

The Arlington Connection

A house in Arlington flies the Union Jack in remembrance of the Queen.

Mourning the Queen

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Following Passion

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PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION
OPINION, PAGE 2 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 5 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

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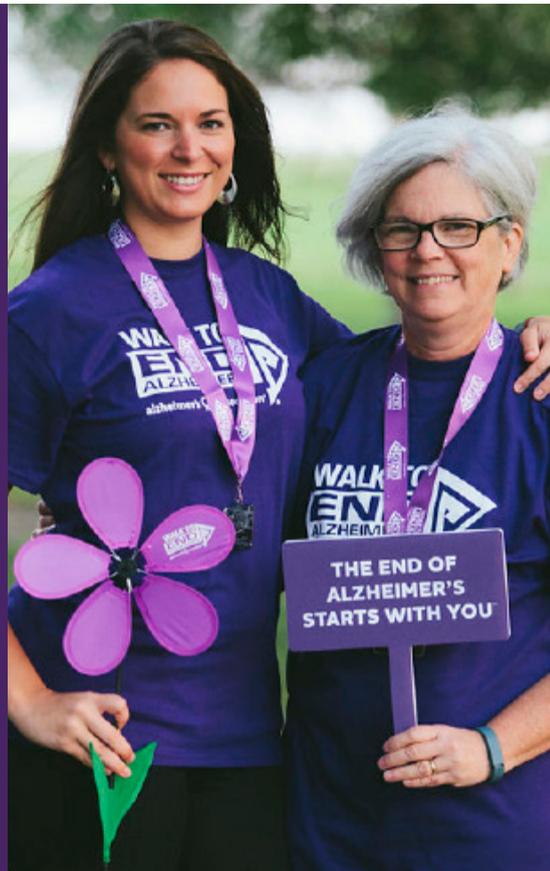
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OPINION

Myth of the League

To the editor:

I read in your Arlington Connection of the efforts of the League of Women Voters (LWV) to increase the voter rolls locally. It is a widely accepted myth that this group is largely non-partisan – please do not perpetuate it.

LETTERS

Your newspaper described the LWV as non-partisan; while this may be true in a very strict sense, any visit to their web site will make it clear to anyone that this is a group outside of the mainstream. Their policy positions – and yes, they have policy positions – are all hard left.

Nicholas Kalis JD
Arlington

Start Making Sense

To the editor:

It's time for the politics of common sense. That's why I'm voting for Karina Lipsman for Congress in November.

Our current leadership is so bound by ideology and dreamy-eyed assumptions that they have been unable to produce common sense solutions. In education, the economy, and public safety we see the fruits of disaster wrought by Northern Virginia's incumbent politicians. In drifting such a distance from common sense, our incumbent politicians have done real harm to our nation.

Consider this:

It is only common sense that parents should have an important say in how their children are being educated.

It is only common sense that our politicians should not vote to make life more expensive for the working and middle class.

It is only common sense that we should take advantage of our abundant natural resources to gain energy independence and build a thriving economy so that everyone in the country can prosper, grow, and realize their dreams.

It is only common sense that if police are defunded, we'll have fewer police. It is only common sense that with fewer police, crime will rise.

It is only common sense that our justice system should side with crime's victims rather than its perpetrators.

But here's the sad reality: our incumbent politicians have acted in the opposite manner time and time again. We need to elect legislators who will shed their ideology and make their decisions on what's best for the American people. We need to elect Karina Lipsman – it's just common sense.

Art Levine
Arlington

The Arlington Connection

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Buena Vida Gastrolounge

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Jaime Pelayo slices lengthwise through the ears of baked corn on the cob using his least fancy knife. He is creating corn ribs, “my take on traditional corn on the cob. This is one of the most popular menu items at Buena Vida,” where he is Executive Chef.

Pelayo has baked the corn in the husk at 330 degrees for 35 minutes. “See, by the time it is finished the corn is so moist.” Pelayo says he uses this knife instead of one of his good chef’s knives because the knife can chip when cutting through the corn.

The next step is to place the corn in a basket and submerge in hot canola oil for about a minute and a half. “It’s already cooked so we’re just adding a little color. And see, the slices of corn curl up.

“Let me grab a large mixing bowl.” Pelayo slides the slices of corn into the bowl lined with paper towels to knock off the extra oil from the deep fryer. He flips the slices with additional paper towels. Pelayo sprinkles on Kosher salt. “It’s important to shake the bowl. This is a perfect item to share at the table.”

On with his own special tajin seasoning—a mixture of Mexican cheese which has been aged and dried. Pelayo shreds the cheese and mixes it with chili peppers, lime juice and salt. “This is a similar taste to many Mexican street dishes.” Pelayo arranges several slices of corn on a plate and drizzles Mexican sour cream across the dish. He finishes it off with chopped cilantro. “See beautiful—green, yellow and white.”

Next Pelayo turns to huitlacoche enchilada. “I created this when I was a lazy cook coming home after studies or work. I would put tortillas in a pan, add a filling and top with Mexican cheese. I’d put it in the oven while I took a shower and it would be finished. And there was no pan to clean.”

Pelayo starts with two 4-inch tortillas which he has made by hand and rolled out until they were very thin, the old way. He slaps them on his large grill with a little canola oil just long enough to warm them through and then places them in a 4-inch skillet. He tops the tacos with a huitlacoche mixture—a combination of tomatoes, poblano peppers, sweet onions, and roasted sweet corn. He says he likes to play with eclectic flavors.



Jaime Pelayo, Executive Chef at Buena Vida Gastrolounge, recalls his early memories in his grandmother’s kitchen in Mexico when he was 4-years-old.
www.buenaavidagastrolounge.com/

Pelayo scoops out the huitlacoche mixture and spreads it evenly over the taco. “I have cooked this sauce slowly about two hours with poblanos, epazote, lots of onions, vegetable stock and white wine. I like to use Sauvignon Blanc, a dry wine for this dish. I render them all together.” He puts a second



Pelayo has sliced baked corn cobs lengthwise for his corn ribs, a popular dish at Buena Vida.

taco on top and layers on huitlacoche, then spreads another scoop of about 2-ounces of poblano sauce.”

The final touch is to sprinkle shredded chihuahua cheese over the top and put it under the broiler for about a minute, not to melt the cheese but to add color. The



Pelayo deep fries the corn ribs which gives them a nice color and makes them curl.



Mounded corn ribs spiced with chili oil and tajin with a drizzle of Mexican sour cream and chopped cilantro—yellow, white and green.



Jaime Pelayo, Executive Chef at Buena Vida and his line cook, Max Quizpe, who has been there since the beginning.

final step is to sprinkle a little chopped onions and cilantro over the top.

Pelayo’s interest in cooking goes back to when he was 4-years-old. “I have a vivid memory of myself in the kitchen where my grandmother cooked for a gathering every single weekend. She could cut a potato slice so thin by hand that you could see your face through it.” He says she fried them into potato chips and made little ground steaks like meat patties with spices that she rolled very thin. “I cannot even replicate it. She spent hours in the kitchen.”

He says at an early age “I was eating the raw meat and the chips and they tried to kick me out of the kitchen. I told them I would work for my chips so they allowed me to stay in there.” He can still picture the two pantries, one outside below the stairs with the presents for the grandchildren and the candies and the one inside with all the spices and chocolate. “They were locked because any day the revolutionaries could come in and take your supplies.”

As he grew up, his interest in cooking continued but “it wasn’t a time when men were in the kitchen and they wondered why I wasn’t playing soccer with my brothers or with my grandfather in his carpenter shop. They wanted me to be a doctor or lawyer or engineer like my father.” But he thought, “I like the smells and I like eating so I need to learn how to cook.”

Somewhere along the way after struggles with his family and with an office job where he fell asleep at his desk, he decided to follow his passion. “My family wanted to manage my life and I wanted my life.” Pelayo had learned business skills by following his grandfather around the markets when he was young “where I learned how to make the best deal.” After five years studying at a hospitality school in Mexico, he was ready to venture out.

Pelayo lived in Canada and in Spain and came to the United States 11 years ago.

He has been the Executive Chef at Buena Vista since it opened on Wilson Boulevard in March. He says it can be a challenge to embrace true Mexican tastes but he is happy his customers are tasting real Mexican food. “I won’t eat out here because everyone serves Tex-Mex which is not what you will find in Mexico. I serve real Mexican food.”



Pelayo warms hand rolled tortillas and places in a 4-inch skillet for huitlacoche enchiladas.



Pelayo spreads huitlacoche mixture on 4-inch tortillas and pours on poblano sauce.



After layering poblano sauce, Pelayo sprinkles on chihuahua cheese and slips the enchilada under the broiler to finish off his huitlacoche enchilada.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Arlington Mourns Queen Elizabeth

Many touched by death of a queen we grew up with.

BY EDEN BROWN
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

On Sept. 8, as the news of Queen Elizabeth's death filtered through a busy day, I couldn't have been more surprised to feel a catch in my throat, even tears, and several times over the next few days, being caught off guard, deeply moved, as the BBC described the reaction of millions of Britons learning of their queen's death. The reliability of royal succession, the God Save the King refrains, the long understudy of Charles over and his taking on the role solemnly, well trained by tradition, were followed obsessively by millions.

"I can't get anything done," said one friend, a New Zealander. "I'm glued to the TV and in tears."

"Sure," I thought, "You're practically British. But this is crazy. I'm not even British, my ancestors fought the redcoats, and I'm this sad?" And that's when I found out I wasn't alone. The Union Jack was hung from front porches all over the county. Much of Arlington was mourning too.

Everyone I asked was deeply moved, and none of us were monarchists. We had grown up, and our mothers had grown up, with the Queen. As she weathered the changes in society, major global and personal challenges, we

watched to see how she managed, what color hat she was sporting, who she had knighted, how she dealt with losing her spouse. As she had died, so had our mothers recently died or become, like the queen, unable to walk very well. Her public use of a cane, managing it even with the trademark purse on her arm, showed us she was aging, but not giving up.

When I asked Joanna Cameron, born in England, how she was coping with the Queen's demise, she thanked me for asking. "I'm saddened by her death. I had not really noticed there was ample evidence of her failing health. I'm thankful for the Queen. She was a great unifier. When I was growing up in England, we all got together as a family to watch her annual Christmas address. We sat around the radio, and then the TV, because she was the first to use the TV, you see," said Cameron, "and listened to the Queen. It was a highlight, a tradition. The unifying and reassuring words of the Queen were very important, particularly during turbulent times in the sixties and at other difficult times. And what she said wasn't as important — we always knew what she would say — as the way she addressed us, and the constant of the Queen, just being there, reliable, 'steadfast and true.'"

Cameron wasn't buying all this talk about the monarchy being a thing of the past and Queen Elizabeth's death possibly marking an end to the royal era. "The Queen really was loved, and the royal family is an important part of the U.K." And somewhat jokingly, she added, "After all, what would people talk about if they didn't have



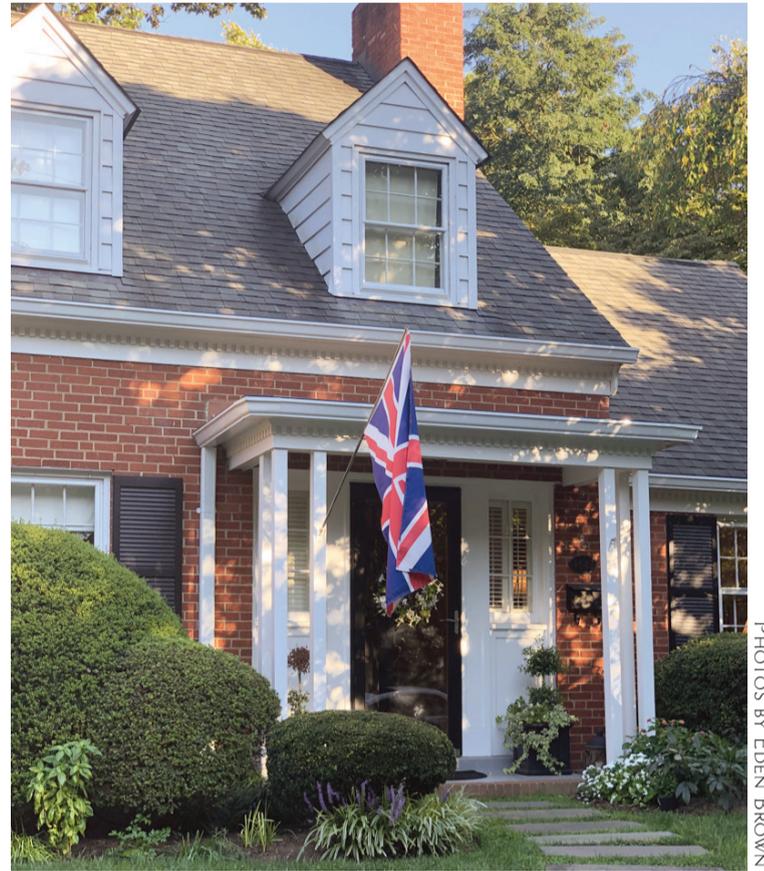
A milky tea, British style, in a mug celebrating Queen Elizabeth's 60th year on the throne, proclaiming her "steadfast and true."

the royals to talk about?"

Anne Stewart, a teacher at Yorktown High School, said, "We loved Queen Elizabeth II. We have a photo (my mom took it on her little, cheap camera) of the Queen riding her horse, dressed in her red uniform, during Trooping the Colour 1982. My parents were lucky enough to be guests (and apparently I was left at the hotel with my brother). She was splendid!"

The constant refrain of "end of an era" gave shape to some of the sadness. It was the era of hats, white gloves, brooches, riding a horse well, service to country, pearls, tea time, a stiff upper lip: these were things our grandmothers may have shared, but now are increasingly rare. It seems the queens of England have always defined their eras: the first Elizabethan, the Victorian, and now the second Elizabethan era. It turns out, 98 percent of the global population grew up with Elizabeth as Queen of England, and 31 percent of British subjects have actually met her or seen her in person.

And I was one of those.



A house in Arlington flies the Union Jack in remembrance of the Queen.

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN

Invited to tea at Buckingham Palace as part of the Queen's regular invitation to diplomatic personnel, I had waited three years for my tea time with the Queen. Protocol required my husband wear a top hat and morning suit; we went down to Piccadilly to find one. I would wear a tea dress with obligatory hat. We were driven to the palace, walked in through the gates into the garden, and waited for the Queen. We drank a lot of tea. We ate endless tea sandwiches served by her staff. We weren't sure she would make it. Would Princess Anne come instead? And

there she was. She walked through the garden greeting guests, her purse on her arm, and her practiced gaze scanned the crowd. She glowed. She was happy to be there in a way I had never imagined, believing as many did that she was a rather stern, remote lady. And then she saw my husband, in his wheelchair, a man a few years younger than she, and she stopped, and turning slightly, looked him in the eye, nodded to him, and gave him a warm smile, as though she recognized him, as though to say "I see you, fellow traveler." It made his day.

Local Seniors Remember the Queen

Sharing loving memories of their chance to see the queen.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

On the day of Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1952, Etta Blackstone was living in central London with her family. "My parents and I stood along the procession route from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace," she said. "I will never forget that day. It was magical and I was in awe."

Blackstone, who is 83, now lives in Great Falls with her daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren. "The only images of that day are in black in white, but the photos can't capture the elaborate pageantry of the day."

Blackstone has long admired the British royal family. "My mother received her telegram from the Queen marking her 100th birthday, she said. "It was as if, in a small way, our family was linked to her family."

Each Christmas day when the Queen delivered her annual address Blackstone made sure to find and watch it, "I would be engrossed in her message," she said. "I've always loved the royal family and I tried to pass it along to my children. I remember waking them up at 5 a.m. to watch Prince Charles and Lady Diana's wedding and then again, sadly to watch Diana's funeral."

IT WAS JULY of 1958 in Leeds, England that 5-year-old Avery Jones, his parents and two sisters stood in a crowd of thousands for a chance to get a glimpse of Queen Elizabeth as her motorcade made its way down a street filled with spectators.

"She was smiling and waving from the back seat of the car, said Jones, who is 70 and lives in Falls Church. "At the time, I didn't appreciate the magnitude of what was happening. I was just angry that my parents piled us into our car and made us wait for hours in crowds for a chance to see 30 seconds of a woman waving from the backseat of car."

Jones says that his dad took photos of the procession. "I'm not a sentimental person, so I was never interested in keeping the pictures," he said. "The day that the queen passed away, my grandchildren asked me if I'd ever seen her in person. I wish that I had at least one of the pictures to show them."

ORIGINALLY from Kingston, Jamaica, Gladiola Hanson now makes her home in Arlington. She recalls the Queen's visit to her country in 1966.

"My mother and I were at the front of the crowd and I got a great view of the Queen and Prince Philip," she said. "They stood in the

open top of their car and waved to the crowd," she said. "There was so much excitement. It was so emotional. I remember seeing my mother dabbing tears from her eyes."

While Hanson holds the royal family in high regard, she acknowledges the controversy surrounding the monarchy.

"My granddaughters were born in Virginia and they have a different view of the royal family," she said.

"They can be critical of the monarchy and its history with its colonies. When I was growing up, we were taught to always admire and respect Her Majesty."

Eli Lev's Music has Worldly Influences

Musician with local roots comes back for shows in October.

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Country musician Eli Lev has had a multi-tiered career that's gone in a few directions, similar to the four-direction album he put out earlier with sounds that went east, west, south and north. Eli Lev is bringing it all together in October for shows in Arlington, Rockville and Gaithersburg as he visits his hometown of Silver Spring.

Although he's experienced the finger-pointing that goes on in this politically-charged area, especially this year, he's past all that.

"I would like to think that my music is post-politics. While I feel it's important to stick up for what you believe in and to form our own ideas on the state of the world, I also feel like it's our patriotic duty to see humanity in people who don't agree with our opinions," he said.

A few years ago, Lev worked on a series of songs for albums he pulled together for different parts



Eli Lev.

of the country. There is "All Roads East 2017," followed by "Way Out West 2018," "Deep South 2019," and "True North 2021." They each have a different country sounding vibe to them but each is different. His musical influences are Tyler Childers, Lucy Dacus, Billy Strings, Mat Kearney, and local guitarist Yasmin Williams. Not real big names, but big sounds.

Early on, Lev got his teaching degree and landed a teaching position at a little middle school out in the heart of the Navajo Nation's town of Shonto, Arizona. This influenced his attitudes towards Na-

tive Americans, which comes up in some of his music today. He started his musical career in his mid-30s and found himself on stage at 9:30 Club during the DC Music Rocks Festival in August 2019, putting out a special mix of heartfelt country and Americana.

"Growing up in the Washington DC area absolutely influenced my songwriting as I was exposed to grunge rock, hip hop, hardcore, oldies, and folk music," he said. "I was very fortunate to have such an eclectic soundscape around me growing up, and you can definitely hear that in my music."

These days, it's important for musicians to have a sound, but also have a screen presence, and Lev looked to a different venue for his latest music video "Chasing Daylight." He worked with an internet marketing company called "Zuke creative," and came up with the

Upcoming Eli Lev Local Shows:

❖ Thursday, Oct 6 at
Hank Dietle's Tavern
11010 Rockville Pike, Rockville
(240) 512-3077

❖ Friday, Oct 7, Westover Market
5863 Washington Blvd, Arlington
(703) 536-5040

❖ Sunday, Oct 9
Gaithersburg Oktoberfest
31 S Summit Ave, Gaithersburg

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

idea to have fans submit 30-second videos of themselves singing along to the song, and then he edited it together to form the whole song. Clips came in from South Africa, France, Lebanon, Canada, St Louis, the beaches of Nags Head, N.C. and even Joe & Karen McGavin from Springfield, Virginia.

In 2022, he released a five-song collection called "Walk. Talk. Dance. Sing." and it has his experiences songwriting during the pandemic.

CALENDAR

CHECK OUT

THESE PLANT CLINICS

- The Arlington Central Library Plant Clinic is open from 6:00-7:45 p.m. every Wednesday through Sept. 28 and is located in the East Lobby of the Library, 1015 N. Quincy St.
- The Arlington Farmers Market Plant Clinic, open Saturday mornings from 7:45-11:15 a.m., operating through Sept. 24, is located at N. 14th St. and N. Courthouse Rd.
- The Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic, located at 203 E. Oxford Ave, Alexandria is open on Saturdays from 8:30-11:15 a.m., and will operate through Sept. 24.
- The Alexandria Old Town Farmers Market Plant Clinic, located at 301 King St., Alexandria, operates on Saturdays from 7:00 - 9:30 a.m., through Sept. 24.
- The Small Space Garden Plant Clinic, located at the back of the Fairlington Community Center at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, is open on Sundays from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., coinciding with the Fairlington Farmers Market.

THRU SEPTEMBER

Witness the Changing of the Guard. At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington. From April-September, the ceremony occurs every 30 minutes,

on the hour and half-hour. For more information, visit: <https://arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Changing-of-the-Guard>

WEDNESDAYS,

SEPTEMBER 21 AND 28

Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village. 10-11 a.m. "Coffee and Conversation" speaker series. Everyone is invited to join the conversation via Zoom. Bring your own coffee, learn interesting things about our community and hear from the speakers listed below. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88948577106?pwd=e-W0rN1RTTU5ITmJ5NnF2QXZINmdUQT09>

THROUGH-OCT. 1

Group Exhibition. George Mason University's College and Visual and Performing Arts and Mason Exhibitions present Approaching Event Horizons: Projects on Climate Change by Atlantika Collective, a group exhibition of photography, video, sculpture, and performance. Curated by María Alejandra Sáenz, the exhibition will be on view at Mason Exhibitions Arlington located at 3601 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22201 from August 24- October 1, 2022. Gallery hours are Wednesday

through Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. An event horizon alludes to a boundary in space around a black hole beyond which nothing, including light, can escape. Acknowledging the current climate crisis of our planet, Approaching Event Horizons: Projects on Climate Change by Atlantika Collective resists the idea that the future of planet Earth is reaching a point of no return. The seven artists in this exhibition illustrate the present environmental crisis and inspire actions to help mitigate the critical consequences of climate change.

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More Violence, More Lethal After COVID

By SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Doorways, which operates the Domestic Violence Safe House and Family Home in Arlington, reports that violence has returned to pre-COVID levels and grown, and the lethality is higher. Diana Ortiz, Director of Doorways of Arlington reports, "This increase is being reported around the surrounding areas as well. We don't exactly know why. We know that with natural disasters and pandemics, domestic violence increases. But it could have something to do with the added pressures caused by the economy — more challenges."

She says they suspected the rate of reporting was down during COVID due to people staying at home and fearful of going to the hospital with their injuries. But she has been surprised that the higher rate of reported abuse after COVID has remained high.

"There have been curves with highs and lows over time but the calls went up after COVID and never went back down." She adds, "We didn't expect this level of need to continue and now our budget is almost used up. Our family home is full which houses 10 families and we have had to place an additional 8-10 families in hotels."

Ortiz reports each hotel room costs \$130-150 a night per family. "But we want to be careful that no one is discouraged to reach out because they think we don't have the ability to serve them. We won't let anyone be in harm's way. We will always find a way to meet the need."

Ortiz says each story is different. It may be a spouse who has two small children and a pet. Maybe the neighbors called it in or law enforcement or it could have been an injury at the hospital. They are no longer safe where they are. Or maybe it is someone in their 60s with a lifetime partner who is taking all their income, can't keep independence.

It could be sexual or emotional. Some are running away and the person has found them many times. Doorways does immediate crisis intervention and planning and provides information on local resources as well as referrals and other community and legal services.

Some people have no support system and are isolated with the violence. Ortiz says they want people to understand there are services. They can advocate in court and be protected. She says what is sad for her is that among the participants in the new Le-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Doorways of Arlington operates a 24-hour domestic abuse hotline at 703-237-0881.

thality Assessment Program, which is a partnership with law enforcement, that half of the survivors have never heard of Doorways.

Ortiz says that the county is one of the main funders of Doorways with state resources and a lot of private support. But the demand is currently higher than the resources available. Ortiz explains that they have run through the hotel budget quickly. But in addition to the hotel rooms to house the families who don't have space in the family house there is the cost of running the program.

The goal is to commit those who come to Doorways to long-term housing. But while they are staying at Doorways for a couple of days or sometimes several months until their situation is resolved there is need for household supplies as well as sheets and towels and other essentials. And there are the extras like books and backpacks for the children. They have 99 children in the program right now.

The additional clients add to the cost of running the program. "Do we need to add more staff? The caseworker may have doubled the number of clients. The workforce is managing complex needs. All of the needs for food, basic care and supplies just multiply."

Linley Beckbridge, Director of Communications and Advocacy, says domestic violence programs in general are up against the misconception that only women seek services but Doorway's services are for all genders including LBGTQ. "Anyone can be impacted."

Doorways is a community-based organization that advocates for the rights and needs of survivors of violence and homelessness. The main route to get to Doorways is the 24-hour domestic abuse hotline at 703-237-0881. For more information on the organization or on how to contribute funds or supplies, contact: jmyers@doorwaysva.org or 703-504-9290.

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"Rosenwald: Justice through Education," Julius Rosenwald's legacy presented by Dorothy Canter, pres., Rosenwald Park Campaign, Thursday, Sept. 22, 1:30 p.m. Virtual. Registration # 911400-12.

Filmmaking interest group to meet with video expert Nick Englund, Thursday, Sept. 22, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration #

Name that song and sing-along, music from the 50s, 60s and 70s, Friday, Sept. 23, 11 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 911304-09.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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Having My Cake, and Eating It Too



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After way too many months to remember; my eagle, so to speak, has finally landed. The Entenmann's "Marshmallow Iced Devil's Food Cake" is once again in the house. The only problem is its size, it's too small. A sheet cake type-size would be ideal. Nevertheless, cake one will likely be consumed in a day, two maximum. Followed by cake number two which will suffer a similar fate. In my house anyway, if the Entenmann's cake referenced above was an animal, it would sit atop the endangered species list. Moreover, I had written in a previous column moaning about my difficulties finding this item locally; even going so far as calling the parent company, "Bimbo Bakers USA" at their headquarters in Horsham Township, Pa. My thinking was, perhaps if I could speak with a distribution or public relation's person, maybe they could determine where, specifically, this item is being delivered. Unfortunately, the call was in vain, as the cake couldn't be located. In fact, the woman with whom I spoke wasn't even familiar with this item. Amateur. This escalation is some context for what action has followed.

This unsuccessful attempt followed my initial pursuit which was to visit my local Giant supermarket (after perusing the Entenmann's website which also proved unsatisfying) to speak with the store manager about possibly adding this cake to their rather pedestrian weekly inventory of cookies, other cakes, donuts, and such. I was told that the Entenmann's order is handled by a middleman-type vendor who isn't even a Giant employee. As a result, Giant has no control/ability to submit any amended weekly list to accommodate my needs. Very disappointing. Therefore, I am stuck between a chocolate fudge cake, a cheese Danish/pastry, and an array of miscellaneous donuts/popems. None of which compares to the "sinfully good cake with heavenly Marshmallow frosting" as it's described on the Entenmann's website under "Delicious Products."

The reason I was forced to take this action is because the Entenmann's website provided no relief. There is a "store locator" feature on the site which enables the user to specify the item and then find it, if available/delivered within a 20-mile radius (maximum distance, from the zip code provided). After multiple visits to their site, I came away unrequited. I was out of any alternative ideas to reach this promised land. Then it hit me, perhaps the cake is located/distributed in other less local — to me, supermarkets, and so on a few occasions when I was further than 20 miles from my home, I would stop in a local supermarket or two (it didn't have to be a Giant; I've bought the cake at Safeway before, twice) and cross my fingers and hope to buy. That too, on the occasions which presented themselves, likewise proved unsuccessful.

And there the pursuit has remained, stalled almost, until Sept. 10, a day that will live in Lourie lore. That's the day when the eagle that had been flying around with no place to land indeed found its landing spot. It all happened so unexpectedly, so innocently, when I wasn't necessarily even thinking about the cake (it's rare, but it does happen) that it makes the reward all the more sweeter. As former vice president Hubert Horatio Humphrey, Jr. (1965 to 1969) might have said: "I am pleased as punch" to have found and already eaten in their entirety, both cakes. They never stood a chance, really. (And yes, they were as delectable as ever.) Not that it had been years since I was last lucky enough to find/eat this cake, it only seemed like it. Nevertheless, it was still long enough by half for yours truly to be deprived of something so essential to my existence; especially considering that as a cancer patient who was initially diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, you want what you want because you may never be able to want it again. A "13 month to two-year" prognosis will do that to you.

Next week the details of this most fortuitous circumstance which led to this auspicious and memorable occasion. The working/likely title: "As I Was Saying Last Week."

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

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