



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/CENTRE VIEW

**Tree crushes cars along Route 123. Storms uprooted mature trees, blew down limbs, brought down numerous power lines and also broke power poles.**

## Storms Leave 2 Dead, Power Out

**At least two dead in Fairfax; 285,000 residents still without power after Friday's hurricane force winds.**

BY KEN MOORE  
CENTRE VIEW

**W**inds of more than 70 miles per hour swept through Fairfax County Friday night. Power went out as the storm blew into the area around 10:30 p.m. with hurricane force winds sounding like a freight train.

The sound made some residents think a tornado was upon them, and many took refuge in basements.

**THERE WERE AT LEAST TWO DEATHS** in Fairfax County, both in the West Springfield area.

A 27-year-old Burke man, Khiet Hguyen, died when a tree fell directly on top of his car on Old Keene Mill Road near Bauer Drive, according to Fairfax Police. He was declared dead at the scene of the accident.

A 90-year-old West Springfield woman who was

lying in bed died when a tree fell on her home on Carr Street at 11 p.m. Friday night. Another person in the home called 911 but was unable to reach the woman. Police and fire and rescue units responded to the home, but they needed a construction crane and specialized tree removal equipment to continue the recovery operation.

On Saturday early morning, 429,868 of Dominion Power's Northern Virginia 831,900 customers were without power. Among those affected was the Fairfax County emergency 911 service.

The Fairfax County emergency 911 phone system was down around noon Saturday, according to the Fairfax County Emergency Alert system. "Many other forms of communications to include cellular, land line and texting are intermittent. If you have an emergency, we ask that you go to your local police or fire station for assistance," according to Fairfax County officials.

911 service was partly restored several hours later, using the backup non-emergency numbers of 703-691-7561 and 703-691-3680 if a 911 call did not go through.

Emergency 911 service was working by Sunday, and police ask that residents call 911 only in a true emergency, and to call the Fairfax County non-emergency numbers, 703-691-7561 and 703-691-3680 to report less urgent public safety problems. These are not the numbers to call to report a power outage; call Dominion at 866-366-4357.

SEE HURRICANE FORCE, PAGE 2

## Sullivan Honored as Officer of Quarter

**Award presented at CAC meeting.**

BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

**W**hether trying to outsmart a shooter or figure out where a lost child might go, Fairfax County police PFC Gerald Sullivan gives the effort his all. As a result, he was recently honored as the Sully District Station's Officer of the Quarter.

"Everybody calls him 'Sully,' and he's a great guy," said 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ryan Morgan at the June 15 meeting of the station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). "He's a West Point graduate and was a captain in the Army, and I knew it was only a matter of time until he'd

be up here [receiving an award]."

Morgan wrote Sullivan's nomination letter on behalf of the station's Evening B-Team. Included in it were details of a rescue Sullivan made after officers were called to Centreville's Paddington Lane area, west of Stone Road.

A grandmother had taken her 5-year-old granddaughter for a walk on a gravel trail behind their home, when the little girl took off running and went into the thick underbrush. The elderly woman was physically unable to catch up to the child and eventually lost sight of her.

"Horrorified at the situation, the grandmother went home to find the child's mother," wrote Morgan. "The mother was panicked, knowing the dangers of the wooded

SEE SULLIVAN, PAGE 7

## 'I Had To Learn A Lot on My Own'

**Westfield student wins Hispanic Leadership Alliance scholarship.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

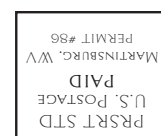
**C**entreville's Joe Fletcher, 18, just graduated from Westfield High. But before he did, he won a scholarship from the Hispanic Leadership Alliance (HLA).

His school counselor, Bill Sidener, wrote the recommendation for his award and, as far as he's concerned, the HLA couldn't

SEE WHS STUDENT, PAGE 2



**Joe Fletcher holds his Hispanic Leadership Alliance award.**



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## NEWS

# WHS Student Wins Alliance Scholarship

FROM PAGE 1

have picked a better recipient.

"He's one of those kids I'll remember my whole career — and this is my 16<sup>th</sup> year doing this," said Sidener. "That's because he's tenacious, doesn't take 'no' for an answer and always has a goal in mind. Joe's also honest and polite, and his integrity is unmatched."

Fletcher was raised by a single mom, and Sidener says he's appreciative of everything he's received. "He even thanks his teachers when he leaves the classroom," said the counselor. "He seems like an older soul with more experience than he actually has, and I've enjoyed every conversation with him. He definitely deserves this award."

His AP calculus teacher, Christy Jenkins, called him a "phenomenal" student. "He soaks up information — you can't teach him enough," she said. "And he comes at things from an engineering perspective; he wants to know how they work and how they apply, instead of just memorizing facts."

She said Fletcher was always prepared for her class, but didn't need to take it for graduation. "He took it because he was motivated to do so, and I think he applies this ability to everything," said Jenkins. "If we have our future in kids' hands, he's the kid in whose hands I'd want my future."

Born in the U.S., Fletcher moved to Bolivia with his mother as a toddler so she could work. When he was 10, they returned to Centreville where he attended London Towne Elementary and Stone Middle School before heading to Westfield.

"I like Westfield's school spirit," he said. "The school's so big, but we come together for special events. And that made my time at Westfield special and made it feel like a family."

Now, he's a new engineering student at Virginia Tech. "My mom's brothers helped raise me in Bolivia and were one of the main reasons I'm going into engineering, because they're both engineers," said Fletcher. "I like problem-solving, doing different ways of thinking and coming up with solutions to make things better."

He's double-majoring in computer engineering and computer science. His dream job is to someday work for Google. "A lot of learning, for me, has come through the Internet when teachers couldn't always answer my questions," said Fletcher. "So I want to help others."

In May, he received a \$1,000 scholarship from the HLA and was delighted to get it. That means he's now received \$5,000 in scholarships because the



**Westfield High grad Joe Fletcher with HLA President Idi Duncan at the HLA awards banquet.**

Martin Luther King Foundation awarded him \$2,000 for his first two years in college.

"My mom was an office manager, but she was laid off because of the economy and has now been unemployed for a year," said Fletcher. "So I'm blessed because — including two loans and government grants — I've gotten \$15,500."

He'd also been working in the warehouse of a moving company in Sterling to make a little extra money. But he's now away at VT, participating in its Student Transition Engineering Program (STEP). "It'll introduce me to the engineering program," said Fletcher. "And I'll also see what I'll have to work on and what I'll need to do to succeed there."

To be eligible for the HLA scholarship, he had to write an essay, and he did it from the heart. "I talked about being an only child with just a mom and a lot of tough moments," he said. "I told them, 'I'm not looking for pity — I just want to tell you what made me the man I am today. You can face any obstacles if you have your friends and family and set your goals.'"

Not having a father, said Fletcher, "I had to learn a lot of things on my own, so I had to mature a lot earlier. I was determined not to be the man my father was, but to be a better person, work hard, take responsibility and make plans for the future."

"I was really excited to get the HLA scholarship," he said. "It was the second scholarship I won, so it meant that all my financial aid was coming together and I could breathe a little easier." As for his advice to other students, he says, "No matter what happens in your life, keep working hard, aim for tomorrow and always have a goal set."

# Hurricane Force Winds Hit Region

FROM PAGE 1

Many traffic signals are out throughout the region. In Fairfax County, 130 traffic signals were without power on Saturday, according to county officials, who remind drivers to treat any intersection with a dark signal as a four-way stop sign.

Residents who get their water from the Falls Church Water system in portions of Tysons, McLean, Vienna, Dunn Loring and Merrifield were advised to boil their water before drinking it. Multiple water pumping plants throughout the region were without power, leading to calls for water conservation.

It will take at least several days, possibly as long as a week, to restore power to most customers, Dominion Power warned.

By Saturday night, there were about 340,000 Dominion customers in Northern Virginia still without power. By Sunday morning, that number was down

to 285,000 households.

With temperatures predicted to be 100 degrees or greater, there were hyperthermia concerns about residents who are older or with disabilities. Supervisor Patrick Herrity was one of many who urged residents to check on their neighbors.

The county offered several heat relief options, including the RECenters in Lee District, Mount Vernon, South Run in Springfield, Cub Run in Chantilly, Oak Marr in Oakton, and the Burke Centre Library. Regional libraries with power were also open to the public. Many residents sought refuge from the heat in area malls.

The opening of Saturday's round of AT&T National, organized by Tiger Woods and going on at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, was delayed. When play began, the tournament was closed to the public, with players only allowed on course — no volunteers or spectators.

## Park Authority to Meet

The Fairfax County Park Authority will meet Wednesday, July 11, at 7:30 p.m., in the Herry Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 900 in Fairfax. Call Judy Pedersen at 703-324-8662.

## Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, July 12 and 26, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed.

However, because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

## Internet Security Workshop Slated

Parents concerned about what their children are exposed to on the Internet might want to attend an Internet Security Workshop on Saturday, July 14, from 10 a.m.-noon. It'll be sponsored by and held at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 14150 Upper Ridge Drive in Centreville, behind the McDonald's on Route 28.

Frank Stone, an Internet security specialist for a Defense Department agency, will discuss practical ways of controlling the content of computer and media influence that enters the home. In addition, a Fairfax County police officer will speak about "General Safety for You and Your Children."

## Public Transit Meeting Set

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation is conducting the Countywide Transit Network Study to determine the type of transit systems needed to accommodate forecasted growth throughout the county over the next several decades. A public meeting will be held Monday, July 16, in rooms 9 and 10 of the county Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. It'll run from 6:30-9:30 p.m., with a 20-minute presentation at 7 p.m.

The study will develop recommendations for where Metrorail should be extended, where streetcar or light-rail systems are appropriate, and where dedicated lanes that allow buses to move faster could go. It will also recommend how the system may be phased in and funded over time.

Area residents are encouraged to attend the meeting or a workshop to discuss the study purpose and scope and schedule and help refine proposed study goals and objectives. They may also help identify possible modifications to the Comprehensive Plan designation of Enhanced Public Transportation Corridors.

## WFCM Seeks Food, Volunteers

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' (WFCM) food pantry urgently needs donations of oil (48 oz. or smaller); flour (2-5 lb. bag); sugar (2-5 lb. bag); rice (2 lb. bags); canned meats; salad dressing, jelly; jam; peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, Ramen Noodles, canned fruit; canned beets, spinach, greens, and mixed vegetables; canned garbanzo, butter and northern beans; dry pasta and beans, pancake mix and syrup; hot and cold cereal and coffee. In addition, the Food Pantry would appreciate fresh produce from local gardens.

Also needed are laundry detergent, toothpaste, shampoo, toilet paper and baby wipes. WFCM clients are also in great need of gasoline cards.

Bring all items to WFCM'S food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive (near Backyard Grill and Bar) in Chantilly. Volunteers are

SEE ROUNDUPS, PAGE 11



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Author Ben Mikaelson talks to Rocky Run seventh-graders about bullying.

## 'Words ... More Hurtful Than Fists'

Author discusses bullying with seventh-graders.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

**B**en Mikaelson lives in Montana. But before the school year ended, he came all the way to Rocky Run Middle School to share with the seventh-graders his firsthand knowledge about bullying.

"Bullies are the biggest losers in every school," he said. "They're not bad people; maybe they were bullied, themselves. Inside — the only place where it counts — bullies feel tiny."

Mikaelson grew up in Bolivia, where his parents were missionaries, and didn't go to school until fourth grade. As a "gringo," he was different, so he was teased and bullied. The family returned to the U.S., to Minnesota, at the end of sixth grade. But Mikaelson was illiterate, dressed differently from other boys and played soccer instead of football, so the bullying continued.

Then three things happened that changed his life: He started becoming a writer, began to like animals and discovered he wasn't so dumb, after all.

"Although I couldn't read or write, I made up stories where bullies didn't live on earth because they couldn't breathe the oxygen," said Mikaelson. "I liked animals because they never teased me. And I decided, if other boys were going to beat me up, anyway, I might as well be myself and have some fun."

He learned to read in seventh grade and wanted to be special like "Jonathan Livingston Seagull." He realized he had to take action to make his dreams come true. He taught himself to dive and wanted to learn how to fly airplanes.

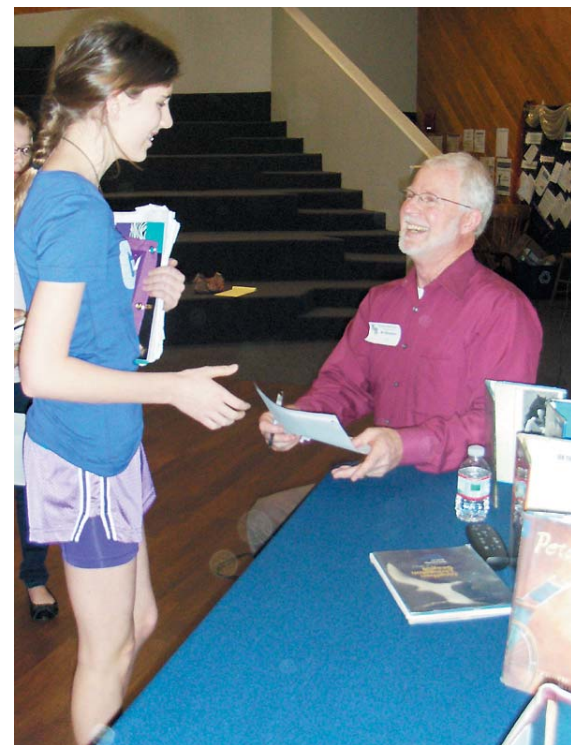
"But my family was poor and on food stamps and I got my clothes from the Salvation Army," said Mikaelson. "Airplane lessons cost money, so I started doing chores to earn the money for lessons. Still, I couldn't control the bullies and, while I rode to the airport on my bicycle, they'd throw snowballs at me and, if I fell off my bike, they'd kick it into the snowdrifts."

But, he told the students, "Bullies have no backbone. They feel so insecure and inadequate, that they have to pick on others. Even today, it makes me angry. I wish I could go back to that time and to that lonely boy and tell me to believe in myself and never give up. If you do that, your dreams can come true."

In high school, Mikaelson added skydiving, cliff-diving and parachuting to his resume and continued writing. "By the time I graduated, I was cliff-diving from 70 feet, had my pilot's license and had won the Minnesota State Skydiving Championships," he said. "I scored at a fifth-grade level on the English portion of the SATs, but got into college because of my skydiving championship."

In freshman English, although he couldn't spell, a professor told Mikaelson what a great writer he was. "It was the first time anyone ever told me that," he said. "So I got a tutor to teach me spelling, punctua

SEE WORDS ARE MORE, PAGE 11



After his talk, Ben Mikaelson signs autographs for the students.

# Dangerous Weapons or Child's Play?

Police warn public about replica firearms.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

It was shortly before midnight when City of Fairfax police rushed to an apartment complex after receiving a report of a man there carrying a gun. He'd already pointed his weapon at several people when officers confronted him, had him drop the gun and arrested him.

This incident happened awhile ago, and the weapon turned out to be a replica of a long-barreled, semiautomatic rifle. But the man had removed the orange tip identifying it as a fake so, at first glance, police had no idea it wasn't real. And had he pointed it at them, the incident could have ended in tragedy.

"In the past year across our region, police officers have responded to many 'person-with-a-gun' calls," said Col. Rick Rappoport, chief of the City of Fairfax Police Department. "Often, officers are confronted with real guns in situations that are truly life-threatening. In a relatively small number of cases — but with increasing frequency — officers are finding that children and young adults with replica weapons are the reason for the call."

So last Friday morning, June 29, his department hosted law-enforcement officers from throughout Northern Virginia at a special press conference to draw attention to the problems posed by realistic-looking, replica weapons. Displayed on a table was



Discussing replica weapons is Fairfax County Police Chief Dave Rohrer.

a large number of guns and rifles — and casual observers could not tell the real from the replicas.

Rappoport said children and young adults frequently use replica firearms in games. And law-enforcement officers in jurisdictions including Centreville, Chantilly and Clifton are especially concerned now that schools are out for the summer and children are engaging in more outdoor play.

"They're not firearms under the law," said Rappoport. "Neither are they harmless toys; they're capable of inflicting serious injury and causing serious damage to property. But the greatest risk occurs when others per-

ceive them as real weapons and the person holding them as a real threat."

He said such situations have occurred throughout the region, sometimes with tragic results, because the replicas are indistinguishable from real firearms. So police want to educate children and parents, alert communities to this issue and "avert needless tragedies."

Officers responding to a weapons call aren't playing games; they're trained to consider every situation real. Further complicating things, said Rappoport, is the fact that "criminals sometimes use replica weapons and kids sometimes play with real



Which are real and which are replica rifles?



A display of real and replica guns.

guns."

Fairfax County Police Chief Dave Rohrer said criminals using replica guns cover up their orange tips. Conversely, added Rappoport, "Just because it has an orange tip doesn't mean it's not a real weapon."

This was important information for the Fairfax fathers and sons attending last week's press conference. The boys hadn't done anything wrong, but they regularly use replica weapons to play a popular game called Airsoft.

Dad Bill Wilkinson brought his son Brady, 14, who explained the game. "A couple guys on each team work together to eliminate the other people," he said. "You're using replica weapons that look like real guns like pistols and sniper rifles. We play in the woods or in our backyard."

A few months ago, said Wilkinson, "Some kids in the community had been seen carrying weapons, and citizens called the police — who gathered the names of local kids known to play Airsoft."

Next thing Wilkinson knew, a police sergeant was at his house, interviewing him, his wife and Brady. "We were quite surprised," said Wilkinson. "But he explained what was going on, and it brought home the dangers of using Airsoft weapons."

Brady said he understood why neighbors might be concerned because "I carry the guns bicycling to a friend's house or sticking out of my backpack. I'm now more careful carrying them around; I conceal them better."

Jordan Tomajko, also 14, brought his replica M14 rifle to Friday's event. "We play Airsoft in our backyards," he said. "The weapons fire plastic BBs that sting, but we're always careful about how we use them."

His father, Stan Tomajko, came because, he said, "It's important for me to be educated on what police perceive is the real thing. I wanted my son to learn that as well."

## Replica-Gun Safety Tips For Youth

- ❖ If a law-enforcement officers approaches while you're carrying a replica weapon, immediately stop and follow his or her commands.

- ❖ Make sure everyone who can see you with this type of gun knows you're playing a game with a pneumatic gun — Airsoft, BB or pellet.

- ❖ Obey all laws when carrying or using these weapons; there's a difference between role-playing with these guns and actually firing them.

- ❖ Obtain permission from the property owner before playing with replica weapons on his or her property.

- ❖ Never remove, alter or disguise the weapon's orange safety tip.

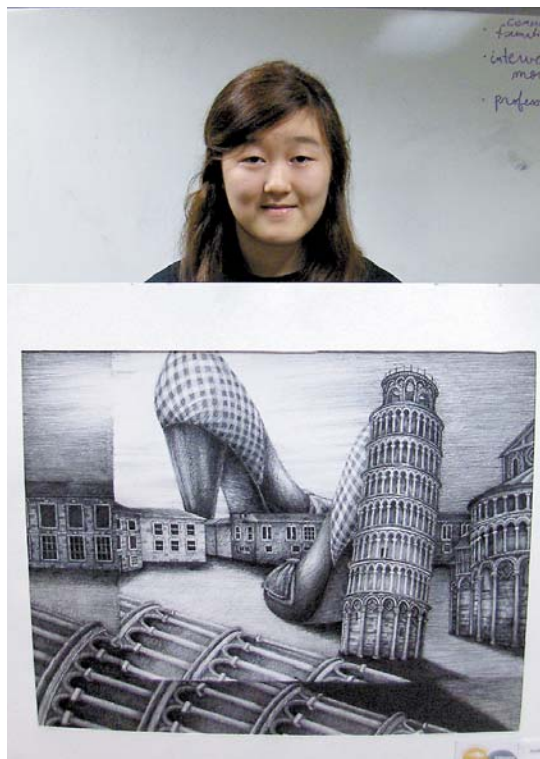
- ❖ Always follow safety rules for firearms handling.



Back row, from left, are Bill Wilkinson, SRO Mike Murphy, Sgt. Kyle Penman and Stan Tomajko; with (front row, from left) brothers Eric and Brady Wilkinson and Jordan Tomajko. Brady and Jordan are holding their replica rifles.



**Yewon Kwon shows (from left) her mixed-media artwork and her printmaking award-winner, "Migraine."**



**Anne-Sophie Kim displays her award-winning drawing of the Leaning Tower of Pisa as the heel of a woman's shoe.**

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

## Attending Governor's School for Art

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

While many students began their summer vacations, two rising seniors at Chantilly High did something different: Yewon Kwon and Anne-Sophie Kim went to Radford University to attend the Governor's School for Art.

But it's not the first time they were honored for their artwork. Both won a gold key in regional competition, earlier this year; and then on April 29, Kwon received the Award of Excellence in the Arts during a ceremony at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

She was one of 35 recipients of the honor, which is sponsored by the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the National Society of Arts and Letters. The awards program recognizes the most promising, junior-level talent from 35 area high schools.

"I was really surprised because, up until now, I didn't really win much for art," said Kwon. "The Art Department teachers selected me, and it was really nice getting to see The Kennedy Center."

Then on June 1 at New York's Carnegie Hall, she received the National Scholastic silver medal for printmaking for one of her works that was on display in March during the Chantilly Pyramid Art Show. She titled it "Migraine."

"I thought that, if you had a migraine, it would probably feel like monsters in your head," she said. "So that's what I tried to show."

Kwon's gold key in regionals was for "a mixed-media piece saying that literature nowadays isn't as great as it used to be," she said. "Now I see books about vampires and supernatural romances, which aren't as original."

She said she did a great deal of artwork when she was younger, but didn't start working really hard at it until high school. "It's easier for me to express myself that way," she said. "I like the creative process."

Kim's gold key was for a black-and-white pen drawing of a pair of shoes. But they weren't just any shoes — the heel of one shoe depicted the famed Leaning Tower of Pisa, surrounded by other famous buildings in Pisa, Italy.

Now both girls are participating in the month-long Governor's School for Art. Before they left, they spoke about it with Centre

View. "At Radford, they'll teach us more about art and help us grow," said Kwon.

She also noted that getting in was "very selective." Kim said the panel chose just "45 people out of about 350 applicants in the whole state."

Actually, added Kim, "I was kind of surprised [to be accepted] because there were a lot of good artists trying out." Kwon said they had to list their awards and GPAs — hers is 3.6 and Kim's is 4.2 — on their applications. Then they went to the University of Mary Washington to show portfolios of their work.

After that, said Kwon, "We had to draw objects in a particular room; we did three of them in two or three minutes each." Kim said most of the objects were tribal masks.

SEE SCHOOL FOR ART, PAGE 9

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**CENTRE VIEW**

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## New Laws, Assault on Freedom?

**Voting restrictions, abortion restrictions, DUI restrictions, fewer gun restrictions, more go into effect July 1.**

**A** plethora of new laws will go into effect in the Commonwealth on July 1, including restrictive new procedures for voting, and the loosening of multiple gun regulations.

Drivers convicted of driving while very intoxicated and anyone convicted of DUI for the second time will now be required to have ignition locks installed on their vehicles which will check their blood alcohol levels and keep them from driving if they have been drinking. Hopefully this technology will keep drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel.

Women seeking abortions will be required to have a sonogram 48 hours before the abortion. The debate over this bill was one of the most publicized pieces of state legislation in the nation, and the focus of many jokes, protests and outrage. But still the bill passed and the Governor signed it into law.

Voters will be required to present identification, and if they arrive at the polling place without identification, they will cast a provisional ballot that will only be counted if the voter attends a meeting of the electoral board the next day to present his or her identification. Previously signing an affidavit swearing to your identity was sufficient.

Fortunately, your concealed weapons permit will count as your voter identification. But the law provides less sanction for carrying your concealed weapon without having your concealed weapons permit in your possession (\$25 civil fine) than for not having your identification to vote in your possession (disenfranchised, your vote is not counted).

These two provisions, counting concealed weapons permit as voter identification and limiting the penalty for not having your permit with you while carrying your concealed weapon, were just a few of the laws passed that lessen restrictions on guns in commonwealth. Some examples, effective July 1: Eliminate the prohibition on purchasing more than one handgun in a 30-day period (there are no limits now); provide that nothing in the Emergency Services and Disaster Law shall limit or prohibit the otherwise law-

ful possession, carrying, transportation, sale, or transfer of firearms; provide that any locality that participates in any gun-buyback program offer the firearms acquired for sale by public auction or sealed bids to a person licensed as a dealer; allow local government employees to store a lawfully possessed firearm and ammunition in a locked private motor vehicle; remove the option for a locality to require that an applicant for a concealed handgun permit submit fingerprints as part of the application.

And something that will affect all of us, although it does not go into effect until September 2013, a new law that will require Virginians to pay sales tax on purchases from Amazon. This is only fair to local retailers.

The Virginia General Assembly enacted more than 700 new laws in 2012, many of them worthy of discussion.

### Independence Day Coverage Online, Next Week

This week's Connection papers were printed on Monday and Tuesday July 1-2 because of the timing of the July 4/Independence Day holiday.

On Monday, at least half of our readers were still without power after Friday night's 80-mile-per-hour wind storm, and at our office, we are coping with intermittent power and related computer problems. Our website has been updated with storm information, [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com), and our twitter accounts kept followers up to date during the aftermath.

While the hard copy of our papers won't get to readers until after the Wednesday holiday,

those papers will not include coverage of independence day events, which will hopefully all be held despite the ongoing cleanup.

Digital replica (free) subscribers will receive their papers before July 4. Digital subscriptions are available without charge. Sign up at [connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe](http://connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe)

Our website is updated daily, [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com). We would love to get your storm photos, email your name, town name and what's happening in the photo to [centreview@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:centreview@connectionnewspapers.com).

— MARY KIMM,

[MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](mailto:MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## Neighborhood Project in Memory of Tim Lyons

**T**he Fair Lakes Forest community of Centreville, held a Community Day on June 9 — a culmination of 10 months of planning and work by the board and community volunteers. Last September, the community had lost one of its neighbors, Tim Lyons, to lung cancer when Patricia Tolbert heard about Fairfax County's Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program which provides grants to "enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods by supporting projects and initiatives that assist in achieving the county's vision elements."

It had been many years since this community had gathered together around a community activity which was just the type of thing Lyons had done frequently when their children were growing up. It inspired the community to request a grant to build a brick patio, hold a Community Day, and repair the



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

SEE NEIGHBORHOOD, PAGE 8 **Members of the Fair Lakes Forest community celebrate their neighborhood project.**

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A Connection Newspaper

# Sullivan Honored as Officer of Quarter

FROM PAGE 1

area behind her home — including a swift-moving creek, strangers and the thought of her child being lost.”

As officers mobilized and a helicopter hovered overhead, Morgan wrote, “Sullivan walked the trail that meanders behind the mother’s home. He said he started to look in places ‘he would go if he was 5 years old.’ Sullivan decided to search the creek area, specifically the [portion] of the creek that travels under Route 29. There, he spotted the child waist-deep in freezing cold water.”

“Without hesitation, Sullivan entered the creek and scooped up the little girl,” continued Morgan. He then carried her to safety and reunited her with her family.

Morgan said Sullivan never complained about being cold or tired.

Only afterward did he ask permission to return to the station so he could change his soaking-wet clothes. Wrote Morgan: “I believe the actions PFC Sullivan took that day embody his character as a



From left are 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ryan Morgan; PFC Gerard Sullivan; Lt. John Trace, assistant commander, Sully District Station, and Leslie Jenuleson, CAC chairman.

Fairfax County police officer.”

Furthermore, as the Police Department has begun a new way of responding to active shooters and eliminating hostile threats, Sullivan’s taken on an additional responsibility.

It’s called PACOP (Paramilitary

Attack Counter Offensive Plan) and will soon be distributed and implemented to the Nation Capital Region as a means of stopping people in the process of harming others. The Sully District Station has been chosen to pilot PACOP training, and Morgan selected

Sullivan to be the Evening B-Team crew leader.

“[It’s] an awesome responsibility, as the leader’s primary purpose is to take other officers into harm’s

way, strategize and use tactics to stop another’s aggressive actions,” wrote Morgan. “Sullivan possesses the leadership abilities and the compe-

tence needed to make sound decisions and give police the advantage.”

Since the beginning of training earlier this year, added Morgan, Sullivan has enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to serve in this new capacity. He also coordinated the training for other officers on the squad to prepare them for their roles, as well. Morgan noted that Sullivan’s military-officer background has proven to be

“a great base of knowledge, coupled with his sound knowledge of police practices and policy.”

“There are many great officers at the Sully District Station that

perform great deeds and are deserving of recognition,” wrote Morgan. “I’m fortunate enough to have a full squad of highly capable officers on the Evening B-Team. [But] the first quarter of the year belongs to Sullivan and I believe he should be recognized for his efforts.”

“Through leadership, reasonableness and compassion, [he’s] proven to be a great asset to Fairfax County,” continued Morgan. “There are few officers that can match the professionalism and character exhibited by him on a daily basis, and it’s been a pleasure working with him.”

**“I believe the actions PFC Sullivan took that day embody his character as a Fairfax County police officer.”**

— 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ryan Morgan

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

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# Neighborhood Project in Memory of Tim Lyons

FROM PAGE 6

trails throughout the community.

Kevin Gaughn, scoutmaster of Troop 146 recommended the patio be built as Josh Bitto's Eagle Scout project, a scout from Troop 146 of St. Timothy's Parish in Chantilly and family friend of the Lyons.

Ken Riley, assistant scoutmaster, neighbor, and a good friend of Lyons, volunteered to assist Josh. Recognizing all the community members who had lost loved ones to cancer and other illness, a brick fundraiser was held to raise money for Capital Caring Hospice. Any past or present homeowner could purchase a brick with the family name and year they moved into the community engraved on it with proceeds going to Hospice. A community day shirt, designed by Elise Kinsey, a neighborhood student at Chantilly High School, was also sold to raise money for Hospice.

So after all that planning and work it was time for the community to come together and celebrate. The day began with the dedication of the patio where the Lyons' family cut the ribbon to unveil the new patio, and Tolbert presented Sally Mallison and Kelli Horton from Capital Caring Hospice with a check for \$1,800 from the fund raising activities.

Following the dedication ceremony, the community donned gloves and trash bags to pick up trash along the trails and the runoff basin in the area. After, everyone returned to Portage Place for some pizza, music, games, Zumba and more. It also happened to be scout Josh's 18th birthday that day so a cake and singing were in order. As a treat, Fire Station 17 from the Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department sent a truck over for the community to tour, ask questions and take pictures. The party continued into the evening as people played,

danced or just visited with people they hadn't seen for a while. Tilly Blanding, a representative from the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services who attended the event, summed it up: "What an absolutely great commu-

nity event. You make yourselves proud. See what a neighborhood/community group can do when they put their heads and heart together. I enjoyed my time with you on last Saturday and look forward to other great things from you in the future."

## Write

Centre View welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor  
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Spiritual Development Courses: (8:45-9:45 AM)  
Youth Sunday Morning Worship: 10:30 AM  
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Holy Communion (Third Sunday) 10:00 AM  
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# ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to [centreview@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:centreview@connectionnewspapers.com). Photos welcome.

## TUESDAY NIGHTS

**World-Class Jazz.** 6 to 9 p.m. Paul Langosch on bass and Rick Whitehead on guitar. At the Copper Canyon, 5815 Trinity Parkway, Centreville. Call 703-830-6600 for reservations.

## MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS

**Zumba.** 7-8 p.m. Latin-based dance fitness classes — no gym membership required. Visit [www.gozumbafun.com](http://www.gozumbafun.com).

## THROUGH AUG. 31

**Summer Camp.** For ages 3 to rising 9th graders. Teen Camp for rising 10th graders to rising 12th graders. At Mount Olive Baptist Church, 6600 Old Centreville Road, Centreville.

## SATURDAY/JULY 7

**The Great Zucchini.** 10 a.m. Free. Children's show at E.C. Lawrence Park Amphitheater, Centreville.

## MONDAY/JULY 9

**Vacation Bible School.** 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Free. Explore the Amazing Wonders Aviation in a one week adventure kid's encounter God's awesome power through Bible Stories, Craft, motivating music and games. Oakton Baptist Church of Chantilly. Located at the corner of Sullyfield Circle and Route 50 in Chantilly. Call 703-631-1799

## SATURDAY/JULY 14

**Obon Festival.** 5:30 p.m. Ekoji Buddhist Temple is celebrating its 31st Obon Festival with a full-evening of activities including traditional Japanese folk dancing, a memorial candle ceremony, children's games and a taiko performance by Nen Daiko. On Sunday, July 15,

a joint service will be held at 11 a.m. and will be officiated by Rev. Brian Nagata, of Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai — America (BDK) visiting from Berkeley, Calif., who will also serve as the guest speaker. Contact information@ekoji.org or [www.ekoji.org](http://www.ekoji.org).

## THURSDAY/JULY 19

**John McCutcheon.** 7:30 p.m. Folk musician at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon.

## JULY 20-21 AND 27-28

**"Anything Goes."** Westfield Summer Stage celebrates 12 years of summer musicals with the classic, Cole Porter musical comedy, "Anything Goes." At Westfield High, Friday-Saturday, July 20-21, at 7:30 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, July 27-28, at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, July 22, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Seating is reserved. Buy tickets online at [www.westfieldtheatreboosters.com](http://www.westfieldtheatreboosters.com).

## SUNDAY/JULY 22

**Music of the Civil War.** 7:30 p.m. Sully Historic Site and Frying Pan Farm Park join together to host a concert of period music in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. The 97th Regimental String Band recreates an actual string band of the Civil War Era singing a wide variety of traditional American songs in authentic, "living history" style. At Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Call 703-437-1794.

## SATURDAY/AUG. 4

**"The Muppets."** 6 p.m. At the Starlight Cinema Drive-in Movies at Trinity Centre in Centreville.

## SATURDAY/AUG. 4 THROUGH SUNDAY/AUG. 5

**Expo.** Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax, will present a Women and Children's Expo for professional women in the Grand Court

of the center. The Fair Oaks Women and Children's Expo will feature such showcased services as continuing education, women's health care and career opportunities for women, along with enrichment programs for children including private schools, private preschools, martial arts, gymnastics, and arts and performance schools. Free and open to the public. Visit [www.ShopFair.Oaks.Mall.com](http://www.ShopFair.Oaks.Mall.com) or call 703-359-8302.

## FRIDAY/AUG. 24 TO SUNDAY/AUG. 26

**Conference.** Rebuilding Christendom: Towards a Vision of Reconstruction Amidst the Ruins. The Conference will include presentations by 10 speakers, a Friday reception, Continental breakfast on Saturday, Saturday lunch, Saturday dinner, full breakfast on Sunday, Mass on Saturday and Sunday. Early Bird registration of \$150. At the Dulles Marriott Hotel. Visit [www.rebuildingchristendom.com](http://www.rebuildingchristendom.com) to register.

## SATURDAY/AUG. 25 TO SUNDAY/AUG. 26

**Civil War Reenactment.** Commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Medical Evacuation of wounded soldiers will be held at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. This Commemoration will honor Clara Barton, "Angel of the Battle Field" and Founder of the Red Cross. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Outside activities are free. Museum fee is \$5 adults; \$1 children 5-10. Under 5 are free. Call 703-425-9225 or visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org).

## SUNDAY/AUG. 26

**Open House.** Caring Hands Animal Hospital of Centreville is holding their 16th Annual Open House and Dog Wash from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Dog wash for donation, silent auction, freebies, children's games, pet contests and more. Open to the public, proceeds will be donated to local animal rescues. 5659 Stone Road, Centreville. Call 703-830-5700.

# School for Art

FROM PAGE 5

"Then we all set up our artwork on a table and [the judges] looked at it," said Kwon. "They also interviewed us about our artwork and why we wanted to go to Governor's School."

"I said I wanted to expand my styles and be in an environment of other artists," said Kim. "Art is really different from my other core academic classes so, in a way, it's a relief to me." And like Kwon, she said, she got more serious about her craft in high school.

Kwon told the judges she wanted to improve some of her drawing skills because realistic drawing is not her strong suit. She also said she wanted to attend Governor's School "to be around other kids with the same mindset."

She eventually wants to enroll in the Maryland Institute College of Art and would love to someday become a professional artist. Kim says she might major in both English and art in college and become a high-school teacher.

Meanwhile, both girls have one more year of high school to complete.

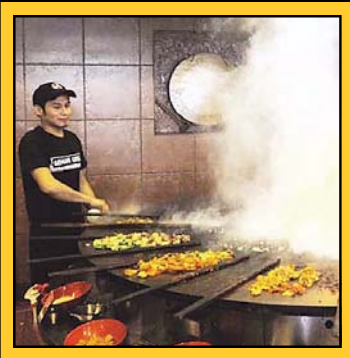
As for their advice to other, budding young artists, Kwon said they should "keep trying, because someone out there will like your work." Added Kim: "Go with your idea — if it makes you happy, it doesn't matter what anybody else thinks."

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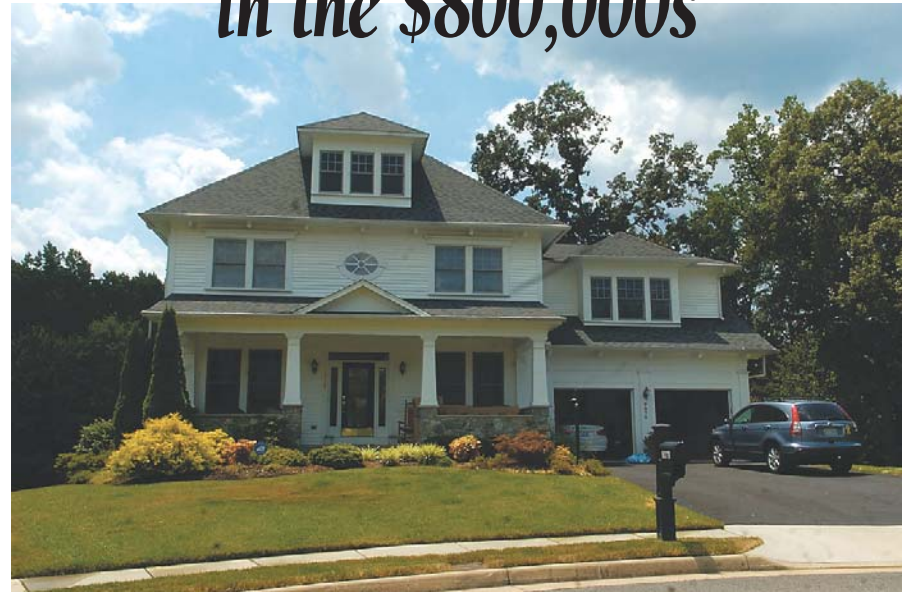
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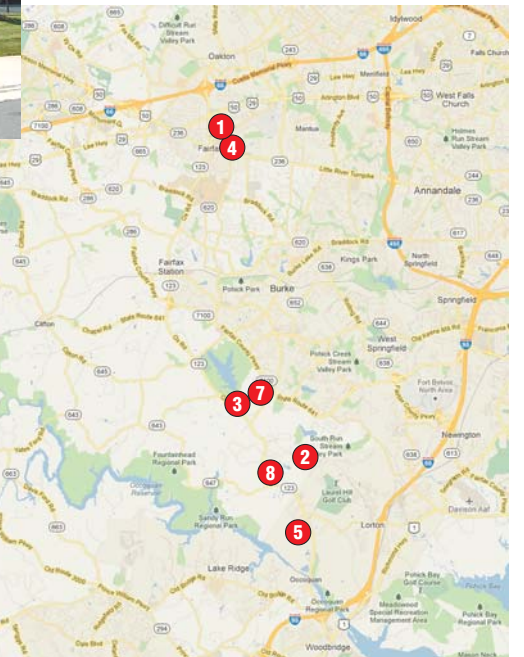
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# 'Words Are More Hurtful Than Fists'

FROM PAGE 3  
tion and grammar."

He eventually became an author, winning the International Reading Association Award and the Western Writer's Golden Spur Award. His articles and photos have been published in magazines around the world, and his novels have won many Reader's Choice honors.

For 27 years, he also lived in a log cabin near Bozeman, Mont., with a declawed, North American black bear named Buffy that he adopted and took care of. Buffy died last year at age 100 in bear years.

"I saved Buffy's life from a research facility, but he saved my life, too — he saved me from myself," Mikaelsen told the students. "When I came to the U.S. at exactly your age, I was an angry young man. I didn't know what to do with my anger, so I became a bully — and I'm ashamed of it. I shoved kids and hit them and thought I was big and strong."

But, he said, "It took a 750-pound bear to teach me I wasn't so cool and tough. I knew, if I didn't start changing and being truthful, he wouldn't trust me and would someday grow up and kill me. Students, you're never deserving of any more respect than you give others. Buffy taught me the biggest and strongest people are the ones who are kind, gentle and respectful."

"Words are more hurtful than fists," said Mikaelsen. "But is being a bully what you want to do with your one, fantastic life? Every time you 'dis' someone and text hurtful things, you show how insignificant, im-



Mikaelsen

mature and scared you are. Collectively, you're the future of this planet; and if you don't get along, there is no future."

He said he's spoken to more than 5 million students over the past 25 years, and never met a bully who mattered. "It's taken me a lifetime to discover who I am," said Mikaelsen. "Who are you? What's your unique potential to become something special? You life is the most important story you'll ever tell, and you are its author."

Even when he was being bullied, he said, he always had a choice — to fight or walk away. "The bully was always bigger than me, so I ran away," he said. "Did it wreck my life? No. I've traveled all over and I don't know anyone who's had as much fun as me."

Afterward, seventh-grader Lydia Hugo said she enjoyed hearing about his personal experiences because "he challenged us to stand up for someone if they're being bullied, to not be a bully and to be who you are."

"It was really cool because he had an interesting life," said classmate Noah Huntington. "He had lots of adventures and said that, if you X-rayed bullies, they wouldn't have backbones."

I learned that persons who are nice can really affect someone's life."

Basically, added Mikaelsen, "If you're a successful human being, everything else will fall into place. If students are afraid in school, learning can't take place. Bullying made me feel worthless, so I wanted these students to realize their own self-worth."

BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

## ROUNDUPS

FROM PAGE 3  
also needed:

**Thrift store:** Volunteers are needed Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., to receive donations. Contact Volunteer Manager Annette Bosley at 703-988-9656.

**Food pantry:** Volunteers are needed Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m., to bag/stock groceries. A regular, weekly volunteer is also needed on Wednesdays to pick up donations from Food Lion, from now through August.

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# SPORTS

## The Meet After The Storm

**N**ot even the aftermath of a “derecho” storm could keep the Brookfield Breakers from jumping into their second NVSL Division 10 meet against the Cottontail Cobias on June 30. The meet was scheduled to take place at Cottontail, but power loss at their pool had Brookfield rapidly working to host the meet instead. The Breakers exhibited solid teamwork by pulling together to get the pool operational for the meet in record time. Many families from both teams left homes without power and braved roads with scattered debris and limited traffic signals to cheer on their swimmers and teams. The Breakers encountered some stiff competition by the Cobias, but still gave them a run for their money, with many Breakers dropping personal times. However, Cottontail maintained a lead for the duration of the meet and won, 234-180.

Double first-place finishes in individual events were awarded to Breakers Simon Condemi (back and fly), Alexa Conti (back and fly), Anna Kenna (free and fly), Claire Kenna (free and breast), Jordan Greenlee (back and fly), Kelly Guerrero (breast and fly), Mikayla Lynn (free and back) and Wil-



**Grace Hilburger remains focused as she prepares to swim in her first ‘A’ Meet.**

liam Schulte (back and fly). Additional first-place winners were: Samantha Avery, Benjamin Condemi and Colin Finnegan. Earning second place for the Breakers were: Benjamin Condemi, Michael Donatello, Colin Finnegan, Kevin He, Nicholas Kenna, Taylor Ko, Christopher Laing, Caitlin Mowry, Ryan Plott, Paige Shervanick and Sam Shervanick. Giving the team additional points for third: Samantha Avery, Grace Boland, Caroline Clark, Franky Doyle, Anne Ettare, Emily Harris, Emilia Judd, Taylor Ko, James Laing, Charles Mack, Andy Miller, Rita Miller, Caleb Mitchell, Caitlin Mowry,



**Stephanie Proctor swims the 15-18 butterfly event for the Breakers on June 30.**

Jessica Mowry, Stephanie Proctor, Sam Shervanick and Preston Whittle.

The girls performed strong in the relays, winning four of their six events: mixed age 200 free (Anne Ettare, Samantha Avery, Alexa Conti, and Mikayla Lynn); 9-10, 100 medley (Jordan Greenlee, Caitlin Mowry, Samantha Avery, and Hannah Ko); 13-14, 100 medley (Grace Boland, Claire Doyle, Alexa Conti, and Paige Shervanick) and 15-18, 200 medley (Stephanie Proctor, Kelly Guerrero, Rita Miller, and Mikayla Lynn).

The 15-18 boys (William Schulte, Michael Donatello, Casey Trahan, and Nicholas Kenna) demonstrated their power and determination in the 200 medley relay, winning the event by less than a second.

Brookfield is looking forward to hosting Shouse Village for the next NVSL meet on July 7. The Breakers will also display their excellent teamwork, once again, when they hold their rescheduled Swim-A-Thon on July 8 to raise funds for Inova Breast Care Institute.

## Chantilly Wins Ice Hockey Spring League Title

**T**he Chantilly High ice hockey team avenged its only loss of the season with a 12-2 victory over the Reston Raiders Hockey Club in the championship game of the Reston High School Ice Hockey League spring season on June 21.

Leading the way was graduating senior Christopher Howland and rising sophomore Keegan Kelly, who combined for seven goals. Goalie Dylan Harris recorded 20 saves as the Chargers finished the season 10-1-1, outscoring their opponents 113-57. Chantilly had to defeat Herndon, 12-3, in the semifinals to advance to the championship game.

“The spring league gave us an opportunity to let many of our younger players create chemistry with one another, and it was something great to see,” Chantilly head coach Nathan Van Nuys said. “The line we have of Keegan Kelly, Clay Shapiro and Ben Nicoll cycles the puck as well as any I’ve ever seen at Chantilly. We also have speed, physical play and good on-ice awareness with our up-and-coming defensive players, and I’m extremely thankful to have [rising ninth grader] Justin Mercer taking over the goaltending duties next year with Dylan graduating. If we can stay healthy next season, it should be a great one for Chantilly hockey.”

Although the Chargers lose six seniors,



**The Chantilly ice hockey team won the Reston High School Ice Hockey League championship.**

including two-time All-NVSHL forward and Hobey Baker, Sportsmanship award winner Howland (38 goals, 13 assists for the spring), Lucas Smoot and Will Bates (7 goals, 6 assists each), as well as defensemen Shawn Neifert and Hannah Lensing, a number of key contributors will return. Nicoll, a rising sophomore who missed the winter season with a broken collarbone, was sec-

ond in scoring this spring with 19 goals and eight assists; Kelly had 11 goals and nine assists; Shapiro had seven goals and eight assists; and rising junior Matt Wolford had four goals and six assists. Alex Sutton, Will Rambin and Connor Kelly, all members of Chantilly’s state runner-up boys’ lacrosse team, also return adding experience and depth to the team.

## Sequoia Farms Tries To Keep it Close

For the second consecutive week, the Sequoia Farms swim team went up against a much larger team and came out on the losing end of a tough-fought battle. In the early events it appeared that Sequoia might be closely matched with the Ashburn Farm team, but as the meet moved into the older age groups, it became obvious that the very young Sequoia Stingrays would have a long morning ahead of them.

In the relay events, the younger Stingray swimmers continued their great performances, but the older relay groups found Ashburn’s greater depth too much to overcome. However, as in every swim meet, there were bright spots for Sequoia, as the following swimmers turned in first-place individual finishes: Travis Blee, Diego Cromwell (two), Avery Harris, Jessie Heise, Sydney Loper (three), Bobby Nevarez, Caroline Santilli, Diane Sellars (three), Russ Steinhilber, James Williams. Again this week, Kate Croxton broke not one, but two more Sequoia Farms team records, one in fly, the other in IM.

Rounding out those swimmers placing second or third in at least one individual event were: Adam Bechtol, Marissa Cassens, Georgia Cerisano, Jesse Cerisano, Brian Chapman, Lauren Chin, Kate Croxton, Sydney Fish, Kelsey Hamer, Brice Harris, Ryan Morris, Liam Santilli, Will Steinhilber and Nicole Williams.

In the relay events, the Sequoia Stingrays once again looked very competitive in the early going as the these medley relay teams turned in first-place finishes: boys’ 8 & under 100 medley (Jesse Cerisano, James Williams, Diego Cromwell, Liam Santilli) and boys’ 9-10 100 medley (Andrew Watson, Travis Blee, Avery Harris and Caleb Caiazza), girls’ 9-10 100 medley (Sydney Loper, Caroline Santilli, Sydney Fish, Julia Barrett) and girls’ 13-14 200 medley (Kelsey Hamer, Lauren Chin, Georgia Cerisano, Nicole Williams).

Next weekend the Sequoia Farms Stingrays will be looking for their first win as they face the Arlington Knights of Columbus at home.

# WELLBEING

## Finding Home for Golden Years

Advice on choosing a retirement community.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
CENTRE VIEW

When Jim Upp's wife Jeannie died in 2006, the Fairfax senior citizen found himself surrounded by a lifetime of memories in the spacious home where the couple had raised three children.

"We lived on a one-acre lot with plenty of trees all by ourselves," said Upp. "I was alone, and there was a large house and an acre of land to take care of. It took me about five days to realize that wasn't where it wanted to spend the rest of my life."

Upp moved to a retirement community, which he called a one-stop center for medical care, activities from bowling to television production, and socializing with people with similar backgrounds.

"I did not know a soul when I came here, but I know hundreds of people now," said Upp. "There are more than 200 activities here on campus. There are five or six doctors here everyday. If I have a problem, I can just go down and see a doctor anytime."

**WHILE UPP'S TRANSITION** was uncomplicated, methodical and borne out of a self-made decision, other moves are not so seamless.

Deciding that one can no longer live alone, selling a house that has been a home for decades and relocating to retirement facility can be an emotionally charged and physically challenging feat. Recognizing the warning signs that a change might be necessary and developing a plan can help make the move less complicated.

"There is usually a crisis that bring someone into a facility," said Catharine A. Kopac, Ph.D., a certified geriatric nurse practitioner and chair of the graduate nursing program at Marymount University in Arlington. "Often the family gets no counseling and the move is made in a hurry."

Knowing when it is time to transition to a professionally run living environment is a decision with which many struggle. Gerontology professionals say there are a few red flags. Topping the list is the risk of vulnerability. "Is the person safe?" asked Andrew Carle, executive-in-residence, at George Mason University's Program in Senior Housing Administration. "Are they are on [multiple] medications and

it's hard for them to manage? Are they at risk for falling or do they have Alzheimer's and are at risk of wandering?"

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," it might be time to move. An inability to perform daily activities such as eating, bathing and driving is another indicator.



Andrew Carle

**SELECTING THE RIGHT TYPE** of facility requires knowing the choices: independent living, assisted living and nursing homes.

Independent living is generally regular housing specifically designed for seniors whereas residents at assisted-living facilities can get aid with daily activities such as bathing and medication management. They often include kitchens, but meals and transportation to medical appointments and other errands are usually provided as well.

"Many people don't understand the difference between a nursing home and assisted living," said Carle. "Unless a person is bedridden, they probably don't need a nursing home."

Identifying a person's specific needs and finding a facility that is equipped to meet those requirements is vital. "If one needs any rehabilitation, then you would want to choose a facility that offers rehab services or therapy," said Dr. Jean Glossa, M.D., medical director for Fairfax County Community Health Care Network and Molina Healthcare. "If one has dementia or Alzheimer's disease, then you would want a facility that has trained and experienced staff in working with patients who suffer from either disease."

Geriatric care specialists, who can be found through the National Association of Geriatric Care Managers, can help assess a person's needs and help match him or her with an appropriate community. The Assisted Living Federation of America is another source for information on facilities, and experts recommend visiting [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) when looking for a nursing home.

"CMS [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services] has the Nursing Home Compare website, which provides basic data about nursing homes, including staffing, past violations in recent surveys by the licensing agency, quality measures and more," said Glossa.

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## Writing On!



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It was June '09 when I published my first column in the Connection Newspapers about being diagnosed with cancer. It was actually a column detailing the diagnostic steps I had taken during the first few months of the year attempting to identify the pain I had initially felt under my right-side rib cage in late December. Once that pain migrated from one side to the other, accompanied by difficulty inhaling and bending, my wife and I decided that a trip to the Emergency Room was warranted. I wasn't in any distress, and it certainly wasn't an emergency; nevertheless, it did seem the sensible thing to do.

During this diagnostic process (which took about two months), I continued to write and publish my regular weekly column as usual (not at all about cancer). Privately, however, I had been writing about this evolving situation ever since it began in the Emergency Room in December. Given all that the diagnostic process had involved, and the range of emotions I had experienced, I had ample feelings on which to write, eventually accumulating more than a handful of columns I have come to characterize as my "cancer columns." These columns remained unpublished until June. My feeling had been that once I published a column about such serious matters, how could I ever again fill my space with the mundane minutiae that had characterized much of its content the previous 10 years, award-winning though some of them had been, as voted on by members of the MDDC Press Association (Maryland/Delaware/D.C.) and the VPA (Virginia Press Association)? Besides, chemotherapy was set to begin in early March, so I just decided to simplify my life and submitted for publication more of the non-cancer columns which I had written during less complicated days. After all, as you regular readers know, if I can write about anything, I can write about my life, its relative interest notwithstanding; so I had a stack of unpublished columns ready to carry me for a few months until I felt better or different and decided to go public with my diagnosis, which eventually I did.

After I published that first column in June: "Dying to Find Out, Sort Of," I just continued with the "cancer columns." It seemed easy enough and I did have a bit of a story to tell/share. Although I had no idea or intention of using my space to chronicle the journey per se, of a terminal cancer patient attempting to survive the emotional, physical and spiritual toll such a diagnosis (stage IV lung cancer) and prognosis ("13-months to two years") can have, apparently, that's exactly what I've done. All I knew then was that writing about my experiences provided me a much-needed outlet. And for all I know now, writing so openly about my life as a cancer patient may have in fact extended that life; I have survived way beyond my oncologist's initial prognosis.

And as I have continued to survive, I have continued to write about having cancer. Once I started (published that first column), I couldn't stop (again, it was my life, so...). Three years later, nearly 150 columns have been published. Occasionally, I'll get off the cancer train (if only it were that easy) and write a non-cancer column but when your life is consumed by something (as much as I wish it weren't and as hard as I try to prevent it), it's sort of difficult to ignore. Writing helps, for me. Part catharsis, part selfish, part greater good, but mostly because it brings me pleasure. And when your diagnosis is terminal, sometimes pleasure is hard to find.

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

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