

# CONNECTION

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## Champions Again

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Gregory Jones #23 elevates between two Patriot defenders in Hayfield's win for a second consecutive state championship.

## Appealing Flats

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MARCH 16-22, 2023

ONLINE AT [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)





The kitchen and living room of a two-bedroom unit.



A condo living room with large windows and a door leading to the balcony.



Laura Nickle inside the club room, where residents can relax.

## More than Four Walls – It's Home

### The Flats at Boulevard VI proves popular in Fairfax.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

For the past two years, area residents driving on Fairfax Boulevard have seen 137 condos arise where Paul VI High used to be. Those luxury condos are now built, and people are moving in while the community's green spaces receive their finishing touches.

Called The Flats, they're the first section of the IDI Group Companies' gigantic mixed-use project, Boulevard VI, on 18.5 acres in Fairfax City. The plan also includes 115 townhouses and seven, single-family homes. The original 1934 portion of the old Paul VI school building – which City residents clamored to be saved – will contain 24,000 square feet of community and office space, plus 20,000 square feet of retail. Its front lawn will be preserved as a village green for hosting events.

In addition, the two retail pads flanking the historic school building have just been sold. On one of them will go Learning Experience, a 20,000-square-foot early-childhood learning and daycare center. The other will have a mix of retail uses, including Chosun Hwaro, a restaurant serving authentic Korean cuisine.

Boulevard VI will also feature five pocket parks, including two on-site playgrounds, an outdoor fitness area, a perimeter biking/walking path, plus historical informational signage explaining the site's history.

"We're excited to see the plans come to life and to see the response to this new community," said IDI Managing Director Enrico Cecchi. "The fact that The Flats outsold every other new home community in the region in 2021 – and that there are only a few homes left as we open – is a much-appreciated testament to the vision we had."

The condos were constructed in two phases – all within one, horseshoe-shaped building with a lobby on each side. Phase one consisted of 66 units, and phase two, 71. Prices ranged from the low \$300,000s to the low \$500,000s for the wide variety of floor plans, including one- and two-bed-



PHOTO COURTESY OF IDI

The pool and seating area in the central courtyard.

room units. Less than 10 are still available for purchase.

Designed by Heffner Architects of Alexandria, one- and two-bedroom condos were built, as well as larger, two-bedroom units with dens and double balconies. Features include 9-foot ceilings, a spacious balcony for almost all units, plus energy-efficient lighting, windows and mechanical systems. There's garage parking, and interior finishes and fixture upgrades were available to purchasers.

Onsite amenities include a large party room with catering kitchen for planned activities or private events; a club room where residents may relax, play games and watch TV; a fitness center with cardio and weight equipment (open from 5 a.m.-11 p.m.); an onsite management office; and business workstations with a printer, WiFi and Internet.

There's secured building access and interior bicycle storage, and each lobby offers a coffee station, WiFi and Uber calling area, plus a mailroom. Outdoors, residents may enjoy the central courtyard highlighted by a pool with swim lane, cabanas and a locker room with showers; as well as a barbecue/grilling area, fire pit, seating and garden.

The Connection recently got a look inside the new, luxury condo building. There are 23 floorplans, with slightly different features. One example of a two-bedroom, two-bath, 1,070-square-foot unit has granite kitchen countertops with counter-height stools for eating, plus stainless-steel appliances, and a full-sized GE washer and dryer behind closed doors between the kitchen and living room.

There are large, walk-in closets, and the bedrooms are on opposite sides of the unit, with glass doors opening onto the balcony. The living room also has large, sliding-glass doors leading to the balcony, and many units overlook the courtyard and pool. There's a shower in one bathroom and a tub and shower in the other, and both feature granite countertops.

"The condos are bright, spacious and have lots of storage," said IDI spokeswoman Laura Nickle. "The Flats have a nice feeling – a place you want to come to. It's a lot more than just four walls – it's home."

"This is a prime, high-profile location, close to everything in Fairfax City," she continued. "People love the lifestyle at The Flats, with indoor and outdoor amenities all year 'round and no outdoor-maintenance worries. And each unit has its own heating and cooling system, plus separate metered water, so residents only pay for what they use. Residents started moving in, in mid-October."

Nickle said The Flats are great for young professionals, just starting out, as well as people stepping down from a house to something smaller.

Alex Choi moved in the beginning of November. He especially liked the location and said his Realtor mom told him about The Flats and said her clients who bought IDI homes considered IDI a reputable developer.

"That sparked my interest," he said. "I also like that it's off the Route 29/Route 50 intersection and a mile from I-66. It's near nice shops, places to eat and the Amazon Fresh;

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



A partial view from a second-floor balcony, showing condo exteriors and gardens in the courtyard.

and there's lots of new development, so I know it'll continue to bloom in the future."

"I'm in the heart of Fairfax, and the place is nicely built, modern and vibrant, with lots of natural light coming through my patio doors," continued Choi. "I'm on the second floor and, from my balcony, I can see the common area and the pool. I have a two-bedroom unit and I love it. It's definitely worth it – I'm happy about the purchase. Even the neighbors and management company are nice."

Pleased, as well, is Angela Went Wijas, who moved into The Flats with her teenage granddaughter on Halloween weekend. "I moved from a house that got to be too big for me, and my kids went to Paul VI," she said. "Our condo overlooks what was the carpool lane, so it feels like home."

She's delighted that her two-bedroom unit is "kind of self-contained. I don't have to maintain a yard, and there's even a trash chute where I throw my garbage. There's also garage parking, so I don't have to scrape ice off my car on winter mornings. And I like the swimming pool and beautiful grounds."

Furthermore, said Wijas, "It's centrally located – just three miles from my job, and close to family, friends and church – and I'm happy to be in Fairfax City. I have a two-bedroom unit that's roomy and beautiful, with a modern interior and neutral colors. The builder did outstanding, quality work. I'd absolutely recommend The Flats to others. It's the whole package, and it looks like it's going to be a really nice community."

More at BoulevardVI.com.



## STATE CHAMPIONS

# Hayfield Wins State Championship over Patriot

BY WILL PALENSCAR  
THE CONNECTION

**D**efending Class 6 Virginia State Champions Hayfield Hawks took on the Patriot Pioneers on Saturday at the Siegel Center on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Hawks would out score the Pioneers 12-10 in the 1st quarter behind Donovan Bass-Briscoe's 6 points. Patriot was led by Desmond Hopkins, 5 points.

In the 2nd quarter David King and Greg Jones each scored 4 points, and again Hayfield would score 12 points, while holding the Pioneers to ten points. Nasir Coleman would lead Patriot with 7 points.

Trailing 24-20 after one half of play the Pioneers hoped to change the second half in their favor. Greg Jones and David King each each had 4 points again,

and the Hawks again scored 12 points while holding the Pioneers to 8 points. Jay Randall scored 6 of the Pioneers 8 points.

With a quarter to play the Hawks were 8 minutes away from a second consecutive state championship.

The 4th quarter saw Patriot put out their best offensive output, scoring 14 points and twice coming within 5 points. But Hayfield would not be denied, scoring 16 points to seal their second state championship in as many years, 52-41.

Patriot finishes their season (27-4), while Hayfield finishes (30-1). Patriot was led by Nasir Coleman's 12 points. Hayfield was led by Donovan Bass-Briscoe and David King who each scored 14 points. Patriot out rebounded Hayfield for the game 44-31. Patriot turned the ball over 20 times while Hayfield turned it over 10.

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR



David King #32 led Hayfield with 14 points in Class 6 State Championship win over Patriot



Donovan Bass-Briscoe #5 defends Patriot's Nasir Copeland #3



DJ Holloway prepares to shoot at the foul line



DJ Holloway prepares to shoot at the free throw line



Kaden Bates #1 pulls the ball in close to avoid Hayfield defenders



Gregory Jones #23 elevates between two Patriot defenders



Donovan Bass-Briscoe #5 drives past a Patriot defender



Phenix Card goes for a short jump shot.



# Local Government, Museum, Child Care and Police All in One

## Ground breaking in Franconia for multi-use facility.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

**W**hen officials got together to officially break ground on the Franconia Governmental Center and Kingstowne Regional Library, the centerpiece was one facility housing multiple civic entities.

"I like the idea that it will be a police station, supervisor's office, museum, library and child center," said Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia), looking towards other county buildings in the future. "It's going to be the mold," he said, before grabbing a golden shovel and making it all official.

Lusk has an old, outdated office, the police station has severe limitations, and even the museum is packed wall to wall with memorabilia, so each entity will have it better at the new center on Beulah Street.

The center was just a vision when Chairman Jeff McKay was still in the Lee District supervisor's office where he put in 24 years as a county employee.

"We don't ever want to see gray cinder blocks again," he said.

This new combined facility will be approximately 90,000 square feet with better parking and access. The 28,000-square-foot Police Station and the 4,200-square-foot Franconia District Supervisor's Office will share a space with the Franconia



Officials of all sorts break the ground in Franconia.



Franconia Supervisor Rodney Lusk looks forward to a state-of-the-art office.



RENDERING FRANCONIA SITE

The Active Adult Center will include 7,200 square feet of space and a new childcare center will have 10,000 square feet. The Kingstowne Community Library will be expanded to a regional library.

Museum and a 7,200 square-foot have a new Childcare Center for children and the Kingstowne Community Library will be expanded. It will also infants to pre-kindergarten chil-

to a Regional Library. The current Kingstowne Library is in a bottom level space in the shopping center where Beulah Street meets Telegraph Road but it is not a "regional" library.

The total project estimate for the consolidated facility including the two associated parking garages is \$79.5 million. Funding was approved in the 2015 Public Safety Bond Referendum. Funding for the library, to include the Active Adult Center, was approved in the 2020 Library Bond referendum. It is scheduled to be open in 2024.

Also at the groundbreaking event were Public Library Director Jessica Hudson, Neighborhood and Community Services Deputy Director Pallas Washington, Police Chief Kevin Davis and Public Works and Environmental Services Director Chris Herrington.

## Fairfax City EDO Develops 5-Year Workplan

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**F**airfax City's Economic Development Office (EDO) has finalized a five-year, strategic workplan to guide it through 2028. And that's important because the EDO is critical to Fairfax City's economic wellbeing and quality of life, helping build a resilient tax base, plus activities that attract, retain and expand businesses in the City.

It developed this plan with guidance from the Place Consulting team at Streetsense – a global, creative collective that helps shape places where people connect. It's an outline for the EDO to follow so it

may remain competitive and innovative. The EDO will do so by adhering to industry-standard best practices, helping the City's newly adopted Small Area Plans and 2035 Comprehensive Plan become reality, and staying aligned with City Council's adopted goals.

"Working with Streetsense brought a great deal of clarity to the process of developing our five-year, strategic plan for economic development here in the City," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "There are exciting opportunities in the years ahead, and we feel ready for them."

Agreeing, Economic Development Director Chris Bruno thanked Streetsense for its

"creativity, professionalism and ability to deliver a complex, comprehensive plan for economic development in Fairfax City in a way that's clear and digestible for our staff and stakeholders. It establishes a framework for efficient and impactful economic-development efforts through 2028 and represents yet another investment in the future of our City."

The workplan provides a blueprint so the EDO may enhance Fairfax City's economic environment and showcase it as a competitive place to do business. It also establishes eight, key recommendations, plus suggested actions to achieve them, in the fields of marketing, operations, partner-

ships, real-estate development and reuse, business attraction and development, business retention and expansion, place-based strategies, and special initiatives.

"Streetsense is extremely pleased to have worked closely with the Fairfax City Economic Development Office, city staff, and an Advisory Committee consisting of key business and civic leaders," said Larisa Ortiz, a managing director at Streetsense. "Together we turned previously adopted plans into a practical workplan – one that reflects the goals, resources and tools available for implementation. We're excited to see these plans turn into actionable outcomes in the coming years."



# SCHOOL

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARRIE DORSEY



From left are Terri Edmunds-Heard, Executive Principal, FCPS; Fairfax City School Board Chairman Carolyn Pitches; Principal Andrew Pratt; Rebecca Baenig, Assistant Superintendent Region 5, FCPS; and Eric McCann, Executive Principal, FCPS.

## Andrew Pratt: Providence Elementary's New Principal



**Providence Principal  
Andrew Pratt**

**A**ndrew Pratt is the new principal of Providence Elementary in Fairfax City. The City of Fairfax School Board officially welcomed him during its meeting, last Monday, March 6, and he started his new job, this Monday, March 13.

He replaces the previous principal, Dan Phillips, who now becomes Assistant to the Superintendent of City of Fairfax Schools. Phillips was named to that post in January but couldn't start his new duties until a new principal was hired to replace him.

Pratt brings more than 16 years of elementary-school experience with Fairfax County Public Schools. He began his career as a fifth-grade teacher at Riverside Elementary in Alexandria; and for the past five years, he's been an assistant principal at Mason Crest and Annandale Terrace elementary schools, both in Annandale.

"This afternoon I was so warmly welcomed by the staff, Mr. Phillips and the administration team, and I am honored to be here tonight," said Pratt at the School Board meeting. "I am excited and grateful for this opportunity to serve the City of Fairfax and its students, and I can't wait to get started. I look forward to being there for each of you and look forward to

you being there for me, as we take on this important and challenging work to prepare our students to become lifelong learners and successful citizens."

Phillips was on hand to welcome Pratt. "Our students and our staff are ready to give him our best, and we know he's the best person for the job," said Phillips. "I look forward to working with Andrew for a smooth transition and for many years ahead."

Outside of school, Pratt enjoys spending time with his wife and three sons, as well as playing soccer, biking, running and cheering for all the Washington, D.C., sports teams.

— BONNIE HOBBS

CARRIE DORSEY ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

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### Public Notice

#### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
FAIRFAX	6767	645	CLIFTON RD	SANDY RUN	2/23/2023
GILES	8436	635	BIG STONY CK RD/RTE 635	LAUREL BRANCH	2/22/2023
ROANOKE (M)	21702	118	RTE 0118	BRANCH	2/22/2023
LOUISA	11554	714	HORSESHOE FARM RD	SMALL BRANCH	2/21/2023
ROANOKE (M)	21611	0	RTE 0000	MUDLICK CREEK	2/21/2023
ROANOKE (M)	21731	221	RTE 0221	BRAMBLTN AV O MURRAY RUN	2/21/2023
CULPEPER	5642	628	HAZEL RIVER RD	STREAM	2/16/2023
WYTHE	19508	0F044	EAST LEE HWY	LITTLE PINE RUN	2/14/2023
PATRICK	13283	631	DOE RUN RD/RTE 631	ARARAT RIVER	2/14/2023
BLAND	2980	61	WOLF CREEK HWY	SPRING BRANCH	2/13/2023
BLAND	2982	61	WOLF CREEK HWY	SPRING BRANCH	2/13/2023
WYTHE	19774	701	OGLESBY RD	STREAM	2/10/2023
ROANOKE	15011	620	MILLER COVE RD/RTE 620	TROUT CREEK	2/10/2023
WYTHE	19710	649	ATKINS MILL RD	SPILLER BRANCH	2/9/2023
MONTGOMERY	12235	629	BRADSHAW RD/ RTE 629	BRADSHAW CREEK	2/7/2023
BEDFORD	2798	680	MURRELLS GAP RD	SHEEP CREEK	1/31/2023

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

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

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

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



## From Here to Reconvene

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

The General Assembly is set to reconvene on Wednesday, April 12 to consider Governor Youngkin's vetoes and amendments to legislation passed during this year's session. This is usually a long day on the House Floor as both chambers work together as a legislative body. So, what has to happen between now and then?

The Governor's constitutional deadline to act on legislation is 11:59pm on March 27, or 30 days following the adjournment of the regular session. During this period, the Governor reviews legislation with his policy staff. He then has a choice whether to recommend amendments to the bills, veto them, sign them, or take no action. Interestingly, in Virginia, a Governor does not have to sign a bill in order for it to go into effect. Therefore, "taking no action" on a bill is de facto approval.

In Virginia, the Governor also

has line-item veto power, meaning he can strike and amend portions of a bill without rejecting a bill outright. This ability certainly has its benefits and drawbacks. Bills with emergency clauses go into effect immediately upon the Governor's signature. From my calculations, 10 such emergency bills passed this year, and the Governor has already signed one, SB 882 patroned by Sen. Janet Howell related to amending Virginia's tax code. The rest will go into effect on July 1 of this year unless otherwise specified. A positive aspect is that this gives everyone one last chance to get it right, so to speak, so that if there are any edits necessary to make the bill even better or more effective, this is a final opportunity to make it happen.

During the reconvene session, the General Assembly can over-



Krizek

ride a Governor's veto by a two-thirds vote. If both chambers override the Governor's veto, the bill shall become law without his signature. If either chamber fails to override the Governor's veto, the veto shall stand and the bill shall not become law and it is done.

When the Governor amends a bill, if both chambers agree by a majority vote to the Governor's entire recommendation, the bill, as amended, shall become law. If the amendments are only agreed to in part by both chambers, the bill shall be reenrolled with the Governor's amendments agreed to by both chambers and shall be returned to the Governor. The Governor then can either sign or veto the bill returned to him. If the Governor vetoes the bill, the veto shall stand and the bill will not become law.

If both chambers reject all

amendments by a two-thirds vote, the original bill becomes law.

If the Governor takes no action on the bill within thirty days after the adjournment of the reconvened session, the bill shall become law without his signature.

As I write this column, only three bills have been signed by the Governor, but I doubt that many of the 867 bills will be vetoed or amended since they already passed both chambers of the General Assembly, a Republican-led House, and a Democratic-led Senate.

You can follow along as bills are signed into law here: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?231+lst+APP>. This will certainly be a busy next two weeks for the Governor's staff.

In addition to bills, budget negotiations continue among budget conferees. I have done my part in advocating for funding most important to our community and other critical funding measures introduced by my colleagues.

## Celebrating a Virginia Woman History-Maker

BY DEL. KENNETH R. PLUM

March is Women's History Month, and this March we can celebrate the many women who contributed to our past history and who are contributing to our history as recently as last week. On March 7 Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan was sworn in as a member of the 118th Congress becoming the first Black woman to serve in Virginia's Congressional delegation. She succeeds the late Congressman Don McEachin who passed away recently from complications of cancer.

For Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan to be making history is no surprise to anyone who knows her. If I had my way she would be the current governor of Virginia for I had supported her in the Democratic primary to be the party's candidate for governor. It remains possible that she will in the future be the first Black woman governor of the Commonwealth for which she has the abilities.

When I was chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, the late Governor of Virginia Gerald L. Baliles told me about a young associate in the law firm for which he was working after leaving the governorship and for whom he had the highest recommendation for political office and service.



Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan at her official swearing in with the House Speaker and her husband Dave Mills and her children Samantha and Jackson.

She was Jennifer McClellan who had only recently earned her law degree from the University of Virginia and who was already demonstrating her keen knowledge as a native Virginian and her political acumen. He could not have been more accurate in his assessment of her.

It was less than ten years later that now Congresswoman McClellan ran successfully in the Richmond area to become a member of the Virginia House of Delegates in 2016 where she served until 2017

when she became a member of the Virginia Senate where she served until her recent election to Congress. In both the Virginia House and Senate she stood out for suc-

cessfully sponsoring the most difficult and important legislation.

In its most recent edition, Black Virginia News reported on her first speech to the U.S. House. She talked about being the "daughter and granddaughter of men who paid poll taxes and the great-granddaughter of a man who took a literacy test and had to find three white men to vouch for him to be able to vote." She went on to say, "I stand on the shoulders of my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, recognizing that in a lot of ways I am fighting the same fights they did. And I stand here to ensure that my children and yours do not have to fight those same fights." I remember her making the same kind of speech in the Virginia Capitol where her work was responsible for so much positive change.

Congresswoman McClellan will serve on the House Armed Services and Science, Space, and Technology Committees and no doubt will continue to make history.

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PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/ THE CONNECTION

Aggressive ignition and light breezes helped to generate enough intensity to burn plant debris in the targeted area in Lorton's Laurel Hill Park as a team member walks to another vantage monitoring point.

## Park Authority Burns New Ground

### Laurel Hill Park gets relief from dense growth.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

A 25-acre meadow in Lorton's Laurel Hill Park was burned for the first time, on purpose, on March 9. While two other restoration areas within the park have undergone managed burns multiple times since April 2021, the area near the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center had not previously received this type of resource management attention. Prescribed fires, or controlled burns, are important tools in the county's resource management tool belt to help eradicate invasive plant species and ensure long-term regeneration of plant life native to Virginia's habitat.

The Park Authority's natural resources branch manager John Burke explained the key reasons managed burns are needed. "They help reduce the fuel loads of grasses or woody debris in the event of unplanned fires," he said. Prescribed fires burn at very low intensity compared to wildfires that burn out of control. The controlled burn consumed a significant amount of plant material and debris that accumulated over time from the dense presence of invasive vines.

"Prescribed fires also 'knock back' woody vines, shrubs, and invasive trees that would turn into woods, and then forest, which are more costly to remove in order to create better [natural] resource areas," Burke added. "Fire can be used to control some invasive species and promote fire adaptive native ones." This burn aims to "reduce the abundance and dominance of invasive plants, especially Por-



Workers are prepared to stop the burn if smoke reaches the nearest roads, but the natural shape of the bowled meadow area helps to contain both fire and smoke within the burn area.



Park Authority fire team, under direction of fire manager Owen Williams, prepares equipment and checks fire plan prior to burn start in Laurel Hill Park.

lain Berry and Japanese Honey-suckle vines, Callery pear and Tree-of-Heaven trees. These plants have

overwhelmed the other vegetation and reduced the biological diversity

SEE PARK AUTHORITY, PAGE 9

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# CALENDAR

## NOW THRU APRIL 30

**Score: Mixed Media Art.** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Score explores 20 years of the work of Virginia-based mixed media artist, Joan Dreyer. While developing her MFA thesis at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, PA, Joan began taking tools, techniques and imagery that have been historically considered “women’s work” and transforming them into innovative, contemporary art that is responsive to the tone and tensions of our times. Created by combining fiber techniques with unexpected materials like X-rays, her work is a subtle art that asks questions about life, loss, symbolism, and the impact of war instead of providing one size fits all answers. The artist’s work provides a space for the contemplation of life stages that we all encounter. The result is a body of work that allows for meaningful but also multiple interpretations by the viewer. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/score-mixed-media>

## ONGOING

**Earthquake Relief Collection.** Elected leaders from Northern Virginia announced the launch of a fundraising effort to collect money to purchase food packages for those impacted by the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. NVRC hopes to collect \$25,000 for this effort. To donate, visit [www.helpearthquakevictims.org](http://www.helpearthquakevictims.org).

## NOW THRU MAY 31

**Candytopia Opens.** At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Candytopia, in partnership with Tysons Corner Center announces the arrival of its sweet interactive concept to the center. It will feature 16,000 square feet with 14 different interactive environments, Instagram-worthy photo opportunities, and delectable tastes of your favorite sweet treats. There is a candy art gallery, a state-of-the-art candy confetti

room, complete with confetti-farting pigs, a marshmallow pit filled with a quarter-million marshmallows, as well as DMV-inspired elements throughout the experience. The journey includes candy samples throughout the experience. Visit [www.candytopia.com](http://www.candytopia.com).

## NOW THRU MARCH 26 (EXTENDED)

**”How the Light Gets In.”** Presented by 1st Stage of Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road Tysons. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. From the co-writer of the breakout hit *Duck Harbor* comes an uplifting story of connection and healing. Set against the backdrop of a peaceful Japanese garden, this beautifully touching story centers around four very different people who build a community of love and hope. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

## NOW THRU APRIL 16

**Texture Photography Exhibit.** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Falls Church Arts Gallery, 700-B West Broad Street, Falls Church. Sixty photographic images from 37 photographers will be featured in “Texture, A Photography Show” on view at Falls Church Arts Gallery. The submissions vary widely and range from country



The Mason Dance Company Gala Concert will be held at GMU Center for the Arts on March 24-25, 2023.

and city scenes to bodies of water, botanicals, and geographical formations, among others. Visit the website: [www.fallschurcharts.org](http://www.fallschurcharts.org).

## NOW THRU APRIL 2

**Art Exhibition.** 1-6 p.m. At Mosaic Arts Gallery, 2931-B Eskridge Road, Fairfax. An art exhibition titled “Focus on Faces” will be presented by the mosaicArts Gallery. The exhibition will feature encaustic portraits of young adults painted by Alexandria artist, Linda Lowery. Opening reception March 11 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Visit the website: [mosaicarts.site](http://mosaicarts.site)

## ONGOING

**Riverbend Park Plant Sale.** At 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. The Annual Plant Sale is now open! Go to [www.forbpbark.org](http://www.forbpbark.org), then click on “2023 Native Plant Sale” to order your plants by April 1st. Pickup is on April 29th.

## WEDNESDAY/MARCH 15

**The Falls Church Pyramid Art Show.** 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Falls Church High School, Entrance 8 lobby. The Pyramid Art Show is held annually in Fairfax County Public Schools to promote student art from grades K through 12. Art teachers from Camelot, Fairhill, Graham Road, Mason Crest, Pine Springs, Westlawn, Woodburn, Luther Jackson and Falls Church select a number of student artworks to display in the event to represent each school.

## MARCH 17-19

**Super Pet Expo.** At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. Dogs, cats, Champion Trainer, Dexter the Dog & reptiles will highlight this show with more than 150 pet related exhibits along with entertainment and educational activities. Friday, March 17 – 3-8 p.m.; Saturday, March 18 - 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, March 19 - 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: Adults \$15; Children aged 4-12 \$10, age 3 and under – free. Tickets: [www.superpetexpo.com](http://www.superpetexpo.com).

## MARCH 17 TO APRIL 8

**Easter Bunny Photos** at Tysons Corner Center. The Easter Bunny is back at Tysons Corner Center starting on March 17. Individuals, kids and families can visit the Bunny in Fashion Court-Lower Level Nordstrom Wing, and for the easiest experience, pre-book photo sessions for your littles by visiting the link: <https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/BunnyPhotos>

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**”Makin’ Cake.”** 6 p.m. At The Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Dasha Kelly Hamilton’s inspiring stage production, “Makin’ Cake,” reveals what

the history and ingredients of cakemaking can teach us about race, class and equity in America. Filled with “Aha!” moments, poignant vignettes, digital media and two onstage bakers. Tickets are \$25, \$15 for Alden district residents and \$20 for seniors and students. Visit [aldentheatre.org](http://aldentheatre.org) or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**KODO – One Earth Tour 2023: Tsuzumi.** 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Experience the power, grace, and joy that KODO’s athletic percussionists bring to the stage in their much-anticipated 40th anniversary performance: Tsuzumi. As masters of the ancient art of Japanese taiko drumming, KODO bewitches audiences with visually stunning performances that combine raw athleticism and refined percussive virtuosity.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**Fundraising Banquet.** 6-9 p.m. At Arlington Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Coastal Conservation Association’s Northern Virginia Chapter 20th Annual “Save a Fish – Build a Reef” Fundraising Banquet. Support CCA Virginia’s efforts to ensure the health and conservation of our Chesapeake marine resources and anglers’ access to them. Visit the website: [ccavirginia.org](http://ccavirginia.org)

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**NOVA BPW Best Friends Luncheon.** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy, Fair Oaks. The Northern Virginia Business and Professional Women’s (NOVA BPW) Club, of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women’s Club, Inc. will host a Best Friends Luncheon on March 18, 2023. The Best Friends Luncheon will recognize the history of true friendship and the bond of friendship between friends. A woman’s best friend, male or female, positively contributes to her mental and emotional health. The proceeds from this event will support scholarship, schools, women’s shelters, and other non-profit organizations in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince Williams Counties. Tickets are available (\$85.00) online at Eventbrite at <https://BestFriendsLuncheon.eventbrite.com>

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**Children’s Consignment Sale.** 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Grace Weekday Preschool, 7434 Bath Street, Springfield. Cash only and all sales final.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**Teen Job Fair.** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Fair focuses on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. No signup required; just walk in. Recommended students bring their resumes and leave copies with potential employers. Sponsored by McLean Citizens Association with support from McLean, Langley, and Marshall High Schools.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 18

**Teen Job Fair.** 1-3 p.m. (Final workshops ending at 3:30 p.m.) At South County High School, Lorton. Hosted by Supervisor Herry’s office. Fair focuses on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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# Park Authority Burns New Ground

FROM PAGE 7

of plants native to Virginia.”  
Tree-of-Heaven is a target of county-wide control efforts as a host of the Spotted Lantern Fly, a non-native moth that is highly destructive to crops and has recently been found in other Virginia locations. Tall fescue, a standard livestock pasture grass imported from Europe, was grown here when the Lorton Prison maintained cows and a dairy operation. The county’s burn can “reduce the vigor of tall fescue and gradually allow native Virginia grasses and wildflowers to return to the area.”

A controlled fire event in an area of several acres lasts an entire day and takes considerable preparation. Team and equipment staging near the area on Thursday began about three hours before the first fire was lit. Fire manager, Owen Thomas Williams, a county staff ecologist, spent several more hours preparing before the day. The area was mapped to illustrate the fire plan, surveyed for hazards, and tested for any leaks along the incorporated underground natural gas lines of three providers. Fiber optic utilities and others, such as the nearby Covanta waste-to-energy facility, were notified. The county also notified park users, including biking, equestrian and volunteer groups. Prior notifications and permit approvals included local county fire and rescue stations, the fire marshal’s office, and the department of forestry. Trail entrances were marked as closed and the team was instructed to stop igniting if hikers wandered past closure signs into the area, until they could be escorted out. The fire team included members of the park authority staff from several sections, trained and tapped to assist, and help from a contracted professional prescribed fire services provider. After the elaborate prep of equipment, radios, and safety gear, and a review of the plan and safety contingencies, the dozen fire team members ignited, managed, and monitored the fire, finishing late in the afternoon.

The fire team sought an “aggressive ignition” to tackle this first time burn of bare tall fescue and vines growing low to the ground.

SEE LAUREL HILL, PAGE 10

Mobile carts carry a water supply if needed to protect objects or suppress fire.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION



Fire team member uses drip torch to start a line of fire in prescribed burn area in Lorton’s Laurel Hill Park.



With an extraterrestrial appearance, fire team members don helmets, goggles, masks, flame-resistant gloves and clothes, and carry radios and special fire tools, like this combination shovel and rake, to manage fires safely.



Completing the burn of one section, the fire team prepares for next burn section.



During the burn, much of the task is monitoring the fire direction and containment.



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### Obituary

### Obituary



**Patsy “Pat” Cox Whitehead** peacefully slipped into her Savior’s arms on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at age 80.

Pat was born to the late John Carl Cox and Sarah Dunsmore Cox on December 10, 1942 at the family farm in Independence, Virginia. Growing up on the family farm, Pat gained a special appreciation for animals, agriculture and faith. She became a believer in Jesus and followed him the rest of her life, reflecting his love in the way she treated others, particularly those in need.

Pat met her late husband Howard Whitehead, a Virginia Tech cadet, on a blind date set up by their roommates while Pat was attending Radford College. After graduation, the two married on August 14, 1965, and moved to Alamogordo, New Mexico. This was the first of many assignments while Howard served as an Army officer. During Howard’s Army career, which included service in Vietnam, the pair welcomed their daughter Nicole, who survives them both.

After the family moved to Springfield, Pat began a career with the USDA in the Food Safety and Inspection Service. She retired from public service after 20 years, but her service to her community never ended, even after Howard’s death. She volunteered at the Lamb Center, a ministry to the homeless in Fairfax, Virginia, where she helped with meals and offered a compassionate ear to those who needed someone to listen. She was an active volunteer in her church community wherever she lived, helping with grief counseling and hospitality. She also supported many veterans charities through her life, most recently for the Willing Warriors retreat center in Haymarket. Additionally, she helped administer more than a few charity golf tournaments. She was a skillful golfer, who enjoyed many happy hours on golf courses with her friends.

Her great love for people also included her family who will dearly miss her. She leaves behind her daughter Nicole and son-in-law Patrick Cooley and her grandchildren John, Robert, David and Abigail Cooley. Pat’s final resting place will be near her childhood family farm in Independence.

The family is especially grateful to Pat’s wonderful caregivers who watched over her the last years of her life.

A public memorial service is scheduled for Saturday, March 18th at 2:00 PM, with visitation at 1:00 PM at the Henry Funeral Home in Staunton, VA.

Condolences may be sent to the family online at [www.henryfuneralhome.net](http://www.henryfuneralhome.net).

### Legals

Notice is hereby given that on **Thursday, March 23, 2023, commencing at 10:30 am, EST** we will sell by public auction, at the single location of **5801 Rolling Road, Springfield, VA**, the personal effects stored at the following, Ace Van & Storage, Inc. 5801 Rolling Road, Springfield, VA for the account in the name of **WAYNE ADAMS; JUDITH BOSTON; BEATRICE GEELHAAR (1); BEATRICE GEELHAAR (2) and JOANN MARTIN** to enforce its warehouseman’s lien for storage and/or other related services. All parties in interest please take notice.

### CALENDAR

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# Laurel Hill Park

FROM PAGE 9

A light breeze stoked the flames which produced considerable smoke, contained within the bowl shape of the meadow, wedged between biking/hiking trails. The fire team did not leave until all fire was extinguished. Trails were immediately reopened after the fire event.

What will happen next to the area? The county describes this effort as “a preliminary measure to gauge the response of the field. During 2023, plant and animal surveys will take place to determine the results of the burn.” Ecologist Williams expects the area to regenerate naturally from the endemic seed bank present in the soil. He describes the soil as “the best possible source for native plants and biodiversity,” adding “that seed bank represents the endemic genetic identity of the local plant community and the natural heritage of Virginia.” He expects the field to have a better chance of reviving those native seeds now with the space the fire has provided, and with relief from the dominance of non-native plant species.

How long will it take the area to recover? The day following the managed fire, the air carried an acrid tang as a pair of Ospreys called to each other while soaring over the blackened field. No doubt they were hoping to find field mice creeping out of their burrows to inspect the change to their surroundings, with fewer places to hide. The bright red of Cardinal plumage struck a brilliant contrast against the charcoaled soil, as the several pairs that frequent this meadow flew about. With Spring arriving next week, and nudged by the warmth of the fire, seeds will be sprouting soon, giving park users the opportunity to watch native plants reborn and flourishing in their renewed environment.

Thomas expects the regrowth “to begin in just two or three weeks and be highly vigorous”. How much regrowth will be native versus non-native will soon be seen. If the native plants recover well, that vegetation also will promote a more healthy and thriving ecosystem that can include native wildlife and pollinators that want to call this habitat home.

The county’s Natural Resources Branch has conducted past controlled burns this season at Riverbed, Poplar Ford, Lake Fairfax and Laurel Hill parks. Six more burns are planned for this season. More information about these efforts can be found at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nature/prescribed-burn](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nature/prescribed-burn)

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# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. The fairs have provided thousands of teenagers the opportunity to get in front of employers and for our employers to find talented Fairfax County students to fill their positions. Students can register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZFG3RC2>

## SUNDAY/MARCH 19

**Holi Festival.** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Bollywood Bistro 3955 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Includes a celebratory buffet and Holi-themed cocktails. The festival kit comes with everything you need to welcome spring in the tradition of the popular Indian Festival, including a "colors you can taste" buffet, colorful lights, colorful chalk, colorful smoke bombs and music. Holi is known as "The Festival of Colors" in India and is a celebration of the victory of good over evil.

## SUNDAY/MARCH 19

**NTRAK Model Trains Running.** 1-4 p.m. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5, \$6 for special events. Seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](https://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), 703-425-9225.

## WEDNESDAY/MARCH 22

**Toast of Oakton Toastmasters Open House.** 7-8:30 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Toast of Oakton Toastmasters meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Oakton Library on Lynnhaven Place off Hunter Mill Road in Oakton, Virginia. For more information about this event and the club, visit <https://too.toastmastersclubs.org>.

## THURSDAY/MARCH 23

**Burke Historical Society Meeting.** 7 p.m. At Woods Community Center, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. BHS member Patrick O'Neill will speak about the fascinating history of the 14th Street bridges into Washington. Today's bridges are only the latest versions of various spans.

## FRIDAY/MARCH 24

**Oil Painting Demo.** 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society is honored to welcome J. Jordan Bruns to give a demonstration of figure oil painting in the style of "Alla Prima." As an artist with a diverse range in his body of works, he's demonstrated his mastery of abstract works, works on paper, assemblage paintings and the "Alla Prima" style he will be illustrating. Also known as "color spot painting," Mr. Bruns uses decisive brush strokes to capture the mood and background of his model while leaving the viewer to imagine the rest.

## MARCH 24-25

**Mason Dance Company Gala Concert.** 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Featuring four thrilling and technically demanding works choreographed by some of the biggest names in dance: Robert Battle (Awakening), Rafael Bonachela (Variation 10), Doug Varone (Double Octet), and Manuel Vignouille (Black and White). \$28 General Public; \$15 students, faculty/staff, and seniors

## MARCH 24-26

**Women's Storytelling Festival.** At Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Showcasing a wide range of storytelling styles, the 2023 festival features 15 storytellers performing in-person, 5 storytellers performing in a virtual-only showcase, and 7 storytellers competing in the People's Choice Storytelling Contest, in-person and online. All ticket holders, whether in-person or virtual, will be able to watch the festival videos for one month after the festival concludes. For schedules, other details, and tickets, visit <https://www.bettersaidthandone.com/womens-festival/>.



**Trick of the Light Theatre: "The Griegol"** can be seen on Saturday, March 25, 2023 at The Alden Theater, McLean Community Center in McLean.

## MARCH 24-26

**Capital Art & Craft Festival.** At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. The Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature 230 juried artisans in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday, March 26: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: [www.CapitalArtAnd-CraftFestivals.com](http://www.CapitalArtAnd-CraftFestivals.com)

## SATURDAY/MARCH 25

**Trick of the Light Theatre: "The Griegol."** 4 p.m. at The Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, McLean. New Zealand's Trick of the Light Theatre shares an eerie, elegant wordless tale about death, love, grief and monsters. After a child's granny passes away, she starts to suspect she is being pursued by the smoke demon shapeshifter from the old woman's stories. In the tradition of "Spirited Away" and "Coraline," "The Griegol" is a mythic, gorgeously rendered dark fantasy for lovers of theater that conjures magic and laughter out of silhouettes, puppetry, live music and animation.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 25

**Boxers and Briefs 5K Race.** 9 a.m. at House 6 Brewing Company, 44427 Atwater Drive, Ashburn. The 5K course will be open for 60 minutes and take runners through the neighborhood streets of Ashburn and back to House 6 Brewing Company. Registration is \$35 and includes a pair of custom race boxers and the official Boxers & Briefs 5k finisher medal. Participants 21 and older can add a specialty beer from House 6 Brewing Company to their registration. Registration increases to \$40 on February 20, 2023. A virtual race option is also available. Visit [www.boxersandbriefs5k.com](http://www.boxersandbriefs5k.com).

## SATURDAY/MARCH 25

**Magic of John Williams.** 7:30 p.m. At Fairfax High School, 3501 Lion Run, Fairfax. The "Magic of John Williams" comes in many musical moods: excitement, adventure, fear, sadness, melancholy, suspense, energy, mystery, etc. When John Williams composed, apparently the "Force" was with him. Take this opportunity to relax and re-live your memories of these favorite movies during this journey through his music: "Star Wars," "Superman," "Harry Potter," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," and more. Visit the website: <https://fairfaxband.wpengine.com/>

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Each local newspaper's 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.

Visit [connectionnewspapers.com](http://connectionnewspapers.com) or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>

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## Joie De Vivre



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I guess it's time. Ever since my brother Richard's semi unexpected death on Dec. 3rd, to re-work an old B.B. King standard, the thrill has been gone. The joie has been missing from my vivre. For those of you unfamiliar with this French phrase, it means the joy of living, or more generally, "the joy of anything one might do." It's not exactly one's reason for living (raison d'etre), it's more about the intangible element that puts a proverbial bounce in your step and enables you to see the world (and your place in it) as full of possibilities. It's reminiscent of Maverick's (Tom Cruise) inability to "engage," the storyline throughout "Top Gun" after the accidental death of his "radar intercept" officer, "Goose," as played by Anthony Anderson. Maverick felt responsible for the accident and for much of the film was unable to pull the trigger, literally. Eventually, he got sorted, as the Brits say, and the result was "Top Gun: Maverick." Not so much a do-over. More like a do-it-again. As for me, here in the real world, I am not at all responsible for my brother's death, but because of it, I have been unable to engage (live with any joie and take an interest in my vivre).

Unfortunately, in this example anyway, Hollywood and where I live: Burtonsville, don't have much in common. And in so far as my brother's death is concerned, it wasn't make-believe. My inability to engage however, is real. Quite simply it's about loss. The loss of the person with whom I shared my life with for 68 years, who looked out for his younger brother (me), who I respected and looked up to and who often guided (if asked, sometimes without being asked) me on more occasions that I could possibly count.

I had no other siblings, so I didn't have to share. Though we were both married, the dynamic between us never really changed. And with both of us living in the Washington DC Area (having migrated from Newton Centre, Ma. to attend college locally), our worlds intersected regularly which enabled our relationship to evolve, even mature.

Now, due to his passing, the party is over, so to speak. Many of the expectations I took for granted, concerning my brother always being there, especially after getting a "terminal" diagnosis in 2009, haven't taken a turn - for the worse. After I was given that "13 month to two years" prognosis, I figured, even though Richard was five years older than me, I'd predecease him. And these last 14 years have/had done nothing to change my thinking. But he has died and I'm now living a life I never anticipated.

My brother's oldest friend spoke at Richard's memorial service on Dec. 10. He was shocked when Vanessa, Richard's wife, called him to tell him that Richard had died. Though he lived in Boston, he was in regular contact with both Richard and Vanessa during my brother's hospitalization and his at-home recovery as well. He had spoken to Richard and thought he was doing better (which he was). Norman said he never expected to receive that call from Vanessa. He expected, given my health situation, that the call he'd receive would be from Richard telling him that I had died.

Richard was my best friend. He was also the Best Man at my wedding. For the past few years, he's been my employer as well. Not only have I now lost one of the two most important people remaining in my life, but I have also lost my main source of income. A trifecta: brother, best friend, employer. Try recovering from that during a cancer diagnosis. Speaking of which, Richard was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in June. Now adding to all that we shared, laughed, and cried about, you can now add cancer to our mix. It was odd; him asking me all sorts of questions about what to expect with treatment, side effects, scans, et cetera; my area of expertise, you might say. We grew even closer because he was more than a brother or a friend or even a co-worker, he was now a fellow cancer patient. An unfortunately ever-increasing group, but because of his diagnosis, I was more invested in him - and his outcome, than ever. As I've written before, Vanessa and I visited him every day for nearly two months. Our relationship, as difficult as the circumstances made it, didn't suffer at all. On the contrary, it was better and stronger than ever, and we were all looking forward. Now I'm forced to look backward and think what could have been and what will never be again.

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



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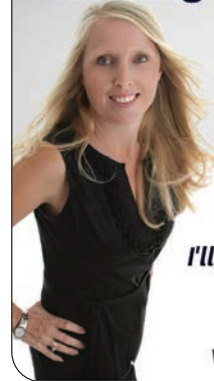
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