

Intersection Plan Approved

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The intersection of Sterling Road and Herndon Parkway has faced congestion issues. Members of Herndon Town Council hope a new traffic plan will resolve these issues.

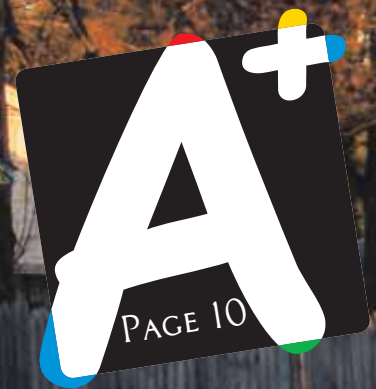
STERLING RD
HERNDON PKWY

10th District Democrats Nominate John Foust

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Mr. Horejsi Goes to Richmond

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Cancer had act one. Isabel received the encore.

At 15 months old, Isabel was diagnosed with a tumor on her left kidney. It was growing rapidly and immediate action was required. Isabel's parents turned to the experts who specialize in pediatric cancer. Watch her journey at JustRightForChildren.com/Isabel.

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Plan For Herndon Parkway and Sterling Road Intersection Approved

Council members hope plan will relieve congestion and improve safety.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

Recently the Herndon Town Council and Mayor Lisa Merkel have been addressing several infrastructure issues, amongst them the overcrowding of students at Herndon Elementary Schools. With developments of Silver Line and soon completion of phase 1 for the Silver Line, the Town Council has been brought to address the traffic flow situations at the Herndon Parkway and Sterling Road intersection.

Improvement of the traffic situation at that intersection has been part of the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP), a financial planning document that establishes a six-year schedule for public improvements and serves as a companion policy to the Town of Herndon 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

In a Dec. 4, 2013 meeting, the firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) with an office based out of Vienna, introduced residents to proposed plans for improvements to the intersection of Herndon Parkway and Sterling Road. The firm has been working with Town staff and council members since 2012. On March 11, at a public Town Council meeting, council members and Mayor Merkel approved a plan to improve the traffic flow at the Herndon Parkway, Sterling Road intersection.

VHB came up with several dozen alternatives to improve traffic operations at the intersection. Among the different options VHB reviewed were adding new lanes and potentially reconstructing the entire intersection.

THE NEW PLAN includes reassigning turning lanes with the Herndon Parkway left turn onto Sterling Road. "Option L3 was the favorite of citizens who had voted," said Bob Boxer, Director of the Town of Herndon's Department of Public Works. Option L3 also has one right turn lane on Herndon Parkway turned into an exclusive right turn lane instead of a shared lane.

"I think the Council arrived at the best decision possible, given the physical constraints of the intersection," stated town council member Grace Wolf. "The proposed design balances the concerns of the citizens with the reality of what future traffic pat-



IMAGE PROVIDED BY VANASSE HANGEN BRUSTLIN, INC. (VHB)

An image of Option L3, a new traffic plan reassigning turning lanes at the intersection of Herndon Parkway and Sterling Road.



PHOTO BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

The traffic situation at the intersection of Herndon Parkway and Sterling Road has been part of the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP). A resolution was passed by the Town of Herndon council on March 11 to take steps on the traffic issue.

terns will be and will help alleviate the traffic congestion. We will be monitoring the impact to our local neighborhoods and still be able to make adjustments to protect access to our residential neighborhoods. We will also introduce new signage and enforcement to ensure our streets remain safe."

In the December meeting representatives from VHB discussed a study conducted re-

garding traffic peaks on the Sterling Road and Herndon Parkway intersection. Their studies showed the biggest cut-through origin and destination is VA-228 south of Herndon from the intersection of Sterling Road and Herndon Parkway, and that drivers could be trying to avoid congestion along VA-28 and the Frying Pan Road exit by cutting through Herndon. "Surprisingly there isn't as nearly as much cut through

traffic as we had expected," stated Merkel. "But with the proposed developments on the Loudoun side that is sure to change." While residences and home developments in Ashburn and other areas of Loudoun County have developed over the past several years, some streets of the Town of Herndon have become part of the work commute for travelers. At one point Wiehle Avenue was considered to be part of a gateway for traffic to Loudoun County, but this idea was cancelled from the Reston Master Plan and land that would have been used for an extension has been designated as parkland. "This was a huge mistake for regional traffic flow," stated Merkel.

"The proposed design balances the concerns of the citizens with the reality of what future traffic patterns will be and will help alleviate the traffic congestion."

— Town Council member Grace Wolf

"I know that this intersection has been a problem for the people in that area as well as the people in the town," said council member Sheila Olem. "We have been working on this as things have grown," said Olem. "I know there are major backups on Sterling Road, the whole thing is a mess.... We could probably do better if we had more money and more land but we don't."

IN THE END, the motion to adapt an improvement plan for the Herndon Parkway and Sterling Road was passed with a vote of 6 - 1 with council member Waddell voting no.

"This is not a perfect solution, but does offer a relatively inexpensive short term improvement to improve the gridlock at this busy intersection while allowing us time to continue to seek grant money for a more long term solution as the development in Loudoun County becomes a reality," said Mayor Merkel.

To learn more about the Town of Herndon, visit www.herndon-va.gov/

Mr. Horejsi Goes to Richmond

In the fight for social justice with patience and persistence.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The SALT “gang” on one of many trips to Richmond. Bob Stewart of Chantilly, John Horejsi, David Baldocchi of Arlington, a national work sharing expert, and Maddie Lupo gather with Sen. George Barker (D-39) (second from right), who worked with Sen. Bill Stanley and various coalitions and agencies to push work sharing legislation through this year.

Every year, dozens of high-priced lobbyists descend on Virginia’s state capitol.

Some tantalize with promises of business investment and jobs; others represent important campaign contributors, while some say they can deliver votes from key constituencies.

They are often joined by Vienna resident John Horejsi, 71, who offers legislators, a simple, singular opportunity: to do the right thing for the socially disadvantaged.

Part Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, part Don Quixote tilting at windmills, Horejsi is regarded by many lawmakers as a man of conviction and persistence.

Those traits often give him the credibility other lobbyists lack, when his idealistic — and sometimes naïve — pleas for social justice collide with more powerful and persuasive agendas.

And like Jefferson Smith — the character played by Jimmy Stewart in Frank Capra’s timeless parable of Good vs. Evil — Horejsi believes that lawmakers have a moral imperative to care about the powerless and voiceless, the “least among us.”

“There are times when he’s a little bit like Robin Hood,” said state Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), a potent ally who has helped Horejsi advance legislation that helps the poor, the homeless, prisoners and children. “The difference is that John doesn’t have a bow and arrow to convince the rich to help the poor.”

“I guess that’s true. I don’t have a bow and arrow, and there are times I feel like Mr. Smith in Richmond,” Horejsi said, smiling. Like Jefferson Smith, Horejsi said he wouldn’t give “two cents for all the fancy rules if, behind them, they didn’t have a little bit of plain, ordinary, everyday kindness, and a little looking out for the other fella too.”

After speaking to a group about homelessness and hunger during a Catholic Charities conference in 1981, Horejsi found others willing to fight for “the other fella” in Richmond. He and a “ragtag band” of eight formed Social Action Linking Together, commonly known as “SALT.”

What began with a few social justice pioneers is now one of the most active and influential nonpartisan advocacy groups from Northern Virginia with 1,200-plus active members.

SALT’s mission is simple: keep social justice issues front and center with Virginia lawmakers. But the group’s legislative initiatives touch a staggeringly wide range of public welfare issues. Since the early 1980s, SALT has introduced bills benefitting the homeless, children, families, employees who face discrimination and other low-income Virginians who lack a secure safety net.

According to Robert Stewart, a founding member of SALT, members bring “the social, economic and justice teachings of their faith to bear on public policy and legislation.”

Whether lawmakers support SALT’s message or not, many respect the messenger, who has a knack for being pushy without being rude and insolent.

“He is a very nice man with a big heart. He states the way we all wish the world would be,” said Del. David Albo (R-42), the most senior Republican from Northern Virginia in Richmond. “But the world is not always like the way we want it to be.”

“(His) work with the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) and SALT alone has done more good for more people than most citizens are capable of imagining,” said Del. Ken Plum (D-36), who has served in the Virginia legislature since 1982.

As an elected official, Plum said he hears regularly from constituents who sometimes lack the basic necessities in life.

“I know what John’s activism over the years has meant to Northern Virginians,” Plum said.

A TRANSFORMING MOMENT

Like most movements that have a profound and lasting impact, SALT was years in the making.

For Horejsi, the seeds of compassion were planted early.

He was born and raised in the tiny farming town of Bechyn, Minn. — which listed its population as 30 in the 1920 U.S. Census. Shortly after World War II, Horejsi’s mother died and his father was unable to care for him.

He was taken in by impoverished relatives, who treated him, he said, with kindness.

“When my mother died everything changed. Since my father was unable to care for me, I was placed into the state social services Kinship Care system,” Horejsi said.

“Who knows what would have happened to me or where I would be today without their help and the support of social services. Being aware of my personal situation sensitized me and always made me feel like I should do something,” he said.

Horejsi said another powerful event in his life was meeting a 16-year-old homeless teen in Alexandria in 1985. When the girl’s mother was laid off from her job, they became homeless, living out of their car for a short time before moving to a homeless shelter for six months.

“After meeting her, I felt strongly that we should help the homeless. That’s when we started our successful advocacy for the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) to prevent homelessness,” Horejsi said.

Thanks to programs and services available to the homeless, the young woman went on to study with the Virginia Ballet School and Company and earned a law degree from Catholic University in 1993.

Horejsi said he will never forget her. “In fact, many people might know her name today, because they voted her into office,” Horejsi said.

Q&A with John Horejsi

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: “I was born and grew up in a small Czech community called Bechyn, Minnesota — named after Bechyn located south of Prague in the Czech Republic, and the place where my family immigrated from to settle in Minnesota. Bechyn is located about 40 miles from the South Dakota border in southwest Minnesota.”



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

John Horejsi, a Vienna resident and founder of SALT, with his wife Mariann.

Q: Who is your hero?

A: “Hubert Horatio Humphrey — vice president from 1965-69 under President Lyndon B. Johnson. He best exemplified ‘selfless and devoted service in the cause of human dignity for the poor.’ He knew that a government that cares about the unfortunate is a government that deserves our respect. He understood that compassion is not weakness and that concern for the unfortunate is not socialism.”

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: Enjoy Vienna restaurants, visiting family and friends in Minnesota during Bechyn CzechFest celebration of Czech heritage/culture during the summer, and spending time with granddaughter in Virginia Beach. Also, love visiting friends in the Czech Republic. I also love to attend weekly free “Concerts on the Green” in Vienna during the summer Concert series.

Q: What’s the best advice anyone ever gave you?

A: A workplace Motivational Speaker advised that if your impact on this world is limited because you’re not allowed to practice your social work training and skills, on your job, then you should use your skills to volunteer on your own time to make a difference. When I contacted then Supervisor Jim Scott, he immediately appointed me to the Fairfax County Social Services Advisory Board, and the Bishop of Arlington appointed me to the Catholic Charities Board of Arlington Diocese. From there, the founding of SALT (Social Action Linking Together) and many advocacy successes followed.

Q: What is the best advice you’ve given your children?

A: Make a difference with your life by working with people — to serve; not to be served.

The homeless teen Horejsi met was Charneille Herring, who has served as a Democrat in the Virginia House of Delegates, representing the 46th district, since 2009. In December 2012, she became the first African-American elected chair of the Democratic Party of Richmond.

“These kinds of life events cause you to think, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

A MAJOR VICTORY; A STUNNING DEFEAT

The political culture in Richmond is frequently compared to a Greek tragedy — most of the plot twists and turns happen off stage. Those who don’t know how the system works, or who don’t know how to work the system, soon get frustrated and give up.

“Richmond is not constituent-friendly,” Horejsi said. “It is very frustrating and disappointing that many of our bills pass the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and then die in some sub-com-

mittee.”

The political winds are constantly shifting, and Horejsi said he and other SALT advocates must constantly monitor bills during session, so they have an opportunity to educate legislators and influence their votes.

“This year started off as an amazing surprise,” Horejsi said. “During our first visit we met with 11 legislators — not just their aides. This was a record.”

“There seemed to be a new era of good feeling and cooperation. Almost all our bills began to pass quickly through assigned subcommittees and then full committees unanimously with lightning speed,” Horejsi said.

But during “crossover” — when bills pass from the Senate to the House — several SALT-backed bills stalled, getting caught in the larger political crossfire that goes hand-in-hand with crossover.

Take Medicaid expansion, for ex-

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com by the Friday prior to the following week's paper.

THURSDAY/MARCH 20

March Meeting of the Women's Club of Greater Reston. 10 a.m., Lake Anne Community Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. The guest speaker for the March Meeting of the Women's Club of Greater Reston will be Ken Knueven, president of Reston Association; refreshments provided. www.restonnewcomers.org or 571-201-8719.

The MOMS Club of Herndon will host a Spring Swap from 10 – 11:30 a.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church (651 Dranesville Rd, Herndon). All Herndon (zip codes 20170 and 20171) stay at home mothers are encouraged to come and meet other

at-home mothers. Bring gently-used children's clothing, shoes, toys, books, etc. and exchange for other items that you see at the swap. When you're done, relax and mingle with other Herndon-area moms. For more information or to RSVP contact: Tomoko Azuma, Membership VP at Herndon_moms_info@yahoo.com.

SUNDAY/MARCH 23

Friends of Reston Regional Library Children and Teen Book Sales. 1-1:30 p.m. The Friends of the Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. The library will hold sales of gently used books and teaching materials for Children/

Educators, and books for teens.

SATURDAY/MARCH 29

Researching Your Veteran's Story. 2 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Commander Victor "Tory" Failmezger, US Navy Retired, will provide an hour-long presentation for family genealogists and others interested in military history who want to begin researching the military service of their relatives but may not know how to get started. A question and answer session will follow. Free. Call 703-689-2700 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library to register.

ONGOING

Fairfax County's Meals on Wheels urgently needs drivers in the Annandale, Franconia/Kingstowne, Reston, Mount Vernon and McLean areas. 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults.

Knitting Enthusiasts, Musicians Needed. 10:30 a.m.-noon, at Herndon Senior Center. Herndon Senior Center seeks a knitting enthusiast to teach basic procedures. Musicians to play soothing music on weekend mornings also needed. 703-324-5406, TTY 711, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadult or VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov. **Habitat Heroes Project.** The fourth Saturday of each month. Join the

Habitat Heroes in protecting Reston's forests from aggressive plants and restoring them to their natural state. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and if possible, gardening gloves to protect from insects and dangerous plants. R.A. will provide tools, gloves, snacks, and water. To volunteer and find more information, contact habrock@reston.org or 703-435-7986.

Arabic-speaking Older Adult Social Visits. Fairfax County needs volunteers who speak Arabic to provide social visits to an elderly person in Reston for four hours per month. 703-324-5406, TTY 703-449-1186, VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices.

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery and childcare are provided and youth and adult Sunday school classes are held prior, from 9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or www.trinityherndon.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds weekly classes starting Sept. 12, Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m., for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. \$12. 202-986-2257 or www.meditation-dc.org.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive in Reston, holds Sunday services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m. Nursery, Sunday school and adult education available. Morning prayer on Monday at 9:30, Holy Eucharist Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. 703-437-6530 or www.stannes-reston.org.

Adult Sunday school will be held 9:30 a.m. Sundays at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. ShalomDC.org.

Epiphany United Methodist Preschool, 1014 Country Club Drive, N.E. in Vienna, is now enrolling 3- to 4-year-old students for the 2010/2011 school year. 703-938-2391 or www.epiphanypreschool.com.

Hope Fellowship Church will temporarily be meeting at Woody's Golf Range, 11801 Leesburg Pike, Herndon. Sunday worship services for the Southern Baptist church are at 10:45 a.m. The public is invited to join a Bible believing, multi-ethnic/multi-cultural congregation, with Bible-based sermons and uplifting music. 703-599-3527 or www.hopefellowshipchurchloudoun.org.

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OPINION

Income Gap Alive and Well

Statistics make life in the area sound idyllic, but many families are left out in the land of plenty.

Northern Virginia is a place of wonder and plenty. So says the New York Times this past week in, "Income Gap Meet the Longevity Gap," (March 15, 2014).

Fairfax County is cited as place whose residents "are among the longest-lived in the country," and compared to McDowell County, W.Va., where residents have one of the shortest life expectancies. In Fairfax, "men have an average life expectancy of 82 years and women, 85, about the same as in Sweden. In McDowell, the averages are 64 and 73, about the same as in Iraq."

If you are reading this, chances are that the Connection was delivered to your single family home in an affluent neighborhood. In fact, many of us do live in the Northern Virginia described in the New York Times. All it takes is money.

"In Fairfax, there are ample doctors, hospi-

tals, recreation centers, shops, restaurants, grocery stores, nursing homes and day care centers, with public and private entities providing cradle-to-grave services to prosperous communities."

But here is where the crack in the wall appears: "The jobs tend to be good jobs, providing health insurance and pensions, even if there is a growing low-wage work force of health aides, janitors, fast-food workers and the like."

In Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 49,000 of the 185,000 students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized or free meals. In Fairfax County, more than 100,000 people lack health insurance, including 35,000 who could be covered now at no cost to themselves or the state if they lived in West Virginia because West Virginia has embraced the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, so its poorest residents do have access to health care. Not so in Virginia.

In Northern Virginia, we have our own income gap, and likely our own longevity gap. In Northern Virginia, we have a health care crisis. In Northern Virginia, we do have an affordable housing crisis.

Tens of thousands of working poor people in Northern Virginia, families with at least one full time job, cannot afford to rent an apartment. Earnings of at least \$1,100 a week would be required to afford market rate rent in Fairfax County according to the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance. But the county's 50,000 retail workers, for example, average about \$635 a week according to the Virginia Employment Commission. The county's 40,000-plus food service workers average \$415 a week. Even the county's 38,000 local government employees average \$950 weekly, a stretch in this area.

To read the story in the New York Times, go to www.NYTimes.com and search "income gap."

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

COMMENTARY

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



At a time when quality reviews and accountability measures result in more activities being given a letter grade, it is appropriate that legislative sessions receive the same treatment. At the risk of seeming to cop-out, I give the session an "I" for incomplete because we have not yet completed the basic requirement of passing a biennium budget in the even-numbered years. We are back in Richmond in special session now to meet that requirement.

Taking the budget out of the equation, I would give the session a "B"—a higher grade than I would have given sessions in recent years. Some important work got done. Growing out of the recent tragedy of Senator Deed's family

and with lingering memories of Virginia Tech, mental health laws were strengthened. Legislation extends the time a person can be held involuntarily under a temporary detention order from 48 to 72 hours. The state will maintain a "real time" online registry of available psychiatric beds in public and private hospitals. Emergency custody orders will be extended from six to 12 hours with the state assuming responsibility to find a bed for a patient after eight hours. A four-year study will be undertaken to determine what other reforms are needed.

In significant reform of ethics laws that will continue to be debated as to whether or not they go far enough, a cumulative cap of \$250 was put on gifts that elected officials can accept. Gifts

Making the Grade

and with lingering memories of Virginia Tech, mental health laws were strengthened. Legislation extends the time a person can be held involuntarily under a temporary detention order from 48 to 72 hours. The state will maintain a "real time" online registry of available psychiatric beds in public and private hospitals. Emergency custody orders will be extended from six to 12 hours with the state assuming responsibility to find a bed for a patient after eight hours. A four-year study will be undertaken to determine what other reforms are needed.

In the area of education, the General Assembly restrained itself from passing the latest reform fad as it had been doing the last several years and even took a second look at recent reforms by delaying for a couple of years the idea of giving each school a grade, until it can be determined how such a system might work and whether it would be meaningful. State take-over of failing schools will also be delayed. SOL (Standards of Learning) testing that in recent years has come to dominate the school year will be reduced from

22 to 17 in K-8, giving more time for instruction.

The hybrid car tax was repealed, but efforts to roll back other provisions of last year's transportation bill were rejected. The sodomy law was repealed as court action had already effectively done. A small step forward on bike safety increased from two to three feet the distance cars must leave to pass bicycles. Posting pornography on social media without a person's consent was made an offense. Sunday hunting will be legal on private lands.

What would have given the session an "A"? Full committee debate on background checks for gun purchases, raising the minimum wage, and repealing the marriage amendment rather than such limited debate and defeat of these measures in subcommittees would have made for a better grade.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Commending Election Officials During Sunshine Week

To the Editor:

During this year's Sunshine Week, the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area salutes the Fairfax County Electoral Board, General Registrar and employees of the Fairfax County Office of Elections for their transparency and willingness to share information with the public in the follow-up to the 2013 general election.

Their handling of the election reporting, canvass, provisional ballot determinations and recounts in the races for Virginia Attorney General and 33rd District Senate seats exemplified the best principles of open government. The Office of Elections frequently published updates on election reporting problems and the extended provisional ballot

determination process, later on providing details about the progress of the recounts, all the while describing the safeguards in place to protect the integrity of the ballot.

That integrity is essential for our system of government to work.

This is why during Sunshine Week we commend the Fairfax County Office of Elections for shar-

ing important voting results and information with the residents of Fairfax County, detailing exactly how their votes in these important elections were counted and protected.

Jones and Helen Kelly,
Co-Presidents

League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area

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10th District Democrats Nominate John Foust

Democrats cancel convention uniting for Dranesville Supervisor for Congress.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

The field of GOP contenders vying for retiring U.S. Rep. Frank R. Wolf's seat is still crowded, but the Democratic pool of political hopefuls dwindled to one on Monday: Fairfax County Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville).

The Tenth Congressional District Democratic Committee (10th CDDC) announced Monday, March 17, it had cancelled its April 26 convention after Foust became the only candidate to file to seek the Democratic nomination for Congress.

"To win this race in November we needed to avoid a costly primary and coalesce around a nominee as soon as possible," said Committee Chairman Charlie Jackson in a statement regarding the decision. "We've done that and we couldn't be happier that John Foust will become our nominee and have the ability to hit the ground running right away as our standard bearer."

"I am very grateful for the support I'm receiving across the district," Foust said Tuesday morning. "I believe we're unified because we represent the concerns and priorities of the residents of the 10th district, and I look forward to continuing the cam-

paign through November and having a discussion on the issues with whomever the Republican nominee is."

Jackson said the move on Monday will give Democrats an edge in building widespread district support for Foust before a Republican nominee is named in a "firehouse primary," also called a party canvass, slated for April 26.

Democrats had anticipated McLean attorney Richard Bolger would continue his bid for the nomination, but Bolger announced he was suspending his campaign late last week.

In a news release, Bolger said it became clear to him that "John Foust is our strongest choice with the best chance of helping our party win this seat and change the direction of Congress."

ON MONDAY, Jackson praised Bolger and his campaign.

"Richard Bolger has been a class act from day one," Jackson said. "He put together a top-notch team and demonstrated an ability to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars. That's no small achievement."

"John Foust is the only problem solver in this race," said State Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37), a longtime Foust friend and supporter. "His most well-known potential opponents

About John Foust

John Foust was re-elected to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2011, winning every precinct and more than 60 percent of the vote. He serves as Chairman of the Board's Audit Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Budget Committee and Chairman of the County's Economic Advisory Commission. He cites his leadership in expanding full day kindergarten to the entire county and funding the widening of Route 7 to ease congestion for commuters as successes. He lives in McLean, and has been married to Dr. Marilyn Jerome for 30 years. They have two sons, Matthew and Patrick.

For more information about John Foust's campaign for Congress, visit www.foustforvirginia.com.



are tea party types. Even Frank Wolf can't be happy about the Republicans in this race. He has little use for this wing of the party and has publicly said so."

When Foust entered the Democratic primary for the 10th Congressional District in December, he seized on the public's negative perception of Congress often stuck in partisan gridlock, citing both parties' "reckless brinkmanship." Foust's campaign focused on bringing a fresh face to Washington.

Foust quickly racked up a slew of endorsements from more than 50 former and current elected officials, including Lt. Governor Ralph Northam and Congressman Jim Moran (D-8), who later announced he

would not seek reelection.

Foust's momentum had a rainmaking impact on donors. In late January, Foust reported raising more than \$217,000, with nearly that amount - \$210,000 - reported as cash on hand.

"This is another clear sign that our message of bringing problem solving, bipartisan leadership back to Congress is resonating with Northern Virginia residents," Foust said in a statement about his successful fundraising. The two-term supervisor also touted his current service on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and his past service on the Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

WITH MONDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT, Foust now has more than a month head start campaigning against an unknown Republican challenger.

"We expect he will take advantage," Jackson said Monday.

According to the 10th Congressional District Republican Committee, six candidates will compete for the Republican nomination, Del. Barbara Comstock, Stephen Hollingshead, Howie Lind, Del. Bob Marshall, Marc Savitt and Rob Wasinger. The Republican nominee will be decided in a Party Canvass on Saturday, April 26 at 10 different locations around the District. For more information on the candidates and the Party Canvass contact chairman@vagop10.org or visit the 10th District website at vagop10.org.

Fighting for Social Justice with Patience and Persistence

FROM PAGE 4

ample, which was SALT's number one priority this session.

On Saturday, March 8, the General Assembly adjourned its 60-day session, yet lawmakers left Richmond without passing Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe's number one priority — a \$96 billion budget that included expanding Medicaid eligibility for roughly 400,000 Virginia residents.

Republicans in the GOP-controlled House opposed the expansion, saying the rapidly-growing program still needs reform, and the debate should be separated from the budget.

A key part of the new federal health care law, the issue deadlocked the GOP-controlled House and the Democratically-controlled Senate. In response, McAuliffe immediately called for a special session to begin in two weeks.

SALT members argue that turning down roughly \$5 million a day in federal funds associated with expanded Medicaid eligibility could have severe consequences, such as shutting down many hospitals in rural communities.

SALT also lost its battle to "Ban the Box." If passed, Virginia would have joined the growing number of states that give job applicants with a prior criminal conviction a "fair chance" at getting a job.

The legislation, filed by Del. Rob Krupicka (D-45), would have removed the box on applications for state jobs that asks people if they have been convicted of a felony.

"This is not about hiding an individual's past," Krupicka said in a letter to constituents, noting that employers can still ask about criminal history during the interview process.

"All this bill aims to do is help ex-offenders reach more job interviews that hopefully will lead to more jobs ... In Alexandria alone, 13 people are released from jail every day. In trying to re-integrate into society, finding employment can be one of the most useful factors in reducing recidivism rates," Krupicka said.

Horejsi called Ban the Box an "essential" component of any meaningful program designed to help former prisoners reenter society, and said he was extremely disheartened when it failed — at the 11th hour — in the House Courts of Jus-

tice Committee, chaired by Del. Dave Albo.

"I wish the world was like John (envisioning it), but taxpayers are maxed out, and there are violent people among us that the only place safe is to have them in prison," Albo said in an interview Sunday. "We have limited money and there are bad guys out there that want to hurt people. John's positions are always what we could do with unlimited money and assume that all criminals could be rehabilitated."

In the plus column, SALT was successful in moving work share legislation through the General Assembly and on to the governor's desk for his signature.

State Senators George Barker (D-39) and Bill Stanley (R-20) were instrumental in getting the legislation passed this year, after it failed last year. Horejsi said both senators, and SALT advocates, worked closely with the Virginia Employment Commission to ensure that the bill works with current VEC programs.

The program lessens the impact of layoffs by allowing employers to reduce the hours of their existing work force instead of letting employees go. A kind of unemploy-

ment insurance in reverse, the program comes with free federal dollars to keep workers in their jobs instead of supporting them after they're laid off.

"Having been through the recession and recent slight increases in Virginia unemployment rates as federal sequestration takes effect, it is important that we give Virginia businesses all the tools we can to help them and their employees get through challenging times. This bill does that," Barker said in an interview at the beginning of this year's legislative session.

Horejsi admits there are times when he gets discouraged by "politics as usual."

"What keeps me going are notes like this, from a parishioner of St. Anne's," Horejsi said:

"John, I just want you to know I appreciate all of these emails you send. I was at St. Ann's community weekend today. I saw your sign-up sheet. I feel bad that with all that is going on with my life right now, that I haven't had time to help, but please keep the emails coming. I enjoy your posts. Every once in a while it is a helpful reminder that there are others who care."

"I truly believe there is always hope," Horejsi said, after the General Assembly session ended. "For example, Sen. Jill Vogel, the only Republican senator to vote for our Ban the Box bill during a lively debate, made a beautiful and inspiring speech about some of her most loyal employees being those with former convictions."

Horejsi is already gearing up for next year's session, studying legislation and organizing constituent education meetings.

Despite the sometimes overwhelming odds against social justice bills, Horejsi said he refuses to let social justice issues become submerged in the tide of legislation that benefits only wealthy corporations and constituents.

"Legislators have told us that what they really respect about us is that we're not asking anything for ourselves," Horejsi said. "We're asking on behalf of those who are the most desperate and in the greatest need ... That's why SALT will remain intimately involved in the process."

For more information on SALT, and how to get involved, visit the SALT website at www.S-A-L-T.org.



During the Nowruz celebration, Saeed Banaei played the drums while Reza Kaliouh dressed as the character Hajji Piruz spoke about the New Year.



At the March Nowruz Festival, Ashburn resident Saghar Shoaie preformed a classical Persian dance to tune of Gole Gandom.

PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Nowruz Celebrated At Reston Town Center

Third annual Persian New Year's festival brings thousands.

By RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

This event is basically the Iranian New Year's festival," said Ashkbous Talebi, who was assisting with a display representing the Ghashghaich tribe, from southern Iran. Both Talebi and his wife have attended the celebration of Nowruz at Reston Town Center since it was first hosted in March of 2012.

The event was a day-long celebration, with the Pavilion serving as the presentation hub throughout the event. Layla Rad served as an emcee for the morning and afternoon. "Norwruz is very important to us, and to me," said Rad. "This is one of the biggest local gatherings of Iranian people." After graduating from Shahid Beheshti University in 2006, Layla started work as an interior designer. Rad has also taught art classes in Oakton.

Nowruz is a festival of early spring, renewal and the future. The full annual Nowruz celebration has many rituals, all having to do with aspects of hope and renewal. The event at



Emcee Layla Rad and Shohreh Asemi, founder of Nowruz Festival Organization.

Reston was open to the public, and there were a variety of singers, musicians, dancers and storytellers entertaining an actively engaged crowd. Market Street was filled with booths offering customary foods, goods and crafts.

During one of the shows, Saeed Banaei played the drums while Reza Kaliouh dressed as the character Hajji Piruz spoke about the upcoming New Year. "I am enjoying the event and I hope everyone enjoys it as well," said Banaei, a resident of Herndon. "I hope this event continues every year."

Helping several dance groups was Katayoun Hutson, artistic director and dance instructor of Mosaïque Center for the Cultural Arts based in Sterling. "This event is such as a great opportunity," said Hutson.

Hutson also works with the dance ensemble Troupe Eshveh

and Cyrus Academy, a family school located in Sterling. "This is a celebration of spring for everyone," said Hutson.

Performing a classical Persian dance was Saghar Shoaie, a resident of Ashburn and junior at Broad Run High School. "I preformed in last year's celebration as well," said Shoaie. "I think everything was fun, people can come attend and learn about the Persian culture." Shohreh Asemi, Persian-American stage actress, journalist, host and founder of Nowruz Festival Organization, was also at the celebration. "I am very excited about the third Nowruz Festival," stated Asemi.

"This huge on-street event takes the normal Persian celebrations to the next level."

For more information on the festival, visit nowruzfestival.org

CALENDAR

"Solace Outside My Window," by Gennara Moore, won first place in paintings for her evocative winter image at the League of Reston Artists' "Winter Dreams" exhibit, currently at the Parkridge 5 Building in Reston and is on display until April 11.



Send announcements to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline is the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

MONDAY/MARCH 17-FRIDAY/APRIL 11
Artists Honored at LRA's "Winter Dreams" Exhibit. Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Parkridge 5 Building, 10780 Parkridge Blvd., Reston.

THURSDAY/MARCH 20
Spring Swap on Thursday. 10-11:30 a.m. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon. Hosted by The MOMS Club(R) of Herndon, clean out your closets and get ready to freecycle. The Spring Swap is a great opportunity to declutter your home and save money by swapping items your children have outgrown. Simply bring gently-used children's clothing, shoes, toys, books, etc. and exchange for other items that you see at the swap. When you're done, relax and mingle with other Herndon-area moms. For more information or to RSVP email Herndon_moms_info@yahoo.com.

Return of the Reptiles. 10-11 a.m. or 1-30 - 2:30 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Discover Reston's cold blooded reptiles as they are emerging from their winter sleep. Reservations required by March 17. Reston Association members: \$7; \$ Non-members: \$9. naturecenter@reston.org, or 703-476-9689 and press 5.

Friends of Reston Regional Library Children and Teen Book Sales. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. The Friends of the Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. The library will hold sales of gently used books and teaching materials for Children/Educators, and books for teens.

FRIDAY/MARCH 21
Friends of Reston Regional Library Children and Teen Book Sales. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Friends of the Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. The library will hold sales of gently used books and teaching materials for Children/Educators, and books for teens.

FRIDAY/MARCH 21- SATURDAY/ MARCH 22
DC Vapefest 2014: E-Cigarette Convention and Seminar. 2-10 p.m. Hyatt Dulles, 2300 Dulles Corner Boulevard, Herndon. Since 2010, the National Vapers Club has been hosting



Watch Classical Ballet Theater's performance of "The Sleeping Beauty," on Sunday, March 30.

VapeFest—a social convention, educational forum, and industry networking event for current e-cigarette users and smokers who would like to learn about vaping. It is open to adults 18 years and older. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit <http://www.vapefest.com>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22
Nature Walk: Sunrise Valley Wetlands. 1-3 p.m., Sunrise Valley Wetlands - 12700 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Enjoy a leisurely stroll along the boardwalk and get an up-close look at the amazing diversity of life. naturecenter@reston.org, or 703-476-9689 and press 5.

Friends of Reston Regional Library Children and Teen Book Sales. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The Friends of the Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. The library will hold sales of gently used books and teaching materials for Children/Educators, and books for teens.

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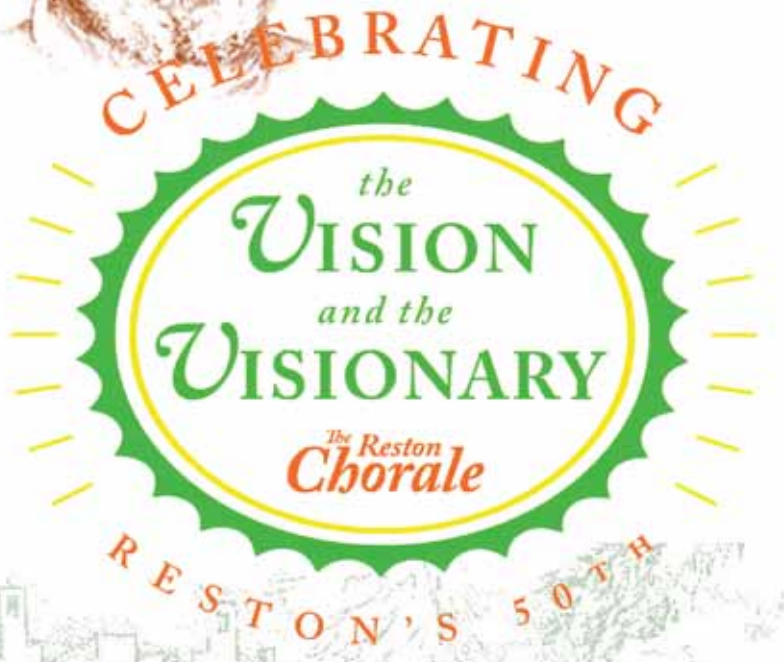
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Artwork by Patricia Macintyre

A student at The Madeira School in McLean enjoys art in the school's art room. Stacie Steinke, chair of the Arts Department, says the school's approach to art draws on a student's natural curiosity, ability to perceive art in different forms and ability to think spatially.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MADEIRA SCHOOL



Visitors look at art created by students from Fairfax County Public Schools in the McLean area as part of the McLean Project for the Arts' youth art show.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MCLEAN PROJECT FOR THE ARTS

Local Art Educators, Galleries Celebrate Youth Art Month

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Experts say art can teach valuable life skills.

Brightly colored self-portraits, landscapes dotted with spring flowers and hand-carved sculptures fill a gallery at the McLean Project for the Arts in McLean. All of the art was created by local school children. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, parents and tots dip their fingers in glue, clay and paint to create collages, sculptures and paintings.

"It is a true delight to see parents and

children making things together in the studio. Joy is found in the stuff they make — the collages, paintings, drawings and sculptures — as well as the more intangible things we build: relationships, confidence, creativity, persistence and the many ways we make meaning through art," said Kathryn Horn Coneway of Art at the Center in Mount Vernon.

These are just some of the local art ac-


tivities for children. In fact, Youth Art Month is an annual observance held each March to emphasize the value of art and art education. This year's theme is "Start With Art, Learn for Life," which was chosen by the Council for Art Education, a sponsor of Youth Art Month.

Local art educators are using the month as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of art education and raise awareness

about the important life skills it can build.

"We believe art is important to study for its inherent value, but art also promotes life skills, including creativity, problem solving, determination, concentration, collaboration and confidence," said Samantha Marques-Mordkofsky, education and outreach manager for the Arlington Arts Center in Arlington. "Regardless of what field a child pursues later in life, these skills will translate and he or she will be better rounded be-

SEE YOUTH ART, PAGE 11



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Youth Art Month Celebrated

FROM PAGE 10

cause of ... art. We also offer multidisciplinary classes like Book Illustration, Amazing Architects & Engineers, and Murals: Big Art, Big Ideas where students have the opportunity to master technical skills in art while simultaneously learning about other subjects."

Jorge Luis Somarriba, art teacher and artist-in-residence at Norwood School in Bethesda, Md., says the school is a community of artists. "We believe in a process-oriented and child-centered philosophy," he said. "Art nurtures self-confidence through self-discovery and personal visual expression. Art education is instrumental in the holistic development of a human being: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical. Art making develops the right brain, empowering individuals to become creative, problem-solvers who may think 'outside the box.'"

Experts said art education also develops self-expression and an appreciation for the work of others. "Elementary school students create art with such unbridled enthusiasm for painting, drawing and creating things," said Dabney Cortina, communications director for the McLean Project for the Arts. "I think it's because they haven't been told that

there is anything wrong with how they create art. Currently going on is our youth art show featuring Fairfax County Public Schools in the McLean area. It is incredible to look at. You see the talent they have. It is totally amazing."

Eileen Lyons, chair of the Fine Arts Department at Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac, Md., said that the arts are a vital part of the school's curriculum. "Arts education helps students learn how to solve problems in unique ways and it deepens their overall learning experience," she said.

Stacie Steinke, chair of the Arts Department at The Madeira School in McLean suggests art education might not be taken as seriously as other disciplines. "Schools in general have been responding to trends that you need more science and math education and have been teaching to tests. Not at Madeira, but at some other schools, art education has diminished," she said. "We look at arts as a process. Our students learn to work effectively with others. Our approach draws on a student's natural curiosity, ability to perceive art in different forms and ability to think spatially. They develop cognitive growth, so they learn to see how parts relate to a whole."

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PHOTOS BY CINDY NORMAN

Olivia Norman tops the podium as the Level 9 State Champion in uneven bars for the 15 year old group.

State Champion

South Lakes freshman a State Champion on uneven bars.

This past weekend gymnasts from across the state of Virginia competed in the Virginia USA Gymnastics Level 8, 9, and 10 State Championships in Richmond. Olivia Norman of Herndon, a Level 9 gymnast and freshman at South Lakes High School, scored 9.425 and won the State Champion title in uneven bars for the 15 year old group. She also garnered third place on vault for her age group. Norman qualified to compete in the Region 7 Level 9 Championship meet on April 4-6 in Hampton, Va. Regional Championships brings together the top gymnasts from six states in the region (which includes MD, DC, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia).



Olivia Norman of Herndon, a freshman at South Lakes High School, scored 9.425 and won the State Champion title in uneven bars for the 15-year-old group.

Playing to Stop Hunger Now

Great Falls and Colvin Run elementary schools participated in a sixth-grade charity basketball game that raised more than \$800 for Stop Hunger Now. Colvin Run won 57-52 in overtime. Colvin Run roster: Colin O'Connor; Lucas Gauthier; Luke Addington; Jacob Rose; John Kelly; Rex Kerrigan; Sam Sachtleben; Will Rissing; William Bean; Zachary Crumes; Zack Baskin; Coach Jim Rose; and Coach Rich Gauthier. Great Falls Roster: Andrew Walker; Bradley Carvajal; Cameron Dhillon; Carson Volanth; Cole Walmsley; Ian Walker; Jack Fitzgerald; Nate Mazich; Pierson White; Sam Maruca; Simon Medina; Tre Vasiliadis; Coach John Fitzgerald; Coach Doug White; and Coach Todd Walmsley.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pictured with Senior Naval Science Instructor Commander Rick Cassara (U.S. Navy, Retired) and Coach Clay Wilkins, Herndon High's NJROTC cadets celebrate placing third in the nation.

Herndon's NJROTC Orienteering Team Places Third in Nation

After suffering postponement due to the region's unusual winter weather, Herndon High's NJROTC cadets triumphed in the much-anticipated Navy National Orienteering Championship.

Held in Georgia over the weekend of March 7-9, this rigorous event challenged competitors throughout the United States to prove their mastery of off-path cross country running and land navigation. Cadets used their maps and compasses to traverse miles of rough terrain swiftly and confidently.

Both Herndon's varsity and junior varsity teams performed well. Standout individual competitors included: Marshall Wilkins, who finished sixth of 76 male varsity competitors; Virginia Murphy, who was third out of 17 female varsity competitors; Joe LaRosa, who took 18th out of 88 junior varsity competitors; and Joe Jackson, who finished 14th out of 69 intermediate competitors.

Led by coach Clay Wilkins, Herndon's national ranking improved from 11th in 2012 and seventh in 2013. Next year's championship will be held in California in February of 2015.



BY CRAIG STERNUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

The Herndon girls' lacrosse team participated in a scrimmage against Yorktown on March 14 at Herndon High School. The Hornets will compete in the Atomic Blast tournament at Annandale High School on Saturday, March 22.

Herndon Awaits Construction Of New Mural

New mural to depict animals in downtown Herndon.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

While the region has been anticipating the incoming Silver Line, the Town of Herndon has taken steps to become an art friendly town. Some of these steps include the design of murals. The Council for the Arts of Herndon, the Town of Herndon's officially designated local arts agency orchestrated the design of another mural in downtown Herndon. The next project will be one at the Dominion Animal Hospital at 795 Station Street.

The artist for this mural project will be Herndon resident Keith Naquin. Naquin retired from teaching art at Herndon High in 2011, where he taught for 32 years. "While I was teaching I was doing art stuff on the side, and I am at sort of a juncture in doing art full time now that I have the time to do it," said Naquin.

Naquin painted two other outdoors murals within downtown Herndon. One mural is on a wall of the Ice House Caf building, and was completed in the fall of 2012.

THE OTHER MURAL is at NAPA Auto Parts on Elden Street completed in the summer of 2011. Herndon resident Karen Shoemaker, a board member of the Council for the Arts of Herndon (CAF) had helped advocate the new mural.

We had been working with Keith [Naquin] on the concept for the past several years and drew up some sketches," said Shoemaker. Shoemaker said the estimated costs of the mural are \$20,000. Also CAF will take responsibility for the maintenance of the mural, and pay for resealing and all touchup work. "That is the relationship we have with the owner of the building," said Shoemaker.

Dominion Animal Hospital is a full-service veterinary medical facility. The location began operation in November 1967 when it was opened by Dr. Kermit O. Cockrell. The wall on which the mural will be painted on is very visible, and neighbors the Great Harvest Bread Company. But before work on the wall of the Dominion Animal Hospital begins, the wall will need to be covered in stucco. This stucco project will be handled by Best Bid Inc. of Chantilly.

The CAF anticipates the stucco work to begin in April. "We will anticipate to have the entire mural done by the Herndon Festival, in June," said Shoemaker. "The Town gave us approval for a year to complete the project, otherwise we have to ask for an extension." Naquin is eager to begin work on the mural. "I am ready to go, once the facade is ready. I will probably be there 10 or 12 hours a day," said Naquin.

Dominion Animal Hospital Mural- Herndon, Virginia



Mural Draft: before and after

Proposed for Spring 2014; Keith Naquin

IMAGE PROVIDED BY KEITH NAQUIN

A before and after image of the wall of Dominion Animal Hospital at 795 Station Street.



PHOTO BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Section of the wall of Dominion Animal Hospital in Herndon, VA at 795 Station Street which will be part of a mural once stucco has been applied.

tival, in June," said Shoemaker. "The Town gave us approval for a year to complete the project, otherwise we have to ask for an extension." Naquin is eager to begin work on the mural. "I am ready to go, once the facade is ready. I will probably be there 10 or 12 hours a day," said Naquin.

"I would say there are two phases, first a landscape that is conducive to a park, and a secondly landscape that can have pets and animals that can be drawn in it," said Naquin. "In my research the biggest issue was to disguise the windows, there are 10 or 11 windows on the wall. I looked at a

number of landscapes to disguise the windows and not make them obtrusive. I was also trying to keep an image of Runnymede Park as a nice backdrop." Runnymede Park located at 195 Herndon Parkway is a site for many community nature-related events such as the yearly Nature Fest.

"I am ready to go, once the facade is ready. I will probably be there 10 or 12 hours a day."

— Herndon resident Keith Naquin

To help finance the mural project, for a limited time the CAH has opened sponsorship opportunities. Depending on the level of contribution, donors can either have their pet's likeness added to the mural, or have the name of their animal "carved" on a tree. The five levels of sponsorship range from \$250 to \$2,000. "We are hoping to raise more than what it costs us and to use the money for other programs," said Shoemaker.

SO FAR LOCAL OPINION has been in favor of a new mural. "I look forward to a new mural, I think it is a great idea," said Beth Meyer, co-owner of the Green Lizard Cycling, a small business which neighbors Dominion Animal Hospital. "I absolutely support it, I think it will be great," said Town of Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel. "I think a mural is cool because it is nice to showcase local art," said Melanie Stanley, an artist and resident of Herndon for 27 years.

"It is great working with Dominion Animal hospital," said Signe Friedrichs, Executive Director at Council for the Arts of Herndon. "Their staff and the doctors have been enthusiastic supporters of this project for some time, and the only stumbling block has been raising funds for the project. We hope it will be appealing to children and nature lovers and will help the downtown be even more welcoming to visitors."

To learn more about the Herndon Council for the Arts visit herndonarts.org.

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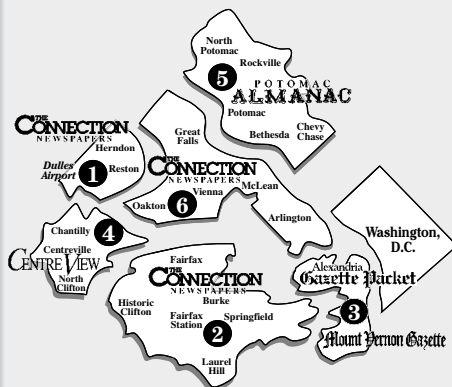
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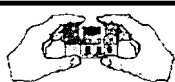
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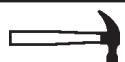
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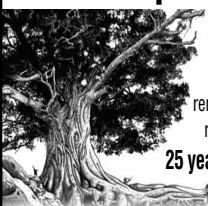
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No Know. No Problem.



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I felt a bit of a dope this week when, after reading last week's column, "Whew!", multiple friends called to inquire specifically as to the "Tony-the-Tiger Great" news I wrote that I received from my oncologist, and I couldn't answer them in any detail: shrinkage, less fluid, "partial stable remission"? Nothing. And though I tried to get my oncologist to explain to me exactly what was so encouraging about this most recent CT Scan – compared to the one I took three months ago (as opposed to the one I had nine months ago which was mistakenly compared to this most recent scan and resulted in the "Some better, some worse. I'll explain more on Friday" e-mail I received from my doctor and talked about in "Whew!") – I was rebuffed. Rebuffed in the best possible way: being told instead how great I was doing, how great my lab results were (for this most recent pre-chemotherapy) and how I could live a long time like this (presumably continuing to be infused with Alimta) – it was almost disconcerting; especially when you consider the original e-mail assessment we received and our less-than-positive interpretation of it. Moreover, the oncologist's exuberance and smiling countenance, along with his offer of a congratulatory handshake led me away from the missing facts and immediately into these new-found feelings.

There's an old advisory among salespeople: "Don't be afraid to take a 'Yes.'" Well, I took a yes (figuratively speaking), and didn't feel compelled to press my doctor to further explain the reasons for his excitement. I became very happy taking the good news, and extremely fortunate that what Tuesday's inaccurate e-mail suggested: trouble, was turned completely on its figurative ear Friday when in person, my oncologist explained the semi-miscommunication. Believe me, when your oncologist gives you news with which you can live – pun intended, your reaction, at least mine, is not to question his judgment too much further in pursuit of some heretofore untold truth that could ruin what super-amazing-positive words you just heard. Call me naïve, "Simple Simon," whatever, but since I am still alive five years post-diagnosis, you can call me anything you want.

A week later, a few of these phone calls have given me pause for reflection. And though I've tried to answer their queries in a sort of intelligent way, I'm sure I've failed. But I'm moving on. I will enjoy relative peace over the three-month interval until my next CT Scan on May 28th and follow-up appointment with my oncologist to discuss the results – in person. Then, we'll do this all over again. For the time being, I'm very lucky to have received such good news, however incomplete it originally may have seemed. Nevertheless, I can certainly appreciate the message even if I was confused by the delivery.

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

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St. Patrick's Snow Day in Great Falls

Enjoying a St. Patrick's Snow Day, from left: Avery and Lexie Perez, Allie Wakeman; Front: Caitlyn Shumadine.

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