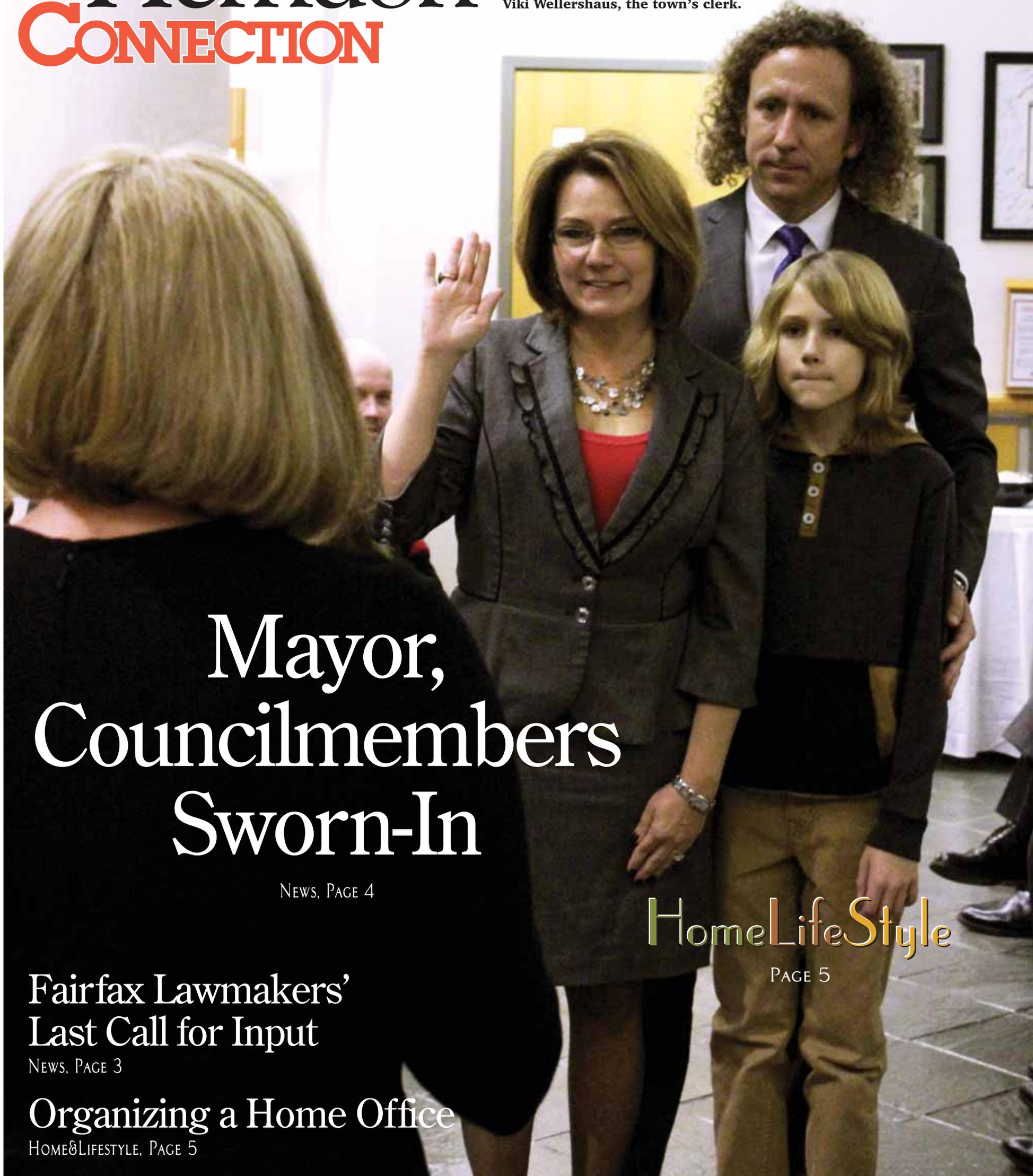


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Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel stands with her husband Zachary and daughter Lila as she is administered her third oath of office by Viki Wellershaus, the town's clerk.



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PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

More than 80 Fairfax County residents spoke directly to members of the Fairfax delegation to the General Assembly at a public hearing on Jan. 7 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Fairfax Lawmakers' Last Call for Input

More than 80 speak at General Assembly public hearing.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

“We’re not letting teachers do their jobs,” was the plea from Jo Neuber of Vienna Co-chair of the organization Class Size Counts. Neuber thanked Del. Jim Lemunyon (R-67) for developing three class size bills for the 2017 session of the Virginia General Assembly, including HB1498. Neuber said she was in favor of putting a cap of 24 students in science labs.

Neuber was one of more than 80 Fairfax County residents who spoke directly to members of the Fairfax delegation to the General Assembly at a public hearing on Jan. 7 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

The General Assembly is set to convene in Richmond at noon on Jan. 11, when they will begin work on new or amended legislation for the Virginia Code.

The public hearing was the last chance local constituents had to voice their hopes or concerns for pending or potential legislation in person without traveling to the state capital, though most lawmakers have already all but finalized their legislative agenda for the session.

Education was once again an important topic for many speakers, beginning with Board of Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova.

“Of the \$21 million in additional state

funding the county was expected to receive in FY2017, \$4.4 of that is already at risk due to the cancellation of funding for raises for teachers and other instructions personnel,” Bulova said. “We must get that funding back and we must make sure that funding for those raises is included in the FY2018 budget.”

Bulova and Fairfax County Public School Board vice chair Jane Strauss said the Virginia Retirement System rates were accelerated by one year last year, which increases the costs for FCPS by more than \$25 million in FY 2017.

“We ask for help in avoiding funding reductions to our local programs and services,” Bulova said, “and opposing restrictions on our local revenues.”

Several education advocates echoed Neuber’s call to reduce class size, and Bulova’s concern for competitive teacher salary levels.

Other topics with numerous speakers included legalization of marijuana for medicinal use; funding for disability services waivers; transportation and congestion reduction; funding for the court system; and the tax on toilet paper, adult diapers and some feminine hygiene products.

Holly Seibold of Vienna is founder and executive director of the group Bringing Resources to Aid Women’s Shelters that provides donated feminine hygiene products to who have insufficient access to them. She urged the delegation to support the “Dignity Act,” introduced by Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86), that would make toilet paper, adult diapers and some feminine hygiene products tax exempt.

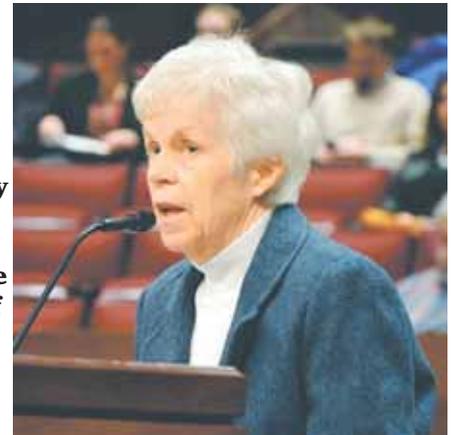
For more information on the General Assembly, to track a bill or find out who your representative to the assembly is, visit viriniageneralassembly.gov.

Hearing Highlights

Sharon Bulova and Fairfax County Public School Board vice chair Jane Strauss (center) said the Virginia Retirement System rates were accelerated by one year last year, which increases the costs for FCPS by more than \$25 million in FY 2017.



Helen Kelly of Herndon is a community leader for the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. “We join the Board of Supervisors and School Board in asking to fully restore the cost of competing for all teachers,” she said. Kelly also said the League was hoping for the delegation to support reduction of transit congestion.



Rikki Epstein of Reston is executive director of the Arc of Northern Virginia. Epstein said there “simply isn’t room for more cuts” when it comes to the more than 4,000 Virginians with disabilities on the waitlist for disability services waivers that would allow them to receive services to live independently in the community.



Morgan Jamison of Oakton is a board member for the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board, which makes recommendations to the county about programs and resources for low-income families and individuals. “Affordable housing is a particular need,” she said.



Elanna Weinstein of Herndon represented the Fairfax Bar Association, advocating against eliminating the 15th seat on the Fairfax County Circuit Court.





NEWS



Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel finished the ceremony by providing remarks and vision for the year ahead. She was introduced by Supervisor John Foust, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Dranesville District member.



Vice Mayor Jennifer Baker stands with her family as she is administered her oath of office by Viki Wellershaus, the town's clerk.

PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

Town Mayor and Councilmembers Sworn-In for 2017-18 Terms

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel and town councilmembers were sworn into office for their 2017-18 terms on Tuesday, Jan. 3, at the Herndon Municipal Center.

"It is with great humility that I stand before you tonight," Merkel said in a speech to those who attended the ceremony. "To be elected the first time is an incredible experience, but to have your work reaffirmed and to be elected for a third term is truly gratifying."

In addition to Merkel, members of the newly-sworn-in council are Jennifer Baker, Grace Wolf Cunningham, Jeffrey Davidson, Signe Friedrichs, William "Bill" McKenna and Sheila Milstead Olem.

Baker, Olem and Wolf served on the 2014-2016 town council. This is the first term on the council for Davidson, Friedrichs and McKenna.

"My primary goal as mayor has been to bring our downtown plan off the page and into reality," Merkel said. "And after years of work, it is likely we will finally break ground during this term, creating the walkable, vibrant space we've dreamed about for years."

Conversations about the redevelopment began in 2000— before Merkel was elected to

any position with the town. As reported in December in the Connection, the previous council made concrete progress by adopting a resolution that directed town staff to move forward with negotiations for the redevelopment with Reston real estate firm Comstock Partners.

Merkel and the council won their new terms during Herndon's first fall election. The elections were previously held in the spring.

"Last November, the town of Herndon resoundingly embraced the message that Herndon is a hometown for everyone," Merkel said. "A place where all are welcome, no matter where you come from, how you worship, or who you love."

During her remarks, she said Herndon has branded itself as a "next generation small town."

"I believe that," she said.

BAKER ELECTED VICE MAYOR

Jennifer Baker was re-elected vice mayor for her 2017-18 council term by Mayor Lisa Merkel and council members, who unanimously approved a resolution naming her to the position, with Baker abstaining.

Traditionally, the councilmember who receives the highest number of votes during the general town elections is named to the post.

The Connection previously reported that she received 5,650 votes, more than any of the



Councilmember Jeffrey Davidson stands with his family as he is administered his first oath of office by Viki Wellershaus, the town's clerk.

other councilmembers, during the election on Nov. 8.

ACTING TOWN MANAGER APPOINTED

William "Bill" Ashton II, Herndon's IT director, will be appointed acting town manager to fill the position that will be vacated by retiring Town Manager Art Anselene.

While Anselene retires on Feb. 28, Ashton will assume the post on Feb. 1.

"Bill's management experience and instincts, his operations expertise and his thorough knowledge of town policies make him the optimal candidate for this role," Mayor Lisa Merkel said in a press statement.

Ashton has worked for the town since 1998.

The council plans to conduct a comprehensive search for Anselene's permanent successor.

WEEK IN HERNDON

Herndon MOMS Club to Hold Preschool Roundtable

The MOMS Club of Herndon will host a monthly meeting on Thursday, Jan. 19, 10 a.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church (651 Dranesville Rd, Herndon VA 20170). All Herndon, VA (zip codes 20170 and 20171) at-home mothers and their children are encouraged to join an informal discussion and disseminate information on local area preschools.

For more information or to RSVP, contact:

Stephanie Talberg, Membership VP at herndon_moms_info@yahoo.com.

Herndon Village Network Elects Board

Herndon Village Network (HVN), a not-for-profit organization serving Herndon senior citizens, has announced its 2017 Board of Directors — President: Penny Halpern, Vice President: Charles Marts, Secretary: Rosemary Kendall, and Treasurer: Nancy Boughn.

These directors will oversee the policies, administration, funding and volunteers for the

now three-year-old organization. Volunteers make a difference by providing the elderly much-needed transportation for appointments, errands and social gatherings. This more organized concept of neighbors helping neighbors encourages older residents to age in the Herndon community and allows them to maintain established routines and connections, which results in a higher quality of life.

Herndon residents who are 55 or older, live in the 20170 zip code, and are interested in HVN services should call 703-375-9439. Interested volunteers should visit www.herndonvillagenetwork.org and complete an application. All volunteers are vetted.

HomeLifeStyle

This new home office by Anthony Wilder Design/Build incorporates a custom-designed cord control system.



PHOTO BY MORGAN HOWARTH

Organizing a Home Office

Design ideas for workspace order.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Whether located in a basement, spare bedroom or kitchen corner, one of the keys to creating a functional home office is organization. Local designers offer suggestions for styling a space that is both practical and aesthetically appealing.

“Start by thinking about how you would like to use your home office and plan accordingly,” said Megan Padilla, senior designer at Aidan Design. “Will it be a desk that easily converts to a homework station or craft area or a dedicated home office for the everyday telecommuter?”

Keeping office equipment out of sight will give the space a home-like feel, says Padilla. This can be accomplished by using storage solutions like printer drawers.

Practical home office organizational solutions include roll-out trays for computer accessories like printers and a wire management system above and below the desk for power cords and computer cables both on top of the desk, advises Chuck Khel, vice president of Fred Home Improvement, a division of Case.

“Create a Bluetooth operational office space,” he said. “Organizing all of the smaller office supplies can be accomplished with a series of coordinated containers for tools such as pencils, scissors and mark-



PHOTO BY ROBERT RADIFERA

Organizing small office supplies, like this one by Aidan Design, can be accomplished with a series of coordinated containers for tools such as pencils, scissors and markers.

ers ... or within drawers,” added Padilla. “Consider a mix of drawer heights to allow ample storage for smaller desk supplies as well as your typical file folders.”

Use open shelving to allow for quick access to frequently used items and book storage. “[It] can also make a smaller space feel more expansive,” said Padilla.

If a home office is in a spare bedroom, closets can be repurposed and organized to hide copy and fax machines, says Shannon Kadwell, interior designer at Anthony Wilder Design/Build.

“Add fabric bulletin boards in prominent locations and in a complementary color for visual appeal,” she said. “Custom built-ins make a huge difference as you can tailor the storage space to individual needs and create more functional spaces.”

Storage solutions such as those in this office by Megan Padilla help make home offices aesthetically appealing.



PHOTO BY ROBERT RADIFERA

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Slippery Hope



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

When you're diagnosed with a terminal form of cancer, you spend a lot of time talking to yourself, not aloud; well, mostly not aloud, trying to convince yourself of a million and one things that don't lead to that inescapable conclusion: premature death (I know, any death is premature). And when you get sick, as I am now and have been for the past 10 days; not getting worse, just not getting better; it is, at least for me, not only next to impossible, but impossible as well, not to think that perhaps this is the time when you have crossed the Rubicon.

Though what I am referring to are merely/mostly cold symptoms: sneezing, coughing, runny nose, nasal congestion, watery eyes, occasional headache; no temperature or sore throat, no vomiting, no nausea; it's easy to rationalize that I am simply experiencing a severe seasonal reaction to some strain of something which is, if what I hear from friends and family is true, something which is definitely going around. However, that assessment would presume I'm a relatively normal person, 'normal' meaning not a person diagnosed with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer. Ergo, the conversations me, myself and I are constantly having with ourselves.

And though the answers rarely change (always minimizing, never reinforcing a negative, accentuating the positive), I have to admit the longer I live through these blips on the radar, the less conviction I am able to sustain in my ongoing attempts to talk myself into or out of, whatever the case may be, the challenges emotionally and/or physically, that characterize one's life living with cancer. And believe me, 'living with cancer' is all it's cracked up to be, and I'm one of the lucky ones, a survivor, nearly eight years in fact, post my Feb. 27, 2009 face-to-face appointment with an oncologist; my new best friend, who lowered the diagnostic boom to Team Lourie that day.

I think I can say with some certainty that the one constant in my life these past eight years has been the many conversations I've had with myself. Trying to maintain an even keel; heck, any keel that would keep me emotionally afloat. Obviously, encouraging and supportive words from others have filled many gaps, but there are way more gaps when I'm alone that need to be filled. Reading, writing, 'rithmetic, radio, television and the Internet, fill some and provide distraction for others, but still there are many more times when you're left alone with your thoughts; when the rubber really hits the road and somehow you must get through the night or the post-chemo weak or the before, during and after "scanxiety" and navigate the slings and arrows of the outrageous misfortune which has befallen you.

Mostly I have been successful. Occasionally though I have been depressed. Occasionally I have felt lonely. Occasionally I have felt out of control. And more than occasionally, I have just plain worried. Like now, when I'm sick and tired and wondering if persistent cold symptoms portend the beginning of something worse. After all, I do have lung cancer so any breathing-related and/or coughing problems could indicate an exacerbation of my underlying condition, or so I would guess.

Ah yes, guessing. That's perhaps the real problem. How do you stop yourself from going down that rabbit hole, especially when you've already quadrupled the back end of the number of years: two, offered up by your oncologist eight years ago? I don't suppose I could experience a normal life expectancy after being given a terminal diagnosis. Could I? I guess it's possible. Probable? I wouldn't know. However, there's no harm thinking about it. Except if you're thinking about it all the time.

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

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PHOTO BY TRACI J. BROOKS/COURTESY OF RESTON COMMUNITY PLAYERS

From left — Vanya played by Andrew JM Regiec, Cassandra played by Alexa Yarboro and Sonia played by Lee Slivka in Reston Community Players' production of 'Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike.'

Chekhov's Masterworks with American Flavor

Reston Community Players' production of 'Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike' coming to CenterStage on Jan. 20.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Where and When

Reston Community Players presents "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" at CenterStage, Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, (in the Hunters Woods Village Center) Reston. Performances: Jan. 20 to Feb. 4, 2017, Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 8 p.m. with Sunday, Jan. 29 matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$18 (seniors/students) \$21 adults. Call 703-476-4500 or visit www.restonplayers.org.

Ever inventive contemporary American playwright Christopher Durang's Tony Award-winning, "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" is the Reston Community Players' upcoming production.

Durang's "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" is an imaginatively adjusted version of several of Anton Chekhov's masterworks all packed together with modern American ingredients. Enjoying "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" requires "no previous knowledge" of Chekhov, said Jolene Vetese, RCP Board President.

"We decided to produce 'Vanya' because it is such a funny, eclectic play," said Vetese. "It's a dark comedy that explores these sibling relationships and the people that intersect that relationship."

Playwright Durang riffed on Chekhov's moody Russian characters then transported them to present times in Bucks County, Pa. The play has a middle-aged Vanya (Andrew JM Regiec) and his sister Sonia (Lee Slivka) who live a quiet life after providing long-term care for their now-deceased parents.

Soon enough chaos begins when Vanya and Sonia's flashy sister and Hollywood actress Masha (Joanne Maylone) arrives for a belated condolence visit. Sibling rivalries flair along with wit and biting sarcasm. Masha has brought along her younger buff boyfriend Spike (Will MacLeod).

Andrew JM Regiec called his character Vanya a man who "while educated, he hasn't really lived and experienced the world except through books and TV and movies."

Now that the parents are gone, he's looking back at a life gone by, a little forlorn, realizing he's got little future himself."

Vanya is "repressed...resigned to his life of living like a lump on a log; overly concerned about change," added Regiec.

For Lee Slivka her Sonia character is "snarky and funny as hell as she steps outside of her comfort zone. I want the audience to come along and maybe find a bit of that leap within themselves." Beyond laughter, "there are also moments which may move the audience as they watch this family navigate their history and complexity."

Inviting audiences to partake of Durang's "wonderfully funny look at people and family relations" Monk went on to say, "I would like audiences to come out laughing, remembering and enjoying the characters and the situations they have seen, and content with the final resolution."

Audiences taking in RCP's "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" will have plenty of zingy comedy as well as earthy revelations and even Snow White to savor as Durang's fictional on-stage characters' lives are turned upside down.

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CALENDAR

Send announcements to www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/.
The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

THURSDAY/JAN. 12

Encore Chorale of Reston Rehearsals
6:30pm at St. Anne's Episcopal Church located at 1700 Wainwright Drive, Reston. There are no auditions and singers may be seated for rehearsals and performances. Singers will rehearse each week for 90 minutes in preparation for May performances. The spring repertoire for Encore Chorale includes Porgy & Bess, Va Pensiero, Les Miserables, Do, Lord Remember Me, & more! The conductor is David Lang. The Spring repertoire for the ROCKS choruses includes favorites like, All You Need is Love by the Beatles, Longest Time by Billy Joel, Forever Doo Wop and Rock On—a medley of hits from the 50's & 60's. Fee is \$175 for 15 weekly rehearsals, sheet music, CD in your music part and performances.

FRIDAY/JAN. 13

Erev Shabbat Service at Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Avenue, Reston, 6:30-9 p.m. Jewish-American songwriter Michael Hunter Ochs and award-winning Muslim Palestinian peace activist/songwriter Alaa Alshaham and Shireinu - Hebrew Congregation's youth choir - weave their extraordinary story and music into the worship. Co-Sponsored by The All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS).

SATURDAY/JAN. 14

Concert Tribute to Dr. King 4 - 5:30 p.m.
Reston Community Center 2310 Colt's Neck Road, Reston. The Reston Community Orchestra presents its annual musical tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. featuring the work of Olly Wilson, one of the pre-eminent contemporary composers of African-American descent, along with baritone Bryan Wilson and song-stylist Beverly Cosham. restoncommunityorchestra.org

TUESDAY/JAN. 17

Concert Joan & Joni 7:15 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. 110 Devil's Backbone Overlook, Stephenson. Allison and Kipyn bring to the stage many of Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell's well-known originals and folk songs, as well as a few hidden gems. They also highlight the impact these legendary women have had on their own songwriting and performance. Tickets: at the door or contact Dave DAHurdSr@cs.com Cost: \$10 Members, \$11 Non-members.

THURSDAY/JAN. 19

Artist's Critique Group at Greater Reston Arts Center 7 - 9:30 p.m. Call to local artists: Bring 1-2 recent artworks to the gallery for a group discussion and critique. Limited space. 703-471-9242 restonarts.org

SATURDAY/JAN. 21

Living with Arthritis Seminar 2 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join Dr. Mark P. Madden from Reston Regional Hospital Center to learn about the major types

of arthritis and their treatment options, and what you can do to manage pain and preserve joint function, mobility and your quality of life. Adults only. Cost: Free. Please register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

NextStop's Theater Presents Much Ado About Nothing 7 p.m. NextStop's Theater 269 Sunset Park Drive Herndon, VA 20170. The Shakespeare tale of Beatrice and Benedick, the original romantic comedy. The pair are locked in a constant battle of wits and share a mutual disdain for love. Cost: \$25 -average per ticket. www.nextstoptheatre.org/contact/

SUNDAY/JAN. 22

Springtime in Winter 2 - 4 p.m. 11400 Washington Plaza, Reston. Reception for a collaborative exhibit of poets, painters, and musicians, featuring readings and music created to complement the works of eight artists. The exhibit will remain on display through February 22. 703-930-5214 mikemaggio@mikemaggio.net

ONGOING

Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers Support Group Meetings are the first and third Thursdays of every month, i.e. January 19th, 2017 from 10:00 a.m to 11:30 a.m. Join us at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Rd, Oakton. All caregivers are welcome to come for support anytime. For more info contact facilitator, Jack Tarr, 703-821-6838, jtarr5@verizon.net Lynn Rafferty, 703-508-1365 radmom8992@gmail.com

All-comers Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running Every Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30 p.m. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a free, fun, low-key run that's safe and social. 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com

NextStop's Shakespeare "Much Ado About Nothing" Jan. 19 - Feb. 12 NextStop Theatre 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Tickets at: www.NextStopTheatre.org 866-811-4111

"A Bird in the Hand" through spring 2017 Reston Town Square Park, 11990 Market Street, Reston Town Center. See and explore Patrick Dougherty's monumental public art sculpture made from tree saplings. Presented by GRACE in collaboration with IPAR. 703-471-9242 restonarts.org

PenFed Realty Hosts Sievers' Paintings during January 2017 at the office of PenFed Realty, 1886 Metro Center Dr. Reston. The exhibit is free and the office is open to visitors Monday through Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. Visit the LRA web site at www.leagueofrestonartists.org for more information on this and other events.

Little Hands Preschool Art Class at Greater Reston Arts Center Saturdays, January 7 - 28, 10 - 11 a.m. Introducing young children to art by having them explore new artwork, materials, and skills each week. Four weeks of classes cost: \$80 for Reston residents, \$120 non-residents. 703-471-9242 restonarts.org

Exercise for Parkinson's Every Monday, 1:15 -

We didn't inherit the earth from our parents. We're borrowing it from our children.

—Chief Seattle (1788-1866) Suquamish/Duwamish chief

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9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
Sunday School: preschool - grade 2
Music: grades 3 - 7
10:25 a.m. Sunday School Grades 3 to 6
Music 4 years to 2nd grade
11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
5:00 p.m. Come Just as You Are Contemporary Service
Nursery care provided at 9:00 a.m. service
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