

Great Falls CONNECTION

LTG (R) John R. "Bob" Wood, keynote speaker, Andy Wilson, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial and MacPhearson Strassberg, piper



Gathering To Remember

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Friends Matter

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Alex Rocks Elvis

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Helping Children Develop Healthy Friendships

Positive relationships with peers offer happiness and security.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
 THE CONNECTION

After a call from the guidance counselor at her son's school, Amy Lucas, a Chantilly, Va. mother of four, learned that her sixth-grade son sat alone in the school cafeteria and was often afraid to eat in front of other students.

"He's overweight and was being teased mercilessly because of it," said Lucas. "We started seeing a therapist because he was so depressed and had very few, if any friends."

From playdates for elementary school students to trips to the mall for middle and high school students, friendships can be a source of happiness, security and comfort. Some children have difficulty acquiring companions and need help developing the social skills necessary to overcome this challenge.

"Making friends and maintaining healthy relationships is a critical part of a child's social and emotional development," says Marta Cohen, an Alexandria-based therapist who specializes in teens with anxiety disorders. "Not only do they help build self-esteem, and self-confidence, they also help a child establish their identity. This is especially true for children in middle school and high school. Knowing that a group of your peers has your back a critical part of their growth."

Recognizing unhealthy relationships is just as important as nurturing those that are positive, says Cohen. "For example, if your child's so-called friend teases or belittles your child, especially at school or in other public settings, you can guarantee yourself that the relationship is toxic. The same is true for a friend who encourages your child to break rules at school or be disrespectful to teachers or other adults."

"Help your child identify the way that they feel after spending time with that friend, continued Cohen. "One thing that you don't want to do is forbid your child to see their toxic friend or criticize that friend. Doing so could cause your child to rebel. Try not to nag. Instead have a conversation about the consequences of the undesirable behaviors."



FILE PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Children playing with friends on an Arlington playground in June 2020.

"Making friends and maintaining healthy relationships is a critical part of a child's social and emotional development."

— Marta Cohen

Developing and maintaining healthy friendships requires skills that not all children possess, says Laura Maxwell of Bethesda, a former school guidance counselor.

"Modeling healthy friendships by allowing your child to see you interact with your friends is one of the most effective ways to teach a child how to develop those skills," she said. "You can even discuss the characteristics that make your friendship a positive one. It's also important to make sure your child is treating others well and isn't bullying or teasing other children."

Put your children in environments where they are likely to meet children with whom they are compatible, says Maxwell. "If your daughter loves to dance, for example, try enrolling her in a ballet class and she'll meet other children who share her interests," she said. "Encourage your child to make a wide variety of friends, which will also help strengthen their social skills."

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NEWS

9/11's 20th Anniversary at Great Falls Freedom Memorial

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On the benchmark day of the 20th anniversary of remembering 9/11, the people of Great Falls gather. They hear what has become a heartbreaking tradition, sounds of twenty years ago. An audio clip of several different recordings plays over the loudspeakers. "To bring back the memory," says Andy Wilson, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial.

The voices of multiple traffic controllers are heard. Mostly staying clear and calm, they transmit the final calls to assist aircraft in crisis. Sliced into the mix are the sounds of jet engines developing thrust. Cries in the cabins, words of fear, and words of hope play. "You are not going to die." Messages left on answering machines by passengers and crew, private comments to family members say, "I love you." The word hope is heard. The audio clip loops again and again.

Pastor Dave Zucuchelli (Ret.), Smith Chapel United Methodist Church in Great Falls, gives the Invocation. Like so many other invocations heard at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, it carries the same message but in other eloquent words. "Those who have died...will be those whose memories keep us moving forward. We pray for strength, and above all, we pray for love."

Scout Troop 55 presents the colors during the program and leads the Pledge of Allegiance. Those gathered remain standing as the Langley High School Madrigals, under the direction of Dr. Mac Lambert, Langley's choral director, sing the national anthem. Next, Wilson introduces Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34). And, finally, before keynote speaker LTG (R) John R. "Bob" Wood speaks, piper MacPhearson Strassberg plays



LTG (R) John R. "Bob" Wood, keynote speaker

**"United we stand,
divided we fall."
— LTG (R) John R. "Bob" Wood**

"Amazing Grace." According to Wilson, MacPhearson learned to play the bagpipes during the COVID shutdown.

WOOD'S DAUGHTER called him at the Pentagon, concerned about his safety after learning planes struck the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. He says, "With a father's patience and reassurance, I calmed her with mock bravado. 'Keep your head down,' I said. As

SEE FREEDOM MEMORIAL, PAGE 8

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



The Langley High School Madrigals, under the direction of Dr. Mac Lambert, Langley's choral director, sing the national anthem.



Scout Troop 55, supported by its chartering organization St. Francis Episcopal Church in Great Falls, presents the colors during the program, and leads the Pledge of Allegiance.



(From front left) Kathleen Murphy (D- 34th District) member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Pastor Dave Zucuchelli (Ret.), Smith Chapel United Methodist Church in Great Falls, LTG (R) John R. "Bob" Wood, keynote speaker, Andy Wilson, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial and MacPhearson Strassberg, piper



Andy Wilson, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial.



On the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the community gathers for the program of events at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial 9/11 Ceremony held Sat., Sept. 11, 2021.



Alex Dell'Atti, 18, of Great Falls, shares his passion for Elvis during a spotlight performance with the band Hello Cleveland at the Labor Day evening Concerts on the Green presented by Celebrate Great Falls. Guy Perotti in the straw hat is one of the singers in the band.

Rock on, Alex!

Great Falls teen 'nails it' performing with a local band.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GREAT FALLS CONNECTION

Alex Dell'Atti, 18, of Great Falls and a senior at Langley High School, hurried onto the gazebo performance area at the Labor Day evening Concerts on the Green. Organizers reported it was the largest turnout of the season. Like his idol, Elvis Presley, who reportedly was a shy young man at 18, Alex is generally on the quiet side, but can be outgoing depending on the setting.

One of Hello Cleveland's singers, John Johnson, welcomed Alex to share his passion with the people of Great Falls and join the local rock 'n' roll band on stage for a spotlight performance. Johnson handed him the mic. At first, Alex's voice was quiet. He thanked his parents for their support and Hello Cleveland for the opportunity.

Then Alex became a powerhouse of rock 'n' roll. He demonstrated top form singing Presley's "Burning Love," written by Dennis Linde originally released by Arthur Alexander in 1972.

Alex's vocals grabbed the audience's attention.

"His vocals, his sharp dance moves, his outfit right down to the blue suede shoes — were all spot on," said Craig Simpson, drummer with Hello Cleveland. "He even managed to get the audience singing along."

Alex Dell'Atti crooned the upbeat lyrics with hip gyrations. Alex reshaped the song ever so slightly, injecting his character and emitting pure joy that resonated in the vocals.

"The whole band was blown away by his performance; definitely the highlight of our set ... Alex absolutely nailed it," said Simpson the day after the performance.

Even though fans wanted more, like Elvis, there was no encore. "Elvis has left the building."

Running back through the applauding crowd, Alex buzzed with excitement. Family and friends swarmed him, slapping high fives, bumping elbows, and giving hugs. Answering if

he considered himself the second king of rock 'n' roll, Alex said, "Actually, yes."

Alex said what made him most happy was that the crowd appreciated him for his talent. "They didn't look at my disability. I have this syndrome called Sifrim Hitz Weiss that affects my genetics," Alex said. "I love when the crowd doesn't see my syndrome. They just notice my actual performance."

Alex said that he would like more bands to be inclusive. "Let people like me who have disabilities sing along with them."

Alex shared a couple of thoughts on inclusion. The first step toward facilitating inclusion ought to be education. "We should teach band members and singers about autism, Down Syndrome, and other types of syndromes, so they know, and they can let others [with disabilities] perform," Alex said. Other plans for greater inclusion are apparently forthcoming, according to Alex.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Alex Dell'Atti pulls the audience in during his performance of Elvis' "Burning Love." The crowd moves with the beat and claps along loud and strong.

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Crash Kills Mother and 2 Children

Virginia State Police is still investigating a multi-vehicle fatal crash that occurred Thursday (Sept. 9) in Fairfax County. State police were called to the scene at 3:06 a.m.

Police determined that a 2012 Honda Crosstour was traveling east on Interstate 66 when it lost control near the 64 mile marker, the Beltway exit. The Honda struck a 2015 Toyota Rav and then continued off the right side of the interstate. When the Honda struck the guardrail, it then re-entered the eastbound lanes of I-66 and struck the Toyota a second time. The Honda continued off the left side of the interstate and struck the guardrail, after which it spun back into the eastbound lanes of I-66. An eastbound tractor-trailer swerved to the right to avoid

the spinning Honda, but the two vehicles collided.

Police say there were a total of five individuals in the Honda Crosstour. The driver, Lacquora Smith, 28, of Alfred, Maine, died at the scene. A 4-year-old female passenger and 6-year-old female passenger also died at the scene. A 7-year-old female passenger and a 2-year-old juvenile survived the crash and were transported to Fairfax Inova Hospital for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

The adult male driver of the tractor-trailer was not injured in the crash.

The adult male driver of the Toyota SUV was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

The crash remains under investigation.

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

VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES DISTRICT CANDIDATE FORUMS

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area invites the public to join Virginia House of Delegates District Candidate Forums, to be held online in September and October. These events are free and open to the public. Register and address questions to candidates at: <http://www.lwv-fairfax.org/2021-candidate-forum>. The Candidate Forums are nonpartisan. The League never supports or opposes any party or candidate. They invite all certified candidates competing for office in their respective districts. Direct any questions about the event to: pr@lwv-fairfax.org

September 21, 2021:
Virginia House of Delegates District 49
Candidates:
Alfonso H. Lopez (D)
Timothy E. Kilcullen (R)
Terry W. Modglin (I)
September 23, 2021:
Virginia House of Delegates District 53
Candidates:
Marcus B. Simon (D)
Sarah White (R)

Schedule:

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Jason R. Jenkins, assistant fire chief, Fairfax County government



Jeffrey McKay, chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Don Graves, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce

To Honor the Lives Lost of 9/11

In unity, they remember; united, they serve in tribute.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For twenty years, it's never been an easy day, the 11th of September. But the people of Fairfax County gather. Painfully, they recall the death and destruction, souls lost, and souls who forged forward united by compassion. On Saturday morning, Sept. 11, at the Fairfax County Government Center, many from across the county joined together.

More than 800 people turned out on A Day to Remember, the 20-year anniversary of 9/11, and VolunteerFest 2021. They were there to support first responders, remember the nearly 3,000 people who died in the terrorist attacks, and in tribute, transform 9/11 from a day of tragedy into a day of doing good.

Days earlier, Hollie D'Amico Gordon, manager of corporate service events at Volunteer Fairfax <https://www.volunteerfairfax.org/> said they deliberately moved up their annual signature event to align with the observance of Sept. 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. VolunteerFest is an annual community-wide day of service that supports area nonprofits by adding volunteer power for wish list projects.

"For those of you who remember 9/11 as vividly as I do, you know, it was an eerily similar beautiful day that turned into a tragic day," said Chairman Jeffrey McKay, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. He and several of his colleagues were there in remembrance and to help kickoff VolunteerFest, 2021. Steve Mutty is chief executive officer at Volunteer Fairfax who introduced public safety and elected officials at the event.

They recalled the loss of life, the collapse of the World Trade Center's North and South Towers, and the gaping holes of destruction in the western rings of the Pentagon, in a field in Pennsylvania, and the hearts of many.

"It is right and just that we focus our undivided attention right now and reflect on those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to all the families without their loved ones today," said Jason Jenkins, assistant fire chief Fairfax County Government. For many, he said, even twenty years later, the sadness and anger are forever etched in them. However, while tragic, Jenkins said, "It emphasizes preparedness, embraces interoperability, [and] ensures resiliency, all of which reaffirms our commitment to those we serve



Mathew M. Lopez, piper, Northern Virginia Firefighters' Emerald Society of Pipe Band



Volunteers and community members gather for the 20th anniversary remembrance of 9/11 and the kickoff of Volunteer Fairfax's 26th annual VolunteerFest featuring more than 30 projects.



From left, Chairman Jeffrey McKay; Assistant Fire Chief Jason Jenkins; Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield); M. Lattimer, and D. Bourassa.



From left, Jason Jenkins, assistant fire chief, Fairfax County; Jeffrey McKay, chairman, Board of Supervisors; Caroline Evey, firefighter, Company 40; Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield); E. Cory; C.A. Stewart; and Supervisor Walter Alcorn (Hunter Mill).

as we near 10:28 a.m."

Sept. 11, 2001 also united many communities. People dropped everything to help others regardless of differences. McKay said people realized whatever they were doing at that moment was immediately unimportant compared to what was happening in our country. He recalled 184 people who died at the Pentagon. "But also, on that day, our first responders, their families, and our community stood up and said, 'We will be resistant, and we will protect Fairfax County and the United States of America.'"

According to McKay, in the aftermath of 9/11, many individuals considered what they could do to help the community heal

and how to do it better. "Many of us volunteered," McKay said. "Most people in Fairfax County have stepped forward in unprecedented ways to serve and never forget the lives that were lost."

In his remarks, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly said on 9/11, he was struck by the juxtaposition of people fleeing in terror down the steps of the Twin Towers while first responders were going up. "People risked their lives to save others," he said. Connolly recalled a Monsignor part of the Vatican representation in Washington and that he observed the horror of people jumping out World Trade Center windows when faced with jet-fueled flames coming at them.

"But what this Monsignor observed was that total strangers ... at the last minute held

hands [as they jumped]. It was a statement of love and fraternity, where one victim said to another, 'You will not be alone in these final moments.' And that kindness suffused America that day and for months following," he said.

According to Connolly, the terrorists who took over the planes targeted America because, "They wanted to destroy what we stood for, freedom and the inalienable rights...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, unfettered here. We believe those are universal human aspirations; they're not limited to us." He added that twenty years later, Americans are fighting amongst themselves, and although the country lost nearly

Fairfax County Observances for the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

The events of 9/11 hit Fairfax County hard, being so close to the Pentagon. Parts of the tragic day unfolded in our backyard. On Saturday, the 20th anniversary of 9/11, communities around the county held remembrances in different manners. Some were like the keystone County Remembrance held at 2 p.m. at Bailey Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department in Falls Church. Many first responders from there were deployed to the Pentagon on 9/11. A video of the remembrance can be viewed on the Fairfax County Government Facebook Page.

Others were ceremonies like the one held at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial featuring keynote speaker LTG (R) John R. Wood of the U.S. Army.

In the Town of Vienna, organizers held the 20th Anniversary Remembering 9/11, on the Freeman House Lawn, with keynote speaker Anne Dellinger, former digital content editor at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

In the Town of Herndon, an evening candlelight vigil at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church gathered people in remembrance. These are only a few of the observances.

In Reston, two trees, now part of the landscape, grow in memory of Norma Cruz Khan and Leonard Taylor of Reston, who died aboard American Airlines flight 77 when it crashed in the Pentagon.

Six trees are planted at the Freedom Memorial in Great Falls to remember the residents they lost.

LOCALS LOST ON 9/11

<https://pentagonmemorial.org/explore/biographies>

- LTC Dean E. Mattson, 57, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Eddie Dillard, 54, of Alexandria, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Capt. Robert Edward Dolan, 43, Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Diane M. Hale-McKinzy, 38, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]

- Maj. Wallace Cole Hogan, 40, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Bryan Creed Jack, 48, of Alexandria, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Steven D. "Jake" Jacoby, 43, Alexandria, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- MAJ Stephen V. Long, 39, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Terence M. Lynch, 49, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- MAJ Clifford L. Patterson, 33, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- CDR Robert Allan Schlegel, 38, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- LTC Gary F. Smith, 55, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Norma Lang Steuerle, 54, of Alexandria, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Sandra Carol Taylor, 50, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- In the Town of Herndon, an evening candlelight vigil at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church gathered people in remembrance. These are only a few of the observances.
- Meta L. Waller, 60, of Alexandria, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- LTC Stephen Neil Hyland, 45, of Burke, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Charles E. Sabin, 54, of Burke, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Stanley R. Hall, 68, of Centreville, Va. (American Flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Karl W. Teepe, 57, of Centreville, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Col. Canfield Boone, 54, of Clifton, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- CAPT Jack Panches, 51, of Clifton, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Khang Nguyen, 41, of Fairfax, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Michael L. Selves, 53, of Fairfax, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Sandra Teague, 31, of Fairfax, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]

- Mary Jane "MJ" Booth, 64 of Falls Church, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Brenda C. Gibson, 59, of Falls Church, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- 1st Lt. Richard P. Gabriel, USMC, Retired, 54, of Great Falls, Va. (American Flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Ann Judge, 49, of Great Falls, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Barbara Olson, 45, of Great Falls, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Lisa J. Raines, 42, of Great Falls, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Diane M. Simmons, of Great Falls, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- George Simmons, of Great Falls, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Capt. Charles "Chic" Burlingame III, 51, of Herndon, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Mark E. Schurmeier, 44, McLean, Va. (World Trade Center) [Legacy.com]
- TC Kip P. Taylor, 38, of McLean, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Norma Cruz Khan, 45, Reston, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Leonard Taylor, 45, of Reston, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Rosa Maria "Rosemary" Chapa, 64, of Springfield, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- LCDR Charles Droz, 52, of Springfield, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- CDR Patrick S. Dunn, 39 of Springfield, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Ada L. Mason, 50, Springfield, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Patricia E. "Patti" Mickley, 41, of Springfield, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Marjorie C. Salamone, 53, of Springfield, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Janice Scott, 46, of Springfield, Va. (Pentagon) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]
- Vicki C. Yancey, 43, of Springfield, Va. (American flight 77) [The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial]

— MERCIA HOBSON

To Honor the Lives Lost of 9/11

FROM PAGE 6

3,000 souls that day 20 years ago, "in the last 16 to 17 months, we've lost 650,000."

"We can't agree on masks. We can't agree on vaccines. We can't agree on lockdowns or quarantine or contact tracing," Connolly said. As we rededicate ourselves to try to come back together, we find what brings us together are commonly shared values, he said.

Don Graves, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce, attended the remembrance and VolunteerFest kickoff. Graves said that as we remember the victims of 9/11 and honor the Americans who responded twenty years ago, he hoped that "we as a nation, in the midst of ongoing tragedy in the suffering and pain that our nation is finding and countless others around the world, that we come together as a nation."

"Remember, all that binds us is greater than what separates us," Graves said.

IN AN INTERVIEW a few days before the gathering at the Government Center, Mutty, CEO of Volunteer Fairfax, said on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, he left home late and was stuck in traffic, "right next to the Pentagon."

"I saw the whole thing in my rearview mirror," Mutty said. At a dead stop and seated inside his vehicle only hundreds of feet from the Pentagon, Mutty watched American Airlines flight 77 fly into the building and erupt in a fireball. The crash, Mutty said, nearly took out the Pentagon helipad firehouse beside him.

So, on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, and officially kicking off Volunteer Fairfax's 26th annual VolunteerFest involving over 800 people and more than 30 projects, Mutty said that day of service, on Sept. 11, 2021, "maybe more than any recent years, held special meaning for him."

"It is a demonstration of our resilience and caring spirit. May that spirit continue to grow, and may we never forget what sparked that spirit on this morning 20 years ago."

PUBLIC NOTICE

In-Person Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY2023 Budget

(July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023)

**McLean Community Center Governing Board
Wednesday, Sept. 22, 6:30 p.m.**

Residents who wish to speak at the Public Hearing are asked to call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, to be placed on the speakers list. The draft budget proposal is available on the Center's website. Copies will be available at the Public Hearing.

Written comments may be delivered to the McLean Community Center (see address below) marked "Attention: Executive Director," or sent by email to daniel.singh@fairfaxcounty.gov. Written comments may be provided after the Public Hearing up through Monday, Oct. 25.



McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
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Great Falls' Irish Corner!



Celebrating Halfway to St. Patrick's Day

Friday, September 17, 2021

Pub Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

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For the safety of guests and staff, a copy of your vaccination card is required for admission.



Entertainer Will Baskin on the front patio from 1:00 p.m. to close. Full menu and bar available!

Must Be 21 or Older – No Exceptions

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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 Structure ID	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
AMELIA	1247	615	NAMOZINE RD	DEEP CREEK	8/27/2021
PATRICK	13246	103	DRY POND RD/ROUTE 103	BACK CREEK	8/26/2021
PATRICK	13245	103	DRY POND HY/ROUTE 103	SANDY CREEK	8/24/2021
MONTGOMERY	12292	663	WALTON ROAD/ROUTE 663	CRAB CREEK	8/19/2021
LYNCHBURG	20519	9	NINTH ST	KANAWHA	8/19/2021
PITTSYLVANIA	13623	686	MARKHAM RD	GEOGES CREEK	8/18/2021
WYTHE	19710	649	ATKINS MILL RD	SPILLER BRANCH	8/17/2021
GRAYSON	8910	732	LAUREL CREEK RD	LAUREL CREEK	8/16/2021
SCOTT	16635	611	LOWER GRASSY CREEK	GRASSY CREEK	8/15/2021
AMHERST	1451	631	STONEWALL CREEK RD	STONEHOUSE CREEK	8/10/2021
BLAND	3048	604	WALKERS CREEK RD	BIG WALKER CREEK #3	8/9/2021
WYTHE	19714	653	GREASY CREEK RD	STUFFLE RUN	8/5/2021
LEE	10768	421	ROUTE 421	STONE CREEK	8/3/2021

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 www.virginiadot.org and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

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

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

Freedom Memorial

FROM PAGE 3

I hung up the phone, American flight 77 crushed my office." Black smoke filled his office and lungs; bright orange flames lapped at the windows, and his office door was jammed shut. With help, he gets out, and teamwork and training kicks in.

They rush out through old bus tunnels under the Pentagon to escape a possible second strike from a reported inbound airplane that was United flight 93.

"Little did we know, America's longest war had begun," he says.

Wood tells of a draft document, a strategic plan for the army called the Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review. "It's a report to Congress that compares the defense strategy with resourcing needs, a scorecard, and a game plan for defending our nation," he says.

"My two staff members who died in 9/11, it was their professional work, and the analysis I was reviewing was to be published 30 September, just several weeks after that. And in that draft document, it contained virtually nothing about the threat of terrorism to the homeland. A hasty fix was ordered," Wood says. "Peace demands strength, but it also de-



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
MacPhearson Strassberg, piper

mands unity," Wood says. "It's apparent our forefathers had it right. United we stand, divided we fall."

Wilson reads the Great Falls 9/11 Honor Roll. After each name, Sara Hilgartner rings the bell.

1st Lt. Richard P. Gabriel, USMC, Ret.

Lisa J. Raines
Diane M. Simmons
George W. Simmons
Ann C. Judge
Barbara K. Olson.

Michael Fox, bugler, and founder of Bugles Across America, concludes the 9/11 Ceremony, Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021, sounding Taps.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

TUESDAY/SEPT. 21

JLNV Recruiting Event. 6-6:45 p.m. Virtual event. The public is invited to join in a Zoom call to learn more about membership in the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Members will share their experiences and opportunities they've explored through the Junior League, and answer any questions you may have about becoming a member. They are currently accepting applications for the next member class. Website: <https://www.jlnv.org/sept-21st-jl-nv-virtual-meet-and-greet/>

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 22

Car Free Day. All Day. Throughout D.C., Virginia, and Maryland. Car Free Day is a free event celebrated internationally every September 22, in which commuters are encouraged to take the free pledge to get around without driving alone in cars, and instead use transit, rideshare, bike, walk, scooter, or telework. Take the free pledge to use transit, rideshare, bike, walk, scooter, or telework. Register and pledge at <https://www.car-freemetrodc.org> to receive special promotions and be entered into a free raffle for a chance to win great prizes. Call 800-745-7433.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 23

Join Scouting Night. 6:30-7:30 p.m. At Forestville Elementary School, 1085 Utterback Store Road, Great

Falls. Children in grades K-5: bring your parents to learn about the adventure of Cub Scouts and be part of Pack 55! Cub Scouts is a year-round family program. Visit the website: <https://www.gfvscouts.com/>

THURSDAY/SEPT. 23

Childproofing our Communities from Trafficking. 7:30 p.m. Online event. RSVP at www.PreventHT.org/events/. The full name of this event is "Let's Talk Back To School Basics: Childproofing Our Communities from Human Trafficking." Attend this free online webinar to learn how to keep your kids confident and safe from threats of human trafficking as they go back into schools and new real-world hangouts. Free. Those interested in participating can register by visiting www.PreventHT.org/ or going to the RSVP page directly at: https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/4516298175247/WN_hKAPIoWSTaOo2l-3nQjRwg

LIBRARY REOPENS IN FALLS CHURCH

Mary Riley Styles Public Library, a staple of the Falls Church, community since 1957, reopened its doors this week following a nearly 18-month renovation and expansion designed by design firm BKV Group. The updated library includes a two-story, 6,849-square-foot addition that

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

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OCTOBER 24 RESTON TOWN CENTER

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Edward Jones CVS Health

FROM PAGE 8

brings the total size of the facility to 25,727 square feet. Improvements include a new entrance on the corner of Park and Virginia avenues, dedicated youth sections on the lower level, consolidated adult collection on the main floor, expanded conference rooms, an enhanced Falls Church History Room, accessibility upgrades, and completely updated interiors throughout.

FALL ART CLASSES

Registration is currently underway for fall art classes at McLean Project for the Arts (MPA). Classes begin Sept. 22. Autumn offerings include the return of many popular classes, as well as the debut of exciting new options. MPA will be holding fall classes both online and in-studio. Classes are available for adults and youth, and for new and experienced art students alike. Join MPA for a variety of imaginative and inspiring classes to ignite your creativity and expand your horizons. In-studio classes held at MPA's DuVal Studio in the McLean Community Center; online classes also available. Visit mpaart.org for a complete list of fall class offerings. Or visit <https://mpaart.org/education/art-classes/>

TUESDAY/SEPT. 28

Great Falls resident and expert on native plant gardening Meghan McGinty, Ph.D., will be offering five free clinics in September and October at Freedom Memorial in Great Falls from 11 a.m. to 12 noon Sept. 28 Oct. 5, 19, and 26. If interested, please register at CultivateNature@gmail.com. The clinics will be held rain or shine, except for extreme weather. They will be casual, question-driven sessions. Meghan is a botanist with a Ph.D. in Ecology and Environmental Biology from Columbia University. In 2013, she and her husband purchased a five acre property in Great Falls where she has slowly been restoring native plants. In addition to planting native trees in a meadow to restore forest on her property, she also has removed lawn to establish a fenced native plant garden. The garden has thrived and is now home to butterflies and songbirds, skinks, toads, native insects, hawks and so much more.

Check out Meghan's Instagram account [@cultivatnature](https://www.instagram.com/cultivatnature) to follow the seasons of her garden and to pick up gardening tips and advice. EP members may remember Meghan's Zoom presentation in October 2020.

ONGOING

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

TEXT FOR FOOD

No Kid Hungry Virginia encourages families to text FOOD or COMIDA to 877-877 to find free summer food sites organized by school districts and community organizations. Meal sites are offering a variety of distribution models to help

safely connect students with meals and promote social distancing, including "Grab and Go" service and food delivery along bus routes while passing out multiple days' worth of meals at one-time.

FRESHFARM MARKETS OPEN

Local FRESHFARM Markets are opened. Residents are encouraged to pre-order as much as possible, but grab-and-go and prepackaged options will be available for purchase at all of the markets listed below.

Saturday Markets

Arlington, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. -- N Courthouse Rd. and 14th St N, Arlington
Oakton, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. -- 2854 Hunter Mill Rd., Oakton.

Sunday Market

Mosaic, 9 a.m - 2 p.m. -- 2910 District Ave., Fairfax

COVID-19 TEXT MESSAGES IN SPANISH

As part of its efforts to provide coronavirus-related information and assistance in multiple languages, Fairfax County now provides COVID-19 text alerts in Spanish. To sign up, text FFXCOVIDESP to 888777.

FAIRFAX COUNTY CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER

Fairfax County activated a Joint Information Center.

Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus

Emergency Information Blog (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center – The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.

Twitter – [@fairfaxcounty](https://twitter.com/fairfaxcounty) and [@fairfaxhealth](https://twitter.com/fairfaxhealth)

Facebook – www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

Volunteer Victims Needed. Virginia Task Force 1 (VA-TF1) is holding a full scale exercise and needs volunteers to act as victims in need of rescue. The exercise will take place from the evening of Monday, April 23 through afternoon of Thurs-

day, April 26. A minimum shift of six hours is expected – overnight volunteers are especially needed. "Victims" will need to be able to crawl in and out of rubble piles, capable of sitting or lying in place for extended periods of time, and don't mind getting dirty. Contact Christopher Yorty at christopher.yorty@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and

other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmaf.org. The Center's website is www.scmaf.org.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/litombudsman/.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's ap-

pointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs a Certified Arthritis Exercise Instructor. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Volunteers for Change. A program for adults which offers more than 50 weekend and evening volunteer opportunities per month. www.volunteerfairfax.org.

Great Falls Hike or Bike Volunteers. Bike or Hike Patrol volunteers assist park rangers by riding on accessible trails in Great Falls Park. To assist park staff in providing info and services to park visitors, maintain good public relations as a representative of the National Park Service, and monitor park resources, visitor usage, and emergency needs. Skills and Experience Desired: Excellent communication skills. Ability to work with culturally, socially, and economically diversified people. Knowledge of the park and local resources, or the desire to learn. Knowledge of basic bike maintenance or willingness to learn. Willingness to provide basic first aid. Ability to demonstrate skill in basic operation of a bicycle. Call Volunteer Coordinator 703-285-2965 ext. 225

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 8

Potomac Paddlers Volunteer Corps. The Potomac Paddlers Corps is a volunteer group with the National Park Service under shared management between Great Falls Park and the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The primary mission of the Corps is to have trained, uniformed park volunteers on the Potomac River to assist the park in identifying and reporting incidents, watch out for risky park visitor behavior, and to deliver safety messages to the public about the dangers of the Potomac River in the Potomac Gorge. Contact: Volunteer Coordinator 703-285-2965 ext. 225 or visit www.nps.gov

ONGOING

1 Million Cups. Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m. networking; 9-10 a.m. program at Make Offices at Tysons, 1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 600, McLean. Each week a different business owner gives a brief six-minute presentation about where they are in their business. They then offer up a challenge question about a new idea, product, expansion or something they are facing in their business. The group then masterminds solutions. Free and open to the public. Visit www.1millioncups.com/.

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) invites women living in the Langley High School District or The Estates of Lowes Island to learn more about the group. The purpose of GFFN is to establish and foster an atmosphere in which new and current residents can develop new friendships and community contacts through social, educational and cultural activities. In addition, the club provides service, support and donations to philanthropic and civic organizations in and around the Great Falls community. Email info@gffnva.org or visit www.gffnva.org.

Vienna Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30-9 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.

Run With the Doctor. Every other Saturday at 7 a.m. 8230 Boone Blvd., Tysons Corner. The Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine offers its services in a convenient format to runners at this running event. Free. facebook.com/run-withthedoctor.

Virginia Sheriff's Institute Scholarship Program. Those enrolled in a Virginia college or university who are pursuing a degree in the field of criminal justice are eligible for the Virginia Sheriff's Institute Scholarship Program; recommendation letter needed. 703-246-3251, shpio@fairfaxcounty.gov or vasheriff-institute.org/scholarship/.

Brinker Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Saturday, 9:30 a.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. N.E., Vienna. Brinker.wordpress.com.

Pauline Shirley Toastmasters Club Meeting. 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean.

Develop better speaking and presentation skills, learn to think quickly and clearly on your feet. 703-893-5506 or paulineshirley.freetoasthost.info.

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg



The Buckets N Boards Comedy Percussion Show will take place at the McLean Central Park on Saturday, Sept. 18.

SEPT. 3-30

Transitions to Abstractions -- Five Painters. Exhibition at the Great Falls Library, Large Meeting Room, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A collective of local painters show their work at the Great Falls Library. The show features a group of experienced artists who began working in more abstract painting after exploring other mediums and styles. Featured artists include two sculptors and an architect. They are a part of the Great Falls Studios group.

SEPT. 16-26

"Bo-Nita." At Boro Park at The Boro Tysons, 350 Broad Street, Tysons. When: September 16 at 8:00 p.m., September 17 at 8:00 p.m., September 18 at 8:00 p.m., September 19 at 8:00 p.m., September 22 at 8:00 p.m., September 23 at 8:00 p.m., September 24 at 8:00 p.m., September 25 at 8:00 p.m., and September 26 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets: More information about tickets and event details are available at www.1ststage.org

FRIDAY/SEPT. 17

Celebrate Garba (Sharad Navratri) Workshop (Virtual). 6 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, McLean. When people in the northwestern Indian state of Gujarat want to celebrate, the ecstatic dance, traditionally known as Garba, often provides the fuel. An essential component of wedding celebrations and of the nine-day, fall Hindu festival Navratri, Garba refers to both a style of Indian folk dance as well as the event at which the dance is performed. The dance is an intoxicating, high-energy dance style marked by handclaps and twirls. Purchase tickets online at www.aldentheatre.org.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 17

Family Bingo Night (Virtual). 7-9:30 p.m. Sponsored by McLean Community Center. Join in a virtual evening of fun and prizes with your family. Winners will take their pick of prizes. Preregistration is recommended. Activity No. 4701.221. Cost is \$5 per person for 5 Virtual Bingo Cards. Call OFC at 703-448-TEEN (8336).

FRIDAY/SEPT. 17

The Floral Art of Ikebana. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At the Hilton McLean, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, Tysons Corner. Demonstration of Japanese flower arranging. Master artist Naohiro Kasuya, headmaster of the Ichiyo School of Ikebana in Japan, will be making a rare appearance demonstrating what he calls "balance through imbalance" — a centuries old, philosophical approach to nature that's rooted in Buddhist monasteries. Tickets: \$60.00 includes demonstration and luncheon. Demonstration is \$50. Tickets can be purchased online at <https://iichapter1.com/> which is the homepage for Ikebana International, Chapter No. 1, Washington, D.C.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 18

NVMR Train Show. 1-5 p.m. At the Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Ave., N.E., Vienna. Stop by the Historic Vienna Train Station where you can see and hear HO scale model trolleys and trains including Thomas and some of his friends on display and in operation. Great family fun and activity for the young and young-at-heart. The museum and model train layout was included on Fox 5 "zip trip" must see in Vienna. Hosted by the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 18

Buckets N Boards Comedy Percussion Show. 5 p.m. At McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Buckets N Boards is a high-energy, comedy percussion show that is equal parts music and humor. The intricate beats, ridiculous songs, tap dancing and stunning synchronicity combined with the variety of instruments and found objects that they manipulate is unlike any other show.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 18

Super Heroes for SafeSpot 5K Run/Walk. 8:30 a.m. At Lake Fairfax in Reston. A Fun-filled morning that the entire family can enjoy. In addition to a certified 5K, they will have a Fun Run for children, bouncers, games, and entertainment. Dress up as your favorite Superhero to show your support. Proceeds benefit SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center which provides services for abused children. Register at <https://www.safespotfairfax.org/s4s-5k/>.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 18

Block Party. 1-4 p.m. At 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The Old Firehouse Center in McLean is celebrating 31 years of service to the community with a free community block party. Activities will include live music provided by Bach 2 Rock Music School, a three-sided climbing wall and a mobile arcade truck provided by Fantasy World Entertainment and art stations and access to OFC's game room, which includes a pool table, table tennis and arcade games. Food and beverages will be provided by Big Cheese and Ben and Jerry's food trucks and the Old Firehouse will provide free popcorn and beverages as well. Call OFC at 703-448-8336, TTY: 711, or visit the website, www.oldfirehouse.org.

SEPT. 18-19

KORUS Festival. At Tysons Corner Center, Bloomingdale's Parking Lot, Vienna. KORUS will be filled with entertainers, food, retail and service merchants, games, kid's zone, and the beer garden. There will be K-pop, Jazz, Rock, Funk and R&B, Flamenco, Hip hop, Opera, Popera, Nanta, and world music fusion. There will be Kpop dance covers, Swing dance, Line dance, Clogging, and Random dance.

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On My Late Father's Birthday No Less



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

To say I'm looking forward to my next round of scans (CT and bone) on Sept. 23 would be "Geminological." I am, and I'm not. I am not looking forward to the scans because the results, likely emailed to me within day or two - or three if late, will indicate whether my life hangs in the balance or, whether what happened to me in the Houston airport on July 20th was in fact a healing miracle - for which I'm quite eager to find out, or merely the act of a kind-hearted, well-intended soul spreading the gospel that Jesus saves.

As I mentioned in one of the "arc" columns recounting the second degree burns I accidentally inflicted on the soles of both my feet on Crystal Beach (actually it was the pavement I walked across from Crystal Beach to our accommodations) near Galveston, Tx. There, on the way home, I met a woman in the airport named Solange who offered to change my life through the power of healing prayer as practiced/performed at the Dwelling Place Church located in Houston where she is a congregant and devotee. Even though the gate in the airport where I was sitting was extremely crowded, she navigated her way through all the commotion and managed to end up near where I was sitting. It's almost as if she sought us out, somehow. Anyway,

She made her way over to the row of chairs at the departure gate where I was sitting, stretched across two chairs in a meager attempt to lessen the pain in my feet. My wife, Dina, looked at Solange as she sort of looked around for somewhere to sit and apologized for my taking up multiple seats, explaining briefly that I was in pain due to the burns on my feet. Without hesitation, Solange immediately offered up some healing prayers if I were amenable. Looking over at Dina, while sort of snickering, we said "Sure, thank you." And after motioning for a nearby male friend/fellow church member to join her, the two of them soon began praying on my behalf, not in unison, but similar.

I can't remember if she - or they touched my feet but soon enough they were invoking God, Jesus Christ, God's children, relieve my suffering and one or two other healing-type prayers. When they finished, after 10 seconds or so, we thanked them again. Then thinking to myself, I got greedy. I said aloud to Solange something like "Actually, the burns on my feet aren't my most serious problem: I have cancer." To which she instinctively offered up another round of prayers, with our blessing of course, for good health and future well-being. When she finished she walked away and re-joined her friends. In taking it all in, I felt quite fortunate for the experience and extremely grateful she reached out to someone she didn't even know.

It's been nearly eight weeks since our meeting at the airport. Given the excruciating pain I experienced for weeks upon my return home to Maryland, I can't say with too much conviction that my feet healed any quicker than the "weeks, not months" advisory we got from the Urgent Care doctor I visited back home later that evening. But that was then. This is now.

I have quarterly scans ahead which given the "terminal" nature of my papillary thyroid cancer, I could really use a miracle. So as naive as it may sound, I'm kind of looking forward to these upcoming scans. Certainly it would be a great story/unbelievable turn of events if my oncologist emailed me a "What happened? The tumors are gone." Although, for this kind of totally unexpected result, I imagine he'd probably call. I'm not holding my breath though, but with the combined efforts of Solange, modern medicine, and perhaps my late father pulling a few strings for me on his birthday, maybe, just maybe, I'll have a Paul Harvey-type "rest of the story" to share with you. If not, I'll continue to manage as I always have since I first was diagnosed in late Feb., 2009: I'll remain positive about the negative.

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



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