

# Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

## PET CONNECTION

Inside



Alexis Shiflette, of the Greenbriar community, with boyfriend Charles Kerr after the Mountain View High graduation ceremony.



# Looking Toward the Future

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## Missing Teen

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION  
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# Annandale United FC - Expansion Tryouts

Annandale United FC is holding expansion tryouts for hard working players that have the passion and desire to play competitive soccer. AUFC will form teams or add players for NCSL (Select) and NPL (Premier) levels of play. Come join a Club that has over 40 years of experience developing players for professional and collegiate play!



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Training sessions are normally held three (3x) a week in the greater Annandale area.

# BULLETIN

Email announcements to [chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 30, 2017, are eligible to attend kindergarten. Find the correct neighborhood school by entering your address at <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/>. Complete a packet of registration forms found at [www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf](http://www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf) or in the school office. Gather supporting documents: proof of residence in the school boundary, a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required before the student may start school, but is not required for registration. Parents who choose to delay enrollment in kindergarten by one year are required to notify the school in writing of their intent.

**Greenbriar West Elementary School** is now accepting information for next year's Kindergarten classes. Call the school office at 703-633-6700 as soon as possible.

## VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

The **Sully Senior Center** in Centreville is looking for the following instructors: Zumba gold, basic art, Tai Chi/Qigong, and a personal trainer. Meals on Wheels drivers, substitute drivers, and coordinators are needed for routes

throughout the county. Much of the coordination can be completed via phone and computer. Call 703-324-5406, email [VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov) or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm).

## MULCH ORDERS

**Westfield Mulch Delivery.** Have your mulch delivered right to your driveway. Your order will raise the funds needed to provide a safe and sober All Night Grad Party for Westfield Seniors and support other vital PTSA programs. Order early, there is a limit on the total number of bags that can be delivered. \$5 per bag. \$2 per bag, for students to spread mulch, also limited number of slots. Order today at [bit.ly/2kAh4fb](http://bit.ly/2kAh4fb).

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Umpires Needed for Youth Leagues.** Northern Virginia Baseball Umpires Association is in need of umpires for youth leagues, high schools, and collegiate-level baseball and volleyball games. Experience is helpful, but not required. Contact NVBUA at 703-978-3601 or [assignor@umpires.org](mailto:assignor@umpires.org).

## ADULT SOFTBALL

**Over-40 Softball League** will be starting its 27th year this season and is looking to add one more team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. The season runs from late April to early October and usually guarantees 26-30 games.

Email at [skeduman@aol.com](mailto:skeduman@aol.com) for more.

## 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR

**Preschool Registration.** Clifton Presbyterian Church Preschool, 12748 Richards Lane. Offers classes for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (9 a.m.-noon). "Extended care" until 3:30 p.m. is also available. Visit [www.cliftonpc.org](http://www.cliftonpc.org) or call 703-830-3175.

## WEDNESDAY/FEB. 22

**Sully District Community Meeting.** 7 p.m. at Sully Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. Agenda includes Transform I-66 — developments inside and outside the beltway. 703-814-7100

## THURSDAY/FEB. 23

**Police Recruiting.** 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Mason University, Spring Career Fair. Fairfax County Police Department is currently hiring Police Officers, Animal Protection Police Officers and Crossing Guards. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/jobs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/jobs).

## MONDAY/FEB 27

**Free Financial Counseling Clinic.** 6-9 p.m. at Chantilly Computer Learning Center Partnerships, 4101 Elmwood St. Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths offers free sessions at various locations in the Fairfax County area to low- and middle-income adults who reside throughout Northern Virginia. The offerings are free and open to the public, but reservations are required. [ldiaz@wfcvma.org](mailto:ldiaz@wfcvma.org) or 703-988-9656 x108

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# Looking Toward the Future

Mountain View High holds winter graduation.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ountain View High is a school of second chances, and its students make the most of them. But nothing comes easy. They have to work hard to succeed, and many have more to deal with than does the average student.

Some have fled adversity elsewhere, some must take care of older family members or their own children. And many have to work full-time jobs while attending school and learning English – all at the same time.

Such challenges would be daunting to anyone, but Mountain View's students have consistently proven that they're up to the task. And last Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Centreville High, 49 of them reached their goal of graduation.

"I'm honored to be the principal of the best high school in Fairfax County," said Principal Gary Morris as the ceremony began. "With every passing semester, I experience more and more the resilience and pride at Mountain View. Forty-nine students are graduating today; but if there was only one, I'd still be standing here – because you've earned it and you deserve it."

For some students, he said, the pressures of family, jobs, social and emotional difficulties are too much to overcome. "But you've made it," said Morris. Paraphrasing Ecclesiastes 9:11, he said the race doesn't always go to the swift, but to he who endures to the end.

"As long as you're committed to us, we'll be committed to you," he said. He then acknowledged all the teachers, staff and family members comprising the students' sup-



Student speaker Herman Ayala.

port system. "As your principal, I saw firsthand how it wasn't so easy for all of you to get to this day," said Morris. "But you've accomplished everything it's taken for you to get here."

He said the grads will now demonstrate to others in life that "it's not a matter of 'if,' but 'when.'" Noting how people often come home from work and share the details of their day with their families, Morris said, "I tell my family about the young people I meet each day, the hardships they've overcome and about the students who've become achievers."

He told the graduates, "You give us the inspiration to do what we do. You make us want to work and do our jobs. The education profession can seem thankless at times, and we hear that our products – our stu-



Jesica Newman and daughter, grad Brandi Johnson, of the Union Mill community.

dents – aren't as good as students in other countries. It's obvious they've never been to Mountain View." Then, with tears welling up in his eyes, Morris said, "Graduating Class of 2017, we love you! #Gotimberwolves."

Stepping to the podium next were the school's two graduation speakers. Herman Ayala went first, saying people used to describe him as a "future inmate" and a troublemaker, when he was actually a big, friendly guy.

"I grew up in Alabama and had a tough time; it was just me and my mom," he said. "We moved to Virginia because we thought it would be a safer place to live. My mom was working two jobs and we lived out of a Honda Civic."

But things changed for the better after



Grad Darwin Perla and girlfriend Julissa Lopez after the ceremony.

his mom met and married his stepdad. "Life got easier," said Ayala. "We had more money but, most of all, my stepdad became my role model and real father. He taught me how to be a man."

At 14, Ayala started working construction with him, sharing some of his earnings with his mom. "I worked hard for that money and had a sense of accomplishment," he said. "And the more I worked, the more I wanted to drop out of school. But my dad wanted something better for me and told me to go to school."

As a sophomore, Ayala's coach told him he couldn't play football unless he focused on his grades, so he did. He also played football as a junior and returned to working. "But I got into fights and talked back to my

SEE MOUNTAIN VIEW, PAGE 4

## 'Well-Earned and Well-Deserved' Four students honored with school's top awards.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**A**t each graduation, Mountain View High presents special awards to students who've gone the extra mile to succeed, despite the difficult challenges they've faced. And last Wednesday, Feb. 15, the school honored four such students.

Counselor Sue Houde presented the Citizenship Award – given to those who make a difference in their school and community – to Nore Hasan. "Her story is extraordinary because she started her education in September 2010 at the age of 21," said Houde. "She never attended school before because of a lack of opportunity in her native Iraq."

"And now – six years, 13 semesters and 31 classes later – she's reached her goal of high-school graduation," continued Houde. "And she maintained a B+ average while raising her son with her husband and taking care of another family member after school."

Hasan also did volunteer work in the community and made sandwiches for the homeless. And her classmates noted her persistence and courage. Houde said the Optimist Club praised Hasan's positive attitude, and

she was admitted into GMU's Dream-Catchers program to pursue a career in nursing "so she can continue to help others." (This program provides at-risk, obstacle-facing

students with mentors and financial aid to help them graduate college).

The Personal Achievement Award, pre

SEE FOUR STUDENTS, PAGE 4



Brandi Johnson gets the Faculty Award from math teacher Jude Welling.

# Mountain View High Holds Winter Graduation

FROM PAGE 3

teachers, so I had to repeat my junior year," he said.

He then transferred to Mountain View. "I thought its motto of 'Family, Love and Respect' was fiction," said Ayala. "But it's true. Here, there are no cliques or fights over dumb things. Teachers helped me and didn't give up on me, and they made me feel like I had potential."

"I could have dropped out, done drugs and maybe gone to jail," he continued. "I could have conformed to the negative ideas people had of me in the past. But I didn't want to; I wanted to succeed at Mountain View. Here, we're not slackers or drug addicts. We're students, we're us, we're Mountain View."

Brandi Johnson also shared her story at graduation, saying she used to have a "bittersweet" relationship with school. "I'd get bullied and let negative people influence me to change things about myself," she said. "In middle school, I got into fights and cut classes. And in high school, I gave up on school completely – I was stuck and I was lost."

Then things got even worse. "When my house caught on fire and we had to move to another neighborhood, I had to go to a new high school," she said. "But I still had



**Rita Reynoso receives her diploma from Principal Morris.**

PHOTOS BY  
BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**Jazmin Gomez gets her diploma from Principal Gary Morris.**



no motivation or drive." Shortly afterward, doctors diagnosed her mother with two tumors and operated on her.

"We didn't know if she was going to live," said Johnson. "And when she got home, she needed lots of help, and I took care of her and missed a lot of school. I learned I had to mature quickly and that you can't let negativity impact who you are."

Her family then moved from Washington, D.C., to Virginia. "I knew I needed to get

good grades and do well in school so I could succeed," said Johnson. "I learned that life is about knowing who you are and who you want to be."

A friend told her about Mountain View, and enrolling there was "the best decision I ever made," said Johnson. She said her English teacher, Tim Harris, "saw my potential and treated me like an adult. I'd never seen anything like this before, and my mentor became my best friend." As a

result, she made all A grades this year.

"My teachers gave me the motivation to keep going," she said. "Mountain View is straight to the point – you come, do your work and graduate. And it's close-knit like a family."

Now I realize I can become a teacher and complete my goals.

In life, things happen that you can't control, but you don't have to let that be the end of your story."

## Four Students Honored with School's Top Awards

FROM PAGE 3

sented by counselor Ellen Fay, went to Sergio Valenzuela. It's given to a student who succeeds at Mountain View despite having family, job or other adult commitments.

At the podium, Fay told him, "When you arrived at Mountain View in January 2012, you knew very little English and you had no car. But you said you'd walk to school, if you had to, and you kept your word. You attended school full time, worked full time and maintained a B- average."

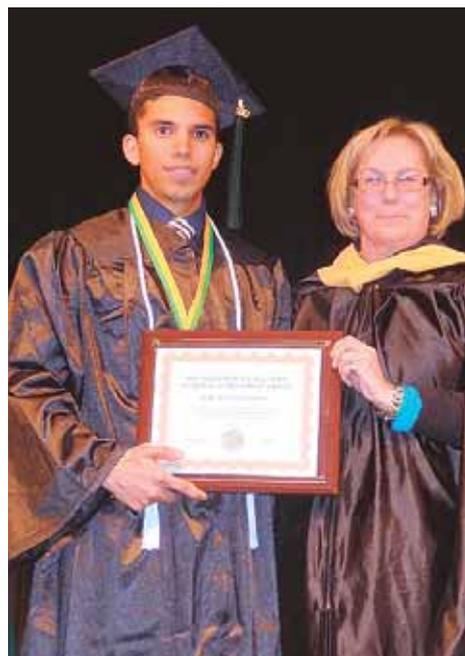
Furthermore, she said, "You not only learned a new language, but passed the reading and writing SOLs the first time you took those tests. You also received the coveted, Excellence in the English Department Award. You plan to go to college and you want to end violence in our world. I am honored to have been your counselor and am pleased to present you with this well-earned and well-deserved award."

The Faculty Award goes to the student who achieved the greatest academic and personal success, despite significant obstacles. Two were given out this year, and the school's newspaper and media advisor, Mark Smith, presented the first one to [name withheld].

"She was young and immature when she first came to Mountain View, but blossomed into a capable young woman," said Smith. "She took college-level math courses and did two summer internships. She was the student representative on the Mountain View Foundation and was editor of our



**Nore Hasan receives Mountain View's Citizenship Award from counselor Sue Houde.**



**Sergio Valenzuela receives the Personal Achievement Award from counselor Ellen Fay.**

school's online newspaper, the Mountain View Mirror."

In addition, [name withheld] was inducted into the Quill and Scroll National Honor Society and received the Sharon DeBragga Academic Excellence Scholarship and a book scholarship. She was also admitted to GMU's Dream-Catchers program and hopes to someday be a corporate lawyer.

Math teacher Jude Welling presented the second Faculty Award to Brandi Johnson. "When she first came to Mountain View, Brandi was having a tough time keeping her grades up and struggled with self-esteem," said Welling. "But she got straight A's last semester, excelled in artwork and emerged with confidence, grace and joy."

Although Johnson is only 17, Welling said she took new students under her wing and made them feel like family. "She exemplifies our school motto of 'Family, Love and Respect,' and we're proud of how she represents Mountain View." She plans on attending NOVA to become an elementary-school teacher.

### SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to [chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon.

**Kalkidan Befekadu**, of Chantilly, was named to the fall 2016 dean's list at Quinnipiac University (Hamden, Conn.).

**Subhiksha Balaji**, a student at Rocky Run Middle School, was a top scoring student in the

Northern Virginia Regional MATHCOUNTS Competition held Saturday, Feb. 4, at George Mason University.

Westfield High School's publication "The Guardian," and Chantilly High School's publication "Odyssey," were two of the six Fairfax County Public Schools student publications named Pacemaker finalists by the National Scholastic Press Association

for 2017. The NSPA Pacemaker competition is one of student journalism's highest honors. Noted staff on the "The Guardian," are editors **Morgan Jackson**, **Charlotte Heo**, **Taliyah Rogers**, and **Nick Alexander-Goldsmith**, and **Anthony Whitten** as adviser; and on the Odyssey staff, editors **Christine Ly**, **Kali Milazzo**, and **Elise Mazzone**, and advisor **Mary Kay Downes**.

## NEWS

# Seeking Missing Daughter

**Carla Hope left home on Feb. 3.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Nearly three weeks have passed since Centreville's April Costello has seen her daughter, Carla Hope, 16. The girl ran away from her home in the Newgate community on Feb. 3. Costello believes she's still in Fairfax County, but believes she's in an unsafe situation.

Describing Carla as friendly and outgoing, Costello said, "She's a comedian – very funny, and people like to be around her. She's a very likable kid." Costello also said her daughter receives in-home therapy, seven hours a week, but stressed that they had a good relationship.

Costello said all was well between them, the night before Carla vanished. But, she said, "I woke up the next morning and she was gone. It's nothing I want any other parent to ever go through. It's the first time she's ever left home. She used a texting app to contact me last week, saying she was fine. But I'm very worried about her safety because she's with people who don't have her best interests at heart."

Costello contacted Fairfax County police and reported her daughter missing, but is unhappy with their decision not to publicize Carla's disappearance. "I feel like the police should be helping more than they are," said Costello. "Every missing kid should be publicized and should get the same treatment."

However, police spokeswoman Megan Hawkins explained that "Detectives work these cases, but we don't put out press releases on juvenile runaways because, usually, they've voluntarily left home. For us to put out a press release, they must be critically ill and endangered."

So Costello also contacted the Center for Search & Investigations for Missing Children (CFSI) to help search for Carla. "We're in every state and volunteer our time for free," said Tina Pearson, a CFSI regional director. "We work hand-in-hand with law enforcement, and it's a wonderful feeling to hear



**Carla Hope is 16.**



**Carla's rose tattoo.**

the words, 'Found safe.'"

Meanwhile, Costello, as well as Carla's brother, 20, are hoping she'll return. Costello wants her daughter to know that "The people who truly love her are really concerned about her wellbeing and want her to come back home where she's loved."

Carla is 5 feet 6 inches and 140 pounds, with brown hair and eyes and a rose tattoo on her left forearm. Anyone with information regarding her whereabouts may call police at 703-691-2131, private investigator Kimberly Williamson at 888-756-6825, or CFSI at 512-537-6603 or [www.cfsimissing.com](http://www.cfsimissing.com).

4900 block of Stonecroft Boulevard, tools from residence

**FEB. 16 - LARCENIES**

6000 block of Chestnut Hollow Court, license plates from business

14400 block of Rustling Leaves Lane, cash from residence

**FEB. 15 LARCENIES**

4300 block of Hollowstone Court, wallet from business

5600 block of Kertscher Terrace, wallet from vehicle

500 block of Shipley Court, bicycle from vehicle

**FEB. 14 LARCENIES**

14300 block of Chantilly Crossing Lane, camera from vehicle

14300 block of Chantilly Crossing Lane, merchandise from business

4900 block of Stonecroft Boulevard, merchandise from business

### CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Sully District Police Station.

**WEAPONS OFFENSE:** Insignia Court / Uniform Drive, Feb. 13, around 5 p.m. Officers responded to the area for a report of a teenager brandishing a weapon. An officer observed a young man at Centre Ridge Elementary School with a machete. The 15-year-old male was taken into custody and charges are pending for possession of a weapon on school property. There were no injuries.

**FEB. 21 - LARCENIES**

14200 block of Asher View, packages from residence

6300 block of Blackburn Ford Drive, checks from residence

5900 block of Fort Drive, property from residence

**FEB. 17 - LARCENIES**

13900 block of Malcolm Jameson Way, cash from vehicle

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## Budget Season in Fairfax County

**Attend a town hall meeting and express your priorities.**

**A**lexandria and Arlington each have a meals tax, both enacted without a referendum because as urban forms of government in Virginia, their local elected bodies were authorized to enact the tax legislatively.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors had to put the meals tax on the ballot for voters to decide, and after a heated campaign, the tax was voted down decisively.

Elections have consequences, a fact being affirmed on every level right now.

In Fairfax County, this means a more difficult budget process going forward than might otherwise have been the case. The vast majority of Fairfax County's \$3.99 billion budget is financed by property taxes, and the proposed budget is based on no property tax increase.

The meals tax would have provided about \$80 million for the schools; the current budget falls \$61 million short of the FCPS request.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Educate And Advocate

To the Editor:

Regarding the Centreville Immigration Forum/Centreville Labor Resource Center (CIF/CLRC) response to recent immigration orders from the new administration, these orders are far-reaching and have potential effects that will be devastating for the community.

After the election in November, the CIF Board approved resolutions to allow our staff to respond to efforts by our colleagues who work more directly in the advocacy area. Even though the mission of CLRC is to enable safe and fair work opportunities for workers in the Centreville area, we need to educate and advocate on policies that affect our members.

CIF Executive Director Terry Angelotti wrote a letter to the editor a couple weeks ago, opposing the travel ban on persons from predominantly Muslim countries. We have members from around the world, including from some predominantly Muslim countries.

We also called a meeting of persons from nonprofits and churches in our area to discuss the challenges ahead. This group has met three times at CLRC (December, January, and February). In December we set up five working groups relating to police and public safety, coordinating response from faith groups, support for public schools,

While County Executive Ed Long has said there can be no new programs in the budget defined by no tax increase, we all know that some things could be cut to make room for new, needed programs. Long will conduct an online chat answer budget questions on Friday, Feb. 24, at 3 p.m. Submit questions here: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/AskFairfax/mobile/ActiveDiscussion.aspx?roomid=131](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/AskFairfax/mobile/ActiveDiscussion.aspx?roomid=131)

The county will hold a series of budget town hall meetings which will include a presentation, time for questions and feedback.

The Connection welcomes letters for publication on the budget, send to [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### FAIRFAX COUNTY BUDGET TOWN HALL MEETINGS

- Tuesday, Feb. 21 - 7:30 p.m., Great Falls Citizens Association, Great Falls Library - 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls
- Saturday, March 4 - 9 a.m., Hunter Mill District Community Meeting, Frying Pan Park, Visitors Center - 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon
- Wednesday, March 8 - 7 p.m., Providence Community Budget Meeting, Providence Community Center - 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. - First Floor Multi-Purpose Rooms
- Wednesday, March 8 - 7 p.m., Sully District Budget

- Town Hall Meeting, Rocky Run Middle School - 4400 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly
- Thursday, March 9 - 7 p.m., Mason District Budget Town Hall Meeting, Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale - Main Community Room
- Thursday, March 16 - 7:30 p.m., McLean Budget Public Meeting, McLean Community Center - 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean.
- Monday, March 20 - 7 p.m., Springfield District Budget Town Hall Meeting, West Springfield Government Center - 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield - Community Room
- Wednesday, March 22 - 7 p.m., Lee District Budget Town Hall Meeting, Franconia Governmental Center - 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria
- Monday, March 27 - 7:30 p.m., Braddock District Budget Town Hall Meeting, Robinson Secondary School - Recital Hall - 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax.

### Correction

Last week's editorial implied that in November 2017, the Virginia Senate will be on the ballot. The 40 seats in the Virginia Senate will next be on the ballot in November 2019. All 100 seats in the House of Delegates are on the ballot this November, 2017, along with Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General.

— MARY KIMM

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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

### Protesting ICE Action

**On Friday, Feb. 17, members from several churches including Centreville-based Well-spring United Church of Christ protested against raids by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducted outside a church-run hypothermia shelter in Alexandria last week. Speakers included Jim Wallis of Sojourners and the Rev. Keary Kincannon, pastor of Rising Hope Mission Church which hosted the shelter. Wallis promised that Christians will not be silent and will challenge this threat to religious liberty.**

accompaniment for families, and getting the word out for Know Your Rights sessions.

At the January meeting we had presentations from local police and from Deputy County Executive David Rohrer; in February we invited representatives from local schools to meet with us. Both meetings were helpful and led to additional information-sharing. We have had about 35 participants overall representing about 15 dif-

ferent nonprofits and churches. All of us feel that we need to work together or we will not be able to serve the needs created by the recent orders.

At CIF, we have held two formal and many informal "Know Your Rights" sessions for our members; and staff and volunteers have participated in trainings on "Know Your Rights." We are organizing bilingual volunteers to assist families who are threatened and di-

vided during this time.

Certainly, the recent orders and stepping up of raids in our area (throughout northern Virginia, including Centreville) have changed our work dramatically. All of our families and our staff are responding in every way that we can, and we will continue to do more in the days ahead.

**Alice Foltz**

President, Centreville Immigration Forum



PHOTO COURTESY OF FCPS

### Science Olympiad

The Rocky Run Middle Science Olympiad team presents its third place trophy, won at regional competition, to Principal Amy Goodloe.

### ROUNDUPS

## Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, March 2, 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.

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.

## Blood Drive at Fire Academy

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, in partnership with INOVA Blood Donor Services, will be hosting a blood drive at the Fire and Rescue Academy on Friday, March 3 from 12 p.m. until 5 p.m. at 4600 West Ox Road, Fairfax. Call 1-866-256-6372 for more.

## Dulles Suburban Center Meetings

As the Dulles Suburban Center Study enters into its second phase, the Advisory Group has set its schedule for the next several months. Residents are invited to attend the meetings and hear what the group is discussing regarding land use in the Dulles Suburban Center. The upcoming meetings will be held at 7 p.m. at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly, on March 6, and March 21.

Specific meeting topics will be posted on the Dulles Suburban Study website <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/dullessuburbancenter/meetings.htm> closer to the date of each meeting.

## Several Volunteers Needed at WFCM

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries at 4511 Daly Drive, Suite J, Chantilly, seeks individuals to volunteer for the following:

- ❖ Volunteer(s) to clean office and bathroom, Tuesday or Thursday, either 8:30-9:30 a.m. or 2:30-4 p.m.
- ❖ Volunteer(s) to answer phones and schedule appointments, Tuesday and Thursday, 2-4:30 p.m. Requirements: good phone skills, personable, able to conduct pantry tours. Interview and completed application required.
- ❖ Volunteer(s) for Client Services Intake, Monday and Friday, 9:45 a.m.-1:45 p.m. Requirements: Spanish speaker preferred, ability to work with clients, able to conduct pantry tours. Interview and completed application required.
- ❖ Volunteer for Food Pantry, bagging clients' food choices, Thursday, 10:45 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Requirements: must be able to stand for long periods of time and lift at least 25 pounds. Interview and completed application required.

See [wfcmv.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-program/](http://wfcmv.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-program/)

## Volunteer Drivers Are Needed

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406 or go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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**Chantilly High School**  
Saturday, March 18  
10 am to 12 pm

*Co-sponsored by Supervisor Kathy Smith, Chantilly HS STEM Academy, and Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce*

**West Springfield High School**  
Saturday, April 1  
12 pm to 2 pm

*Co-sponsored by West Springfield HS Student Government and Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce*

**Oakton High School**  
Saturday, March 18  
1 pm to 3 pm

*Co-sponsored by Supervisor Linda Smyth and Oakton HS Marketing Department*

**South County Secondary School**  
Saturday, April 29  
11 am to 1 pm

*Co-sponsored by Supervisor Dan Storck, South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, South County Federation, and South County Secondary School*

To register as an employer or student, or for more information, please visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfair.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfair.htm)

# ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to [chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

## ONGOING

### Black History Month Events.

Through Feb. 28, 2-4 p.m. at Terminal on the ticketing level at Dulles International Airport, 1 Saarinen Circle. A month-long event series for airport employees and passengers in celebration of Black History Month. Visit [www.metwashairports.com](http://www.metwashairports.com) for more.

### Art Guild of Clifton Exhibit.

10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St., Clifton. Includes oil paintings of European settings; doors, windows, and flower shops. Free. Call 703-409-0919 for more.

### Carolina Shag Dance.

Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m.; no partners needed; dinner menu at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$8. Visit [www.nvshag.org](http://www.nvshag.org) for more.

### Open Rehearsal.

Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Centreville. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires barbershop chorus invites men of all ages who enjoy singing. Free. Visit [www.fairfaxjubilaire.org](http://www.fairfaxjubilaire.org) for more.

### Toddlin' Twos.

Tuesdays, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Early literacy storytime with songs and activities included. Age 2 with caregiver, free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

### Storytime for Three to Fives.

Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Stories and activities for children age 3-5 with caregiver. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

### English Conversation Group.

Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

### English Conversation Group.

Selected Saturdays, 3 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for a list of dates.

### English Conversation Group.

Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

### Plant Clinic.

Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. A neighborhood plant clinic with horticultural tips, information, techniques, and advice. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

### ESL Book Club.

Mondays, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Meet and discuss a book chosen by group. Free. Call 703-830-2223 with questions and to reserve a spot.

### ESL Book Club.

Every other Saturday, 11 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Adults learning English are welcome to meet and discuss a book chosen by the group. To find out book title, call 703-502-3883.

### Lego Block Party.

Every other Tuesday, 3 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Legos will be provided for an

afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

### Duplo Storytime.

Every other Wednesday, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Develop and reinforce early literacy skills for reading success. Ages 1-3 with adult. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

### Live After Five.

Fridays at 5:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway. Every Friday night a band plays on the patio of the winery. Free to attend. Visit [www.wineryatbullrun.com](http://www.wineryatbullrun.com) for a full schedule.

### Mondays are Family Night.

5-7 p.m. at Villagio, 7145 Main St. \$45 for a family of four. Call 703-543-2030.

### Legos Kids Club.

Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Thousands of Legos for children to play with. Ages 6-12. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

### Starlight Storytime.

Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Stories under the stars for ages 4-8. Wear pajamas and bring stuffed friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

### Over-40 Softball League.

A Fairfax-based league is looking for enough players to form another team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders -played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. If interested, email [skeduman@aol.com](mailto:skeduman@aol.com) for more.

## PET ADOPTIONS

**Adopt a Cat or Dog.** Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair

Lakes Center, Fairfax. Visit [www.lostdogrescue.org](http://www.lostdogrescue.org) for more.

### Adopt a Dog.

Saturdays, 12-3 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Highway. Visit [hart90.org](http://hart90.org) for more.

### Adopt a Dog.

Sundays, 1-4 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit [aforeverhome.org](http://aforeverhome.org) for more.

### Adopt a Dog.

Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit [www.lostdogrescue.org](http://www.lostdogrescue.org) for more.

## THROUGH FEB. 28

**FPA Television Series.** Various times on Verizon FiOS TV and Cox Communications in Fairfax County, and by Comcast in Reston. The specials will air on FPA CHANNEL 10, FPA INTERNATIONAL CABLE 30, and FPA SPIRITUAL TV 36. Fairfax Public Access (FPA), will premiere a special series of new movies and documentaries throughout February, in recognition of Black History Month.

## THROUGH MARCH 31

**Slave Life Exhibit.** Various times at the Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. \$7 adults, \$6 students, and \$5 seniors and children age 5-15. Artifacts excavated from around Sully's 18th-century slave cabins. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/) or call 703-437-1794 for more.

## BEGINNING FEB. 22

**Art at the Library.** 7-8:30 p.m. and continuing every fourth Wednesday each month at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice for beginners to expert

artists. February theme: Sketching. Bring sketchbook and drawing materials. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ce/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ce/) or call 703-830-2223 to register.

## FRIDAY/FEB. 24

**Hot Dogs Over the Campfire.** 5:30-7 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road. Enjoy a wagon ride through the Rocky Run stream valley and a hot dog dinner cooked over the campfire. Learn who Ellanor C. Lawrence was and hear about the area's local history. Hot dogs, buns, condiments and s'mores for dessert are provided, bring drinks and sides. \$10, and children must be accompanied by an adult registered for the program. Meet at Cabell's Mill. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence) for more.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 25

**Planting a Four Season Garden.** 10 a.m. at Fair Oaks Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway. With Peg Bier, Merrifield Plant Specialist. Call 703-560-6222 for more.

**Sully District Fundraiser.** 7-9 p.m. at Supervisor Kathy Smith's, 4639 Star Flower Drive. 703-814-7100.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 26

**Rose Products Seminar.** 2-4 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway. Learn about benefits of proven products that award-winning rose growers use to save time and money. Free. Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenter.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenter.com).

## MONDAY/FEB. 27

**A Night With Mike McCurry.** 7-9 p.m. at Centreville United Methodist Church, 6400 Old Centreville Road. Former White House Press Secretary to President Clinton and co-chair for the Commission of Presidential Debates will be discussing the intersection of faith and politics. Visit [www.centreville-umc.org](http://www.centreville-umc.org) or call 703-830-2684 for more.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 4

**Garden Preparations.** 10 a.m. at Fair Oaks Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway. With Kathy Jentz, Editor of Washington Gardener Magazine shares tips on getting the garden ready for spring. Call 703-560-6222.

**Film Screening.** 2 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The screening of the film "Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine," a documentary explores the life and tragic death of Matthew Shepard, a gay student murdered in 1998, in Laramie, WY. The story of Matt Shepard's struggles is told through the personal lens of his friends, family and those who were close to him throughout the years. Visit [mattshepard.eventbrite.com](http://mattshepard.eventbrite.com).

## SUNDAY/MARCH 5

**Dr. Suess Readings.** 2:30-3:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join in the annual celebration of the birthday of Dr. Suess with a reading of "The Lorax," who favored trees. \$8. Call 703-631-0013 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence) for more.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 11

**Women of Walney.** 2 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn how the women of Walney both lived within and challenged the gender roles of their time periods. \$6. Call 703-631-0013 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence) for more.

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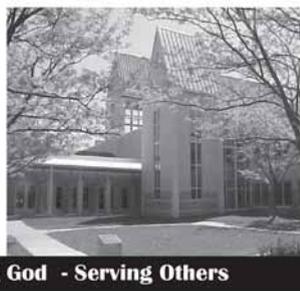
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703-830-3333 [www.cbcva.org](http://www.cbcva.org)

The Church of the Ascension  
(703) 830-3176 [www.ascension-acc.org](http://www.ascension-acc.org)

Centreville Baptist Church  
(703) 830-3333 [www.cbcva.org](http://www.cbcva.org)

Centreville United Methodist Church  
(703) 830-2684 [www.Centreville-UMC.org](http://www.Centreville-UMC.org)

# Matching Pets to Their Owners

**Animal shelters' counselors help families find the right fit for a pet.** **Recommended Reading**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Natasha had been abandoned and was wandering the streets of Arlington under the blaze of a hot summer sun when she was rescued and taken to a local shelter. When handlers at the shelter leashed the German Shepherd mix, she became aggressive with other animals. After months of behavior classes, however, she began to trust and her pugnacious disposition became docile. Within months, Natasha was adopted by a family with small children.

"Most people wouldn't think of a German Shepherd as a kid-friendly dog, but that's a great example of how by taking a dog at their face value and looking at their personality rather than their breed, you can end up with a great dog that you wouldn't have thought of before," said Chelsea Lindsey, communications specialist for the Animal Welfare League of Arlington.

Lindsey says that Natasha's adoption dispels a common misconception that certain breeds are better suited than others for families with children. Lindsey and other shelter counselors say that when selecting a family pet, parents should consider factors such as the animal's temperament and the family's ability to afford and care for a dog properly.

"We don't say there are breeds that are better with kids than others.

Some pit bulls are great with kids and some aren't," said Lindsey. "You really have to look at the individual personality of the dog. Are they going to let kids tug on their ear or take away their toys? Just because a dog is a lab or golden retriever doesn't mean that they're going to be good with kids."

Before selecting a pet, families should do an assessment of their ability to give the new pet proper socialization, training, exercise, and attention. "You have to be realistic and honest with yourself," said Lindsey. "Puppies are appealing and hard to turn down, but they're a lot of work. Maybe your family is looking for an adult dog that is already house trained."

One of the first steps to successful pet ownership is beginning with an animal that is the right fit. Counselors are on hand at local shelters to help with the adoptions process. "We want to understand your family's environment and match it up with the best dog," said Gina Lynch, outreach coordinator for the Humane Society of Fairfax County, Inc. "Half the people who walk in to adopt a specific dog end up adopting something else after they talk to a counselor. You might want a puppy, for example, but if you're gone a lot during the day, an older dog that doesn't need as much attention might be a better match."

"When anyone adopts a dog, it's important to work closely with the counselors who know the dog best, so they can tell you about any personality issues," continued Lynch. "If a dog has recently lost its owners, for example, it might be depressed."

Becoming familiar with an animal's history before deciding to adopt is one of the recommendations

Lynch offers. "It's like when you buy a used car, you want to know all you can about the car so that you can be an informed buyer," she said.

One-on-one counseling for families to help with the adjustment of adding a pet to a family is recommended, says Lynch. "We teach families that dogs have to have their own space and an area to eat," she said. "We want to give the best advice to make it a good situation. That's why the whole family has to be there. Until the dog gets used to your household, it's best to give the animal their space."

Often, young children don't have the emotional maturity necessary to control their feelings or the skill set and physical strength needed to care for an animal, says Lynch, so interactions with family pets must be observed closely by a parent to help ensure safety.

"With regard to bringing a pet home, supervision is key in all interactions to make sure that both the child and the animal are safe and comfortable and being handled appropriately," said Joanna Fortin, community outreach and adoptions manager for the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. "It can take weeks to months to get acclimated, particularly if the pet hasn't lived with a child before. We encourage

parents to be vigilant for a few months. We advise them about the potential issues that could arise so that they can coexist peacefully."

"When the family does bring the animal home, we do encourage people to use caution around

food, toys or other items of high value to the dog," added Fortin. "Proactively setting boundaries with the child, like [not] touching [the dog] when he's eating or taking toys out of his mouth. Respecting those boundaries can generally set them up for success."

Parents must watch vigilantly for the signs that a new family pet is uncomfortable or fearful, says Fortin. "Those signs include growling, avoidance, like the animal choosing to keep its distance, or things that they're visually communicating like looking fearful. Most of the time the dog will give lots and lots of warning before it bites," she said. "Children should use proper behavior and not be too loud or too rough with the animal. There is a potential for an injury to occur, but that is not the norm."

"Kids often want to watch the dog eat, which is fine as long as they stay at an appropriate distance and respect the dog's boundaries," continued Lynch. "Just like you don't want a dog eating off your plate at the table, a dog doesn't want you trying to pull his food away from him."

There is a return on the significant investment that goes into animal adoption with benefits ranging from self-confidence to communications skills development. "Pet ownership teaches kids about responsibility if they are actively taking part in [caring for] the animal," said Lindsey. "It teaches them compassion. They learn to listen and pay attention to non-verbal cues because they don't speak the same language as the animal. Kids who grow up with animals in their homes are also more aware of animal welfare issues."

For those considering adopting a pet, see [www.livingwithkidsanddogs.com/](http://www.livingwithkidsanddogs.com/).

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Lesbia Mencia, President  
NOTE: Objections to the  
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# Work Group to Examine Predatory Lending

Panel to investigate internet loans, car-title loans and open-end lines of credit.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

The growing chorus of criticism about predatory lending in Virginia may not have prompted lawmakers to start passing laws to crack down on the industry. But it has accomplished one thing, formation of a work group.

"In this town, if you are in the minority party in a chamber that's two-thirds Republican, you take victories where you can," said Del. Mark Keam (D-35). "I'd like to think something good can come out of this if we can bring stakeholders together."

Lawmakers are concerned about several aspects of high-interest loans. One is the bait-and-switch nature of many of the businesses, where customers walk into a car-title business but walk out with an open-end line of credit instead. Another issue is the completely unregulated nature of open-end lines of credit, originally created for department stores but now used by car-title lenders and internet lenders. Regulators don't track them, and lenders don't need a license to offer them. Recent years have seen online lenders from around the world offer them with interest rates of up to 5,000 percent.

"If the work group doesn't deal with the open-end loans, it'll be a waste of time," said Jay Speer, executive director of the Vir-

ginia Poverty Law Center. "You can make rules about the Consumer Finance Act, and then all the internet lenders will just switch to open-end loans and it'll all just be a waste of time."

**WORKING GROUPS** are a common way for lawmakers to punt, essentially putting off making decisions and outsourcing solutions to a panel that makes recommendations. Sometimes the groups end up making recommendations that are adopted by the General Assembly. Recent years have seen successful working groups that made significant changes to energy policy and worker's compensation. Many lawmakers view them as an ideal way to consider difficult issues outside of the frenzied pace of the General Assembly sessions.

"There are what I believe to be plus sides to being a part-time legislature, and there are downsides to being a part-time legislature. One of the downsides is you can't keep working during one session in a short session," said Del. Peter Farrell (R-56). "Sometimes it takes a year."

For critics of predatory lending, the chief goal of the working group will be to regulate open-end lines of credit. These have become the tool of choice for car-title lenders and internet lenders to offer unlimited amounts of interest. And lawmakers don't know the scale of the problem because state

regulators don't track them. That's a problem that critics say has an easy fix — require a license to offer open-end lines of credit, and make them abide by the same rules as car-title lenders or payday lenders.

"I hope that we see a path forward for all lenders to be licensed," said Dana Wiggins, who answers the Predatory Lending Hotline at the Virginia Poverty Law Center. "If they're operating in the state of Virginia, they should all be licensed and they should all have to follow the same rules."

**THE SHADOWY WORLD** of internet lending is also in the crosshairs of the work group. Some companies offer loans at interest rates from 600 percent to 5,000 percent. Some of these companies try to get around laws designed to protect consumers by claiming to have affiliations with Indian tribes, allowing them to take advantage of uncertainty surrounding a law from 1918 — long before the World Wide Web revolutionized modern American finance. Last month, Attorney General Mark Herring helped secure a \$15 million settlement against a California-based company that was using a fraudulent relationship to a North Dakota tribe to evade Virginia lending laws.

"In the absence of action, the internet becomes a lawless place that plays by different rules than traditional commerce," said Kevin Mauer, associate director of the Virginia Catholic Conference. "Without protective regulation, the commonwealth's vulnerable consumers may fall prey to more and more opportunistic lenders."

## IN SESSION

### No More Psych Beds

**Robert Johnson** of Woodbridge understands the mental health crisis from a personal perspective. Back in 2011, he was struggling with a serious bout of depression and ended up handcuffed to an emergency room bed for nine hours. That's because no psychiatric beds were available in Prince William County. So he had to wait for one to be available in Fairfax.

"Think of a horse-drawn carriage, and the nearest hospital is 20 miles away and you're riding over speed bumps. That's what I'm going through emotionally. That's the kind of pain that I'm feeling handcuffed to that bed."

Johnson presented his story to lawmakers last week and asked them to support a bill introduced by Republican Del. **Peter Farrell** (R-56). But lobbyists for hospitals opposed the bill because they don't want lawmakers to change laws requiring hospitals to have certificates of public need, known as COPN. Farrell says he's frustrated people in need won't get help because

hospitals are concerned about their bottom line.

"I don't think it has anything to do with psych beds. I don't think they want anything at all having to do with COPN reform period," said Farrell. "I don't think they want anything to go anywhere because they don't want things to change. They enjoy having their cake and eating it too."

One silver lining, Farrell says, is that the issue will go to the Deeds Commission, which was set up after Democratic Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25) was attacked by his son because a psychiatric bed was not available.

### Ethics Reform or New Loopholes?

Should lawmakers be allowed to receive unlimited steak dinners from lobbyists at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse if they are at a meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures? What about a three-martini lunch paid for by coal executives at a meeting of the American Legislative Exchange Council? All of that would be legal under ethics reform adopted by lawmakers this year.

"The bill says that any meal provided for attendance at such a meeting is not reportable," said state Sen. **Adam Ebbin** (D-30), the only senator to vote against the ethics package. "I don't see why we need more loopholes."

Some say that lawmakers are standing up for ethics reform, literally. One provision in the ethics package would allow lawmakers to receive unlimited and unrepeatable food — if it's eaten standing up. That's a provision pushed by Del. **Todd Gilbert** (R-15), who recounted a personal experience to justify the legislation. A few years ago, he said, he went to a lavish reception where he ate some finger food and drank some soda. Several months later, he got notification that the event was valued at several hundred dollars.

"This just is trying to clean up that whole process so that people don't get caught in unwary traps while they are standing around eating finger good and having a glass of cola or something."

The bill also allows the state to redact the home addresses of General Assembly members.

— MICHAEL LEE POPE

## A Date With Destiny



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I suppose, given that Feb. 27, 2017 is the eight-year anniversary of my original non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV diagnosis, followed up almost immediately with my "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I should make mention of it. Not that I need any reminding, but perhaps you regular readers who don't exactly know my history, might be curious as to how long I've been droning on about cancer. Strictly speaking, it was June 2009 when my first cancer-type (it was the diagnostic process, actually) column was published: "Dying to Find Out, Sort Of." And I've been self-indulging myself ever since save for the odd occasion when my mind wanders elsewhere and I'm able to write outside the cancer bubble.

Which is probably a good thing, as is venting every week about the good, bad and the ugly, concerning my having cancer and learning how to live with it. Not that the content is particularly informative, factually, but it is an honest description of the anxieties and fears a patient experiences. Occasionally, I will include a few facts, but as a sports- and chocolate-person, medicine/science and my knowledge and understanding, and ability to explain them are mutually exclusive at best and an oxymoron at worst, with yours truly being the moron. What kind of moron you ask? As *Curly Howard of The Three Stooges* answered in a long-ago "two-reeler." "Why? Are there more than one kind?"

Nonetheless, in spite of myself, life has gone on as I'm proud and extremely fortunate to say. As to where I am in the cancer-survivor scheme of things? Somewhere between slim and none. When I was first diagnosed, my oncologist said the survival rate for similarly staged patients (stage IV) after five years was in the low single digits (as in 1 to 2 percent). When my wife, Dina, asked him why aren't there any parades for lung cancer survivors (as is so often the case with breast cancer survivors), he answered quite succinctly: "Because there aren't any," (survivors, that is). I appreciated his honesty and told him so. I was clueless however, as to what my immediate future would really be like. I would know soon enough as it was recommended that I start chemotherapy as soon as possible. I remember my brother, Richard, asking the oncologist what would he do if it was his brother diagnosed with lung cancer; his answer was to begin infusions without delay and so a week later, we began.

And so here I am, nearly eight years later, still minding my own business and sharing it with you all every week. My infusions now occur every five weeks, CT Scans every three months. My face-to-face appointments with my oncologist occur quarterly as well, a week or so after the scan to discuss the results. So far, mostly so good. Oh sure, I've had my moments (tumor growth, fluid build-up in both lungs followed by a week-long stay in the hospital, ongoing kidney concerns, no surgery though), but for the most part, I've been incredibly lucky (my oncologist calls me his "third miracle").

As to what I'm doing to help myself and hurt the cancer? Not nothing. In addition to the standard fare offered by my oncologist, I have supplemented my treatment with a variety of non-Western alternatives, many of which I've mentioned in previous columns. Are they working? They're not hurting, I can tell you that. Could I do more? Probably. Should I do more? Absolutely! Am I doing more or less than I used to? Less, I'm afraid. But as *Popeye the Sailor Man* said so often: "I 'yam what I 'yam." And come Monday, Feb. 27, 2017, I'll have "yamed" myself into an eight-year lung cancer survivor. Do I hear nine? Hopefully, I hear a lot more than that. From my pen to God's ears.

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

# SPORTS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## First in State for 200 Free Relay

Centreville Girls Relay team of Gabby Kuehhas, Emily Drakopoulos, Thalia Costanza and Lexi Cuomo came home victorious from the Virginia High School League State Finals, which was held at George Mason University on Friday, Feb. 17. The girls took first in the 200 Free Relay and 3rd in the 200 Medley Relay. Also swimming the finals were Noah Desman (9th - 200 Free), Lexi Cuomo (2nd - 100 Fly, 7th - 100 Back), and Emily Drakopoulos (9th - 50 Free).



PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Centreville Wildcats are the 2016-17 Conference 5 Concorde District Champions.

## Wildcats Defeat Chargers

### Taking Conference 5 championship.

BY WILL PALENSCAR

The boys' varsity basketball teams at Chantilly and Centreville, schools only separated by 4.5 miles, met for the 2016-17 Conference 5 final on Feb. 17 hosted by Chantilly High School.

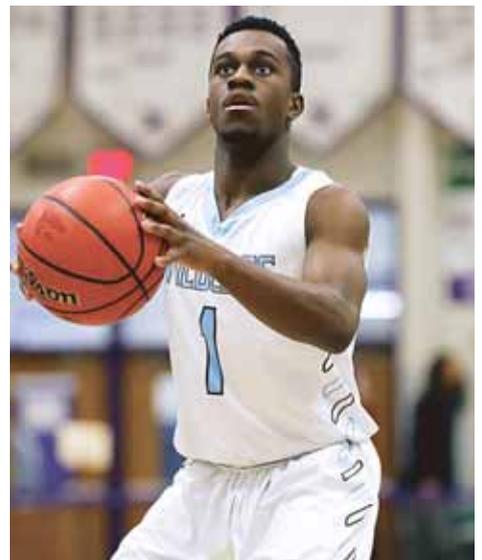
Centreville (16-7) earned the #1 seed and in the first their first conference tournament game defeated Robinson 51-48, while Chantilly (15-7) the #2 seed got by Herndon 48-46.

The first quarter would have the Chargers take an early 16-10 advantage after playing the first 8 minutes.

In the second quarter the Chargers would continue their good start outscoring the Wildcats 16-11, giving them a 32-21 half-time advantage.

In the third quarter Centreville would inch closer, holding the Chargers to just 9 points while scoring 13, and closing the deficit to 41-34.

The fourth quarter would belong to the



Marcus Mack #1 shoots a free throw during Centreville's win over Chantilly in the conference championship game.

Wildcats. Chantilly would be held to 10 points, but more importantly the Wildcats would explode for 28 points in the quarter to earn the Conference 5 Tournament Champions with a 62-51 win.



Christian Parana #3 dribbles the ball past a Centreville defender.



Daniel Carmichael #5 handles the ball inside the paint while Nate Goldammer #10 defends.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## At State Swim Meet

Westfield High School Bulldog Swimming Team participated in the Feb. 17 State Swim meet at George Mason University. They are, bottom row, Alan Zhai, Leo Wang, Ben Neubauer, Geoffrey Eisenhart, and Max Kuranda, and, top row, Katie Sanfield, Maddi Vlattas, Sarah Boyle, Syndey Loper, Didi Pace, Allison Hickey, and Olivia Masterson.