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Discussing School Shootings with Children

Open dialogue is key to quelling fear, say mental health professionals.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Helping parents who are grappling with their children's feelings of anger and fear following the recent Florida school shooting and subsequent fallout was a recent topic that Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., department chair and program coordinator, Pastoral Clinical Mental Health Counseling & Pastoral and Spiritual Care programs at Marymount University, had with her graduate students. The class discussed how high profile acts of violence can frighten children who might feel as though they or someone they love could become a victim or find themselves in danger. From mass shootings to natural disasters, an open dialogue with children is key to dealing with thoughts and feelings.

"In most instances, talking about the incident helps to gain some control over what is not controlled," said Jackson-Cherry. "Normalizing feelings and thoughts like fear, sadness, anger, and confusion can help children know they are not abnormal in how they are feeling or thinking."

"First ask what they heard rather than starting by telling them about it," added Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., professor of psy-

chology at Montgomery College. "I wouldn't get too stuck on the details. Just get a sense of what they know and make sure it's accurate."

In fact, exploration is key. "Encourage children to express their feelings and validate them," said Bagshaw. "You can start by saying, 'I can understand why you're feeling that.'"

Monitor both the amount and source of information that children receive about high profile incidents, advises Bagshaw. "I would really limit their social media and news intake about the violence," she said. "Videos about the shooting are too traumatic, and watching them can be too traumatizing and too dramatic."

Reviewing the family's safety plan can help children feel secure, advises Bagshaw. It's something she did in her own family. "At my daughter's middle school, you can't just walk into a building like they did in Florida," she said. "I reminded my daughter of this and explained the safety differences between her school and the school in Florida. One thing that you don't want to say is that 'That will never happen here.' You want to focus on what's real and what's realistic."

Maintaining a sense of normalcy follow-

ing a public display of violence can help quell fear that children might be feeling, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University and a licensed clinical psychologist. "Parents play a key role by staying calm, maintaining household routines, explaining that many events we worry about seldom happen, and stating that we will cope with whatever happens," he said. "Parents should place the highest priority on helping children stay safe."

"I would caution against using leading questions like, 'Are you scared?' because this question already implies they should be scared of something and that may not be accurate," continued Jackson-Cherry. "Depending on their answers, parents can assist in having the child integrate aspects of power and control in a situation where they may not be in control."

While putting national events into perspective in a way that children can understand, Short also advises parents to explore emotions. "Ask children what they are feeling and empathize and validate what they say. Ask children how they feel about school," he said. "Is there anything at school that worries them? Be reassuring that you will help protect them."

Reviewing safety guidelines can help children feel secure, says Short. "Parents [can say that] local police are working to keep the community safe. We need to look out for each other," he said. "Say that high-profile violence is unlikely to happen at local schools because of safety procedures. For example, there are more than 130,000 elementary and secondary schools, and we focus on relatively few schools where shootings have occurred."

Even those children who don't express emotions or appear unaffected by news reports of violence might still be anxious about the event. "Many children may not display outward anger or fear but that does not mean they are not fearful, angry, or sad about what they have heard or experienced," said Jackson-Cherry. "I think in most circumstances, parents asking about a child's knowledge of the event would be a good way to start."

Limit a child's exposure to media coverage of acts of violence and discuss it in an age appropriate manner, advises Jackson-Cherry. "If the parent is watching or listening to the news together with their child, try asking, 'What are you thinking or feeling about what just happened or was reported?'" she said. "I asked my 15 year old, 'Has the school discussed the shooting in Florida? Have you had drill in case it were to happen?'"

AREA ROUNDUPS

Baby Lambs Born at Frying Pan Farm

High winds pound the area downing trees and power lines, but life continues.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Mother Nature hurled a powerful wind storm at the local area Friday, March 3 through Sunday, March 5, as Winter Storm Riley wreaked havoc. The National Weather Service DC/Baltimore reported Dulles Airport had winds gusting to 50 mph or more for 16 hours, a rare occurrence created by the intense low-pressure system offshore.

The sustained wind storm downed trees and power lines in the Reston/Herndon area and beyond, leaving 192,000 Dominion customers, the majority of them in Fairfax County, without power.

Yet, Mother Nature showed her gentler side Saturday, if only for a moment. Shortly after noon, with winds still howling, twin lambs were born at Frying Pan Farm Park, Kidwell Farm in Herndon. The



Eric Sumner, Farm Mechanic at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, holds up twin lambs born Sunday, Feb. 25. These babies, like one born Saturday, March 3 during the high-impact windstorm that hit the region, will stay indoors for a few weeks before going out to pasture.

ewe instinctively turned and licked her newborns. Within minutes after hitting the straw, one lamb stood up on its wobbly legs, teetered a bit and made its way to the ewe. The second lamb died shortly after birth.

Like twins lambs born six days earlier on the farm and doing well, the surviving lamb will stay indoors for a few weeks before going out in the pasture with its mother. Another baby lamb was born on Sunday to a third ewe.

Kidwell Farm Park is part of Frying Pan Farm Park. It is a working demonstration



As sustained high winds from a massive nor'easter moving up the coast pummeled the area Friday through Sunday, Mother Nature showed her gentler side. Frying Pan Farm Park's third baby lamb was born Saturday, March 3. It is about one hour old in the photo.

farm located at 2709 West Ox Road. The park offers a look at life, a step back in time to experience how farm life was during the 1920s through 1950s.

The park is open daily dawn to dusk; Kidwell Farm is open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to the park is free. Some activities such as wagon rides, the carousel (opening mid-April) and special events have a fee. For more information about upcoming events and the farm animal babies birthing schedule visit fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fryingpanpark.

Paving and Restriping Meeting March 19

The Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County Department of Transportation will host a community information meeting to discuss this year's paving and restriping efforts in the Hunter Mill District on Monday, March 19, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the Terraset Elementary School cafeteria, 11411 Ridge Heights Rd, Reston. The meeting provides residents with an opportunity to speak directly with road engineers and transportation planners about the paving program, proposed striping changes and general traffic safety concerns. Information about paving and restriping in the Hunter Mill District will be on display in an open house format, with a presentation at 7:15 p.m. Community members are invited to give feedback on general traffic safety concerns regarding roads scheduled for paving, and the proposed striping changes at the meeting or by submitting comments online via the comment form on the paving and restriping program page. Comments will be accepted through April 6, 2018.

For more information on the 2018 Paving and Restriping Program, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/2018-paving-and-restriping>. The Hunter Mill District information page, located at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/2018-paving-and-restriping/hunter-mill>, includes maps, sample photos, the proposed list of roads being considered for paving and link to a comment submission form.

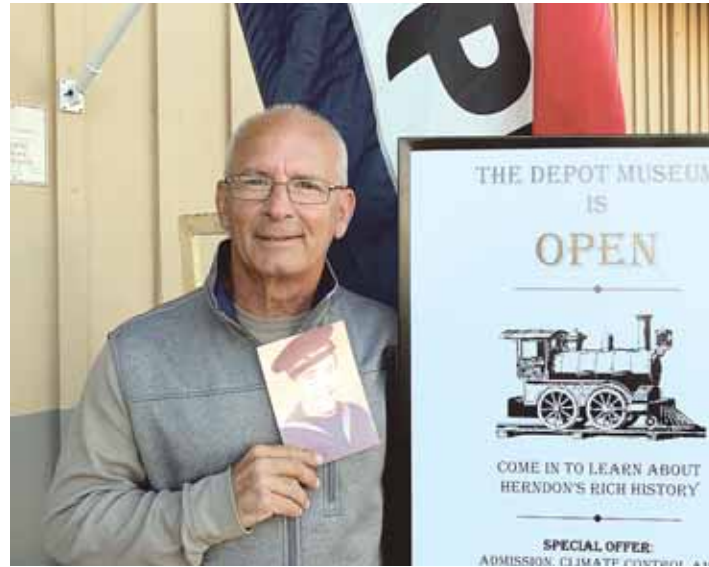
USS Herndon Artifacts Come Home

Son donates father's memorabilia for display in the Herndon Depot Museum.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Angus "Gus" Schmelz, Radioman 2, served on the USS Herndon during World War II. Members of the Herndon Historical Society — headquartered in the Herndon Depot Museum at 717 Lynn Street, Herndon — will remember and thank him for a long time. On Tuesday, Feb. 27, Gus' son, David Schmelz arrived from Florida and stopped at the museum with an assortment of boxes. On hand to greet him were Melissa Highly, president of the Herndon Historical Society, and Margaret Jamborsky, who is researching history of the Herndon. In the boxes were memorabilia Gus Schmelz, as his son recalled, "had kept in an office in his house." Schmelz died in 2007. David Schmelz was there to share with the museum some of his father's photographs, letters, documents, and physical artifacts he had collected while aboard the destroyer.

For more than an hour, everyone opened the boxes and looked back in time through an assortment of pictures and writings. During Schmelz' service as Radioman 2 aboard the Herndon, the ship earned three Battle Stars. The first in July/August of 1943, during the Invasion of Sicily and the second during the Invasion of Normandy in June of 1944. This was the period of significance most important to the Herndon Historical Society and Jamborsky since the Herndon High School Band is scheduled to represent the United States at the 75th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, France in 2019. The Herndon earned its last battle star at the Invasion of Southern France in 1944. Herndonband.org reports, "The Pride of Herndon will be honoring the brave men of the USS Herndon, the destroyer that led the Allied naval armada in the assault on France. The men of the 'Lucky Herndon' were given 10 to 1 odds that they wouldn't come out of D-Day



David Schmelz, son of a sailor who served during World War II aboard the destroyer the USS Herndon during the Invasion on Normandy, outside the Herndon Depot Museum holding his father's U.S. Naval Training photograph. The destroyer was named after Captain Herndon, namesake of the Town of Herndon.

alive. Not only did they beat the odds, their bravery and courage helped win the war. The band will be marching with the American flag that flew on board the ship on D-Day, and each student will carry a photograph of one of the veterans as they march in France." Asked in an interview when his father had signed up to serve, Schmelz said, "There were five boys in my dad's family. Angus was only 17 years old, and his mother



Margaret Jamborsky and David Schmelz look over memorabilia from his father's deployment on the destroyer the USS Herndon during World War II. Schmelz is donating some of the artifacts to the Herndon Historical Society for display in the Herndon Depot Museum.

had to go with him and sign him up because he was underage."

Accepting the donation on behalf of the Herndon Historical Society, Highly commented, "We are very excited about the USS Herndon collection from Mr. Schmelz, and honored that he has entrusted the Herndon Historical Society to be the caretakers of it. We look forward to sharing it with our members and visitors for years to come."



PHOTOS BY SUSAN BERGER

Having Fun, Helping Charities

On Sunday, Feb. 25, several hundred, mostly in costume, attended Congregation Beth Emeth's annual Purim Palooza, with activities for all ages: Moon bounce, carnival games, crafts for "kids" of all ages, Vashti's Shuk one-day gift shop sale, costume parade and contest, raffle for great prizes, lunch, hamentaschen and more. The Purim tzedakah (charity) project, Esther's Treasury, was to bring unwanted jewelry for The Closet of Herndon to sell, with proceeds going to local charities.



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CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

“Godspell.” Thursdays through Sundays, through April 1, at NextStop Theatre Company, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. NextStop opens “Godspell” with a modern twist to the musical, setting the new production in a coffee shop. Tickets, \$35-\$65, available online at www.NextStopTheatre.org or by calling 866-811-4111.

Homegrown Yoga. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Alison Adams is bringing Homegrown Yoga to ArtSpace Herndon. All levels welcome. Drop in and take a class. \$25 two week unlimited pass or drop-in available. www.homegrownpoweryoga.com.

The Elden Street Tea Shop. Saturdays in ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Sip tea and enjoy a variety of locally made snacks and pastries while enjoying the latest art installations in the gallery. Visit www.eldenstreettea.com.

THURSDAY/MARCH 8

Jazz Night. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Lake Anne Coffee House/Wine Bar, 1612 Washington Plaza N., Reston. Patrons may enjoy Mykle Lyons and company as they wine and dine in the cozy second floor wine bar. Admission is free. Call 703-501-6289 or email maurisapotts@gmail.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 9

Live Music. 6:30-10 p.m. at Lake Anne Coffee House & Wine Bar, 1612 Washington Plaza N., Reston. Live music in the 2nd Floor Wine Bar. Admission is free. Visit lakeannecoffeehouse.com.

Swing Dance. 8:30 p.m., beginner lesson; 9 p.m.-midnight, dance, at Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon. Swing dance with All Wheel Jive. \$15. Call 703-359-9882 or visit our website at www.gottaswing.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 9-10

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. 8 p.m. at Reston Community Center's CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Don't miss this intense drama that sizzles with passion and greed. \$20-\$23. Visit restonplayers.org or call 703-476-4500.

SATURDAY/MARCH 10

Annual Kids' Trout Fishing Derby. 8 a.m.-noon behind the Herndon Police Station, 397 Herndon Parkway at the Sugarland Run Trail Stream. The Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department will host the 15th Annual Kids' Trout Fishing Derby behind the Herndon Police Station, where the stream will be stocked with rainbow trout just for this event. For children, ages 2-15. Pre-registration through March 9 at 5 p.m. is \$8 per child. Day of event registration, on site is \$12 per child (bring cash or check). Contact Tim Lander, Recreation Supervisor, Herndon Parks and Recreation Department, 703-435-6800 x2106 or Tim.Lander@herndon-va.gov.

Book Reading. 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston Town Center. Laura Murray will read her book *The Gingerbread Man* and the Leprechaun Loose at School. Visit scrawlbooks.com or call 703-966-2111.

Tough Combo Album Release Concert. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. The collaborative quartet explores



Big Flower Painting

Design and wine with Mary Sears. \$40 per person covers wine, light snacks and supplies. Each event is limited to 25 participants. Registration is required with payment in advance. No prior art experience necessary. Tuesday, March 13, 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Call 703-956-9560 or visit artspaceherndon.org.

the possibilities of jazz, rock, fusion, funk and some traditional rhythms. Refreshments will be served. \$20. Visit artspaceherndon.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 11

Herndon Ice Breaker 5K Race. 8 a.m. at Northwest Federal Credit Union, 200 Spring Street, Herndon. Runners and walkers, take your mark and get ready to conquer the fourth annual Ice Breaker 5K Race. Pre-registration is \$20 adult/youth through noon on March 9. Regular registration is \$30. Registrations can be made at Herndon-va.gov/recreation, at the Herndon Community Center, or at www.active.com.

Women's Choral Festival. 4-6 p.m. at Community of Faith United Methodist Church, 13224 Franklin Farm Road, Herndon. Capital Harmonia Choir will host its third Annual Women's Choral Festival feature the Madeira School Glee Club along with a piano and string quintet. This year Capital Harmonia performs the music of Anne Frank: *A Living Voice*. Free and open to the public. Call 703-989-4007 or visit www.capitalharmonia.org.

MONDAYS/MARCH 12

Restaurant Fundraiser. 11 a.m.-10 p.m. at Not Your Average Joe's, 1845 Fountain Drive, Reston. Every Monday during March 2018, Not Your Average Joe's in Reston will donate 15 percent of the bill to Assistance League of Northern Virginia. Diners must mention the organization when checking in at the restaurant. Visit www.notyouraveragejoes.com/locations/virginia/reston. Contact karenamster@aol.com about the fundraiser or visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 13

Big Flower Painting. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Design and wine with Mary Sears. \$40 per person covers wine, light snacks and supplies. Each event is limited to 25 participants. Registration is required. Call 703-956-9560 or visit artspaceherndon.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 16

Live Music. 6:30-10 p.m. at Lake Anne Coffee House & Wine Bar, 1612 Washington Plaza N., Reston. Live music in the 2nd Floor Wine Bar. Admission is free. Visit lakeannecoffeehouse.com.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 16-18

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. at Reston Community Center's CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer Prize winning, “*Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*” is an American classic. As the hot summer evening unfolds, painful secrets and desperate longings are revealed while the family desperately attempts to secure their share of Big Daddy's estate. Don't miss this intense drama that sizzles with passion and greed like you've never experienced before. \$20-\$23. Visit restonplayers.org or call 703-476-4500.

SATURDAY/MARCH 17

“Sisters.” 3 p.m. at Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Young Actors Theatre Program trains young actors (ages 7-15) in voice, dance and acting over the course of nine weeks of classes and rehearsals, culminating in a final performance of fully produced original musicals. “Sisters,” a story about a group of soon-to-be-borns, who are confronted with some harrowing stories about what their future as female siblings could possible entail, takes a humorous look at what being a sister is all about. For free tickets (limit of four; first come, first served), contact William.parker@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Book Discussion. 4 p.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston Town Center. L. M. Elliott will discuss her new book *Hamilton and Peggy: A Revolutionary Friendship*. Visit scrawlbooks.com or call 703-966-2111.

St. Patrick's Homeless Shelter Meal. 4-7 p.m. at Embury Rucker Shelter, 11975 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Volunteers needed to help prepare and serve a St. Patrick's Day themed dinner for over 100 people at the Embury Rucker Shelter. Visit www.barberafoundation.org/events/st-patricks-homeless-shelter-meal.

DINING

Nunu's Thai Dishes Opens in Herndon

New restaurant in town opens with high expectations.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Mayor of Herndon, Lisa C. Merkel, several members of the Herndon Town Council, and others attended the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for Nunu's Thai Dishes on Thursday, March 1, 2018. The restaurant is located at 410 Elden Street in Herndon. It is a new business venture for owner Pitsanu "NuNu" Setapayak.

The restaurant presents a cozy dining experience and features a variety of traditional Thai cuisine prepared by experienced chefs using authentic Thai recipes.

Councilmember Bill McKenna wrote on Facebook, "The food is amazing and more important the host NuNu is an amazing person. He treats everyone like family, and you cannot go wrong with anything here. A true gem in Herndon!"



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS HOLSTE

From left: Dennis Holste, Economic Development Manager; Melissa Jonas, Chair of Planning Commission; Grace Cunningham, Councilmember; NuNu Setapayak, Owner; Mayor Lisa C. Merkel; Sumitra Setapayak, Co-Owner; Kay Hanwinyoo, Co-Owner; Chaweeewan Kraikhummadan, Co-Owner and Jeff Davidson, Councilmember stand ready at the Grand Opening and Ribbon cutting for Nunu's Thai Dishes located at 410 Elden Street in Herndon.



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News

South Lakes High Students Win Art Awards

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers recognizes their talents.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

South Lakes High School announced the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers named 14 of their students recipients of the 2018 Scholastic Art Awards, the nation's longest-running and most prestigious scholarship and recognition initiative for creative teens in grades 7-12.

Praising the school's art department and award winners, Kimberly Retzer, South Lakes High School principal, said, "South Lakes is incredibly proud of our amazing Art Program. We are excited to have 26 Awards/Honorable Mentions recognized in the Scholastic Art Competition this year."

The website for the Scholastic Awards states the young artists and writers were free to explore any and all topics; there were no pre-defined prompts, and no work would ever be disqualified from the Scholastic Awards because of the nature of its content. As for judging criteria, three areas dominated: originality, technical skill, and the emergence of a personal voice or vision.

Matt Ravenstahl, Art Department Chair at South Lakes, said, "We are extremely proud of these students and the importance of arts in our school. These students utilized art making to engage experience and construct meaning in regard to a deeper self."

The artists who received either or both Gold Key and Silver Key Awards will be celebrated in a ceremony Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2018, at the Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus, Ernst Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Their artwork will be on exhibition there Feb. 9-March 15, 2018.

The South Lakes High School students named honored recipients of the Fairfax County Art Region 2018 Regional Scholastic Art Award are: Gabrielle Baughman, one Gold Key; Clark Bautista, one Gold Key; Maya Bollino, one Silver Key; Elena Castrence, one Gold Key; Luis Zevallos Garate, one Silver Key; Keita Heinrich, three Gold Keys and four Honorable Mentions; Phoebe Liu, three Silver Keys; Maija Louko, one Honorable Mention; Megan Pickell, one Gold Key; Austin Shea, one Silver Key; Kai Thompson, one



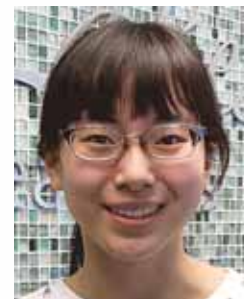
Gabriella Baughman, 17, of Reston – one Gold Key Award: "Art for me is one thing I can always count on."



Keita Heinrich, 17, of Herndon – three Gold Key Awards and four Honorable Mentions: "I had never submitted to an art contest before. Pleasantly surprised by the result."



Lily Vogel, 18, of Reston – one Gold Key Award: "Finding out I had won was great. Finding out I won Gold for Animation was better. My passion is artistic storytelling. I want to be an animator. Being recognized for my passion is amazing."



Phoebe Liu, 16, of Reston – three Silver Key Awards: "For me doing art isn't about feeling happy as much as feeling normal. Drawing is just a natural state of existence for me."

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Gold Key and two Silver Keys; Lily Vogel, one Gold Key; Max Wiegand, one Honorable Mention, and Sophie Wilson two Silver Keys and one Honorable Mention.

The artists whose works received a Gold Key Award – Baughman, Castrence, Heinrich, Pickell, Thompson, and Vogel – will advance to the national level.

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Announcements

Employment

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

BULLETIN

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

SOBER-RIDE FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Free Sober Rides. Saturday, March 17, 4 p.m. through Sunday, March 18, 4 a.m. Area residents, 21 and older, may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a code in the app's "Promo" section to receive a no cost (up to \$15) safe ride home. WRAP's St. Patrick's Day SoberRide promo code will be posted at 2 p.m. on March 17 on www.SoberRide.com. The SoberRide code is valid for the first 1,500 Lyft users who enter the code.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Child turning 5 years old by Sept. 30? If so, contact your child's school to make arrangements for kindergarten enrollment. Most schools begin getting information together now for parents of incoming kindergartners, and many host an orientation or open house. All kindergarten programs are full-day and located in FCPS elementary schools. Check your school's webpage or contact the school directly for specific enrollment information and dates of orientation or visit www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration.

MONDAY-THURSDAY/MARCH 7-8

Unclaimed Property. Virginians can visit any of the four events below and find their unclaimed property. This free public service is facilitated by The Virginia Department of Treasury. Learn more at www.VaMoneysearch.org.

- Wednesday, March 7, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Fairfax County Jennings Judicial Center Cafeteria, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax
- Thursday, March 8, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Hollins Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria

THURSDAY/MARCH 8

Design Public Hearing. 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at the Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. The Virginia Department of Transportation will hold a design public hearing on plans to widen East Spring Street from four to six lanes from just west of Herndon Parkway to Fairfax County Parkway in the Town of Herndon. Visit www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/e_spring_st.asp.

What Can Estate Planning Do? 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Attorney Bettina Lawton will cover what participants need to know to make sure that what they have worked to accumulate goes to the people or charities that they value. Call 703-689-2700 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov.

Hunter Mill District Community Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at South Lakes High School, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston. Hear presentations from County and Public Schools staff on the FY2019 proposed budget. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/huntermill/.

TUESDAY/MARCH 13

Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group. 7-8 p.m. Fairfax County's Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group meets by phone on Tuesday, February 13, 7-8 p.m. This month's topic is Maintaining Relationships While Caregiving. Call 703-324-5484, TTY 711 to register.

THURSDAY/MARCH 15

Community Food Packing. 10-11:30 a.m. at Dominion Energy, 3072 Centreville Road, Herndon. Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, invites community members to help pack food for its Weekend Food for Kids program. This critical program provides nonperishable food over the weekend to children who receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year. Arrive at 9:30 to help with setup. Email LynnB517@verizon.net or visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

Grant Application Deadline. The Audubon Society of Northern Virginia is encouraging community groups, schools, churches and other non-profit organizations to apply for funding under two new mini-grant programs designed to address habitat concerns (audubonva.org/conservation-grants/) and youth education (audubonva.org/news/2018/2/6/youth-education-grant).

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



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

A few weeks back at my last post CT-scan appointment with my oncologist (when all continued to be amazingly stable), he finally asked me the question I've been wondering if he'd ever ask: "Mr. Lourie, I talk about you all the time, how well you're doing; is there anything I can tell people about what you're doing that might help them?"

My first reaction was to laugh and then ask if I even have cancer. I mean, typically, one diagnosed with an incurable disease doesn't just live life merrily along as if the diagnosis was a mere inconvenience, no matter what he or she may or may not be doing. My oncologist assured me that I indeed have cancer and even offered up some news about my tumors with which I was totally unfamiliar.

Five years ago when I was hospitalized (due to excessive fluid in my lungs), in the course of the procedure, the thoracic surgeon did a DNA profile of my tumors to determine if I had a specific mutation (allowing for more targeted treatment). Unfortunately, the ALK and ROS-1 mutations were not confirmed. In pursuit of more current information, more recently, I had a liquid biopsy (a blood test) which tested for the EGFR and T790 mutations. Again, no confirmation. As it stands now, I am as unclassified. For the nine-year moment then, I remain in treatment without the targeted precision so many of my fellow cancer survivors have been extraordinarily fortunate to have. Yet life goes on.

So what am I doing? Other than laughing in the face of death (my best attribute), which if anecdotal reports are to be believed, truly is the best medicine, a bit more. Remaining positive and generally upbeat is a parallel corollary to humoring yourself and those around you.

But more specifically and perhaps uniquely, I am supplementing my standard of care with some non-Western care: alkaline water, organic apple cider vinegar, and about 60 pills a day, most chosen for their qualities of strengthening my immune system and/or eliminating the toxins from my body. I can't say I'm eating really right, but neither will I admit to not eating totally wrong. Reducing stress and exercising are popular advisories in my control. One out of two will have to do.

However, as I told my oncologist, whatever I'm doing I've been told to do by my holistic health and fitness coach. She knows what, how and why. (I might as well be Sergeant Schulz from "Hogan's Heros: "I know nothing.") I don't feel qualified to speak to any of what I do.

Yes, I've survived but, I'm a sports and chocolate guy not a science and medicine man. All I can do is list what I'm doing. I can't chapter and verse any of it. I'm not NIKE, but I just do it. It's a routine and I rarely stray. I do add stuff occasionally but to think any of what I do might have a bearing on another cancer patient's survivability? Not hardly, and that's what I told my oncologist. Dina suggested the alkaline water. I suggested my "coach."

I guess I'm just not that deep of a thinker. I trust people the same way that as a salesman I want them to trust me. I'm not leading anybody astray, and I'm providing them the best available knowledge. I'm not manipulating. Nor am I maneuvering. I'm simply managing dos, don'ts, maybes, what ifs and why nots.

Moreover, I'm trying to think outside the box while respecting and appreciating that the box has its purpose as well.

Heck, for all I know, my non-Western stuff has had minimal impact on my life expectancy and the standard of care from my oncologist has provided the most.

Maybe I'm just an anomaly, pure and simple: a nine-year-plus non small cell lung cancer survivor. What am I doing? Trying not to abuse the privilege, that's what.

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

OPINION

No Guns in the Classroom

Gun safety is an American value.

BY MONTE F. BOURJAILY, IV

In the aftermath of the horrific school shooting in Parkland, Florida, the President of the United States and the head of the National Rifle Association, have advocated arming teachers and hardening schools in other ways. These are shriveled, reactive measures that appeal to fear and rely on the false statement that “to stop a bad guy with a gun, you need a good guy with a gun.”

Introducing guns into the classroom doesn’t demonstrate the virtue of the Second Amendment, it poisons the educational environment, increases the risk that innocents will be hurt and simply challenges “the bad guy” to creatively get around the armed target. We can uphold the Second Amendment, and the rule of law, and ensure Americans’ safety and sense of security with common sense measures, like repealing the Dickey Amendment, that focus on preventing unsafe and malevolent use of firearms.

Arming teachers is a terrible idea. First, it changes the dynamic in a classroom, placing

the weapon between the teacher and the students. Even if its purpose is to protect students, the weapon is a distraction and a barrier. Second, and more importantly, you are introducing more projectile weapons into a chaotic environment, dramatically increasing the likelihood of friendly fire killing children, other teachers and law enforcement seeking to assist. How well do police and soldiers perform in the high stress conditions of an actual confrontation? Does the stress and opportunity for errors increase or decrease when multiple shooters (friend and foe) are added to a situation? Third, in response to the argument that a shooter will avoid schools knowing that teachers are armed, what is to prevent the shooter from wearing body armor? It is easy to buy. We need to stop reacting and problem-solve and innovate, which is our true nature.

Guns are tools, like cars, that can cause serious injury or death when used improperly or with ill-intent. I also am a hunter who grew up respecting guns.

Why is there a “gag rule” (the Dickey Amendment of 1996) on Centers for Disease Control research into the effects of gun violence? How are guns different than cars? The National Highway Transportation Safety Commission collects data on motor vehicle fatalities through the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

Gun owners have a Second Amendment right to own and use guns responsibly, not unconditionally. All Americans have a right to gain a better understanding of how guns are used in ways that harm other Americans and in ways that can pose a risk to all of us.

We must respect the Second Amendment, like we uphold all of the Constitution as the rule of law. However, there are few absolutes under the Constitution, including how far we interpret the right to bear arms. Freedom of Religion does not permit the practice of human sacrifice and Freedom of Speech does not permit fighting words. In short, my right to swing my arms ends at the tip of your nose. We Americans are at our best as problem solvers and innovators. We use data and common sense to find solutions. We confront threats, rather than fearfully wait for them. Can we find common ground on reasonable gun control by listening to each other and recognizing reasonable rights and reasonably accepting certain limits in respectful recognition of the rights of others?

Monte F. Bourjaily, IV is a lawyer who teaches US Government, American History and Philosophy at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. All submissions are in his personal capacity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not Paying Attention in Logic Class

To the Editor:

I was very surprised at the honesty of the headline on your Feb. 21-27 editorial, but then someone pointed out to me that “Another Assault on Common Sense” probably wasn’t referring to the content of your editorial. My mistake.

Since I was wrong about that, maybe I don’t understand the cartoon either. As I understand it, a deranged individual murdered 17 people in a school in Florida; many of that person’s peers “knew” that he was dangerous, but apparently did not mention that to school authorities until after the shooting; school authorities considered him dangerous, but did not go to police; police made dozens of visits to his house, but two investigators concluded that he was not a danger to himself or others; the adults with whom he was living did not notice the aberrant behavior that so many others saw; the FBI was “unable to identify” him as the author of a post indicating he wanted to be a school shooter, and when the FBI received two separate tips actually naming him as dangerous and threatening to become a school shooter, the Bureau ignored one, and failed to send the

second to the local Field Office for action, and when he became the school shooter he said that he wanted to be, the Broward County deputy on duty at the school failed to do his duty and remained outside the building where the shooting was taking place, where he was joined by other Broward deputies who also did not enter the building – and so the NRA was responsible for the atrocity.

I must not have been paying attention in Logic Class.

H. M. Padon
Great Falls

Conversation Stopper

To the Editor:

If I hear the word “conversation” in the media one more time, in relation to another massacre of humans, I might be driven to violence. “Conversation” is not a solution to any of our social diseases. It is particularly unnerving when the calls for a “conversation” usually relate to gun control, and come from folks who don’t even know the meaning of the words they are chanting. “Automatic” weapons have already been banned for decades. “Assault Rifles” have the same capability as many other guns, but they are just designed to look cool. They are a

legal version of a rifle that a veteran can own as a reminder of the automatic rifle he carried while risking his life for his country.

But the demands for a “conversation,” or for the President to do something rather than nothing, keep getting louder and louder. The hysteria usually includes mantras about the NRA having too much influence. Yet no one seems to grasp the idea that maybe it’s the influence of the National Education Association (NEA) that is too weak and misdirected regarding the interests of teachers who can easily identify kids, as early as first grade, who should never have access to a gun. Maybe the NEA should lobby harder for increased regulation of dysfunctional kids, and the parents that are irresponsible. Even without access to guns, these kids can eventually get a driver’s license, and propel a car or a truck into their schoolmates during a fire drill.

Gene Phillip
Great Falls

Cowardice and Complicity

To the Editor,

I’m one of the lucky parents. Like most parents, I worked hard during the 18 to 20 or so years it takes to raise my children, educate

them, instill values, help them become productive adults and, hopefully, parents themselves. All those playdates, sports practices, trips to the library, school events, college visits, illnesses, successes, and disappointments we gladly work through, enjoy, suffer through, and, if we’re lucky, our children actually survive and move on. I can think of nothing worse for parents than to have their child, their gift to the future and image of themselves, taken horribly before his or her time.

A parent should never outlive his child. Even a nuclear holocaust is preferable, because then we’d all die, and the parent would not have to pretend to celebrate the memory of what might have been had the promise of this nation been kept. That’s right, the core promise of this nation is embodied in our elected representative’s oath of office to protect its citizens from enemies, both foreign and domestic.

I call out every Republican in Congress and the President and Vice President for violating their oath, sworn on a bible. If they had any integrity, they would resign. There is a moral duty to act to save a life when you have the opportunity, ability and means. Failing to act is cowardice, and worse, complicity.

Les Halpern
Herndon

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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