serve in the 100-member House of Delegates and three Black members are in the 40-member Senate. For most of my career as a delegate the number of Black legislators in the General Assembly could be counted on the fingers on one hand. For the first time ever,

Black women are in leadership roles with the Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth, the President pro tempore of the Senate, and the House Minority Caucus Chair. A small but significant example of the changes being made are the daily speeches in the General Assembly during February about notable Black Virginians who have not received the attention they deserve.

President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976 to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Events leading up to the designation of a Black History Month extend back as far as 1926 when the Association for the Study of African American Life and History founded by historian Carter G. Woodson and Minister Jesse E. Moorland started a Negro History Week. The second week of February was chosen as the date to correspond with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

Hopefully the writing and teaching of more complete histories will reduce the need for separate historic celebrations, but there is so much to do in filling in the blanks of histories in the past that left out so much information or distorted it in so many ways. There is a continuing effort on the part of many who see one-sided historical accounts as benefiting the false narrative they continue to present.

There are real concerns that I and others have about what is happening currently in Virginia. As I discussed in a recent column, the Governor's Executive Order Number One "ending the use of inherently divisive concepts, including critical race theory" has fueled this concern. Adding to the Order, the Governor's setting up a snitch line for parents and others to report on teachers teaching "divisive concepts" raises further concerns.

It's impossible to teach accurate history without some seeing it as divisive. Hopefully the celebration of Black History Month in the General Assembly will demonstrate that celebrating each other's successes will not be viewed as divisive but rather as strengthening our common histories and aspirations.

Don't Hamper Dulles Future Growth; Adopt 2019 Noise Contours

Letter from Julie Coons, President & CEO, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, to Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay.

Dear Chairman McKay: The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce remains committed to the economic growth and recovery of our region. A central tenet of economic growth is the support of economic drivers like our region's airports. Both Dulles International Airport and Reagan National Airport have been facing economic headwinds since 2020 as a result of the steep decline in passenger service during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, but both are continuing to recover. I am writing today to ask you to support the adoption of the 2019 noise contours for Dulles, which will aid in its economic recovery and provide a solid foundation for future growth.

As you know very well from your time on the Board of Supervisors, being responsive to constituent concerns often puts local leaders in the position of opposing growth and development that negatively impacts existing residential areas. In many cases, this an unavoidable consequence of otherwise positive growth especially in a region like Northern Virginia which does not

have an excess of undeveloped land. However, in many cases it is the actions or inactions of past leaders that create these situations for future residents.

In the case of the growth of Dulles, your board has the opportunity now to take action to limit the noise impacts on future Fairfax County residents by adopting the 2019 contour maps. These maps are forward looking and show the potential paths that future air service will follow. This allows for future development to avoid the areas that would create the most nuisance for those living beneath the paths. It also allows for your Board and future Boards to be able to support the growth of Dulles' passenger and freight service without unduly burdening residents with aircraft noise.

Dulles is poised to grow in the coming years. Phase II of the Silver Line is set to open in 2022, bringing rail service from the airport to DC for the first time. It is also the only airport on the east coast with room to grow. Opposition to growth from nearby residents hampers countless airports' ability to continue to expand employment opportunities by adding jobs and growing its passenger and freight service. Adopting the updated 2019 contour maps and

mitigating the placement of new residential development within those contours by providing notice to homeowners, requiring interior insulation and an avigation easement within the contours area described in the County's staff report

would help avoid future conflict and provide a good foundation for the continued growth of Dulles.

Julie Coons
President & CEO, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Submissions for Pet Connection

Our next Pet Connection will publish the last week of February, Feb. 23, 2022. Photo submissions are due by Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022. Sooner is better. Please complete a submission form and send us your photo(s). <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets/> or email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults. Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description of what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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McLean Postal Employee Publishes Children's Book

Book encourages an interest in ancient Peruvian history and heritage.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Alfredo Martín, a McLean U.S. Postal Service employee, studied journalism in his native Peru and recently published his first children's book, "The Adventures of Chasqui and the Golden Boy" (2021). The 28-page action and adventure fiction incorporating cultural heritage is available in English and Spanish and illustrated by Jessica Martínez.

The story's inspiration came to Martín two years ago, he said in an interview. From there, Martín began developing the story's arc, the path it was to follow, knowing it was to be postal related and tied to his Peruvian culture. But then an eight-to-nine-month writing gap happened after Martín fell ill with COVID-19 in December of 2020.

"When I got better, ideas came back to mind," Martín said. He developed the background information, characters, action and conflict that gives way to a resolution that appeals to children. But tucked within was a historical glimpse into ancient Inca culture and

SEE HELPING, PAGE 6



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Children's book author Alfredo Martín (center) with his daughters, Fiorella (left) and Andrea.

CALL FOR CANDIDATES

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Throw pillow like these from designer Melissa Sanabria can be a practical gift offering for the home.



Use beeswax tapers for a romantic dinner at home.

Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for the Home

Presents that can be used on Cupid's Day and beyond.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

There are many ways to express love and appreciation this Valentine's Day. While roses and chocolates can be symbols of romance and affection, practical gifts can demonstrate thoughtfulness. Items that make one's home enjoyable and relaxing can leave a recipient feeling appreciated. Local designers and lifestyle enthusiasts offer five suggestions that can serve as inspiration for surprising your Valentine.

"A cozy throw is perfect for snuggling with your sweetheart if you have dinner at home on Valentine's Day," said Bethesda designer Julie Powers. "You can then use it to refresh a room by draping it over the back of a sofa in your family room or a chair in your bedroom."

Those who appreciate a relaxing spa day might enjoy a bed and bath tray, suggests designer Elizabeth Winnick of Arlington. "A special person in your life can sit back and pamper themselves," she said. "Look for a tray that has a wine glass holder and a place that will hold a tablet so you can read or watch a movie while you soak."



COURTESY OF THE NEST EGG IN FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

Voluspa created a rose-scented candle that comes in a 3-D, geometric glass holder that can be used long after the candles is gone.

Gifting a candle isn't often associated with originality or creativity, but designer Ann O'Shields of The Nest Egg recommends a line of candles that come in a glass vessel that can be repurposed. Voluspa created a rose-scented candle that comes in a 3-D, geometric glass holder. Reminiscent of the romance that

it is associated with Valentine's Day, the jar can be used to hold jewelry or flowers long after the candle is gone.

A romantic dinner at home on Valentine's Day calls for candlelight. For those who are environmentally conscious, beeswax tapers might be just the ticket. Designer Melissa Sanabria recom-



PHOTO BY CONTRIBUTED

A cozy throw is perfect for snuggling with your sweetheart, says designer Elizabeth Winnick.



PHOTO BY CONTRIBUTED

Those who appreciate a relaxing spa day might enjoy a bed and bath tray with space for a glass of wine and a tablet for reading.

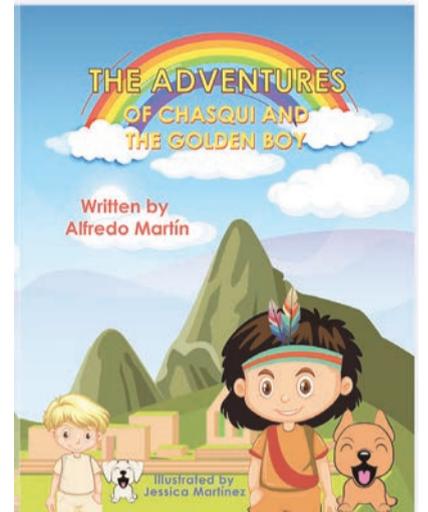
mends home interior items like throw pillows and home fragrance accessories that are made by small business and women, particularly those that are naturally sourced, eco-friendly and cruelty-free.

McLean Postal Employee Publishes Children's Book

FROM PAGE 5

its surviving ancestral language, Quechua.

Illustrator Martínez's use of simplified cartoon-style forms helps children and adults understand the Quechua to English or Spanish translations, such as the words ceviche or quipu, and provides representations of noted Peruvian sites, including the Major Pyramid (Piramide Mayor), located in the City of Caral, near the central Peruvian coast, and the city of Cao Viejo.



Cover image of Alfredo Martín's newly released book.

On the surface, Martín's book is about a young Peruvian boy, an Inca messenger (and his dog) who witnesses a ship sinking off the Pacific coast, and a blond-haired boy, Johnny, and his dog, drowning. They rescue them, and the new friends embark on a series of adventures along the coast in their quest for a ship that would take the survivors back home to "a great island in the far north called: Britannia," sealing a lifetime friendship.

Martín's story combines elements of today's paper mail system for physically transporting postcards, letters, and parcels, about which Martín is well-versed, with the message delivery within the ancient Inca empire via a relay of highly trained Chasquis. The runners traveled hundreds of miles in days, ultramarathon style, supporting the empire.

Martín dedicated the book to his younger daughter, Fiorella, 14, "my little one," as he called her, visiting her father from Peru on the day of

the interview, along with her elder sister Andrea.

Andrea said that when her father informed her that he was writing a book, she knew it would be very good. "But it ended up being better than I expected ... Seeing the results here makes me even more proud of him," Andrea said. She added that although many people know other Latin American cultures, not as many are aware of Peruvian culture.

Andrea acted as a translator for her sister Fiorella and described their father's dedication of the book to her as "touching and emotional." Seeing the pictures, the story, and the characters were quite interesting to Fiorella.

"We will take a Spanish copy for one of our younger cousins, who is six and still learning to read, and maybe he will get more intrigued by our culture."

The Adventures of Chasqui and the Golden Boy is available on Amazon.

NEWS BRIEFS

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Teen dating violence is a pattern of harmful and destructive behaviors used to exert power and control over a dating partner. It usually involves a series of abusive behaviors where one partner has more control or dominance over another. Many teens experience some form of intimate partner violence even before graduating from high school.

The purpose of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is to let the public know about the impact of dating violence on youth, educate young people about healthy relationships, and encourage the community to get involved to disrupt cycles of violence among teens.

By building teens' abilities to identify and respond to unhealthy relationships, young people can interrupt the cycle of violence through bystander intervention. Dating violence is never tolerated, everyone deserves to feel safe in their relationships. Awareness ensures everyone knows how to act when they observe unhealthy behaviors.

* Speak out against statements, attitudes, or behavior that may perpetu-

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 10

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PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE

Gov. Glenn Youngkin is working with Republican lawmakers to define “inherently divisive concept” as anything in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Legislative Privilege

Lawmakers consider efforts to prohibit ‘inherently divisive concepts’ in the classroom.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The phrase “critical race theory” is perhaps as divisive as it is elusive. It has an actual formal academic definition. But that was largely beside the point on the campaign trail. Now that a new administration is taking over, the governor’s pick for education secretary — Aimee Guidera — is giving members of the General Assembly a better picture of what the new governor wants to ban from the classroom.

“We’re talking about privilege walks, privilege Bingo, putting children into situations where they’re playing as the victim and a supremacist,” said Guidera to senators during a confirmation hearing. “Those are completely inappropriate ideas.”

Members of the General Assembly are getting a crash course in privilege, learning how unconscious bias often shapes human behavior. In a privilege walk, students stand in a row and go through rounds of moving forward or backward based on things like being right handed or speaking English as a first language. At the end of several rounds, students have a sense of their relative privilege based on their physical proximity.

“We should not be teaching our children to see everything through the lens of race,” said Gov. Glenn Youngkin in a speech to a joint session of the General Assembly. “We should not use inherently divisive concepts like critical race theory in Virginia.”

“We should not be teaching our children to see everything through the lens of race. We should not use inherently divisive concepts like critical race theory in Virginia.”

— Gov. Glenn Youngkin

But this agenda item on Youngkin’s “Day One Game Plan” is facing an uncertain future in a Senate controlled by Democrats. When the governor’s bill prohibiting “inherently divisive concepts” was considered in a subcommittee, Democrats laid the groundwork for rejecting the bill when it is considered in the Senate Education Committee. Sen. Jen Kiggans (R-7) struggled to define what -- exactly -- is an inherently divisive concept.

“I would say it’s just like it sounds,” said Kiggans, “anything that’s dividing and making one group think they’re superior to the other.”

The text of the bill defines an inherently divisive concept as any idea in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Critics say that’s not really workable.

“The criteria are so open to interpretation that they could be interpreted to forbid teachers from accurately teaching history,” said Breanna Diaz, legislative counsel with the ACLU of Virginia. “This bill could prevent talking about racism or having open dialogue about American history.”

Groups that represent teachers are in opposition to the bill, warning that it would create an environment of fear that would be counterproductive to learning. Slavery, for example, would violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964. So how would teachers explain the reason for the Civil War? These are the kinds of issues the Senate Education Committee will discuss when they consider the governor’s bill, which was introduced on his behalf by Kiggans.

“I find it offensive that the Civil Rights Act is being used to support this,” said Sen. Ghazala Hashmi (D-10). “The purpose of an education is to make us uncomfortable, to challenge our ideas. If students are challenged on their own set of identities and values, that is a good thing.”

The governor’s bill is opposed by the Virginia Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Superintendents Association.

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Special Edition: PET Connection

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Ads submitted by:

February 17, 2022

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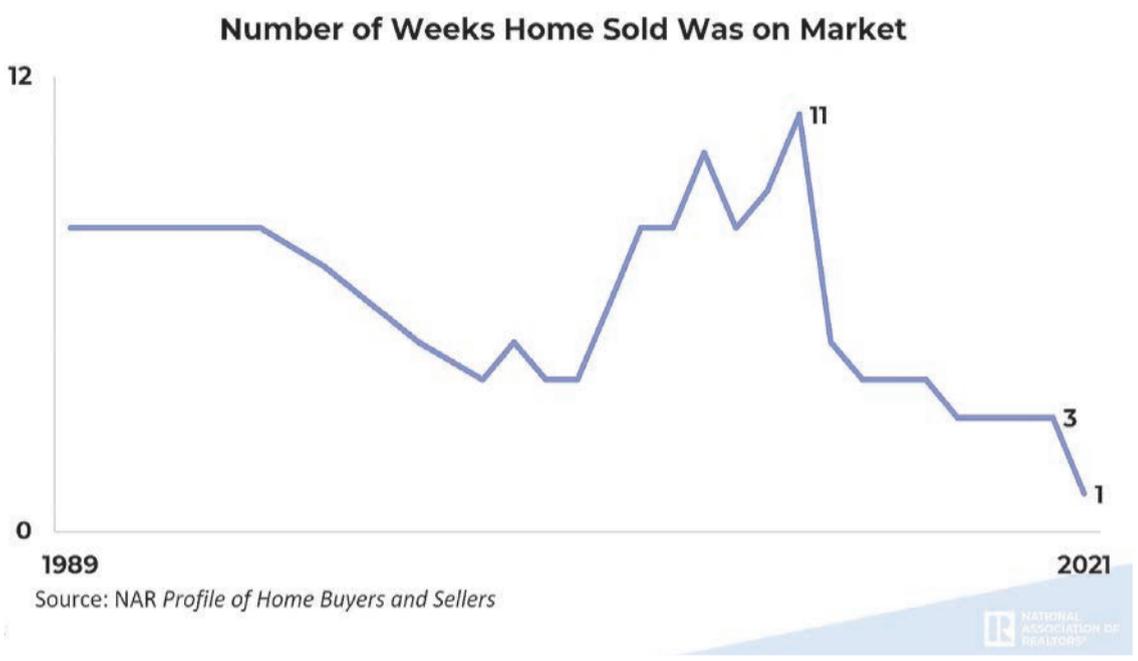
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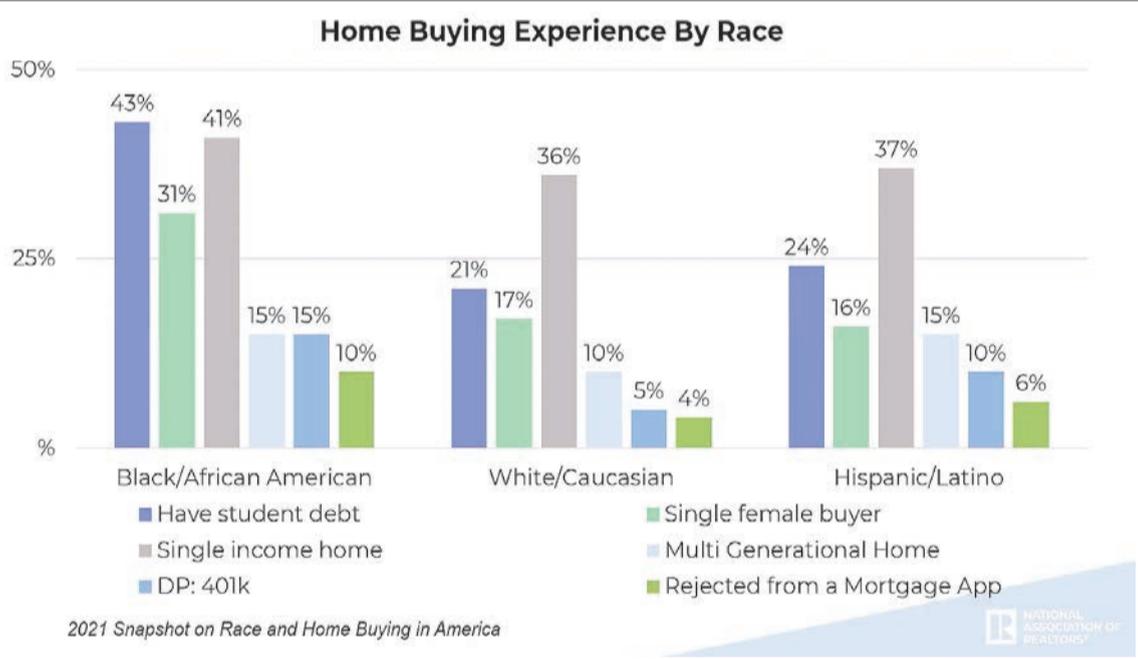
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Seeking Shelter: Changes in Housing Preferences

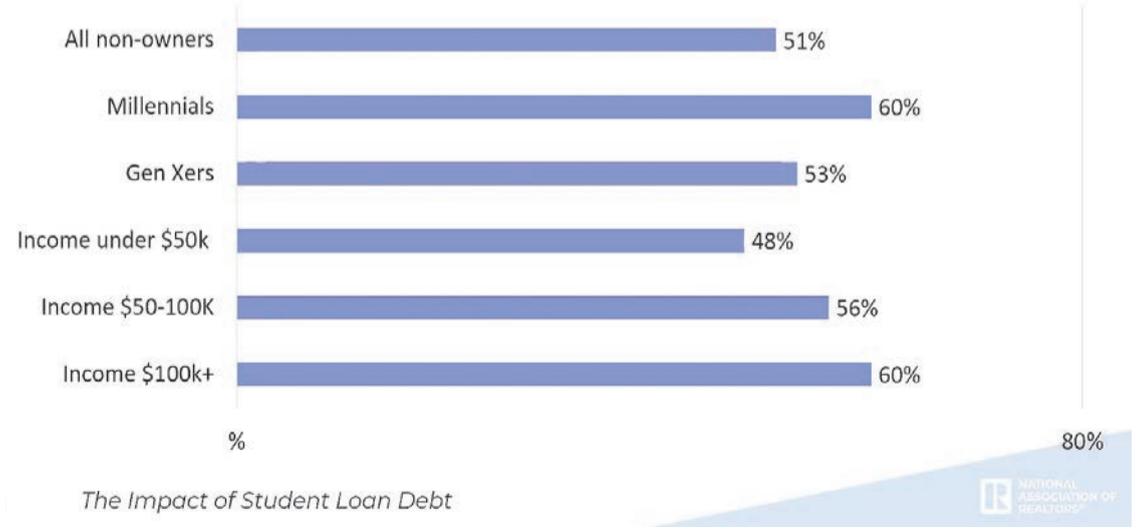


The number of weeks a home is on the market nationally.



Homebuying experience by race.

Half of non-owners say student debt delaying from buying a home



Student debt impacts the ability to buy a home.

Center for Real Estate Entrepreneurship at George Mason University School of Business presents.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The national housing market is experiencing 118 consecutive months of home price gains and the greatest selling price to listing price ratio ever documented. A third of all listings sell for more than the asking price due to numerous bids. Adding to the mix, people have changed how and when they move. It's important to know that a 20 percent down payment isn't the norm.

Dr. Jessica Lautz, vice president of Demographics and Behavioral Insights at the National Association of Realtors, examined these topics and more on Feb. 2 during her presentation, "Seeking Shelter: Changes in Housing Preferences" hosted by the Center for Real Estate Entrepreneurship at George Mason University School of Business. Fairfax County is in line with the national trend as home values and mortgage rates are expected to follow suit.

According to Lautz, multiple factors come into play when attempting to purchase a home, work habits, support systems, and ready cash. On top of that, regardless of the buyers' age, the rising Gen Z generation, maturing millennials, or retiring baby boomers all face an extreme lack of housing inventory nationwide. "We have under 1 million units right now available on the market. That is the lowest level that we have recorded back to 1999 when we first started recording that data at NAR (National Association of Realtors)," she said.

According to Lautz, estimators say about 6.5 months of inventory is needed to have a balanced market. Instead, there is a strong seller's market. "They really are getting their asking price for that home," she said. In comparison to pre-pandemic 2019, Lautz reported a 30 percent increase in property prices and a 60 percent decrease in inventory.

Consumers who previously did not intend to purchase are now doing so, and COVID has altered

household requirements. "Maybe not a home office, but two home offices or a room for kids to zoom school. Perhaps it is a place with a bigger yard where they can grow their vegetables and then put them in their brand new kitchen," said Lautz.

Younger millennials opt for more affordable markets, purchasing in suburban and small towns over urban areas. Aside from pricing and inventory, proximity to friends and family is another motivation. "We see that support systems have redefined themselves in the last two years, and people need their community around them in a different way than they had before," said Lautz.



Dr. Jessica Lautz, Vice President of Demographics and Behavioral Insights at the National Association of Realtors.

Cash is king in the primary residence market. "What we see is that 17 percent of the market who are repeat buyers in the market are actually paying all cash as well. So that's an elevated share from what we have seen historically," said Lautz.

Homeownership is uneven, especially for Black and Latino communities. According to Lautz, among last year's successful homebuyers, Black homebuyers were more likely to have student loan debt than their white counterparts. "In fact, double that amount has student loan debt," said Lautz. Black homebuyers were more likely to be single-income households and single female buyers.

"We know that single female buyers overall are purchasing homes on a lower household income in comparison to single men. They are actually more active in the market ..., especially among first-time homebuyers. But they're making more financial sacrifices to be able to enter homeownership. They have to save for a longer period of time," Lautz said. "We also know that individuals who purchase homes are more likely to be purchasing multi-generational homes, and they're equally likely to be Hispanic Latino buyers."

Lautz said African American homebuyers are more likely, one in

Seeking Shelter: Changes In Housing Preferences

FROM PAGE 8

six, to tap their 401k for the down payment. While it is positive that they are now homeowners and able to have the wealth gains ownership provides, they are degrading the wealth gains from their 401k.

The denial rate for mortgages for successful purchasers is also an issue. Compared to successful white purchasers, Black homeowners had a two-and-a-half-time higher denial rate. Although their debt-to-income ratio was low enough and they had enough savings in the bank, they were still denied a mortgage.

Lautz cited the importance of this because net worth has to do with homeownership and the nest egg that is built into the home. A home buyer, regardless of race, who bought a home ten years ago, the equity that they have earned on their home in the last ten years has a net worth of \$225,000. "When we think about homeownership or home prices increasing by 30 percent since 2019, we know that there is a lot of net worth and a lot of wealth gains that can be had for homeownership," she said.

Lautz dispelled the myths that young adults waste their money on avocado toast, transportation, and fancy cars. "Looking at the data, what we can see is that it is just not true," Lautz said.

Younger millennials under the age of 25 spend a disproportionate amount of their income on housing, accounting for 35 percent of their income, compared to younger boomers at the same age, who spent 29 percent on housing. Student loan payments and spending on education out-of-pocket costs impact young adults' incomes. Transportation costs for young adults have declined over time, with the use of public transit and rideshare services.

Another common misconception is that homebuyers must put down 20 percent of the purchase price. "When we look at the typical down payment of individuals, what we can see is that for first-time homebuyers, it's been six to seven percent," said Lautz. She went on to say that repeat buyers typically put down 17 percent. One of the great resources available to first-time homebuyers is looking at hud.gov because it has low down payment options and programs that are available on a state and local basis...Also, an FHA loan is just 3 to 5 percent. "

Lautz concluded by talking about the use of agents. Homebuyers want that person's expertise when negotiating and closing.

An agent can help sellers price their houses competitively, market them, close the deal, and move them onto their new property.

Question and Answer Session

Q: Are there homes available for buyers below 50 percent AMI (Area Median Income)?

A: That's where we're seeing the real lack of housing inventory for affordable properties right now. Those homes are moving even faster, and some of that has to do with investors coming into the market.

Q: These figures that you presented, along with rising interest rates, signal that this is becoming a nation of renters due to the affordability of homeownership.

A: It really is a very difficult time to become a homeowner if you're not already. But with rising rates, what we have seen is a rush to lock in rates. I have to say, too, that even though we have rising prices and even though we're facing rising rates, the wealth gains that homeowners have is outnumbered by anything that could be done on paper.

Q: Why are homeowners not selling their homes as much as they have been in the past years?

A: People are staying in their homes longer. We have seen the tenure in recent years rise to as high as ten years in a home before selling... Traditionally, people have moved because something in their lives changed — they had a baby, they got married, or they got divorced.

So, all of those demographic changes are happening on a lower scale. The other big change is that in the last year compared to 10 years ago, we've seen a drop in people who are moving because of work change because you can work remotely.

Q: If the baby boomers are the biggest generation demographically and they are passing away, why aren't their homes helping the inventory of properties for sale?

A: Not all the baby boomers are dying off. I will say, we are seeing that people are living longer and they're working longer ... We're seeing that perhaps it is a widow whose kids are all grown up, left and married, or just moved to different areas of the country. What we're seeing is that she's staying put in that single-family home.

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

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Serve on the MCC Governing Board!
- Adult and youth candidate seats open
- Candidate petitions due Friday, March 11

Join the Summer Fun

Summer camp registration now open!
- MCC weeklong camps for children & teens
- Old Firehouse Summer Camp Trips

The Old Firehouse

 **Family Fun Bingo (In-Person)**
Friday, Feb. 11, 7-9:30 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents.
Preregistration is recommended.

Presented by The Alden

 **Chamber Music Series**
Beau Soir Ensemble
Sunday, Feb. 13, 2 p.m.
\$10/\$5 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden

 **Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo**
Friday, Feb. 18, 7 p.m.
\$40/\$30 MCC district residents

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Friday, Feb. 18, 7-9 p.m.
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NEWS

FROM PAGE 6

ate a culture endorsing violence as acceptable or inevitable.

- ❖ Name and stop situations that could lead to assault or violence.

- ❖ Step in during a high-risk incident, whether by disruption, distraction, speaking up or calling for help so others can step in.

- ❖ Support and believe others when they feel uncomfortable or hurt.

- ❖ Help others respond to problematic situations.

Have questions or need help?

Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-Hour Hotline 703-360-7273

Domestic Violence Action Center 703-246-4573

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Main Office 703-324-5730

If the threat is immediate, call 911.

Regional Racial Equity Initiative

Fairfax County's Continuum of Care (CoC) is partnering with the nine neighboring jurisdictions that participate in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Homeless Services Committee in a Regional Racial Equity Initiative led by C4 Innovations to develop coordinated goals and strategies with steps that each CoC can implement at a local level. Collectively as a region, seek to achieve a more racially equitable approach to ending homelessness. Each jurisdiction is represented by a Racial Equity Action Council. Fairfax County representatives are:

- ❖ Lisa Jones, Fairfax County's Department of Family Services

- ❖ Diana Pina, Fairfax County's Department of Housing & Community Development

- ❖ Tanner Sigmon, The Lamb Center

- ❖ Maura Williams, Cornerstones

Point-in-Time (PIT)

On Jan. 26, 2022, Fairfax County nonprofit and county partners conducted the annual Point-in-Time Count, identifying individuals and families experiencing literal homelessness – those in shelters, in time-limited transitional housing programs, as well as those who are unsheltered and living on the street. The local and regional results will be made available at a later date at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless>.

Hypothermia Prevention Program

The Hypothermia Prevention Program expands shelter capacity each winter for individuals experiencing homelessness through overflow space at existing shelters and auxiliary off-site programs hosted largely in partnership with faith communities. The Hypothermia Prevention Program officially started on Dec. 1st and concludes the morning of April 1st. More information on the dates and locations is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/hypothermia-prevention-program>.

CALENDAR



Moch Pryderi, which performs traditional Celtic music, will perform at the Old Brogue Irish Pub in Great Falls on Feb. 13.

NOW THRU FEB. 13

"Every Brilliant Thing." At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Guided by an unnamed narrator, the audience is drawn into the story of a young boy who tries to cure his mother's depression by creating a list of all the most wonderful things in the world. Visit www.NextStopTheatre.org.

NOW THRU FEB. 19

New Art Exhibits. At McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Give and Take: Building Form (Emerson Gallery) will feature abstract wood sculpture by Emilie Benes Brzezinski, Rachel Rotenberg, Foon Sham, and Norma Schwartz, while the Atrium Gallery will feature Intersectional Painting: Works by Sheila Crider. Both exhibitions run through Feb. 19, 2022. Visit www.mpaart.org/ or call 703-790-1953 for gallery hours.

NOW THRU FEB. 27

"Winter Winds" Art Show. 12-5 p.m. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W. at Lake Anne, Reston. See the season's sentiments depicted in oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, mixed media collage, metal mobiles, and more, created by the eight artists of RAGS. Open weekends, 12-5 pm, through February 27, located at the "ART" sign on Lake Anne Plaza. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com.

NOW THRU MARCH 13

"The Phlebotomist." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 9

Ibram X. Kendi: Author of How to Be an Antiracist. 8 p.m. At Reston Community Theater's CenterStage. Ibram X. Kendi is one of America's foremost historians and leading antiracist voices. Cost is \$15 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 11

Family Fun Bingo (In-Person). 7-9:30 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. For all ages. Join us for an evening of fun and prizes! Enjoy free popcorn and winners will take their pick of prizes. Cost is \$15/\$10 MCC district residents. Preregistration is recommended. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 12

Spiritual Winter Walk. 1-3 p.m. At Turkey Run Park, Turkey Run Loop Road, McLean. Bundle up and join us as we explore the resilience and hope that nature displays during its most challenging months. Led by Beth Norcross. Cost is \$22.50. Visit the website: <https://www.centerforspiritualityinnature.org/calendar>

SUNDAY/FEB. 13

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Two consecutive

concerts with Moch Pryderi in a pub atmosphere by the fireside. A full menu and drinks list are available. All patrons must present a vaccination certificate that includes boosters for a minimum of 2 weeks, or a negative covid test within 48 hours. Tickets must be purchased in advance at www.oldbrogue.com - \$21 general admission. A season ticket for all 6 concerts is available for \$110.

SUNDAY/FEB. 13

Silver-Garburg Piano Duo. 4 p.m. At Saint Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. After a long absence, the Silver-Garburg Piano Duo makes a triumphant return with four rarely-heard works. Bach's concertos for two keyboards BWV 1061 and 1062—accompanied by a quartet of Amadeus musicians—are some of the earliest-known piano concertos written. Also on the program: Schubert's Divertissement on French themes and a bouquet of Brahms's multicolored Waltzes, Op. 39. Tickets \$40; Active Military and 17 & under free. Buy tickets online or at the door. Visit www.amadeusconcerts.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 13

Beau Soir Ensemble. 2 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Beau Soir Ensemble is a flute, viola and harp trio dedicated to the performance of standard and contemporary repertoire spanning a variety of genres. Cost is \$10/\$5 MCC district residents. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 17

Mardi Gras Celebration. 12-2 p.m. At the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna. Cajun cuisine lunch, Mardi Gras mask making, trivia and entertainment. Dressing up is part of the celebration so be sure to wear purple, green and gold. To register, call 703-281-0538.

FRIDAY/FEB. 18

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Couldn't you use a good laugh? "The Trocks" recreate the glories of the Royal Imperial ballet in the biggest pointe shoes you'll ever see. Cost is \$40/\$30 MCC district residents.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Abbie Palmer: Scintillating Celtic harp and singer. Tickets must be purchased in advance through the link at www.oldbrogue.com: \$21 general admission. Season ticket: \$110.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Maple Syrup Boil Down. Noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Bundle up, watch, and learn as sap is boiled down into sweet syrup over an outdoor, open fire. Sample the delicious combination of maple syrup served over cornbread made from Colvin Run Mill cornmeal. Cost is \$10 per person. Call 703-759-2771.

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Apparently, the Time Wasn't Now



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

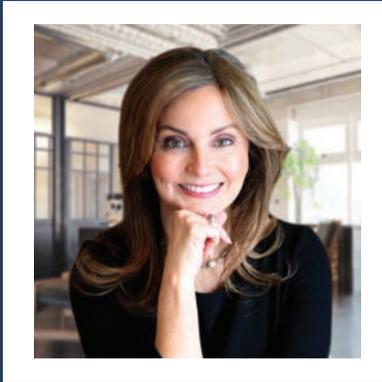
I thought those quarterly scans that I discussed last week came around a little too quick. However, sometimes (heck, oftentimes) life gets to be a bit of a jumble and cooler heads don't always prevail. I was both right and wrong in last week's column. I was right to be surprised by the need timing-wise, to get scanned again so soon. And I was wrong thinking the scans were my usual and customary quarterlylies. They were not. Before the scheduled appointments, I called Member Services to get some clarity. Sure enough, these scans were not the typical, recurring quarterly CT and Bone scans that I wrote about last week coming around so quickly. They were different. They were two MRI scans, one of the brain and the other for the lower abdomen. Scans that I have annually but have no sense when that annual cycle occurs. Of course, the appointments were set by my oncologist - with me, after our last post-scan meeting, but I had totally forgot. Fortunately, I remembered in time, and so far, the results indicate no activity/complication. I am not free and clear by any means, it just means, to quote "Forest, Forest Gump:" "One less thing." News for which I am exceedingly grateful and amazed - and never take for granted.

The MRI scans will take about 35 to 40 minutes each, so long as I remain still during the study. Still, it means lying down and locked in a face cage and then loaded into a claustrophobic tube to endure bangs and knocks and all sort of other auditory interference while the resonance is imaging. The first time I had an MRI 13 years ago, I was loaded into the tube and immediately pressed the panic button to unload. When I slid back outside the tube, the technician advised me to keep my eyes closed. And for 13 years, annually, I have followed her advice. So long as I don't open my eyes and see how close my face is to the machine (inches) and think about how much of my body has been inserted into this tube (almost entirely), I can endure the scan. I've never been given any medication to keep me calm, not an uncommon occurrence for patients (like my father) who couldn't be so confined for so long in such a small place.

But none of that really bothers me. What bothered me was how unprepared I was for the scan appointment. Usually, I know what's going on in my care. The fact - which became a concern, that this time, I was unaware of the procedure and the timing. And after I spoke with Member Services, I realized I had cause for that concern. My most recent quarterly scans were during the last week of December, a mere five weeks prior to this most recent scan appointment. Yet I had no sense of the time/recurrence but instead thought quite mistakenly that it was time for the quarterly scans and got a bit agitated that it seemed to come around so quickly. Boy was I wrong - and right.

But I'll try to take it in stride. After all, being in treatment has its struggles. Invariably, there are complications and confusions. As I was advised to do so years ago: "Blame the cancer."

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



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