

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 5, 2022

The Things that Keep Me Up at Night

A wife, mother, and small business owner makes a difference with just one call.

Alexandria, VA. “I remember thinking, ‘This is terrible!’” shared Laura Wainwright, as she reflected on the struggles of some community members in the Fort Hunt area, where she grew up and resided most of her life. Wainwright was seeing the ongoing and increasing economic disparity between her neighbors, many of whom were having difficulty putting food on their tables. A wife and mother of two who never had to worry about feeding her children, she felt she had to do something. She spoke with key school staff she knew, and with their support, she decided to make one phone call — a call that has since made a difference in the lives of hundreds of local children and their families.

That call was to Food For Neighbors, an all-volunteer nonprofit founded to provide supplemental food to secondary school students who have few, if any, reliable food sources other than the meals they receive at school. The heart of Food For Neighbors is the Red Bag Program, which holds five food collection events throughout the school year. This program mobilizes individuals to shop for nonperishable items and set them on their doorsteps for collection. Volunteers, organized by neighborhoods, collect the food and bring it to central locations, where it is sorted and delivered to participating schools.

At the schools, social workers, counselors, and/or parent liaisons identify students in need and distribute food to them, mostly on a weekly basis. Food For Neighbors also provides shelving and cabinets for school pantries as well as toiletries, holiday meals, and grocery gift cards for the most vulnerable students.

“Food For Neighbors runs like a well-oiled machine,” said Wainwright with enthusiasm. “It has all the documentation and such, which made presenting it to school leadership so easy. The schools sent the information out to their families, and the response from the community has been tremendous.” Now serving as the Food For Neighbors Area Manager for six participating schools in the Fort Hunt area, Wainwright shared, “It was so much easier stepping into the role than I ever thought it would be.”



School Board member Karen Corbett Sanders (far left), Mount Vernon District Representative, joined the Food For Neighbors Fort Hunt Area team and schools in celebrating their partnership in fighting teen food insecurity.

Celebrating Five Years Fighting Teen Hunger

In celebration of its five-year anniversary of partnering with schools to fight teen hunger, Food For Neighbors recognized key volunteers and school administrators. Food For Neighbors began just over five years ago by helping hungry students in two schools. Now the all-volunteer nonprofit is serving approximately 1,700 students weekly in 29 schools in Fairfax County and Loudoun County.

“This is exactly how we wanted Food For Neighbors to work,” explained Karen Joseph, Founder and Executive Director of the now five-year-old non-profit. “Our goal is to make mobilizing community members to help their local schools as easy as possible. With school and community support, we can say ‘yes’ every time we receive a call for assistance. That’s why we’re celebrating our schools and volunteers this school year, as they are key in our fight against teen food insecurity.”

Hunger Is Closer Than You Think
www.FoodForNeighbors.org

During the Food For Neighbors April 30th Red Bag food collection and sorting event, Joseph visited Walt Whitman Middle School, which, under the management of Wainwright, has been serving as the food collection site not only

for Whitman, but also for West Potomac High School, Bryant High School, Mount Vernon High School, Sandburg Middle School, and Quander Road School. There, Joseph lauded Wainwright and her volunteer team including Andrea Wilkinson, Event Coordinator; Mark Wainwright, Driver Coordinator; Siobhan Casey and Katy Kleemann, Red Bag Drop-off Coordinators; and Jackie Fleming, Anniversary Celebration Coordinator.

Joseph also welcomed Karen Corbett Sanders, the Mount Vernon District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board, who noted earlier, “We are forever grateful for the kindness and generosity of Food For Neighbors.” Corbett Sanders added that relationships with trusted adults in

the home, school, and community are key factors in a student’s success. Food For Neighbors inspires and facilitates these relationships.



Andrea Wilkinson (in red), the local event coordinator for Food For Neighbors, led volunteers in sorting food that will support students in six area schools: Walt Whitman Middle School, West Potomac High School, Bryant High School, Sandburg Middle School, Mount Vernon High School, and Quander Road School.



Laura Wainwright (far right), Fort Hunt Area Manager for Food For Neighbors, and Craig Herring (second from right), Principal of Walt Whitman Middle School, were key players in bringing Food For Neighbors services to local schools. Pipi Harrison (not pictured), Director of Student Services at Bryant High School, also played a huge role. Now, Whitman serves as the food hub for six schools in the area. Also pictured are Karen Joseph (far left), Founder of Food for Neighbors, and Karisa Gearheart (second from left), Social Worker at Whitman.

Joseph then highlighted the many area schools and staff that have been making a difference through Food For Neighbors, which reached the Fort Hunt area in October 2019. In all, Joseph recognized six schools, each with its own Food For Neighbors story, as well as the school staff that are key to the program’s success.

Walt Whitman MS
Craig Herring, Principal
Matthew Johnson, Assistant Principal
Karisa Gearheart, Social Worker
Delia Montecinos, UCM Coordinator

SEE THE THINGS THAT. PAGE 14

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Abortion in the Balance

Opponents of abortion rights poised to restrict access to reproductive health.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The right to an abortion in Virginia is hanging by a thread, and the result of next year's election in Virginia may end up being the most consequential moment for reproductive freedom since the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*. In 2023, voters will elect all 100 members of the Virginia House of Delegates and all 40 members of the state Senate. At stake is control of the General Assembly at a time when the court appears to be poised to overturn the federal protections for abortion rights.

"Virginia has the potential of being a safe haven in a post-Roe world," said Tarina Keene, executive director of Pro-Choice Virginia. "But despite our successes over the last couple of years, we now have different political fortunes and our rights actually hang by a one-vote thread."

Democrats control the Virginia Senate with a 21-to-19 majority, although Sen. Joe Morrissey (D-16) opposes abortion rights. That means when bills about abortion are considered on the Senate floor, the vote would be theoretically be tied 20 to 20 with Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Sears breaking the tie in opposition to abortion rights. But because Democrats control the committee process, Senate leaders have been able to prevent abortion legislation from reaching the floor.

"That's a true challenge," said Victoria Cobb, president of the Family Foundation. "We saw this session that they will go to great extremes to make sure that a bill never gets to the floor."

RESTRICTIONS ON ABORTION were a hallmark of the G.O.P. era of Virginia politics that started in the late 1990s, and many Republicans entered politics based on their opposition to abortion rights. Perhaps most infamously in 2012, Republicans were pushing a bill that would have required people seeking abortions to undergo a transvaginal sonogram, a procedure in which a wand is inserted into the vagina to get an image of the fetus. Critics said this procedure was invasive, especially considering the alternative possibility of requiring a less-invasive abdominal ultrasound. The bill became a punch line for late night comedians.

"Transvaginal is my favorite airline," cracked Amy Poehler on *Saturday Night Live*. "I have so many miles on Transvaginal that they upgraded me to ladybusiness."

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET

Opponents of abortion rights rally at the Capitol in 2019.

"Virginia has the potential of being a safe haven in a post-Roe world. But despite our successes over the last couple of years, we now have different political fortunes and our rights actually hang by a one-vote thread."

— Tarina Keene, executive director of Pro-Choice Virginia

"Oh man! Transvaginal ultrasound?" joked Jon Stewart of the *Daily Show* on Comedy Central. "The 15-member jazz fusion chorus band? Those guys are awesome! I saw them at the Beacon in '94. They were amazing!"

When Democrats took control of the General Assembly in 2020, one of their top priorities was stripping away all the restrictions Republicans put in place over the last 20 years. The new majorities in the House and Senate took swift action to remove a requirement for an ultrasound test, eliminate a waiting period and expand the eligibility of clinics to perform the procedure. They also removed hospital construction standards for abortion clinics, strict requirements for how wide the hallways needed to be or how much parking was available.

"The bottom line here is once a woman decides to have an abortion, it should be

safe, it should be affordable and it should be free of punishment or judgement," said state Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33) at a press conference in January 2020.

ABORTION RIGHTS became a flashpoint in the election for governor last year when then-candidate Glenn Youngkin was caught on surreptitiously recorded audio admitting that he planned to limit his comments on abortion. The recording was made in Loudoun County by a liberal activist and posted online by the liberal news outlet *The American Independent* then aired on "The ReidOut" on MSNBC. In the recording, the first-time candidate told an antiabortion activist he planned to remain silent about his agenda during the campaign.

"When I'm governor and I have a majority in the House, we can start going on offense," said Youngkin. "But as a campaign topic,

sadly, that in fact won't win my independent votes that I have to get."

Youngkin spent the duration of the campaign refusing to take a position on things like an ultrasound requirement or hospital construction standards. Democrats believed they had a winning campaign issue, especially after Texas enacted a new law banning abortion after six weeks of pregnancy. Democrats campaigned on the issue and lost control of the House of Delegates and all three statewide offices.

"I'm pro-life," declared Youngkin at a Republican Governors Association meeting shortly after the election. "I believe in exceptions in the case of rape, incest and when the mother's life is in jeopardy."

THE POLITICS OF ABORTION isn't always as predictable as expected. Back in 2019, then-Gov. Ralph Northam appeared on WTOP and seemed to suggest that late-term abortions might be carried after an infant is delivered. Antiabortion activists were certain this would be a campaign issue in 2019, but that was the year Democrats swept into power. Then, last year, Democrats were certain the surreptitiously recorded audio of Youngkin would help them but instead Republicans swept all three statewide races and seized control of the House of Delegates.

"This time is different," said former Republican Delegate David Ramadan, now a professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. "The distinction now is if the Supreme Court is going to overturn *Roe versus Wade*, now the issue becomes truly an election issue in November, not just a brochure issue or a litmus test issue."

Since the draft opinion was leaked to Politico earlier this week, the issue has galvanized many supporters of abortion rights. Here in Virginia, it's crystallized the importance of the 2023 election and what it would mean for reproductive rights in Virginia. Democrats issued a flurry of written statements urging Congress to codify the right to abortion into the federal code while Republicans are trying to punish the leaker.

"Democrats are raising a lot of money. A lot of women are getting mobilized. There's a lot of energy and anger from women about this," said Democratic strategist Ben Tribbett. "But that will all either snowball to something larger or disappear depending on what the Supreme Court actually does when the opinion comes out."

OPINION

Mount Vernon High School celebrated the finalists of the Letter to the Editor contest with the announcement of the winners March 24 in the MVHS auditorium. Eight finalists were honored with Makayla Adams named as the first-place winner. Here we are printing the finalists and winning letter.

To the editor:
With the advancement of technology came the creation of social media, it is safe to say that it has become a key part of many young people's lives. Much of the growth we have experienced with technology has been positive. Despite the seemingly endless good, social media has produced many repercussions. Possibly most detrimental, being the toll on the mental health of its users.

Despite what it may seem like at first glance, social media can actually make its users feel more isolated. Texting is no replacement for face to face conversation, and many young adults who have only ever used the internet to communicate, are deprived of basic social skills. Humans are naturally social creatures and connection with others is just as vital to our health as food or water.

A possible solution to this dilemma could be quite simple. No need to pass legislation banning social media platforms or anything that extreme, but rather educating young people to keep a healthy balance between social media use and personal communication.

The internet can be used as a tool to make the world a better place for everyone, however we must be weary of the ramifications that come with it.

Makayla Adams
Grade: 10th

To the Editor of the Mount Vernon Gazette:

Communication and understanding will be the basis of healthy intergenerational relationships. Children learn about the past, so adults must learn of the future. Older generations need to understand our generation, embrace social media, and accept the LGBT+ community.

It's critical that older generations see social media as more than a cause for depression and anxiety. The article Ups and Downs of Social Media asserts that social media isn't completely negative; it is an important part of the world today. It proves its importance through allowing us to express ourselves freely and connect with others like us.

The acceptance of the LGBT+ community can be difficult for older generations to grapple with. The stigma against LGBT+ is detrimental to many in the community. In the article The Impact of Stigma and Discrimination against LGBT People in Virginia it is expressed that, "...statewide statutes in Virginia do not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity..." This means that people can be turned away simply because of how they identify. Nobody should live in fear of what could happen if they expressed themselves freely.

No generation is perfect, but with communication and understanding, we have a chance.

Ace (Emily) Naylor
Grade: 9th



Mount Vernon High School Letter to the Editor contest finalists Afra Ofori, left, and Rachel Adu, right, celebrate with first place winner Makayla Adams March 24 at MVHS.

JANET BARNETT/THE GAZETTE

To the Editor:

My generation is just a cluster of individuals trying to figure themselves out. With each step we take in our lives, we come to be less ashamed of who we are and what we want to be. We say proudly, "I have anxiety," and "I don't think college is the path for me." We don't stand for what is accepted, but rather what is right. From Black Lives Matter to the LGBTQ+ movement, we are just a generation longing for equality and justice. Left with no choice, it is up to us to see the potential in the earth we walk on. It is up to us to save our planet by recognizing and taking action when it comes to changes in our climate. From Greta Thunberg to Oluwatoyin Salau, there is no age limit to speak up. TikTok, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, there is a place for you to amplify your voice. Even though social media brings light to the unseen, the undeniable social standards cause suicide rates to only increase, but most of all, loneliness and depression. So as you can see, we aren't perfect, but the goal is not to be flawless, but rather to be understood.

Afia Ofori
Grade: 10th

To the Editor of the Mount Vernon Gazette:

Being a fourteen year old, I possess a phone and computer that I am using constantly to talk to friends, listen to music, play video games, etc. just like everyone else my age. I also enjoy talking to people in real life and meeting up with friends; I really try to keep an even mix of virtual and physical communication with friends and family which I personally think I do a good job at. I have friends that live across the country and overseas that I could never keep connected with without the aid of technology. I feel that it's important to keep an even, healthy balance between these two forms of communication.

A lot of people say that having only friends over the internet can lead to feelings of loneliness, poor social skills and of course, a general feeling of isolation

SEE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, PAGE 7



Rex Reiley
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Overturning Settled Law

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

Like so many of you, I was alarmed and dismayed by last night's news from the Supreme Court. In a draft decision of the court case challenging the right to abortion care – *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* – the Supreme Court intends to overrule *Roe v. Wade*, dismantling the fundamental right to abortion and overturning nearly 50 years of settled law. While this leaked draft may not represent the final positions of the Justices, this draft gives us an idea of the reality we could soon be faced with if this fundamental right is overturned. At this moment in time, one thing remains clear: abortion is still legal federally as we do not have an official Supreme Court ruling and access to healthcare remains unchanged.

Should we see *Roe* overturned this June and the end of federal protections of abortion rights, abortion will remain legal here in Virginia. However, the Guttmacher Institute predicts that 26 states will immediately ban or severely restrict abortion due to "trigger laws" already on the books, which we do not have in Virginia.



Those most at risk from these bans remain people of color, trans and nonbinary individuals, those with low incomes, and people who live in rural communities where healthcare may be far away and difficult to access. Sadly, this is nothing new. We've seen efforts to restrict abortion access across the country for decades now. These efforts to restrict abortion are counter-productive, for studies have shown that abortion rates are highest in countries that legally restrict them.

Unfortunately, too many anti-abortion proponents also oppose solutions that reduce the rate of unplanned pregnancies such as free contraceptives, comprehensive sex education, and expanded health care. People with access to these resources are less likely to experience an unplanned pregnancy. So, we should be doing more to support women and their families, as well as promoting reproductive autonomy at all levels.

Nearly 80% of Virginians believe access to abortion should be legal within the framework of *Roe v. Wade*. So, now, with a stark and uncertain future ahead, the right to an abortion

will be decided at the state level, where we will depend on our elected officials in Richmond to protect our rights. Just this year we saw attempts made in the General Assembly to restrict abortion access.

Fortunately, House Democrats were united as we voted against abortion restrictions, and Senate Democrats blocked attempts to ban abortion. But remember, these dangerous restrictions were blocked from becoming law by a one-seat majority in the State Senate. It would not take much to lose that Senate seat or to prevent my Democratic colleagues in the House from picking up the three seats needed to take back the House of Delegates and ensure that these rights are preserved.

Indeed, if Democrats don't prevail in the next election it is no exaggeration to say that we could lose the right to make our own decisions on something as personal and complex as to when and whether to become a parent.

The right to conceive, carry, or end a pregnancy should always remain a private decision between a pregnant person and their healthcare provider. I remain a committed advocate for reproductive freedom and will fight to ensure the right to a safe and legal abortion in Virginia.

Loss of Trees Is a Tragedy

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT



It hurts, it's wrong and it must change. You may have seen the start of construction and removal of large, established trees

at the former Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church at 6510 Fort Hunt Road. The Church closed its doors on May 23, 2021, after serving the Mount Vernon community for 67 years, and the site was subsequently sold to Evergreene Homes. The proceeds from the sale of the church were donated to many local charities that serve the Mount Vernon community.

Unfortunately, this project is by-right per the zoning ordinance, with the developer building 7 homes on 7 parcels zoned R-4. The developer does not need approval from the County to build these homes, nor does the County have the legal right to stop or restrict that property's development. The County does review the site plans for the project to ensure that the development meets County, state, and federal regulations. However, these regulations are not enough to protect our trees, stormwater management and older commu-

nities. You can learn more about the zoning ordinance and what is permissible in an R4 district here: <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/fairfax-county-va/doc-viewer.aspx?secid=490#secid-490>

Most communities in Mount Vernon District are established. We are continuing to see more by-right re-development as people want to move here and undeveloped land is generally no longer available. After seeing the results of other projects and hearing from many of you, in January I established an Infill Development Task Force composed of community leaders, builders, State Delegate Paul Krizek and State Senator Scott Surovell, with technical support from county staff, to review our processes, options and needed changes. You can find out more information about the Task Force here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/infill-development-task-force-idtf>

Before the development of this site began in mid-April, the developer held a meeting with adjacent property owners on March 30 to review the plans and answer community questions. During the meeting, the developer advised



that they would be replanting 8-10 trees per lot, per their approved "Tree Preservation Plan". This meeting recording is available to view on the Infill Development Task Force website noted above.

As a long time Mount Vernon resident, tree hugger, nature lover, outdoor enthusiast and the Chair of the County's Environmental Committee, I absolutely understand that we must find a way to preserve our trees and the charac-

ter of our established communities regardless of the development. And, if it were simple, my predecessor and I would have found a way to address it a long time ago, as we know the impacts it has and has had on our neighborhoods for decades. I will continue to work with you to address these challenges. To learn more, I encourage you to participate in the Infill Development Task Force meetings, which are open to the public.

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A Connection Newspaper



OPINION

FROM PAGE 5

and I agree with this claim. In my opinion, technology does not directly lead to the feeling of isolation if used correctly; that means when we are out with our friends or family in the real world, we should put our phones in our pockets and enjoy their company.

Summary: Technology does not directly lead to feelings of isolation and if relationships over the internet and through real life are healthily balanced, technology can only help you feel more connected with others.

Ethan Lucas

To the editor:

Everyone has been affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic. However, the impact of the pandemic and its consequences are felt differently depending on our status as individuals. Before the pandemic, I was a so-

cial butterfly who loved speaking in public, making new friends, and trying new activities. As soon as covid hit, I stopped talking to my friends since everyone was busy. I spent time with myself which I don't usually do. I used my phone less often. I thought everything was fine until school started in person. I started feeling really weird. Anytime someone gets close to me or starts talking to me, I start to get nervous and shaky. When this happened the first time, I didn't think too much about it but as time went on, I realized this kept happening to me repeatedly. I had developed social anxiety. Whenever a teacher was marking attendance, I kept practicing on how I would say "here". When presenting in class, I would freeze on spot. I realized how much this pandemic has really affected me. I am getting better now and I hope this coronavirus pandemic ends quickly so we can go back to the life we once lived.

Jovana Allotey
Grade: 10th

LIVING LEGENDS

Durham to Host Living Legends Event

Newest Legends to be honored May 18.

Monte Durham, fashion director of the TLC hit "Say Yes to the Dress: Atlanta," will be the host of the upcoming Meet the Legends reception May 18 at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

The reception, postponed from March of 2020, will honor the 2020 Living Legends of Alexandria. Those being honored include: Carol and Ryan Bailey; Frank Fannon IV; Tom and Magaly Hirst; Rosa Landeros; McArthur Myers; Virginia and Richard Obranovich; Bill Reagan; Donald Simpson Jr.; and Lindsey Swanson and Katey Halasz.

Tickets are \$65 per person and include a reception catered by the HomeGrown Restaurant Group with desserts by Alexandria Cupcake.

Tickets are available at www.AlexandriaLegends.org

--JEANNE THEISMANN



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Monte Durham will be the host of the Meet the Legends reception May 18 at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through December 21), 18 farmers and local food producers will sell fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits; meats; Chesapeake Bay seafood; breads

and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs and plants; and more.

This year's vendors are:

- Arnest Seafood - crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more
- The Fermented Pig- charcuterie and gourmet bacons
- Grace's Pastries - cakes, pastries and breads, with a Caribbean touch
- Great Harvest Bread - breads and pastries
- Honey Brook Farms - meats and vegetables raised with no chemicals, gluten-free

SEE BULLETIN. PAGE 10

2nd Annual

ALEXANDRIA OLD TOWN Springtime Art Festival

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Mark your calendar for the fall show!

September 17th - 18th, 2022

Over the Edge Rappelling fundraiser to benefit New Hope Housing.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Greg Garcia, a native Arlingtonian and Emmy-winning creator of the TV show My Name is Earl, will be one of 70 participants to rappel down 14 stories of the Crystal City Hilton May 6 as part of the Over the Edge fundraiser to benefit Alexandria-based New Hope Housing.

Billed as "14 Stories of Hope," the fundraiser is a partnership between New Hope Housing, Keller Williams MetroCenter and the Crystal City Hilton.

"Greg has been a longtime supporter of ours," said New Hope Director of Development Jan-Michael Sacharko. "Back in 2008, the cast of My Name is Earl was on Celebrity Family Feud and wanted to play for a local organization so he called his mom, who told him about New Hope Housing."

Garcia will be joined by his wife Kim; together they have raised more than \$30,000 in donations for the Over the Edge event. More than \$200,000 has been raised

from various individuals and corporations in support of New Hope Housing.

"It's been a challenging two years," Sacharko said. "New Hope Housing had its spring fundraiser scheduled for March 14, 2020. March 13 was the national shutdown due to the pandemic. We had already paid our vendors in full and the venue itself ended up going bankrupt so we lost a lot of money."

Sacharko reached out to longtime supporter Christine Sennott of KW MetroCenter, who suggested the next fundraiser be something COVID-friendly.

"No one knew how long the shutdown would last," Sacharko said. "I had heard about the Over the Edge organization so when they called last year with an opening in 2022, we jumped at the chance to participate."

In addition to Garcia, participants in the event will include local dignitaries and area residents, each of whom have raised a minimum of \$1,000 in donations to secure a spot to rappel 160-feet down the Crystal City Hilton. All funds will support New Hope Housing, a nonprofit agency providing shelter,

"We are looking forward to an exciting day and a chance to help the homeless in Northern Virginia."

— Jan-Michael Sacharko of New Hope Housing

permanent supportive housing, outreach and support services for homeless single adults in Fairfax County, Alexandria, Arlington County and the City of Falls Church.

"The high cost of housing and comparatively lower wages is the primary driver of homelessness in this area," Sacharko said. "This event will help us raise money as well as awareness for the issue of homelessness and the services that New Hope Housing can provide."

The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the public is invited to cheer on rappellers in "The Landing Zone," an all-day festival

at the base of the hotel featuring food, music and booths from event sponsors. Walk-up opportunities to rappel may be available.

The Landing Zone is sponsored by Ourisman Automotive and UPS. Major sponsors include: TV One Networks, TRUIST, Virginia Housing, Modern Technology Solutions, Inc., Sportrock Climbing Centers, and more. "We are looking forward to an exciting day and the chance to help the homeless in Northern Virginia," Sacharko said.

To learn more about the event or to donate, visit www.otenewhope.com



Greg Garcia, a native Arlingtonian and Emmy-winning creator of My Name is Earl, will be a participant in the Over the Edge rappelling fundraiser for New Hope Housing May 6 at the Crystal City Hilton.



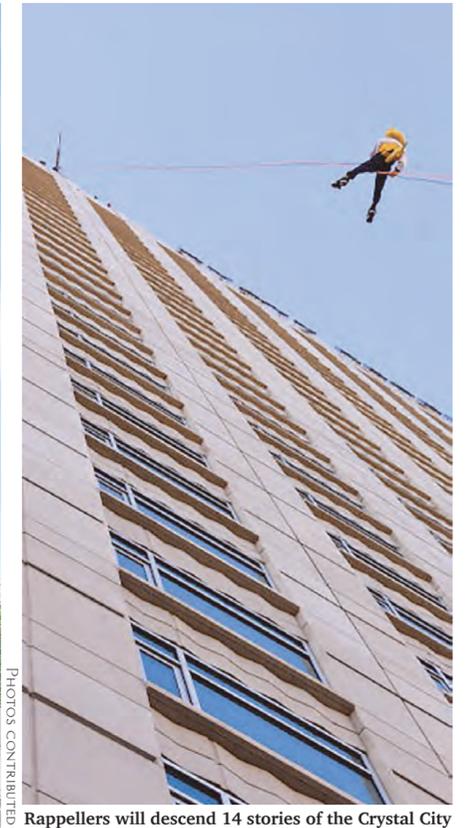
The Crystal City Hilton will be the site of the May 6 Over the Edge rappelling fundraiser for New Hope Housing.



Arlington resident Naaz Farooqi moves into her new home in November of 2020 thanks to help from services provided from Alexandria-based New Hope Housing.



More than 70 rappellers will descend the Crystal City Hilton May 6 as part of the Over the Edge fundraiser for New Hope Housing.



Rappellers will descend 14 stories of the Crystal City Hilton May 6 as part of the Over the Edge fundraiser for New Hope Housing.

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MAY 5 - JUDY HEISER

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MAY 12 - RUTHANN CARR

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MAY 19 - OPEN HOUSE

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MAY 26 - "BEACH" EXHIBIT

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Be a Part of Mother's Day Photo Gallery

As usual every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery. Mother's Day is Sunday, May 8. This year we will continue to publish submissions through the May 18th edition. Photo submissions are due by Monday, May 16, but now is the right time to submit your photos.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate

date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and information directly using the form at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/> or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

This is also a fine time for submissions for our annual Father's Day galleries. Submit them online [HERE http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/fathersday/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/fathersday/)

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

- baked goods
 - House of Empanadas –variety of empanadas
 - King Mushrooms –variety of locally grown mushrooms
 - Layla's Lebanese Restaurant – Lebanese hummus, eggplant dip, garlic sauce and more
 - Linda Vista Farm - fruits and vegetables, specializing in Asian and Latin produce
 - Memis - gluten-free paellas, quiches and more
 - Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs
 - Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers
 - Salsa Las Glorias - fresh salsas, guacamole and chips
 - Sharkawi Farm - herbs, spices, teas, plants and flowers
 - Three Way Farms – vegetables, melons and herbs
 - Traveling Shepherd Coffee Co. – variety of freshly roasted coffee
 - Twin Springs Orchard - fruits, vegetables, cheese and more
 - Valentine's Bakery & Meats - meats and baked goods.
- All of the items sold at the market are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within a radius of 125 miles. The McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon market is one of 10 farmers markets run by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA); for more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmers-markets.

tions Board has made permanent a policy implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow full-size bicycles on every VRE railcar each weekday. VRE's bicycle policy has several requirements to protect the safety of passengers and crew. Cyclists must tether their bike to a railcar's south end bench seats with a bungee cord and may not ride the bicycle on platforms or trains. Learn more at www.vre.org.

PUBLIC INVITED

TO REVIEW FLOOD MAPS

FEMA is proposing updates to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Fairfax County. Community partners are invited to participate in a 90-day appeal and comment period. The updated maps were produced in coordination with local, state and FEMA officials. Significant community review of the maps has already taken place, but before the maps become final, community partners can identify any corrections or questions about the information provided and submit appeals or comments.

The 90-day appeal period will begin on or around April 22, 2022. Residents, business owners and other community partners are encouraged to review the updated maps to learn about local flood risks and potential future flood insurance requirements. They may submit an appeal if they perceive that mod-

VRE TO CONTINUE TO ALLOW BICYCLES ON ALL TRAINS
The Virginia Railway Express Opera-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 10

eling or data used to create the map is technically or scientifically incorrect.
 An appeal must include technical information, such as hydraulic or hydrologic data, to support the claim.
 Appeals cannot be based on the effects of proposed projects or projects started after the study is in progress.
 If property owners see incorrect information that does not change the flood hazard information—such as a missing or misspelled road name in the Special Flood Hazard Area or an incorrect corporate boundary—they can submit a written comment.
 The next step in the mapping process is the resolution of all comments and appeals. Once they are resolved, FEMA will notify communities of the effective date of the final maps.
 Submit appeals and comments by contacting Mr. Dipmani Kumar at Dipmani.Kumar@fairfaxcounty.gov. The preliminary maps may be viewed online at the FEMA Flood Map Changes Viewer: <http://msc.fema.gov/fmcv>. Changes from the current maps may be viewed online at the Region 3 Changes Since Last FIRM Viewer: <https://arcg.is/09vTC4>.

TUESDAY/MAY 17

MV Genealogical's 30th Anniversary. 1-3 p.m. At 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. If you've ever been interested in finding your family history, there's no better time to give us a visit. The Mount Vernon Genealogical Society is celebrating 30 years of helping neighbors and friends find their family history. Visit the website: www.mvgenealogy.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at www.seniorscientist.org. To volunteer, contact donaldrea@aol.com.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

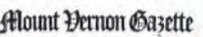


Special Connections Calendar 2022

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursdays unless noted.

MAY	
5/4/2022.....	Wellbeing
5/11/2022.....	HomeLifeStyle
5/18/2022.....	A+ Camps & Schools
5/25/2022.....	Senior Living
JUNE	
6/1/2022.....	Wellbeing
6/8/2022.....	HomeLifeStyle
6/15/2022.....	A+ Camps & Schools
6/22/2022.....	Senior Living
6/29/2022.....	Summer Fun

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CALENDAR

NOW THRU MAY 28 (SATURDAYS)

Washington Whiskey Tasting. 2-5 p.m.

At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. At this outdoor event, sample George Washington's whiskey and other distilled spirits made at Washington's Distillery.

Enjoy a rare opportunity to taste Mount Vernon's one-of-a-kind distilled Spirits. Sample 3 distilled spirits, made using 18th-century distilling methods and techniques. Hear from Mount Vernon's Historic Trades team about the history of distilling spirits, and tour George Washington's Distillery. This event is held at George Washington's Distillery & Gristmill which is located 2.7 miles from the main estate entrance.

NOW THRU MAY 29

Canvas Meets Curve. At the Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Sabiha Iqbal and Paul Cunningham have been painting, critiquing, and exhibiting with a group of local artists since they met at the Corcoran School of Art and Design seven years ago. The Athenaeum show is the first joint exhibition for the two artists. While the formal aspects of their work appear very different, they have always been struck by the ways in which their bodies of work echo each other. At times their color palettes converge serendipitously, while the abstract figurations in Sabiha's canvases play off the bends and curves of Paul's three-dimensional pieces. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

NOW THRU JUNE 5

"SeeWorthy" Exhibit. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Studio #9, Alexandria. View ship construction through the eyes of maritime archaeologists in SeeWorthy, a new exhibit from Alexandria Archaeology highlighting the technology used to digitally reconstruct historic vessels. Recent development along the waterfront has led to significant discoveries by archaeologists, including the remains of four historic ships. These remnants have been laser scanned to create models showing what they would have looked like in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

NOW THRU JUNE 12

MVUC Greenhouse Plant Sale. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Weekends only. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. The Annual Spring Plant Sale at the MVUC Greenhouse opens April 2 and 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., weekends only. They have a variety of vegetables and flowers for sale again this year. Lots of regular and heirloom tomatoes and not-too-hot peppers (more than 20 different varieties) as well as some of your favorite perennials, annuals, and herbs. Visit the lovely, old greenhouse and buy some new plants for your spring garden.

NOW THRU JULY 9

Retrospective Art Deco Exhibition. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive in Alexandria. The first retrospective on the work of Art Deco designer Edgard Sforzina will open April 30th at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial during the Art Deco So-



The Spring Wine Festival & Sunset Tour will take place May 13-15 at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

ciety of Washington's 39th annual Washington Modernism Show. Discount tickets are available at www.washingtonmodernismshow.com.

THURSDAY/MAY 5

Mary Sarah Bilder Female Genius: Eliza Harriot and George Washington at the Dawn of the Constitution. 7 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon. Eliza Harriot was a path-breaking female educator and the first public female lecturer; her courageous performance likely inspired the gender-neutral language of the Constitution. Cost is \$60 individual lecture/\$175 series. Discount for members. Visit mountvernon.org/michellesmith

THURSDAY/MAY 5

Making Art Splash. 6-9 p.m. At Colasanto Park, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. For "First Thursday", come create a "Washington Color Rule-the-School" canvas in Colasanto Park outside the Del Ray Artisans gallery, and recreate a Gene Davis Stripe Sidewalk Painting. Details: <https://delray-artisans.org/calendar/#event=first-thursday-2022>

MAY 5-8

The Greene Turtle Events. At 7879 Heneska Loop in the Hilltop Village Center in Alexandria.

Thursday, May 5 – Cinco de Mayo: The Greene Turtle is celebrating Cinco with \$5 drink specials on Corona, Dos Equis, Cazadores Shot, Margaritas and Modelo. Additionally, guests can indulge in any two tacos for \$5 (offer available at select locations).

Friday, May 6 – Nurses Day: Nurses will receive a free entrée (up to \$12 value) when they show their ID/badge (offer available at select locations).

Sunday, May 8 – Mother's Day: Mom's and maternal figures of any kind will receive a free dessert with the purchase of an entrée (offer available at select locations).

MAY 6-28

The "Drips, Lines, Splatters, and Splash: A Celebration of the Washington Color School" exhibit channels art spotlighting this movement. Juror Barbara Janusz-kiewicz selected artwork exhibiting remarkable use of color, move-

ment, line, and sense of space, both representational and abstract. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Home-Grown Fruit Garden. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Fresh-picked berries for breakfast! What could be better? Learn how to grow small fruits in your own backyard. Green Spring staff will explain how to plant, care for, and harvest small fruits such as cane raspberries, strawberries, melons, figs, hardy kiwi and persimmons. See these plants up close in the Green Spring fruit garden. Wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather. \$18 per person. Code FJU.90LC. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-takes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Spring Pop-Up Market for Mother's Day. 1 to 5 p.m. At Pat Miller Neighborhood Square at Mount Vernon Ave. and E Oxford Ave., Alexandria. Just in time for Mother's Day, the Spring Pop-Up Market provides the chance to discover unique gifts made by local entrepreneurs and artisans. The market will occupy Pat Miller Neighborhood Square, the site of the weekly farmers' market. Visit visitdelray.com.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

RecFest. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Armistead L. Boothe Park, 520 Cameron Station Blvd., Alexandria. RecFest is a free day of family fun, with activities representing the City's fitness, sports, enrichment, arts, nature, out-of-school time, and summer camp programs. Attendees can enjoy demos, meet instructors and staff, and register for programs and camps on-site. RecFest will also feature activities, such as face painting, a moon bounce, balloon art, live animal demonstrations, hands-on science, craft projects, and art activities with the City's Mobile Art Lab. Visit alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Spring Art Market. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Colasanto Park, outside the Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The Spring Art Market is a one-day, outdoor event that gives you the chance to purchase original handcrafted artwork from talented local artists. It includes a wide range of media including ceramics, fiber, jewelry, mixed media, paper, photography, and more. Shop original work from local artists—perfect for gifts or treat yourself. Visit the website: <https://delrayartisans.org/exhibits/#event=spring-art-market-2022>

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs, 50 cents for large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Dragon Fest. 12-4 p.m. At George Mason Elementary School, 2601 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Featuring a family-friendly community fair and online auction to benefit the George Mason PTA. Featuring raffles, kid activities, face painting, food trucks, a magician and music from the George Mason band and orchestra.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

U.S. Colored Troops Encampment at Fort Ward. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Fort Ward Museum, Alexandria. This living history event will feature an encampment of reenactors from units such as the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, Co. B, and the 23rd USCT. Activities will include camp life, drilling, displays on the USCT, and interpretation of the African American soldiers who served the Union war effort. Units trained and stationed in the Civil War Defenses of Washington will

be highlighted. Visit alexandriava.gov/FortWard.

MAY 7, 14, 21, 28

Pillars to Pavers. 10 a.m. At Lee-Fendall House & Gardens, Alexandria. Since the 1960s, the City of Alexandria has seen older buildings and spaces being restored, preserved, and reused in different ways. In honor of National Historic Preservation Month, explore the streets of Alexandria with stops inside several historic buildings to highlight how they have been preserved and adapted for future generations to enjoy. Call 703-548-1789 or email contact@leefendallhouse.org.

MAY 7-8

"Beauty and the Beast." 12 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Temple, Callahan Drive, Alexandria. More than 40 Metropolitan School of the Arts students will perform "Beauty and the Beast." "Beauty and the Beast" spring ballet tells the story of Belle, one of the most beloved princesses, who finds herself on an adventure that she had only read about in books. Visit the website: <http://metropolitanarts.org>

SUNDAY/MAY 8

Mother's Day Tea. 11 a.m. At Carlyle House Historic Park, Alexandria. Treat your mother, grandmother, or special woman in your life to an elegant afternoon tea. Relax in the beautiful setting of our Magnolia Terrace and enjoy tableside service and scrumptious food catered by Ultimate Events for an unforgettable day. Registration required no refunds. Ticket sales end April 29th. \$48 per adult, \$28 per child (6-12), children under 5 are free.

THURSDAY/MAY 12

Outdoor Lute Concert. 6:30-7:30 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess Street, 711 Princess St., Alexandria. The splendor of luteist Ronn McFarlane returns to the Secret Garden, joined by Carolyn Surrick for an imaginative program of early music for the combination of lute and viola da gamba, the Renaissance precursor to the modern cello, including iconic works by Dowland, Telemann and Bach. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

FRIDAY/MAY 13

The Thirteen Presents. 7:30 p.m. At Episcopal High School Chapel, Alexandria. Presenting Molly Netter, Soprano, and Emily Marvosh, Mezzo Soprano. The Outer Edge of Youth is a new choral opera from composer-writer-director Scott Ordway commissioned by The Thirteen.

FRIDAY/MAY 13

The Late Shift: Art & Technology. 7 to 10 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Celebrate the growing tech, DIY and makerspace movement happening in Alexandria and beyond, with music, drinks, and demonstrations. The event will feature makerspace and tech partners from across the DC, Virginia, and Maryland regions. Plus, welcome the Solo Exhibition artist in Target Gallery with a reception at 8 p.m. Call 703-746-4590. Visit torpedofactory.org

CALENDAR

MAY 13-15

Spring Wine Festival & Sunset Tour. 6 to 9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. George Washington's Mount Vernon invites you attend its most popular event of the year. Taste unlimited samples of wines from Virginia's finest wineries. Bring a blanket and relax on the east lawn overlooking the Potomac River and meet George and Lady Washington on the Piazza. VIP tables are available for purchase and include private waiter service. Admission: Friday: \$49 for members; \$59 for non-members; Saturday: \$53 for members; \$63 for non-members; Sunday: \$43 for members; \$53 for non-members. Call 703-780-2000. Visit mountvernon.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 14

Spring Garden Day—The Big Plant Sale. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (All ages) Local garden vendors descend on Green Spring Gardens with beautiful and unusual plants to fill your spring gardening needs. Growers and Extension Master Gardeners will be on hand to help with plant selection and offer gardening advice. Proceeds help to support the gardens. For more information, call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/MAY 14

AWLA Yard Sale. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At the Animal League of Alexandria, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. The AWLA's Junior Volunteers are hosting a Spring Yard Sale. Find a variety of pet supplies at great prices and enjoy yummy human treats from our Bake Sale table. All proceeds from the event will benefit animals through the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

MAY

Thu. May 5: Live Nation Presents Warren Zeiders \$15.00
 Fri. May 6: The North Star Band "CD Release Show" & The Billy Price Band \$35.00
 Fri/Sat. May 6&7: Robin Trower \$55.00
 Sat. May 7: Catie Offerman to open for Caitlyn Smith.
 Sun. May 8: Gavin DeGraw \$65.00
 Tue. May 10: Foy Vance 'Signs of Life Tour' w/ Lee Rogers & Gareth Dunlop \$35.00
 Wed. May 11: Lilli Lewisto open for Carsie Blaton. \$35
 Thu. May 12: Marcus Miller \$69.50
 Fri. May 13: Elijah Blake \$29.50
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Compartmentalize This



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

With all the physical problems and emotional challenges, a typical cancer patient undergoing treatment experiences, one's attitude is a significant contributor to the eventual outcome. My approach has been to never let the mental anguish and disappointment in my presumptive adjusted life expectancy (I was originally diagnosed as "terminal." Now I'm not really classified since I'm in a rather unique situation. My current diagnosis of papillary thyroid cancer stage IV is not usually a "terminal" condition. However, due to a misdiagnosis, my thyroid cancer has progressed to the point where it's not nearly as "friendly" as it could have been. And by 'friendly,' I mean curable as papillary thyroid cancer is often called "the friendly cancer" due to its positive prognosis. Right now, I would say I'm precarious more than "terminal" though life goes on without too much ado/negative effect) overwhelm me. In short, I still believe (certainly hope) I'm in it for the long haul.

And being a cancer patient with or without non-small cell lung cancer stage IV (my original diagnosis) is indeed a long haul. As discussed in a previous column: "The Cancer Effect," there are innumerable and ongoing appointments and conditions making it difficult for one to ignore the very real fact that I have cancer and one that, due to years of mistreatment, the cancer has imbedded itself in my collarbone and as such, turned a curable form of cancer into an incurable one. Moreover, one whose treatment is simple enough (after having a thyroidectomy), one pill a day and no infusions. But a pill whose window of effectiveness ends in Sept. '23, three years after I started the regimen for papillary thyroid cancer (according to current medical data) and for which there's no better available medication waiting in the wings. Granted, medicine isn't arithmetic, and my window may be open longer – or shorter. Nevertheless, if I allow myself to think about it, I don't likely have left nearly as much life as I had long anticipated. But I don't think about it, and that's the point of this column.

Obviously, one can't ignore the fact that he or she has cancer. There are constant reminders; in how you feel, how you think, how you look, how you're reacted to by others and how you integrate all your cancer demons into something like a manageable routine. Somehow, it all must become normal and no big deal, and just another day at that. If you let its abnormality define and/or control your life, then cancer wins and maybe even makes you sicker than your physical condition would otherwise warrant.

Respecting that cancer is in and of itself, bad enough (physically), I'm not going to make it worse mentally by "woeing" is me and therein likely exacerbate my symptoms, further weaken my immune system, and much sooner rather than later, suffer severe consequences as a result.

My enduring philosophy: "I have cancer. So what?!"

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

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NEWS

The Things that Keep Me Up at Night

FROM PAGE 1

West Potomac HS

Tanganylika Millard, Principal
Whitney McDonough, Social Worker
Lauren Heslep, Social Worker
Tanya Stamos, PTA President
Tracy Dunn, PTA President Elect

Bryant HS

Christopher Larrick, Principal
Karen Hertel, Assistant Principal
Marilyn Moore, Assistant Principal
Florence (Pipi) Harrison, Director of Student Services

Sandburg MS

Darwin Barker, Principal
Haleh Royanian, Social Worker (Named pronounced as "Hailey")

Mount Vernon HS

Jovon Rogers, Principal
Rodine Aboul Hosn, Social Worker

Quander Road School

Frank Tranfa, Principal
Greta Nichols Thomas, Counselor

While the brief recognition ceremony ensued, vehicle after vehicle loaded with Red Bag food and toiletry donations continued to arrive. Across Northern Virginia, over 18,000 pounds of food were collected to make a direct, positive impact on the lives of area students.

Attesting to this impact, Craig Herring, Principal of Walt Whitman Middle School where 60-70% of students qualify for free/reduced price school meals, emphasized that Food For Neighbors has provided a consistent and reliable food source for students. "When I first arrived at Whitman, I found kids wandering the halls looking for food," he said. "Many had pieced together support from teachers who were personally purchasing and providing snacks, but this and various short-lived weekend food programs were not consistent resources. Food For Neighbors provides that consistency and stability." Herring stressed the importance of knowing one's community, as many won't ask for support until relationships are built, and he added that, like the Food For Neighbors program, the support given has to be accessible, easy and positive.

Herring was a key player in helping Wainwright bring Food For Neighbors to Whitman and making the school an ongoing hub of food support for nearby secondary schools. He is troubled by the significant economic disparity in an area that is home to the most expensive house in Virginia and, at the same time, to neighborhoods consisting of living spaces cobbled together with plywood or made out of small hitched trailers. He is passionate about providing support to each student as a whole, and he has recruited friends who enjoy providing and/or picking up food donations in support of Food For Neighbors. He also gets students involved, which is a perfect fit for the IB school and its teaching of the importance of global citizenship.

Equally passionate is Pipi Harrison, the

Director of Student Services at nearby Bryant High School. Harrison also noted the huge economic disparity, with much poverty in and around the Route 1 corridor. Bryant has 175 students, already facing life struggles ranging from being young parents to suffering homelessness. Hunger is just one of these struggles, and all of her Bryant students receive Food For Neighbors support.

She shared that her students' parents often say, "It's one thing for me to go to bed hungry, but another for my child." She furthered that Food For Neighbors lightens the load of parents, who may then focus on other important needs like obtaining eyeglasses and dental care for their children. Harrison explained that "I see relief wash over their faces" when she gives them food. It's meaningful for them to be able to provide for their children, and even the simplest opportunity to allow a child to select a favorite cereal from the pantry is empowering.

"We could not do our job without Food For Neighbors," noted Harrison. "It's so easy for me to say to a family 'Yes, we've got this food for you!'... It makes my life easier. I know there is a steady supply of food and gift cards, which frees up my time to focus on other things children need."

Harrison noted that a student can't learn well when hungry. The ability to help through Food For Neighbors, however, is more than physical. "The food nourishes not only their bellies, but also their souls." She said, "It gives them hope. It shows people in our community that you are seen; you are heard; you are not forgotten. You matter." This is more than food. It keeps students connected to school, which makes them want to remain in school.

Harrison reflected on a poignant conversation she had with Wainwright before a pending blizzard. Worried if some students would have food during and immediately after the storm, Wainwright had said, "These are the things that keep me up at night." Familiar with some of the support Food For Neighbors could provide, Harrison recommended she contact Food For Neighbors. With the support of Harrison, Herring, and the Food For Neighbors team, Wainwright took it from there, and now students at Bryant, Whitman, and four additional schools have meaningful, consistent food support.

Food For Neighbors is happy Wainwright made that call, and it continues to expand to address the need in Northern Virginia. The nonprofit now has over 1,700 households donating food and over 1,200 volunteers offering to collect, sort, and deliver it to 29 schools in Fairfax County and Loudoun County. As of the April 30th event, Food For Neighbors has provided over 330,000

pounds of food for students. To learn how you can bring Food For Neighbors services to a school near you, contact Karen Joseph, karen@foodforneighbors.org. For other information about the nonprofit's services and volunteer opportunities, visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/>.

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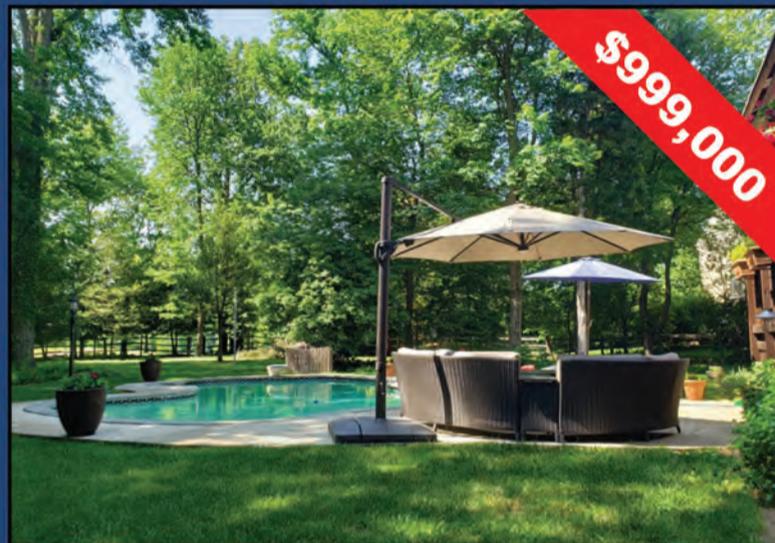
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