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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova added "stuff a bus" duty to her schedule on Saturday, Jan. 19, along with a cadre of county employees, family members, volunteers and staff from the Fox Mill Giant Food Store which hosted the event to benefit nonprofit Helping Hungry Kids.

Burke
CONNECTION

Stuffing the Bus To Help Hungry Kids

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Talking Across
The Political Divide

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Volunteers Give Together
On Dr. King's Birthday

NEWS, PAGE 6

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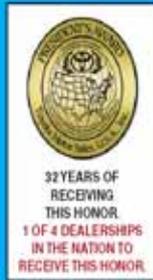
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Stuffing the Bus to Help Hungry Kids

County and community unite for neighbors in need.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The seasonal warm and fuzzy feelings that help local food pantries and nonprofits collect and distribute food and other staple items for our less fortunate neighbors may also start to fade as the “season of giving” comes to an end, and the day-to-day of life takes hold once more.

“That’s exactly why we’re out here today,” said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, standing in the entrance of the Giant food store in the Fox Mill shopping plaza in Herndon.

“After Christmas, the cupboards start to get bare, but our neighbors still need our help. The ‘Stuff the Bus’ initiative is a real boost to replenishing those dwindling supplies at local food pantries and other places where our citizens go for this most basic assistance.”

FAIRFAX COUNTY AND PARTNERS have been “stuffing the buses” around the region for nine years, and Bulova has been participating since the beginning.

“It’s a priority for me. I always make room on my schedule to personally participate in one or two of the collections.”

So do a lot of others. Ben Boxer, the Communications Director for Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), practically brought his own bus full of volunteers to this collection that will benefit Reston-based Helping Hungry Kids. Ben did a lot of coordinating, while his wife Cara and daughters Penny and Chloe handed out flyers and “wish lists” to shoppers, and sons Leland, Tony and Tyson did a bit of the same, as well as lending some muscle to moving goods from boxes to bus.

“It makes me feel productive,” said 12-year-old Leland. “This is important,” agreed “almost 15” Tony.

Lakeshia Lewis, also with the county’s NCS, didn’t have to ask daughter Kendall or son Justin twice if they wanted to get in on the action again this year. The youngsters have been doing just that for the last “four or five years” said Justin, “it’s fun and a good thing to do.” An impressive length of service given that the siblings are only ten and eleven years of age.

The enthusiasm of the volunteers and their dedication to the cause inspired a lot of the Saturday shoppers.

“Couldn’t resist,” said Ellen McAvoy of Reston, as she added her donation of applesauce, granola bars and canned ravioli to one of the carts. “I see their bright, healthy faces and what they are doing on a Saturday morning to help others, and I had to help, too.”

One gentleman shopper, who preferred to remain anonymous, grabbed a cart when he found out what all the commotion at the



The Boxers get to work. Tyson, Leland and Tony Boxer up front, with sisters Chloe and Penny gave hours to the event, handing out flyers, encouraging donations and even helping to load the goods on to the bus. Dad Ben Boxer works for Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, but the kids said that neither their dad, nor mom Cara who was also working the front lines, had to convince them to help out. Their dad’s line of work “has shown us how many people need our help. We’re happy to be here.”



Larry Merritt, the store manager at the Fox Mill Giant takes a breather from loading boxes onto the bus with Lakeshia Lewis from Fairfax County’s department of Neighborhood and Community Services. “This is an awesome community. We are really happy to help any way we can,” said Merritt. He and his gang helped the bus-stuffers get a head start by having more than 127 cases of needed food items already collected before the event even started.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Upcoming Stuff the Bus events

SATURDAY, FEB. 2

Tyson’s Walmart - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
1500-B Cornerside Blvd, Vienna
Benefits Committee Helping Others
Village Center at Dulles Giant - 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
2425 Centreville Road, Herndon
Benefits LINK

SATURDAY, FEB. 9

Annandale Giant - 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
7137 Columbia Pike, Annandale
Benefits Annandale Christian Community for Action
Clifton Giant - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
5740 Union Mill Road, Clifton
Benefits Western Fairfax Christian Ministries

SATURDAY, FEB. 16

Fairfax Walmart - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
11181 Lee Highway, Fairfax
Benefits Britepaths
Falls Church Giant - 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Falls Plaza, 1230 W. Broad Street, Falls Church
Benefits Falls Church Community Service Council
Manchester Lakes Shoppers - 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
7005 Manchester Boulevard, Alexandria
Benefits Koinonia Foundation

MONDAY, FEB. 18

Cardinal Forest Giant - 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
8320 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield
Benefits Ecumenical Community Helping Others

store’s entrance was about and simply said to the volunteers, “fill it up with whatever you need.”

“That cart came to about \$300 worth of donations,” said Chairman Bulova. “The generosity of the people of Fairfax County doesn’t surprise me, but it continues to make me feel so happy to be a part of this caring community.”

“Don’t forget to mention the folks here at this Giant,” reminded Capt. Thomas Johnson of nearby Fire Station 301, who was doing a bit of shopping – and donating – himself along with some of his colleagues.

“They always help out,” he said, adding that the Giant provides the firefighters and first responders with pallets of water and Gatorade in the summer months, something

that is “much appreciated when we do our work in the heat. They are really great people.”

Fox Mill Giant manager Larry Merritt says he’s “just happy to support this awesome, great community” any way they can. Merritt and the Giant crew had already been hard at work several days before the event, collecting more than 127 cases of ravioli, ramen soups and other items to “give them a head start.”

OVER THE YEARS the “Stuff the Bus” partners have collected more than 250,000 pounds of food, provided more than 170,000 meals, and aided more than 32 local food pantries in their winter collections – all with the assistance of more than 5,000 community volunteers who contributed some 15,000 hours of service.

Their efforts will continue around the county through Feb. 18, so it’s not too late to do your part, and keep some of that holiday spirit going.

Next up will be the Tysons Walmart on Saturday, Feb. 2, and the Village Center at the Dulles Giant on Centreville Road in Herndon, where the Fastran buses will be waiting with doors open for your donations.

Check out the county’s website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov, search “stuff the bus,” for more information and other opportunities to get on board.

OPINION

'My Hopes Have Already Been Dashed'

Current General Assembly session generates frustrations.

There were big changes in the Virginia House of Delegates after last year's elections, but Democrats fell one coin flip (actually name out of a hat) short of controlling the legislative body.

No doubt the electoral swing delivered one of the most important changes in recent history, the expansion of Medicaid to cover hundreds of thousands of Virginians who had previously lived without health coverage.

But as Del. Ken Plum (D-36) wrote in his column this week: "In light of the last election for House seats, I approached this legislative session with the hope that there might be more flexibility in the House leadership that might result in the consideration of

bills that had been summarily defeated in past sessions. My hopes have already been dashed."

A groundswell of public support for Virginia being the 38th and final state needed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment led to the Senate passing a resolution for ratification.

The subcommittee of the House Privileges and Election Committee Tuesday morning defeated a resolution to ratify the Equal Right Amendment on a vote of 4 to 2. Four members of the House are blocking a vote by the 100 members of the House.

"A major struggle seems to be looming be-

tween the two houses on the ERA which might need to be resolved by the voters at election time," Plum wrote.

Yes, that time is November, with primary voting likely in June.

The question of nonpartisan redistricting is too important to leave until after the next election.

The Senate has passed a bill to establish such a process while House leadership is expressing opposition. Since the legislation is a constitutional amendment, it is important that a resolution be passed this year and next to go to a popular referendum in 2020 in time for redistricting after the 2020 census results are known.

Be Part of the Pet Connection

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of February, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Friday, Feb. 22.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other crea-

tures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your family depend on an assistance dog?

Or take this opportunity to memorialize a beloved pet you have lost.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and humans.

Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

VIEWPOINTS

Shutdown: Local Perspective

George Becerra, Burke

"I'm a furloughed federal employee, home with no pay. I've been proactive; paid all bills up to date in December. I limited holiday spending, didn't splurge. I'm not paying annual memberships due in January to organizations and my HOA. My wife is a government contractor. The solution would be Lindsey Graham. Reopen the government for three weeks. Get people back to work and politicians can hash it out."



Kathryn Oakley, retired Coast Guard, Town of Herndon

"Our active duty members in the United States Coast Guard get paid every two weeks. The last time was Dec. 31, 2018. For Coast Guard retirees, it is not clear if we will get a check because funds are tied to Appropriations Funding. The Coast Guard is under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. I went to Navy Federal Credit Union, and they shared information about their Government Shutdown Assistance, 0% APR Loan. I'm not worried about myself. I'm worried about the young men and women in the Coast Guard, working without pay. They cannot get a part-time job.



There are two bills introduced. In the Senate, Bill 21, "Pay Our Coast Guard Act" and in the House of Representatives (HR) 367, "Pay our Coast Guard Parity Act." We are small and do not have visibility."

Kevin Powell, Reston

NO PHOTO

"It seems like Congress resolved itself to government shutdowns as par for the course. With Trump and a divided Congress, I didn't think it would get better. My action plan has been to limit my spending. As a government contractor, I ran into this in the past. I'm job searching so I can get out of government contracting. The shutdown has impacted my marriage and my family. I wish legislators would think country first, constituents second-those who would vote for them."



Keven Leblanc, Town of Herndon

"Federal employees are no doubt impacted. Federal Contractors suffer significantly. If people on contract can't report, they have to take leave without pay or be furloughed. A shutdown this long can drive small businesses out of business if all their work is tied to Federal contracts. Large companies have shareholders they are accountable to and must maintain a profit. The economic ripples then extend to the larger community, as the economic base no longer has money to buy goods

or services or eat at restaurants. For some who live paycheck to paycheck, whether a federal employee, contractor or private employee in a federal-employment concentration, it can mean defaulting on loans or rent, not eating, not getting required medicines or healthcare or the heat and safety from the cold they require."



Cher Muzyk, Nokesville, Md.

"I'm the wife of a government attorney who has been furloughed but is deemed essential. He will eventually receive the back pay, but there are bills to pay now. We have a two-month nest egg for payments as long as we cut back. We called the credit union. My solution is simple. I don't understand why the border wall has to be coupled with the budget. Separate those two arguments. Resolve the budget. Get working families paid and back to work. I would support anything, even temporary. Eighty-three percent of Americans are not affected, so there is no sense of urgency. There is a need for a human face on it. The uncertainty is terrifying."

Burke
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LETTERS

Keeping Parks Clean

To the Editor:

We are fortunate in Fairfax County to have many beautiful green spaces, parks that allow us to get out in nature and walk. I am a dog owner and I enjoy going out with my dog. It gets both of us needed exercise and a chance to take my mind off other things. If you love our parks as I do then you would agree we should take care of them. Part of taking care of our public green spaces is keeping them clean. This is a plea to dog owners to pick up after their dogs. I understand occasionally leaving the house without a poop bag; I've done it on occasion. It's irksome but I go home, get a bag, and return to the scene of the crime and pick it up. But we have a problem if you routinely do not pick up after your dog. At one of the parks I enjoy I've seen

a huge pile in the same spot, under a light pole, on more than one occasion. I have at times bent down to pick up after my own dog, discovered another dog's waste, and picked it up as well. But I've been to parks where my good faith effort would be futile given the number of piles. This failure of civic duty by some dog owners gives all dog owners a bad name and ruins the outdoor experience for everyone. Dog poop is not only unpleasant to the eyes and nose, it's a health hazard to people and to pets; it's bad for the watershed, and it's against the law. We love our dogs and it is the sheer number of dogs that makes this an environmental issue. Please clean up after your pet.

Linda Miwa
Burke

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

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Talking Across the Political Divide

Organization seeks to end polarization in America – one conversation at a time.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

- ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1861

Those words, spoken by the American president in the time of the greatest discord and division in the history of the Union, are the inspiration behind the mission of the Better Angels organization, to move beyond the issues and sentiments that divide us, and find the things that unite, to find a common ground through real conversation.

The nonprofit was formed shortly after the 2016 presidential elections when David Blakenhorn, one of the founders and currently the president of Better Angels saw the writing of polarization on the wall and called David Lapp, an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values to ask if he would help bring a handful of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton supporters together for a weekend of dialogue.

Even in the midst of the post-election heated emotions, the organizers found remarkable results. “We liked each other and wanted to know more about each other...we wanted to keep meeting...those red and blues invited friends to another workshop” and together they founded the first Better Angels Alliance to keep the conversation flowing.

BETTER ANGELS describes themselves as “a national citizens’ movement to reduce political polarization in the United States by bringing liberals and conservatives together to understand each other beyond stereotypes, forming red/blue community alliances, teaching practical skills for communicating across political differences, and making a strong public argument for depolarization.”

On Saturday, Jan. 19, Better Angels-trained facilitators Catherine Fox and Tony Speranza brought that mission in the form of one of Better Angels’ structured “Skills for Difficult Personal Conversations” workshops to the Patrick Henry Library in Vienna.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the roomful of participants declined to have their particular reasons for attending quoted for the record, since a majority of them admitted that they registered for the workshop in order to improve fracturing personal relationships, and even, in a few cases, to save family relationships that were on the brink of complete breakdown due to political differences.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Jackie Wilson of McLean and Joanie Young of Oakton practice some of the listening and speaking skills offered at the Better Angels workshop on “Talking Across the Political Divide” held at the Patrick Henry Public Library in Vienna. “This is a good start,” said Wilson. “We need to find the common things that hold us together.”

Tony Speranza was one of the two Better Angel-certified moderators who facilitated the workshop for developing the skills to negotiate difficult political conversations. Catherine Fox was his partner for the day.



Dave Rogers of Vienna came to the event with an unusual perspective. A native of South Africa, Rogers says he has seen “good government, bad government and everything in between” in the last 30 years in his country. “This division is relatively new in America. I wanted to come and hear the American approach to working against polarization and to practice those skills myself.”

structed that they would have to “give up” on the following:

- ❖ That you can persuade the other person to change core attitudes and beliefs;
 - ❖ That facts will be agreed on and logic followed consistently;
 - ❖ That your conversation partner will match your openness.
- “Remember,” Fox said, “you’re trying to understand the other’s point of view, how they came to their positions, not judge or disparage them.”

The Better Angels goal is to look for common values and concerns. Establishing a neutral conversational plane where we seek to learn something, affords “the better chance to have meaningful conversations that maintain, and sometimes even strengthen relationships, even when the speakers have opposite points of view on certain subjects.”

“Remember, you’re trying to understand the other’s point of view, how they came to their positions, not judge or disparage them.”

—Catherine Fox

THE GROUP was split into pairs, one representing the “blue” side, the other the “red.” Although there were many more “blues” in the room, there were some “reds” and with the help of some role-playing scripts, a few of the “true blues” were able to take the “red” part for the sake of the exercises.

Things moved quickly from there, with the pairs sharing what went well and what was challenging after each scenario. The moderators were right. Even in simulation mode, the conversationalists acknowledged that it was difficult to not give in to emotion, to listen, and to look for the common ground rather than go on the offensive.

“But at least we are more prepared now, and know how to start and what to look for from ourselves,” said Jackie Wilson of McLean, who signed up for the workshop with her “best pal” Joanie Young of Oakton.

“This is good for me,” said Young. “People tell me I interrupt when we get into these kinds of conversations, so this is helping me think about that, holding back while the other person is talking so I can really hear them.”

“Yes, this is really important,” agreed Wilson. “In these times, we need to find every method to find a measure of peace and understanding. This is just a start.”

Wilson’s remarks were echoed by the others when the class was concluded and it was feedback time. Most wished that the session could have been longer and more in depth, with the opportunity to explore potential pitfalls that might really occur, but felt that their role-playing experiences and the information shared by the moderators was, in fact, a good start. Several said they would be on the lookout for the next, nearby available full-length “red/blue” workshop.

Better Angels’ Virginia state coordinator Mel Pine directed those interested in continuing the process to the group’s website at www.better-angels.org. Membership in the organization is only \$10 per year. Pine also announced that Better Angels would be having their own “state of the union” address on Jan. 31 at 9 p.m. via web stream. Mel can be reached at mel@better-angels.org for anyone interested in more information, or interested in hosting a training session.

In the meantime, say the Better Angels, keep talking and keep listening to keep the conversation going.

NEWS

Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity, center, talks with volunteer Caleen Sullivan of the Educational and Charitable Foundation, right, Monday, Jan. 21, 2019, during Volunteer Fairfax's 10th annual Give Together at the at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in Fairfax. Several hundred volunteers took part in the event held in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service.



Volunteers Give Together on Dr. King's Birthday



Volunteer Sydney Harris of Lorton reaches to post her thoughts on the MLK Day reflection board during Volunteer Fairfax's 10th annual Give Together, Monday, Jan. 21, 2019, at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in Fairfax. Several hundred volunteers took part in the event held in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service. Give Together featured several fun, hands-on projects that will benefit several local nonprofits. After taking part in the projects volunteers were invited to write about their experiences and post them on the giant board.

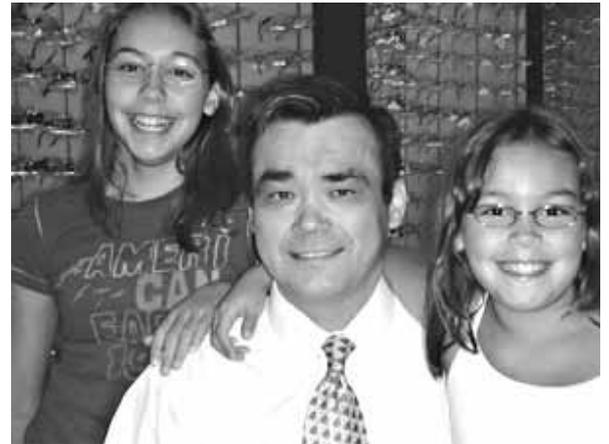
PHOTOS BY ROB PAINE/
VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX

Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay and his family take part in Volunteer Fairfax's 10th annual Give Together, Monday, Jan. 21, 2019, at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in Fairfax. Several hundred volunteers took part in the event held in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service. Give Together featured several fun, hands-on projects that will benefit several local nonprofits.



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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Founding Artists Exhibition.

Through Feb. 3 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Muse Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center presents a group exhibition highlighting Studio and Arches artists that have been a part of the organization for its 10-year span. In honor of their dedication and support, the exhibition will survey their works in various mediums including painting, sculpture, fiber, glass, precious metals, and mixed media. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

Workhouse Student-Faculty Exhibition.

Through Feb. 10 at Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center Student and Faculty Exhibition will survey works from course instructors, faculty and their students. Explore the numerous paintings, drawings, glass works, clay works and fiber art created in Workhouse's classes and workshops. Call 703-584-2900 or visit www.workhousearts.org.

Art Exhibit: Amazing Art Jam.

Through Feb. 24, gallery hours at the Vulcan Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center hosts the third iteration of the Amazing Art Jam. This pop-up exhibition offers fresh perspectives by exploring several young, contemporary themes including street art, anime, Marvel iconography and hip-hop culture. Visit www.workhousearts.org/event/amazing-art-jam.

Exhibit: Purchased Lives.

Through Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily (except major holidays) at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St., Fairfax. Purchased Lives is a traveling exhibition from the Historic New Orleans Collection. The exhibit examines a complex and divisive period of American history and educating about the far-reaching economic and heartbreaking personal impact of the domestic slave trade. Look for The Washington Home of the Philippine Suffrage Movement March 3-31. Call 703-385-8414.

Fine Arts Enrichment Camps.

The Youth Arts Camp & Education Outreach (ages 13-17) programs at the Workhouse provide rich experiences in fine arts year-round. Campers work alongside professional artists and professional educators to excel in different mediums, learning various techniques, and creating quality artwork with every visit. Find upcoming camps at reservations.workhousearts.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 25

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

Bonita Lestina Performance Series.

8 p.m. in Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. With IONA Celtic Fusion. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Free. Visit fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts or call 703-352-ARTS.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/JAN. 25-26

Chinese Food Fest. Friday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Wegmans Fairfax, 11620 Monument Drive, Fairfax. Attendees can taste Peking duck Wegmans-style, fresh



Woodbury aka Silas Burke House

'If These Walls Could Talk'

Burke Historical Society President Jon Vrana will give a presentation called "If These Walls Could Talk," examining the 19th-century history of Woodbury—also known as the Silas Burke House. Sunday, Jan. 27, 3:30-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6540 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

dumplings, Chinese hot pot, and bubble tea. Wegmans chefs will do cooking demonstrations throughout the event. Dumpling-making classes for children will be held at 5 p.m. on Friday and noon and 3 p.m. on Saturday. Free admission; dumpling classes cost \$10 per child with parent, and tickets are available at Customer Service. Class space is limited. Visit www.wegmans.com/events/2019/01/chinese-food-fest.html.

SATURDAY/JAN. 26

Book Event: "The War Outside My Window."

2 p.m. at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Editor Jan Croon, will be presenting and signing copies of *The War Outside My Window: The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham, 1860-1865*. As a young child, Gresham suffered a horrific leg and back injury that left him an invalid. Educated, inquisitive, perceptive, and exceptionally witty, the 12-year-old began keeping a journal in 1860 – just before secession and Civil War tore the country and his world apart. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/historic-resources/civil-war-interpretive-center.

Reminiscences.

7-8 p.m. at Providence Presbyterian Church, 9019 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. After winning first prize at the Golden Classical Music Awards International Music Competition and making his debut performance at Carnegie Hall, concert pianist Mark Irchai returns to the DC-metro area. He will offer "Reminiscences" – a solo piano recital of music written by composers in reflection on their pasts. Free. Visit markirchai.com.

Opening Reception: Amazing Art Jam.

7-11 p.m. at the Vulcan Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center hosts the third iteration of the Amazing Art Jam. This pop-up exhibition offers fresh perspectives by exploring several young, contemporary themes including street art, anime, Marvel iconography and hip-hop culture. Visit www.workhousearts.org/event/amazing-art-jam.

SUNDAY/JAN. 27

Reading Circle and Craft Day.

1-4

p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. "My Little Book of Trains" will be featured in a reading circle. Train locomotives and tenders will be explored during the activities that day. Participants may make their own ongoing journal for the year's reading circles and information learned about trains and railroading. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Burke Historical Society.

3:30-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6540 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. After a brief review of the Society's activities over the past year, BHS President Jon Vrana will give a presentation called "If These Walls Could Talk," examining the 19th-century history of Woodbury—better known today as the Silas Burke House. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

TUESDAY/JAN. 29

Fairfax Gratefulness Gathering.

7-8:30 p.m. at Richard Byrd Public Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. A program of Gratefulness.org. Bring gratitude to life in the community, be present to opportunities always available; opportunities to learn and grow and extend oneself with care and compassion. Free. Email joanne.spahnrd@gmail.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 31

Adults' BYOG Night.

7-8:30 p.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. BYOG = Bring your Own Game – come to the library with your favorite board game or card game to share. Adults only. Free. Call 703-978-5600 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4741919.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com

or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/FEB. 2

Dog Park Grand Opening. 9 a.m. at the Fairfax City Dog Park, 11000 Berry St., Fairfax. City residents, both two-legged and four-legged, are invited to the grand opening ceremony for the Fairfax City dog park on the former Westmore Elementary School site. All dogs with current licenses are welcome. The park will include a fenced exercise/run area (fence is a gift from Affectionate Pet Care), park benches, and trash and recycling receptacles. Waste bags and a receptacle will be provided at the dog park. Call 703-385-7858.

Chinese New Year Festival.

10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church. The 12th Annual Chinese New Year Festival hosted by the Asian Community Service Center featuring live performances, including Dragon and Lion dances, Han Costume Fashion show, Asian food, the writing of Chinese names, language, craft and business booths, children world, and also a lunar new year dragon parade. Free admission. Visit ChineseNewYearFestival.org.

Winter Music and Dance Festival.

7:30-9:30 p.m. at Workhouse Arts W3 Theatre, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Next Reflex Dance Collective presents the Winter Music and Dance Festival featuring performances from area musicians and dancers. \$10-\$25 (reserved seating). Visit insidenovatix.com/events/next-reflex-dance-collective-winter-music-and-dance-festival for tickets.

SATURDAY/FEB. 3

Author Event: Tiffany Foo-Garcia.

Noon-3 p.m. at Barnes & Noble-Fair Lakes, 12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Tiffany Foo-Garcia will be holding a reading and signing for the first book of her new middle grade culinary adventure series, "Ruby Foo and the Travelling Kitchen: Finding the Foo Identity." Visit rubyfookitcheen.com.

Make a Valentine Card Craft.

1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have a Valentine's Day Make and Take event. Visitors will create their own

Valentine's cards to take home with them. The cost of supplies is included with admission.. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

TUESDAY/FEB. 5

Parktykes: Explore the Natural World.

1:30-2:15 p.m. at Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Adults with toddlers are invited to join a naturalist in the classroom and outdoors to discover the wonders of the natural world. Designed for young explorers, age 1-3, and an adult. \$9 per child. Meet at the visitor center. Call 703-569-3464 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-accotink.

Burke Historical Society.

7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Local authors, Mary Lipsey and Cindy Bennett, will share their experiences and tips on the process of researching, writing, and publishing a historical book. Free. visit burkehistoricalsociety.org or mail slawski_brian@yahoo.com.

TUESDAYS/FEB. 5-26

Try Girl Scouts.

6-7 p.m. at West Springfield Elementary School, 6802 Deland Drive, Springfield. Make new friends, learn about Girl Scouts, and meet the requirements for two new cybersecurity badges. \$25 for four weeks. Email cosborne@gscnc.org or call 703-372-4341.

FRIDAY/FEB. 8

Gunston Hall Game Night.

6-9 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Gunston Hall is opening its doors after-hours to welcome game enthusiasts to immerse themselves in a variety of 18th-century card, board, and dice games. \$35 registration includes beverages and heavy hors d'oeuvres, including some items made from 18th-century recipes. Visit www.gunstonhall.org.

B-I-N-G-O.

7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/FEB. 8-9

Small Plates Choreography Festival.

8 p.m. at Building W-3 (Theatre), Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Small Plates creates a growth environment by holding guided Q&A feedback sessions with the audience after each performance. The Friday performance will feature pre-professional dance created by student choreographers, or by professional choreographers performed by students. Saturday's performance will mainly feature professional artists. \$15-\$20. Call 703-584-2900 or visit workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 9

Animal Sweetheart's Dance.

2-4 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Dance, laugh, and learn at the social event of the winter season. Space limited, register online (tinyurl.com/y9nz9q48) or call 703-451-9588 to save a spot. \$9.

Winter Wonderland Family Dance.

5-8 p.m. at Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Bring the whole family for an evening of magic and wonder with dinner, special guest characters, crafts, dancing and more. All families are welcome. \$30 per adult, \$20 per child. Visit fairfaxva.gov/parksrec or call 703-385-7858.

Guest Violinist at Mason Stage

Chee-Yun joins Fairfax Symphony Orchestra for a performance at the Center for the Arts.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Sumptuous music from composers Mendelssohn and Schumann, will create an evening “rich in emotional and intellectual music content,” said Christopher Zimmerman, Conductor, FSO. The FSO evening event includes guest violinist Chee-Yun performing Mendelssohn’s “Violin Concerto” and the FSO orchestra playing Mendelssohn’s “Hebrides Overture” and Schumann’s “Symphony No. 2.”

“To my knowledge, the FSO has never focused on these two contemporaneous composers in one concert. They are towering figures of the early Romantic period in music who set the 19th century ablaze in the wake of Beethoven.” added Zimmerman.

Mendelssohn and Schumann are “composers who characterize the essence of ‘romanticism’ in music.

Where and When

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra performing Mendelssohn and Schumann with guest violinist Chee Yun at George Mason University, Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performance Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019 at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$65, \$43, \$39, and \$25, with \$15 student tickets. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxsymphony.org or by phone 703-993-2787. Note: Before the concert at 7 p.m. a discussion with the artists and FSO music director Christopher Zimmerman.

Both were prodigious geniuses with an unrelenting need to write music,” added Zimmerman.

“Audiences should come to the performance because the music is wonderful,” noted Zimmerman. “And Chee-Yun has an extraordinarily mesmeric stage-presence and engaging personality matched, frankly, only by the brilliance and virtuosity of her playing.”

Mendelssohn’s “The Hebrides Overture” was inspired by a visit he made in 1830 to the barren and windswept Hebrides islands off the Northwest coast of Scotland. Later that year he wrote this piece, evocative of what he

experienced: “the power of the sea that surrounded him and its constant ebb and flow, at times threatening.

Schumann’s music is very different in emotional content according to Zimmerman. “Schumann was severely manic-depressive, ultimately dying at the age of 45. His music often reflects the virulent bouts of torment alternating with joy that he experienced. “Symphony No.2” has abrupt and ever-shifting changes of mood, sometimes serene, sometimes combative. “It is a dramatic journey from despair to euphoria-against-the-odds,” said Zimmerman.



Chee-Yun, guest violinist performing Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto with Fairfax Symphony Orchestra.

PHOTO BY CHEHO LEE/COURTESY FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Chee-Yun’s first public performance at age eight took place in her native Seoul after she won the Grand Prize of the Korean Times Competition. At 13, she came to the United States to perform. Since then she has performed with many of the world’s foremost American and international orchestras and conductors. Chee-Yun teaches master classes as well.

Playing her flawless 350 year old violin for the virtuoso three move-

ment, nearly 30 minute concerto, Chee-Yun said, “I want to transport audience with a journey of emotions with the much beloved Mendelssohn ‘Concerto.’ I want the audience to have a great experience. To be enthralled and transported as I play.”

In times of personal and community stress, Zimmerman added that “classical music can provide great meaning and satisfaction, even perhaps be a healer.”

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PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Colors and padded equipment dominate the SkyZone in north Springfield.

Furloughed Government Employees Burn off Stress at SkyZone

Climbing, dodgeball and more are free for furloughed employees every Thursday in January.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

When the SkyZone in Springfield opened their doors on Thursday, Jan. 17, free to the government furloughed workers, Adam Ferguson put down his Chinese textbooks and headed over with his wife Natalie. Adam is a State Department employee who is learning Chinese for his next assignment in China when the government is funded.

"It's kind of a mess, we're headed to China," he said. While out of work, he's meeting with others in the class to keep up on the curriculum and they appreciate support from the outside, like SkyZone.

"It's so nice to know that businesses care about us when the government doesn't seem to," said Natalie.

They are from Arlington and attended another event with Chef Jose Andres for dinner one night. "We went with our family and they fed all of us," she said.

Over at SkyZone, a gym-like place where participants can play dodgeball, climb, jump, and balance

on platforms high in the sky, "we support families impacted by the government shutdown," their information stated. "Federal government employees currently without pay and up to three immediate family members are invited to Sky Zone Park for one free 60-minute jump every Thursday until Jan. 31, 2019."

SkyZone general manager Terry Fife likes the contact he gets with the furloughed workers. "We want members of the community to know we're here for them," he said.

Burke father Rob Gates came in with the family to take part. He's furloughed too. "Being out of work for 27 days causes stress, this is good to burn off stress," he said. They've been "cutting back on extras, if it goes much longer, more stuff," he said, adding that "the outpouring of everyone is amazing."

Arlington residents Kim Sikora and her husband are both government employees, and she's been to SkyZone before, but came back for this perk. "When I heard about this I figured it would be a treat to come back again," she said, right before getting on the climbing wall.



Adam and Natalie Ferguson are happy SkyZone has a furlough day.



Clara Meyers, 6, was not afraid to jump off the platform 20 feet in the air.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

NEW

Prescription Drug Take Back Box Program. Fairfax County announced the expansion of the Prescription Drug Take Back Box Program Countywide. The boxes are available 24/7/365 at each district police station for any person to anonymously and safely dispose of their prescription medications 24/7/365 - no questions asked. It is important to get unused medicines, especially opioids, out of your medicine cabinets to prevent accidental or illicit use. Several Fairfax County pharmacies also take back unused prescription drugs. For a current list, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news2/4-ways-to-safely-dispose-of-unused-medications/.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Interested in local Civil War or Railroad History? Consider volunteering at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. The Museum is also seeking an individual to coordinate the scheduling of the volunteer staff. Training will be provided for all positions. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 for opportunities. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. It is open every Sunday, except holidays, from 1-4 p.m. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke needs volunteer drivers for trips to medical appointments (Monday - Friday) and companion shopping (Tuesday, Friday) within the Fairfax-Burke area and in the South County area (west of Route 1, Alexandria). Office volunteers are also needed to work in the SCFB (Olley Glen) office to schedule rides. Bilingual volunteers (English and Spanish) are needed as drivers and office volunteers. Email Shavaun Wall at recruiter@scfbva.org or call 703-323-4788.

INPUT SOUGHT

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program. Fairfax County is developing a comprehensive Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program and would like to hear from residents. Each of six public information meetings will include a static display of unmanned aircraft followed by a presentation outlining the program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. The formal presentation will begin at 7 p.m. To find out more about the UAS program go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas. Send feedback or questions to uas@fairfaxcounty.gov or through the link located on the UAS webpage. Written comments on the draft program must be received by the close of business Feb. 8, 2019, to be included in the official public record.

- Wednesday, Jan. 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at McLean District Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean.
- Thursday, Jan. 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly.
- Monday, Jan. 28, 2019, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Reston Community Center - Hunter Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road.
- Wednesday, Jan. 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Braddock Hall - Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke.

TUESDAYS THROUGH FEB. 19

Workshop Series: Mind in the Making. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 100, Dunn Loring. Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs by Ellen Galinsky, encompasses an evidence-based list of life skills that are essential for children to succeed socially, emotionally and intellectually in the short and long term. Participants may register for one or all of the workshops and do not need to attend the previous class. Registration is limited. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

- Tuesday, Jan. 29 - Making Connections (part 4)
- Tuesday, Feb. 5 - Critical Thinking (part 5)
- Tuesday, Feb. 12 - Taking on Challenges (part 6)
- Tuesday, Feb. 19 - Self-Directed, Engaged Learning (part 7)

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Worried About What Awaits



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that there's anything wrong with me - other than having cancer that is - but I've been going to see doctors - other than my oncologist - fairly regularly in the past few months: internal medicine, three times; otolaryngologist, two times.

The reason/symptoms vary, but in general, nearly 10 years into my "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I am finally erring on the side of taking a precaution and scheduling appointments with doctors as often as I see fit. Apparently, waiting isn't the hardest part after all, it's the dumbest part - if you have cancer.

So far, in all five instances, the various symptoms were not cancer-related, they were life-related. Meaning, they had nothing to do at all with my have cancer and/or its progression, and everything to do with living life outside of the bubble.

However, surviving life inside the cancer world for as long as I have has now made me a bit trigger happy, so to speak. At the drop of a hat or for most any other reason, I am scheduling an appointment with my primary care physician to confirm or debunk any medical suspicions that I might have.

Henceforth, I am going to let the professionals tell me what I need to know and what I need not worry about. It has become time for me to no longer fool around with my health presuming that whatever ails me is merely a blip when in fact it could be a sign of things potentially to follow.

Sort of like the oil warning light illuminating on your car's dashboard - it likely means the damage has already occurred. And the next steps you take might even be too little, too late.

As concerns my health, there is no warning light as such. Knowing there's only so much I can do to preempt (some of which I've been doing) what trouble possibly awaits, at the very least I shouldn't be stupid or stubborn anymore. Instead I have to be vigilant and proactive.

Since my life is at stake here, I can't worry too much about what the doctor might say when I show up at my appointment with less-than-life altering/cancer-connected symptoms. Until they tell me otherwise, which they haven't yet, I will continue to overreact to any symptoms I experience because for all I know about such matters, it just might matter.

And lately, when my exams have indicated there was nothing to matter, I've often felt the need to apologize for taking up the doctor's time. Time which I realize is very valuable. But they would hear none of it. Instead, they have encouraged me not to hesitate making future appointments should the need arise.

And I suppose that's the issue: 'should the need arise.'

But how will I know when the need arises? How will I know if the need is genuine? How will I know if the need is cancer-related or merely life-related, and should I act differently depending on the answer? Or should I not care about any of these questions and simply schedule appointments as soon as possible because, as I was advised years ago when I was first diagnosed: "It's all about you now, Kenny."

In thinking about where all this anxiety is coming from, I believe it has something to do with my switching to an immunotherapy drug - which we've been discussing for a few months, and being aware of the many possible side effects. Side effects which, should they manifest, I am to contact my oncologist immediately.

My concern is however, will I know and will I be too early or too late. Or maybe it won't matter, and that's what scares me. Moreover, I'm afraid we might not be able to stop what we've already started.

Granted, it's all speculation, and it's all premature.

Either the side effects prevent me from infusing the drug or it doesn't. And if I am able to be infused, the tumors, especially the "Adam's Apple" tumor, shrink in the process. And if I have to see multiple doctors during my treatment, so be it.

This is no time to wait and see. It's time to be seen without waiting.

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



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