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Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ❖ Fair Lakes

SUMMER FUN
PAGE 5

From left: Maya Tischler, Becca Perron and Bea Tremblay dance to "Brand New You" from "13." Encore's new show is June 2-3.

'Another Opening, Another Show'

NEWS, PAGE 2

Blue Firefight

NEWS, PAGE 4

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PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA HELMS CALENDAR, PAGE 5 □ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

MAY 23-29, 2018

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Show times are Saturday, June 2, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, June 3, at 3:30 p.m. at NOVA's Richard Ernst Theatre, 8333 Little River Turnpike in Annandale. Tickets are \$19-26, and Girl Scout specials include meeting the cast and touring behind the scenes. For more details and to buy tickets, go to www.ensemble-tap.org or call 703-222-5511.

Experience Broadway in Tap, Jazz and Song

BY BONNIE HOBBS

The Chantilly-based Encore Theatrical Arts Project is known for its Broadway-style music and dances, and its upcoming production, features this genre at its best. It's a Broadway-musical revue called, "Another Opening, Another Show."

"I picked some of my favorite numbers and some I thought the audience would love," said Encore founder, director and choreographer Raynor van der Merwe. "We go from old musicals like 'A Chorus Line' and 'Kiss Me, Kate,' that were big hits in their day, to modern-day musicals like 'Hamilton.'"

So, she said, "The show ranges from a traditional, Broadway feel to some unexpected jazz, tap and vocal numbers that'll truly take the audience through many, different genres of musical theater. It's an upbeat, feel-good show that'll take the audience on a journey for an hour and 45 minutes and will, hopefully, leave people feeling happy, joyous and whistling a tune."

Calling her students "hard-working and delightful to work with," van der Merwe added that "My

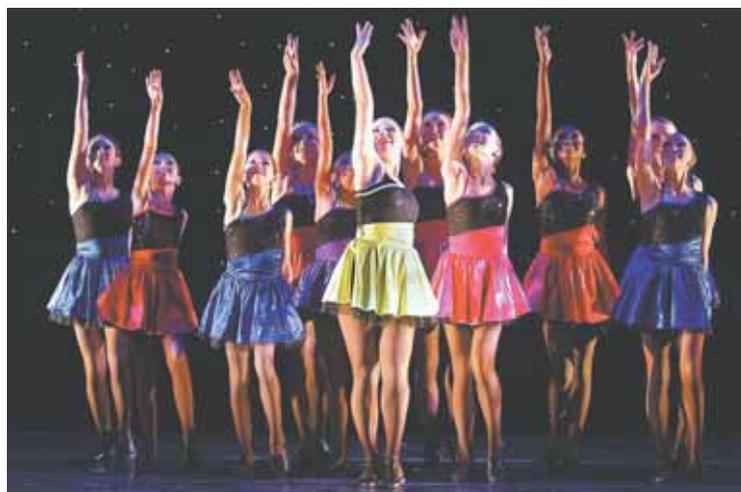


PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA HELMS

Dancers reach for the sky in "Brand New You" from the musical, "13."

advanced dancers are ones who excel, not only at school, but here, too. Their dedication and attention to detail have made the choreography quicker to learn and polish."

The 27 girls and one boy in the show have been rehearsing since February. And, said van der Merwe, "It's been fun putting this show together, knowing that ultimately, we're not just putting it on for audiences here, but also for international audiences. This summer, we're traveling to Italy and France to perform five shows."

Dancing since age 3, Chantilly High junior Rithika Ashok says it's her outlet. "I come to the dance studio every day after school, and it's a way to express myself," she said. "And it's fun learning new things." In this show, she said, "I do stylistic dances like Bob Fosse numbers, and tap, with flowy music and costumes. I dance with props like fabric and hats and do some fast-paced, energetic numbers, too."

Ashok's favorite number is "Fishies" because it's a stylistic

dance, but fast at the end. "It's a jazz number, and we wear jackets that we take on and off, plus black fedoras and heels," she said. "I like doing Fosse-style dances, isolating your body parts to slower music. It's also an audience favorite because it's energetic and we use props. In this show, people will get to see a whole variety of styles of jazz and tap, so there's something for everyone from traditional to contemporary."

Erin Krobath has been an Encore member for nine years and in its performing company for seven. She said this show ranges from "Broadway-style, super-elegant tap to a fierce dance from 'Hamilton'" and illustrates the dancers' versatility. She's in two tap numbers, two vocals and 10 jazz dances. "I enjoy tap most; it clicks the best for me," she said. "My favorite number is '20th Century Fox Mambo,' a jazz dance with a little Spanish feel to it. But what's cool is that the 12 of us in it are all wearing pink costumes, but different-looking ones, so we have distinct personalities. For example, mine is light pink with a big bustle in back, but someone else's is hot pink with sequins. It's

a hard-hitting, jazz number, but with girly aspects."

Besides teaching dance to her students, van der Merwe also imparts life lessons. Krobath said she learned to "Work as hard as you can. You may not be the best at something; but if you work your hardest, you'll get to your personal best."

Veronica Litschgi has danced with Encore since 2007, and with its performing company since 2013. "Whenever I'm stressed, it really helps me get my mind off of anything going on," she said. In this show, she's in 13 jazz and tap numbers.

Her favorite is "City Lights," in which the dancers wear two, different costumes. "I'm a grandma in it and use a walker," she said. "There are 12 grandmas telling kids the important lessons of life. It was my senior request to do it. Before I was in the company, I used to watch it being performed, and it was one of my favorite dances. Everyone shows so much character in it."

Litschgi said the audience will be impressed by "how many costume changes we have and how quickly we do them. Our costumes are detailed and some of them are very bright."

She said van der Merwe instilled a good work ethic in her. "Raynor said people will always want to work with the people who work hard, more than the ones that things come naturally to," said Litschgi. "That's because it shows their commitment and that they put their heart and soul into it."

Heading to Marymount University in the fall, Litschgi's advice to younger dancers is, "Don't get discouraged if you don't get a certain part, because there's always another one that you were made to be in. So don't give up and don't be hard on yourself for it."

Faith Chun has danced since age 3 and has been with Encore for six years. "I can express myself when I'm dancing," she said. "It's my passion."

She, too, is in 13 jazz and tap numbers, and especially likes "Cry Me a River." It's a jazzy tune in which the dancers wear blue halter dresses with sparkles. "It's different from the other numbers," she said. "It's contemporary jazz and is fun to do. The song is deep and interesting and allows me to express myself the most." Overall, said Chun, the audience will enjoy "the creativity of the choreography that makes each dance different. And the 'Hamilton' number brings something special, too."

Chantilly Show Choir Gets Second Life

Principal says the class will continue, after all.

BY BONNIE HOBBS

For more than three decades, Chantilly High's Jazz & Pizzazz show has been a deeply entwined part of the school and community — and an event highly anticipated by performers and attendees alike. But on April 4, Director of Student Services Robyn Lady advised those involved with the program that — due to declining enrollment in Show Choir — this choral class was being cut.

Since the ShowStoppers Show Choir members comprise the choral performers in Jazz & Pizzazz, it meant the end of this show, as well. But five days later — after a student's petition to save the class caught fire online — Principal Scott Poole decided to take a second look at this issue before any further action was taken.

Since he'd only been Chantilly's principal since October, he was unaware of Jazz & Pizzazz's long history and tradition, as well as how much the community prized

this show. He also discovered that no one had told the students and parents, before the letter went out, that Show Choir was on the chopping block,

So Poole contacted former Chantilly Principal Teresa Johnson and discussed the matter with her. Then he spoke with parents and gathered information about how many upcoming students planned to enroll in the class. Finally, last Friday, May 18, he sent the following letter to the Chantilly ShowStoppers parents:

"I'm writing to follow up with the message that I sent on April 9 regarding my decision to put the future of ShowStoppers on hold in order to better understand the challenges the program faces and to give all parties involved an opportunity to share their feedback. We also thought it was important to suspend any decision about the program until the 2018-2019 try-outs were completed.

"I'm pleased to share that [Choral Director Evan] Ayars and I just met with current ShowStoppers students to inform [them] that we will continue to offer ShowStoppers next year! I want to thank everyone for engaging in this important dialogue about a program that clearly means a great

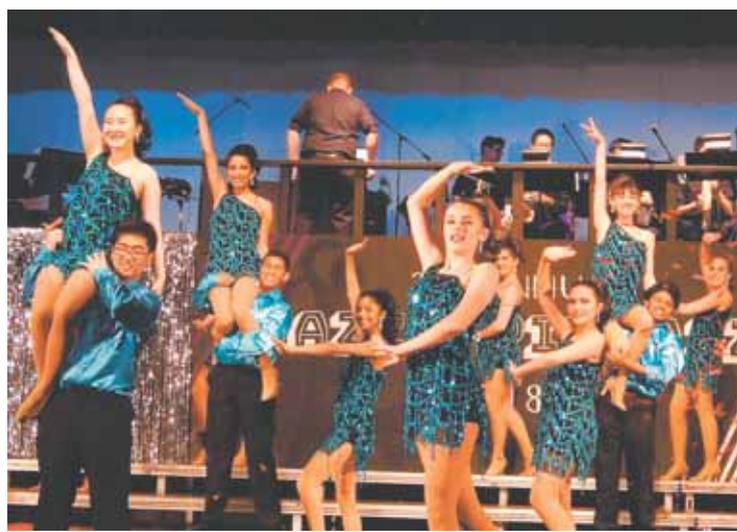


PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS

The ShowStoppers perform "Conga Rhythm" in the finale of the May 4-5 Jazz & Pizzazz extravaganza.

deal to participating families, alumni and the CHS community.

"All of us are pleased that the proud tradition of Showstoppers will continue at Chantilly HS. The unique opportunity for students to combine their love of singing and dancing makes ShowStoppers unlike any other performing arts program that we offer.

"Our dialogues over the past month revealed that what makes ShowStoppers unique also makes it, in some ways, a more challenging program to maintain. Before the last day of school on June 15,

I will work with Mr. Ayars and Ms. Lady, administrator for performing arts, to develop a summary of what we learned.

"We will share that information with all of you and also communicate some of the changes that we believe need to take place to make ShowStoppers a strong and sustainable program, moving forward. We are fortunate to have an engaged and supportive community, and we thank you again for your time and patience over the past few weeks. Go ShowStoppers!"

‘Compassionate, Steadfast, Committed, Dedicated’

Johnson celebrates 25 years as Mount Olive’s pastor.

BY BONNIE HOBBS

For more than a quarter century, the Rev. Eugene Johnson has been the guiding light and spiritual leader of Mount Olive Baptist Church in Centreville. But on Sunday, April 22, it was his turn to sit with his congregation and listen while others took the podium — and sang his praises.

For on that day, the church celebrated his 25th anniversary in songs, dance, speeches and prayers. The members did it with style, enthusiasm and, most of all, heart and gratitude for all their pastor has done for them.

During his tenure, Mt. Olive has undergone unprecedented growth in membership, ministries, outreach programs and financial stability. Johnson even put his architectural degree and experience to use when he helped design the church building and all six of its 18x7-foot, stained-glass windows illustrating Jesus’s life.

Fittingly, the celebration began with the Children’s Choir singing, “Yes, We Love Pastor Johnson, followed by the adult choir’s version of “Wind Beneath My Wings.”

“We are blessed to have a pastor after God’s own heart,” said the Rev. Pat Rather, the worship leader. Speaking directly to Johnson, she said, “You walked with us to the cemetery as we laid our loved ones to rest and prayed for us as we went into that operating room. You continue to cover us in prayer, and we’re grateful to have you and First Lady [June] Johnson.”

The Rev. Gregory Howard from Newport News noted that, “In our state Baptist general convention, whenever Pastor Johnson shows up, we all say, ‘Here comes that cool cat. We’re here to celebrate this 25-year union between pastor and people, and we praise and thank God for [Johnson’s] labor outside these four walls.”

Howard also described Johnson’s wife as “the epitome of grace and elegance.” And he said Johnson was able to lift up his congregation’s burdens and spirit, while always knowing that his help comes from God.



June Johnson stands beside her husband, the Rev. Eugene Johnson, while he addresses the congregation.



Bishop Wilfret Johnson, Eugene Johnson’s brother



From left: Johnson’s sister, Birdel Spears, speaks while her daughter, Drenica Brunson, listens.

Then Rather read congratulations sent from the U.S. Senate and Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), saying, “The residents of Fairfax County are fortunate to have your vision and kindness. May God continue to sustain and guide you.”

Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax said Johnson “instituted a unique, Christian discipleship ministry that focuses on building individuals spiritually for God’s service.”

And U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock thanked Johnson for his “commitment and devotion to Mount Olive, for the past 25 years. I, along with everyone else in the 10th District, know you’ve made your congregation proud.”

Speaking on behalf of the church, deacon Chuck Coffin told Johnson, “We love you with all of our hearts and thank God for you, each and every day. God, with His providential wisdom, sent you to be our angel.”

Noting that Johnson became Mount Olive’s pastor in November 1992 and was officially installed there on April 25, 1993, Coffin called him “steadfast” and said the congregation is “blessed” to have him. The church ministry members then presented Johnson with several gifts, and the congregation gave him and his wife a three-day vacation at the Salamander Resort and Spa in Middleburg.

Next came Johnson’s children, grandchildren and other family members. Son Kevin spoke about his father’s faith and vision. And granddaughter Marley — who flew in for the ceremony from Providence, R.I., where she’s attending college — praised Johnson’s quarter century of “faithful ser-

vice, long nights and early mornings.

“He puts so much effort and time into it because he loves God, this church and all of you,” she said. “I remember when this church was really small and held services in middle and high schools, and then, coming to this beautiful church for the first time. Congratulations.”

Grandson Jadin told Johnson, “You’ve worked hard and done many things for me, and you’re the best preacher I’ve known. Thank you for everything, and I love you.”

Son Brian stressed “the dedication and earnest, hard work our pastor puts in. So much goes on behind the scenes that no one knows about.”

Johnson’s brother, Bishop Wilfret Johnson, said the Johnson brothers are all pastors, as was their father, Horace. “We’re a faithful family, just as he [Eugene Johnson] is a faithful pastor. He causes us to lift our heads higher, and he’s taken his message to North Carolina and to Africa. We were all born by a river, and now I say, ‘Roll on, my brother; keep on running.’”

“What he’s done for this church, he’s done for my family,” Johnson’s sister, Birdel Spears, told the congregation. “He’s baptized and married people and been in hospital rooms and at gravesides. This is your anniversary, and I and my family appreciate all you’ve done for him.”

Next, Spears’s daughter, Drenica Brunson, thanked her uncle for his influence in help-



From left: Johnson’s sons Kevin and Brian, and grandchildren Jadin and Marley, at the podium.

ing her start her professional career, adding, “You’ve been there to baptize and christen my babies, and I love you immensely.” Then Johnson’s sister, Diana McClain, said how happy she was to be there for the celebration. And Jhelisha Clyburn, the event’s chairman, thanked everyone who helped plan it and called it a “labor of love.”

June Johnson was grateful for “what God has done for this pastor.” To her husband, she said, “I see the love of God in your heart, so I feel the love of God in my soul.” And to the congregation, she said, “I love him and know that the steps of a good man are honored by God. God put us together and, for 25 years, we’ve faced joys, sorrows and happiness.”

Then Eugene Johnson, himself, addressed

SEE ‘STEADFAST,’ PAGE 7



The Children’s Choir singing, “Yes, We Love Pastor Johnson.”



Johnson’s sister, Diana McClain



Dancers entertain during the anniversary celebration.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS

OPINION



Julia Biggins



Alison Friedman



Dan Helmer



Paul Pelletier



Lindsey Davis
Stover



Jennifer Wexton

Blue Firefight Six Democrats vying for Democratic nomination to face Barbara Comstock.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE

Democrats are so eager to take on two-term incumbent U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) that several of them moved to the district specifically to run against her. The field of candidates vying to become the Democratic nominee has a wide range of experience and expertise — people who have lived there for decades and people who are new to the neighborhood. Military vets and doctors. People who have experience running for office and people who were inspired to run after the election of President Donald Trump. And the stakes couldn't be higher because this congressional district is the hottest ticket in Virginia, one of the hottest in the nation.

"The 10th is a district that Hillary Clinton carried but has a Republican member of Congress in Barbara Comstock, so it's a high level target for Democrats," said Geoff Skelley at the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "Comstock will, to some degree, probably be hanging on for dear life. She may be able to pull it out. But at the same time, we rate that race as a toss-up."

Two of the candidates are ready to move forward with impeachment now while the other half want to wait for the investigation to conclude. Most of the candidates want to keep the consumer protections created by the Dodd-Frank Act, disagreeing with U.S. Sen. Mark Warner's bill that would reduce the number of banks that have to comply with regulations many in the industry consider burdensome. On the issue of health care, several of the candidates support a single public health system that covers all residents funded by taxpayers — an idea long supported by the liberal wing of the party that remains divisive among Democrats.

"There'll be a ton of money in this race," said Skelley. "Comstock raised \$5 million last time, and there's a decent chance she'll best that this year."

In the order the candidates will appear on the ballot:

LINDSEY DAVIS STOVER

A native of Humble, Texas, Stover, 39, is partner in a consulting firm in Fairfax County. She has a Bachelor of Arts in communications and political science as well as a Masters in Public Policy, both from Baylor University, as well as a Masters in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School. She spent time in the AmeriCorps VISTA program then worked for U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas) before taking a position in the Obama administration working on veterans policy. She moved to the 10th Congressional District in 2011, when she moved to McLean. She is a partner in the consulting firm Edwards, Davis Stover & Associ-

ates which provides outreach to federal agencies and congress.

"I was raised by a single working mom who worked really hard to make ends meet for our family. In fact I actually got my first job when I was 14, and got a job at my local church," said Stover. "My husband and I are still paying off more than \$80,000 of student debt, and I'm running for Congress because my story is not a unique story. There are millions of Americans and many families across our district who are working two and three jobs and can still barely make ends meet."

She is in favor of moving forward with impeachment proceedings, although she says she wants to make sure the case is "airtight" before charges are brought in Congress. She says the country should move toward a single-payer health care system, although she adds that she'd also like to look at a Medicare-for-all system as well as other proposals for a system that could not be undermined by a future administration. She supports the consumer protections in the Dodd-Frank Act, and she disagrees with Democrats who believe that the regulations are overly burdensome on banks. If elected, she says, she would work to support public education and implement gun control.

"Our children are being murdered in our school, and our country is failing them. And we have to do more," said Stover. "If you're too dangerous to board an airplane, you should be too dangerous to walk into a gun store and buy a gun. And I also believe that the guns our soldiers use on the streets of Baghdad shouldn't be used on the streets of our communities."

JENNIFER WEXTON

A native of Washington D.C., Wexton, 49, is a state senator representing parts of Loudoun and Fairfax as well as Leesburg. She has a bachelor of arts in history and economics from the University of Maryland at College Park and a juris doctorate from the College of William and Mary. She was in private practice in Alexandria before joining the office of the commonwealth's attorney in Loudoun. During her time as a prosecutor, she prosecuted everything from reckless driving to first-degree murder. One case that attracted national headlines involved a woman who persuaded her boyfriend to kill her father with a samurai sword.

Wexton moved to 10th Congressional District in 2004, when she worked in the prosecutor's office.

"Congress has lost the bipartisan spirit of cooperation to represent the people who sent us here," says Wexton. "For me and what I've been able to accomplish in the General Assembly, I see that there's a lot that we have in common and a lot of areas where we can find com-

mon ground. But it seems like in Congress they are more interested in shouting past each other than working together to get solutions for our constituents."

She is not yet in favor of moving forward with impeachment, adding that her time as a prosecutor taught her to collect facts and evidence before applying the law. She says the country should be "evolving" toward a single-payer health-care system, although she says she's not sure the country is ready for that yet. On banking reform, she says she would vote against Warner's bill although she adds some of the regulations in Dodd-Frank are overly burdensome and she doesn't want to choke community lending for smaller borrowers.

If elected, she says, she would work for more cooperation on health care as well as gun safety legislation.

"The views of the majority of legislators who have stymied any sort of gun safety legislation in Congress are out of the mainstream, even on things like universal background checks and closing the gun show loophole," said Wexton. "The people are going to speak about this, and I hope that we'll see some progress."

PAUL PELLETIER

A native of Beverly, Mass., Pelletier, 61, is a former federal prosecutor and adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center. He has a bachelor of science in economics from Providence College in Rhode Island and a juris doctorate from New England Law in Boston. After law school, he had a trial court clerkship and an appellate court clerkship before taking a job in the tax division at the Department of Justice. As a federal prosecutor, he went after everything from drug smuggling to health-care fraud. His work against bank executives who helped crash the global economy is featured in the 2017 book "The Chickenshit Club." He moved to the 10th Congressional District last year specifically to run against Comstock.

"I'm doing this because I care, and I believe I can make a difference," says Pelletier. "I've spent a career attacking and solving big problems in a non-partisan and a bipartisan way. I have found ways to not only attack the immediate problem before me but also see the big picture as to what is the problem and how do we solve this bigger issue."

He supports the House moving forward with impeachment proceedings, and he says he wants Trump to be accountable for his actions. He describes the single-payer health care system as the "gold standard," but he says he would work toward pragmatic health-care solutions like driving down the cost of health care. When asked about banking reform now

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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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A Connection Newspaper

SEE COMPETING, PAGE 6

SUMMER FUN



Mason scholarship students gather at a previous Diversity Scholarship Golf Classic.

Scholarship Golf Classic

George Mason University hosts its annual Diversity Scholarship Golf Classic to support college scholarships for deserving high school students enrolling at Mason who will be the first generation in their family to attend college. Monday, June 11, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens Ave., Clifton. \$200 per golfer. Call 703-993-1438 or visit diversitygolfclassic.gmu.edu for more.

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

SUNDAY/MAY 27

Reading Circle and Activities. 1:15 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Reading circle for "That Daddled Union Cow," the children's story based on a real-life case of a cow that adopted Union soldiers during the Civil War. The museum will be open from 1-4 p.m. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2, ages 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR. Call 703-425-9225.

FRIDAY/JUNE 1

Forks, Corks & Kegs. 6-11 p.m. at St Andrew School, 6720 Union Mill Road, Clifton. A tasting festival of local breweries, wineries, and food trucks with the Sunday Night Big Band performing. \$55; \$65 after May 25. Call 703-969-1891 or visit handbid.app.link/standrew.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 2-3

Living History Weekend. Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum will host its third annual Living History Weekend with a Civil War Encampment. Civil War re-enactors will be in full attire with drills, musket shooting demo and camp life demonstrations. In addition, ladies in Civil War period costume will hold a Victorian Tea Party and give presentations on their Civil War costumes. Sunday's events include a Ball run by the Victorian Dance Ensemble and the performing troupe of the Civil War Dance Foundation. Museum members and 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$5. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR or call 703-425-9225.

Vintage Virginia Wine and Food Festival. Saturday, noon-6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Bull Run Park Special Events Center, Bull Run Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. This annual event features Virginia wine, food and music. Vintage Virginia has offered an opportunity to taste from nearly half of Virginia's homegrown wineries, from the oldest and the largest to the smallest boutiques. Visit www.vintagevirginia.com.

TUESDAY/JUNE 5

Climate Reality Presentation. 6:30-9 p.m. at Centreville Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive,

Centreville. Paula Clements, a Climate Reality Leader, will present a presentation about the destructive impact of climate change. She will include uplifting stories about the success of renewable energy. Free. Call 703-655-5069 or visit virginia2.sierraclub.org.

MONDAY/JUNE 11

Scholarship Golf Classic. 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens Ave., Clifton. George Mason University hosts its annual Diversity Scholarship Golf Classic to support college scholarships for deserving high school students enrolling at Mason who will be the first generation in their family to attend college. \$200 per golfer. Call 703-993-1438 or visit diversitygolfclassic.gmu.edu for more.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 16

CFH 2018 5k. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Bull Run Regional Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. Come out and support a four-decade mission to provide sustainable affordable housing and critical life skills training to help set individuals and families on a path of self-sufficiency. \$30 pre-registration; \$35 day of registration. Visit cfhva.org/2018-5k-for-affordable-housing.

SUNDAY/JUNE 17

Summer Concert in the Parks. 3-4:30 p.m. at the Harris Pavilion, 9201 Center St., Manassas. The Kings Park Concert Band, performing in Northern Virginia for over 50 years, announces a summer concert in the parks. Typical programs include: marches, concert band classics, movie and Broadway show medleys, novelty pieces. Free. Visit kingsparkband.org.

FRIDAY/JUNE 22

FrogHair Golf Tournament. Noon at Twin Lakes Golf Course, 6201 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Enjoy the chance to be a winner at the upcoming FrogHair Golf Tournament presented jointly by Southwestern Youth Association and Chantilly Youth Association. A fun twist on the game is presented at each hole, providing both experienced and inexperienced golfers with an opportunity to win a prize. Golfers can sign up as a single, a twosome or a foursome. \$99 per person. Visit www.froghairgolfclassic.com.

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NEWS

Competing to Challenge Comstock

FROM PAGE 4

being considered in Congress, Pelletier says he disagrees with the effort to roll back consumer protections in the Dodd-Frank Act. If elected, he says, he would work to restore the insurance mandate under the Affordable Care Act that was overturned by Trump and amend the tax reform effort to allow deductions of state and local taxes. He says he would also work to remove guns from the hands of dangerous people.

"The most important thing that I would absolutely fight like crazy to do is to pass legislation to ban assault weapons, like we used to have in the 1990s," said Pelletier. "We need common sense legislation like expanded background checks and outlawing bump stocks."

ALISON FRIEDMAN

A native of Takoma Park, Md., Friedman, 39, is a former Obama administration official. She has a bachelor of arts in political science from Stanford University and an executive master of business administration from Oxford University. She served as national director of students for Gore during the 2000 presidential campaign before becoming a legislative and program coordinator for People for the American Way. She worked for U.S. Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.) before founding the nonprofit organization known as Alliance to Stop Slavery and End Trafficking. During the Obama administration, she served as deputy director for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and later helped establish a public-private partnership known as the Global Fund to End Slavery. She moved to the 10th Congressional District last year for a number of reasons, one of which was running against Comstock.

"I've spent my career standing up to abuses of power," says Friedman. "And now we have an epitome of one in the White House, who is being enabled by my representative. And I can't do nothing."

She says she's not yet ready to move forward with impeaching President Trump, although she adds "nobody wants this president out of office more than I do." On health care, she says she wants to improve the Affordable Care Act rather than pursue a single-payer health-care system. When asked about banking reform now being advocated in Congress, she says she would keep the consumer protections created by the Dodd-Frank Act. If elected, she says, she would work to improve affordability and accessibility of health care as well as tax reform and infrastructure needs.

"You can't knock on a door or go to an event in Northern Virginia or the Shenandoah Valley without hearing horror stories about commutes," said Friedman. "And that's one place where my record of taking on big issues that are mired in bureaucracy and actually driving to solutions that make people's lives better on the ground will be really valuable."

DAN HELMER

A native of New Brunswick, N.J., Helmer, 36, is an Army veteran and management consultant. He has a bachelor of science in history and Arabic from West Point. After graduating, he served a tour in Iraq and then became a Rhodes Scholar at University of Oxford, where he earned a master's degree in philosophy and international relations. He served 11 years of active duty in the military, including tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and Korea. In the private sector, he worked with the Boston Consulting Group, where he helped U.S. manufacturers, and he remains

in the Army Reserves. He was recruited to run for Congress by a Boston-based group known as New Politics. He moved to the 10th Congressional District in 2013, when the Army stationed him in Northern Virginia.

"This is a country that welcomed my family when they were immigrants and refugees — my dad is an immigrant, and my grandparents are Holocaust survivors," said Helmer. "I've always felt a deep desire to defend the country that gave my family a shot at the American dream, and the dysfunction and hatred in Washington is the greatest danger to other Americans continuing to have a shot at that American dream."

He supports impeaching President Trump. On the issue of health care he says he supports a "Medicare for all" option that would allow Americans to opt into Medicare if they choose. On banking reform now being considered in Congress, he says he would have to spend more time studying it before committing one way or another. If elected, he says, he would work to enact gun safety legislation.

"I've carried assault rifles in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I've seen the consequences of Washington cowardice in terms of a war of choice in which I've lost friends," said Helmer. "Now I think we're seeing the consequences of cowardice here at home, where both in Richmond and in Washington we've seen time and again Republicans and Democrats fail to pass meaningful gun safety legislation. I look forward to working diligently in Congress to fight back against the NRA and the gun lobby and pass meaningful gun legislation reforms."

JULIA BIGGINS

A native of Joliet, Ill., Biggins, 41, is a medical researcher. She has a bachelor of science in microbiology from the University of Illinois at Champagne and a doctorate in molecular virology from Baylor College of Medicine. After graduate school, she took a job as a contractor at the United States Army Medical Institute for Infectious Disease at Fort Detrick, where she worked on a team that developed vaccines and therapies for the Ebola virus. She moved to the 10th Congressional District last summer. She is currently the assistant director for in vivo research against viral and bacterial pathogens at Integrated Biotherapeutics in Rockville, Md.

"This is not something I thought I would ever be doing prior to the election in 2016, and then I started really paying attention and being concerned," said Biggins. "In the scientific community, I don't think we ever thought we'd have to stand up and defend science. So I felt like this was something I needed to set my research aside and stand up to protect science and help make change in the country."

She does not support impeaching President Trump at this time, adding that she wants the investigation to run its course. She is in favor of a single-payer health-care system, adding that she would like to see an overhaul of the system rather than patching up the Affordable Care Act. When asked about banking reform now being considered in Congress, she says she would keep the consumer protections created by the Dodd-Frank Act. If elected, she says, she would use her expertise to reform the healthcare system and overturn the ban on federal funding for gun violence research. She also wants to focus on education.

"The way that we fund education needs to be improved since it's based on our property taxes, and that leads to inequality," said Biggins. "I would like to see more money coming from the federal government to education so that we can ensure all kids, regardless of where they live, have that foot in the door."

'Steadfast'

FROM PAGE 3

everyone. "I feel very privileged and blessed," he said. "God is to be praised for all He's done and for allowing me to be here for 25 years." He thanked those close to him, his ministerial staff, the choir and deacons, plus the Rev. Curtis Stewart, who was present for Johnson's first sermon at Mount Olive and returned for the anniversary celebration.

Also there were some members of St. Luke Baptist Church, where Johnson first preached. Thanking his family, he said his wife calls him the "wind beneath her wings," but "She's the groove in my swag. God gave me the person I needed because, if it hadn't been for her beside me – and all her support – I couldn't have done what I did." And with a nod toward his congregation, Johnson also acknowledged the late Mary Naylor, who called him after he'd been confirmed as Mount Olive's new leader and told him gleefully, "Rev, you my pastor."

After the ceremony, some church members explained why Johnson is so special to them. "What's impressed me is his dedication and commitment as a leader," said the Rev. Woodrow Cooper, an associate minister there. "He's always striving to encourage those under him to be better, and he exhibits a sacrificial lifestyle in his devotion to this church."

Mary and Chuck Coffin have been members for 25 years, and Johnson baptized their youngest son, Lorenza. "Mary Naylor told us to join this church; she said we'd be a good fit," said Mary Coffin. "And we became close friends."

Calling Johnson a "people person – truly concerned, faithful and honest," she said, "It's awesome to have a pastor like him for 25 years; we are unbelievably blessed. He doesn't just know you as a member, but your whole family. Even when family members have passed, he's gotten on a plane or driven to be with the family."

Agreeing, Jenna Burkette said, "He drove to Mississippi to visit my mom in the hospital and returned for her funeral. And when I taught music at Lees Corner Elementary, he'd go to our school music programs. My three sons and I joined Mount Olive that Easter Sunday in 1993 [when he was officially installed]."

Chuck Coffin recalled deacon Calvin Word's death last winter. "Pastor Johnson was supposed to go on a mission trip to Ghana in November," said Coffin. "But he decided instead to be here to comfort Calvin and his family as his death approached. And it's these decisions that show his compassion. He's calm and cool and always knows what to do."

A member since 1989, Beverly Williams said, "We love and honor our pastor because he's a man of God and does what the word of God says. You can tell about a person by how he loves in time of crises, and he's been good to me and my entire family. My daughter flew up from Charlotte, N.C., for this celebration, and she told us it's because she's his favorite parishioner. We know she's not, but that's how he makes all of us feel."

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Oh Happy Daze



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I sat on the couch Saturday morning with my wife, Dina, and pretended not to watch or listen – too attentively, anyway, to the “fairy tale” wedding of the former Meghan Markle and the current Prince Harry, in Windsor Castle on May 19, I was reminded of my own wedding, proposal, courtship and introduction to Dina, dating back to November 1976 when we first met. (I’ll try not to self-indulge too much; it’s boring I know.)

After graduating undergraduate school in May 1976, I moved back home to Boston, and began looking for work. Upon receiving an offer from the now-defunct Prince Georges Post to write a weekly column, I returned back to Maryland in late summer and moved in with my brother, Richard. Unfortunately, after meeting with the Editor-in-Chief, I was informed that due to a revenue shortfall, the tabloid was shrinking its page count to 32 from 40, and with it my column and budget for it was shrunk as well. At that moment, my Art Buchwald-type dream was over.

Though living with Richard in his one bedroom apartment and sleeping on his living room couch was not costing me much money, it was hardly the ideal transition to post-college life I had anticipated. I needed to find a job and my own place to live. Soon after speaking with my college buddy, “Mot,” my housing and job status would change. I moved in with him into a group house in Potomac, where one of his roommates, Rick, was a lunch manager at the Sir Walter Raleigh Inn Restaurant in upper Georgetown.

Always looking for daytime staff, I was immediately hired and within days began my new job. On my first day, I drove in with Rick. After parking behind the restaurant, we walked in the back door, through the kitchen and into the dining room. Rick looked around at the various employees doing their pre-lunch set-up, saw Dina to his right and said: “Dina, train the new man.” After spending the morning together, she thought I was weird; I thought she was stuck-up. Amazing how little has changed. Six months later we were dating.

I remember the exact circumstance when I told Dina that I loved her. We were driving north on Connecticut Avenue past the Avalon Theatre heading into Chevy Chase Circle. While rounding the Circle, it just hit me so I said it: “Dina, I think I love you.” I don’t recall how Dina responded but my ill-timed delivery didn’t seem to be a problem.

A few months after that, another awkward progression toward our getting married. We were sitting in a sub/pizza place called C.J.’s located in the Cabin John Shopping Center having a casual lunch. While we were talking and eating, it struck me that I wanted to ask Dina to be my wife. Without too much thought or preparation – and with no ring – I grabbed my paper placemat and wrote a proposal on it – in the margins, if I recall, and then slid it around toward Dina for her to read. Again, I don’t remember too much about her reaction other than her answer was “Yes.”

A year or so later, we were married – twice. Due to our differences in religion, we agreed to be married by a judge, for whom Dina’s maternal grandmother had once worked. Five weeks after the invitations had been mailed and five days before the wedding, we went to visit the judge to discuss the service. After we made our in-person introductions and exchanged pleasantries, the judge says to us with as serious a look as he could muster: “I can’t marry you on Sunday.”

A moment of silence/horror passed between us. “What!?” we murmured politely. Then he smiles reassuringly and says: “I’m a Pennsylvania judge. I can’t legally marry you in Delaware on Sunday. (Another collective gasp as we’re trying to process what we’re hearing.) He goes on: “Just come by my chambers on Friday and we’ll do it legally. Then on Sunday, I’ll do it for show.” The result: two wedding-anniversaries, Oct. 20 and 22, one year though: 1978.

Harry and Meghan may have their “fairy tale,” but we have our funny tale; still being told almost 40 years later.

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

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The Princeton Review Editor in Chief Rob Franek, left, meets with Cathy Green and her son DeSean at the Roadtrip Nation and The Princeton Review "Best Fit Colleges, Best Fit Careers" tour.



Rob Franek, Editor in Chief of The Princeton Review, left, visits with Jonathan and Marcia Pokrant who worked together on a sample college choices questionnaire.

Learning about College Admissions

Roadtrip Nation and The Princeton Review's travelling roadshow on college admissions and career planning made its way to Chantilly and Westfield High Schools last week to meet with parents and students. The Princeton Review Editor in Chief Rob Franek, an expert in the college application process and admissions, offered over 100 parents and students in-

sider tips on standardized college entrance exams, finding the right "fit" for college and how college admissions teams review high school transcripts and SAT and ACT scores.

Franek is the author of the just released book, "College Admission 101: Simple Answers to Tough Questions About College Admissions and Financial Aid."

BULLETIN BOARD

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to first grade students during the school year. To learn more contact VP Membership Mary Gronlund at gronbiz@aol.com or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at lynnib517@verizon.net.

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

703-227-2600 with questions.
Greenbriar West Elementary School is now accepting information for next year's Kindergarten classes. Families who live within the school's boundaries and have a child who will turn 5 years of age by Sept. 30, 2018, call the school office at 703-633-6700.

registration is requested at politicalaction@fairfaxnaacp.org. Visit www.fairfaxnaacp.org.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 23

Proposed Zoning Changes Community Meetings. 7-9 p.m. at Chantilly High School, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. The Department of Planning and Zoning will hold provide information about upcoming Zoning Ordinance Amendments and staff will speak one-on-one about zoning issues. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicaffairs/learn-about-proposed-zoning-changes-may-affect-your-neighborhood-2018-zoning-open-houses.

THURSDAY/MAY 31

Meet with Virginia WMATA Representatives. 7-8:30 p.m. at the Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. Virginia's representatives to the board of directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will meet the public in a forum sponsored by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. The event will include a presentation focused on funding, governance and safety, followed by a question-and-answer session. The facility is within walking distance of the Vienna Metro station. Visit www.novatransit.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 26

Congressional District 10 Candidate Forum. 1:30-4 p.m. Doors open at 1:30 at 14312 Chantilly Baptist Lane, Chantilly. Fairfax County NAACP invites presents a Congressional District 10 Candidate Forum. Meet the candidates and network with attendees from 1:30-2:30. Attend the candidate forum from 2:30-4. Free

FRIDAY/JUNE 1

Help Children Navigate Adolescence in the Digital Age. 10 a.m.-noon at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 100, Dunn Loring. What else can parents do to keep their teenager safe on the internet? Join Richard Stegman, FCPS Educational Specialist, to learn the top internet dangers for teens and seven steps for good digital parenting. Free. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center.

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.
Centre Ridge Elementary School in Centreville is open for kindergarten registration for the school year 2018-19. Forms and other information are available on line at <https://www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration>. They are also available in the front office. Call

Cappie Nominations for Westfield, Chantilly

Westfield High has received 13 Cappies nominations for its musical, "The Phantom of the Opera," and Chantilly High garnered three nods for its play, "Pride and Prejudice." Centreville High does not participate in this competition.

The 2018 Cappies Awards Gala is Sunday, June 10, at 7 p.m., at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Below are the nominations:

❖ Westfield

Andy Mays Rising Critic: Grace Jenkins, Julia Tucker and Sarah Bourgeois (individual nominations);

Bill Strauss Graduating Critic: Diana Witt and Anna Krelovich (individual nominations);

Special Effects and/or Technology: Ray Panzer;
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Musical
❖ Chantilly
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Comic Actress in a Play: Annie Silva.

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