

The Arlington Connection

Retiring Executive Director of OAR Gail Arnall gets dressed for her retirement party at California Tortilla July 14 by her friend of 42 years Belle O'Brien. O'Brien said, "If you think Gail is really retiring, you don't know her."

'Of Course She'll Never Retire'

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PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

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PEOPLE

Strain, 76, Sways to the Music

Dancing the night away.

BY KAREN L. BUNE
THE CONNECTION

Arlington resident, Robert (Bob) Strain, 76, has not let the “golden years” slow him down. Fortunate enough to be the benefactor of generally good health and one who exercises at the gym daily, Strain has not let any grass grow under his feet. An Arlington resident since 1960 and a federal retiree with 37 years behind him as an Operation Research Analyst, Strain is still on the move.

He developed an interest for dancing in 1979 when he began lessons in Arlington at the Dance Factory. After completing approximately five lessons, Strain connected with some renowned Australian dance instructors and subsequently studied with them for the next year.

By the end of that year, Strain had completed the Bronze, Silver and Gold Syllabus. Bronze is known as the first level of figures in which the dancer learns the basics of ballroom dancing. Silver is another set of 12 figures that allows the dancer to compete at a higher level. Gold is the highest level of achievement. It is not uncommon for students to spend years just achieving the Bronze level, but Strain mastered Bronze in one year.

He developed a passion for dancing that has been ongoing. “Other dancers respect me for having hung in there all this time,” Strain said.

In 1981, Strain visited Joe Jenkins Dance Studio in Bethesda, Md., that has since closed. It was there he met Joyce (Joy) McDonald. McDonald was an accomplished dancer and a professional ballerina. McDonald told Strain that she preferred dancing with him more than anyone else because he danced basics. “I liked her style, and she liked mine apparently,” Strain said.

Strain invited McDonald to attend a dance competition with him in Montreal, Canada soon after they met, and she agreed to accompany him. It was in Montreal that the dance connection led to the beginning of a romance between the two of them, and she became the love of his life.

Upon returning from Montreal, McDonald wanted Strain to compete with her. “More than half the time, we would win. Here I was just a novice. I felt so lucky to be part of this art form. These professionals were very respectful and kind to me, and I couldn’t believe how accepted I was in this professional family,” Strain said.

In 1981, the duo travelled to Blackpool, England for the Blackpool Dance Festival that is known to be one of the most prestigious events a dance competitor can attend. “We went almost as soon as we had met,” Strain said.

After engaging in close to 100 competitions together, Strain and McDonald retired from competitive dancing in 1989. Subsequently, they moved on to sharing other interests that included yachting. “She loved to sail,” Strain said.

Strain and McDonald never officially married, but they were together as a couple until her death in 2003. “I had 22 glorious years with her. I treated her like a queen, and she deserved it. She was a remarkable woman. She had skill, wisdom about the world in general that opened up more. I was not street smart like she was. She knew her way around then in the world,” Strain said.

Following McDonald’s death, Strain grieved deeply and had a profound void in his life. His dancing came to a halt, and his interest for many things dimin-

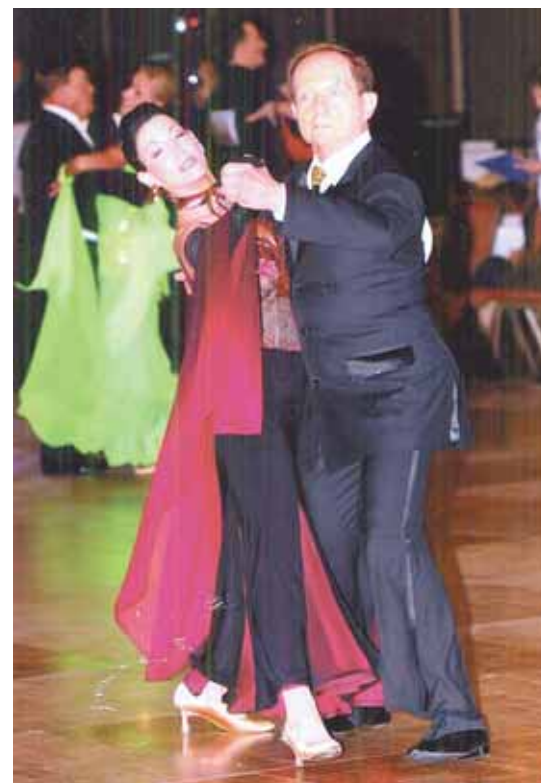


PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT STRAIN

ished amidst his grief and for the next several years.

Five years later, in 2008, Strain attended a local competition as a spectator. He observed a woman, Catherine Noblitt, competing with students.

“I first met Bob when he walked into a studio where I was attending the evening social dance. The owner spoke to Bob and thought I would be a good fit as his instructor and introduced us. We had a long conversation and then he disappeared into the night. A few months later, he called me to start scheduling dance lessons. He started out taking two lessons per week and gradually increased this number to six lessons per week,” Noblitt said.

For the past six years, Noblitt has been his dance partner. They have danced in approximately 50 competitions together. In addition to his lessons with Noblitt, they also dance on weekends and other nights of the week. “Dancing has enabled me to maintain an active lifestyle,” Strain said.

“As a female dance instructor, it is a little more challenging to find guys who want to compete. It has been wonderful working with Bob and competing with him over the past few years. He is very eager to get out there. He is very dedicated to his dancing and is a great source of inspiration for many. He works out at the gym, fits in as many lessons as he can and is happy to get out there and perform and compete. He has a positive attitude about the whole learning process and journey of ballroom dancing,” Noblitt said.

Strain’s passion and achievements in dancing have not gone unnoticed by friends. Melvin Russell, a long time friend and former housemate of Strain’s said, “I’ve known Bob for many years and have seen how dedicated he was and still is to practicing the international style of ballroom dancing. Perhaps the real eye opener for me was at a friend’s wedding reception where there was guest dancing after the wedding. There were a fair number of couples on the floor of varying dancing skills. But when Bob and his partner started dancing, people paid notice and before long they were the only couple on the floor. By the end of the dance, they received a hearty round of applause.”

Karen L. Bune is a freelance writer. She serves as an adjunct professor at George Mason University in Fairfax and Marymount University in Arlington.

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NEWS

Seeing Red

Arlington County approves new retail plan.

BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

After nearly four years, Arlington's new retail plan passed through the County Board on a 4-1 vote. But despite its "flexible new approach," many in the county took issue with the plan's restrictive "Red Streets." Use of Red Streets is limited specifically to retail, food, or entertainment establishments. Gold, Blue, and Green Streets are each decreasingly restrictive, but many of the main roads through Arlington neighborhoods are listed as red. Discussion in the audience and on the board surrounding the use of Red Streets consumed the majority of the discussion at the County Board's July 18 meeting.

According to the Retail Plan, the Red Streets are designed to work as clustered environments that allow customers to see all of the retail options at once. The core

problem, for some in Arlington, is that the Red category limits non-traditional retail spaces from Red Streets. While the plan was approved by many community organizations, each expressed concerns about the red zone restrictiveness.

Kate Roche, president and CEO of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, endorsed the plan and said she supported the generally less restrictive direction the retail plan went towards. Roche also noted that the plan is not regulatory, but is provided as a set of guidelines. This would later be one of the main factors in the County Board's decision to approve the plan. However, Roche said the Chamber of Commerce did have serious concerns with the red coloring on the map.

"Flexibility should be given to these properties to fit the retail objectives in the space best for the business," said Roche.

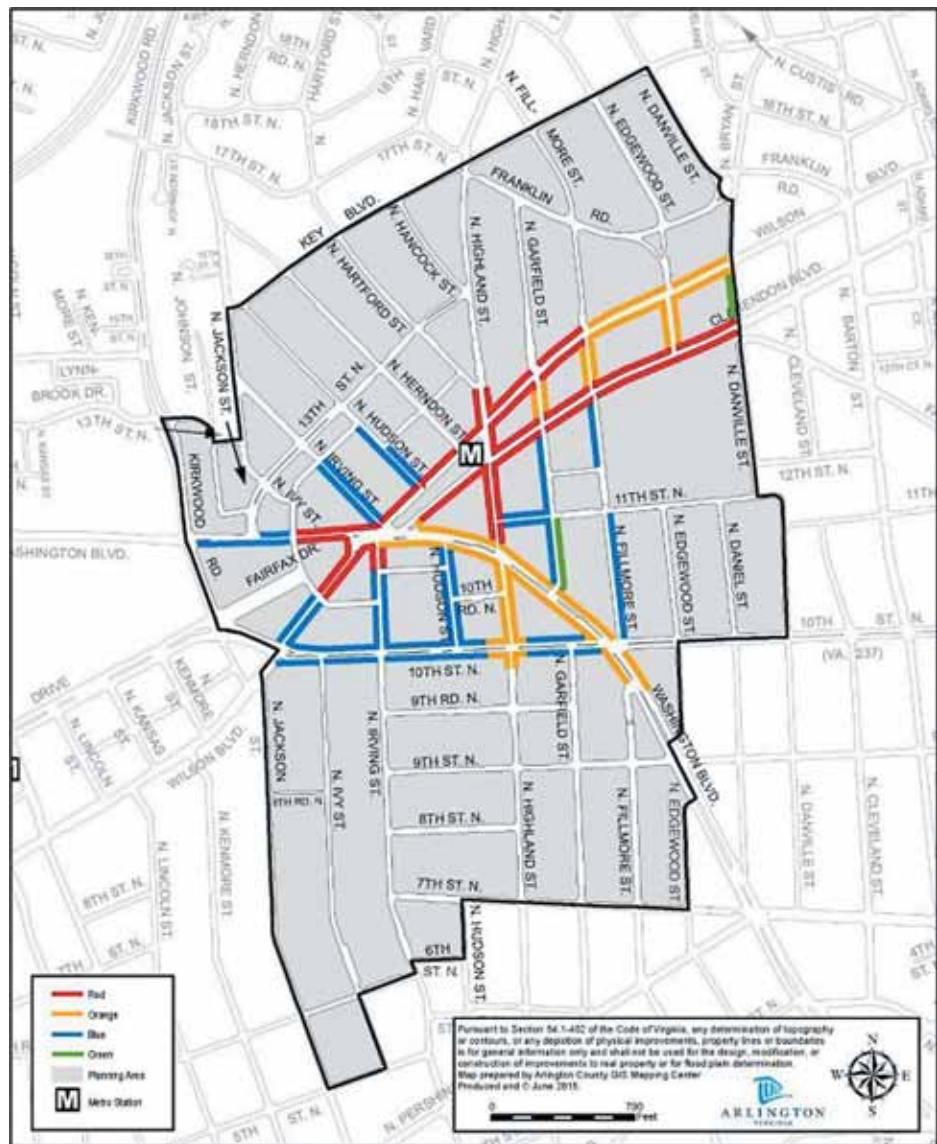
In a letter to the County Board, Mary-Claire Burick, president of the Rosslyn Busi-

ness Improvement Corporation, endorsed the retail plan but added: "We reiterate our suggestion that the Red category be more inclusive. We want to encourage active and thriving pedestrian streets by enabling various uses, such as hair salons and cafes, to coexist on primary retail streets without needing special exemptions through additional processes."

For some, however, the plan's problems made it unapprovable.

"A resolution calling for the County Board not to adopt the retail plan was passed [by the Civic Federation] in February, said Stephanie Pryor, president of the Arlington Civic Federation. "We saw fundamental

SEE NEW RETAIL PLAN, PAGE 9



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Red*	Gold*	Blue*	Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Design Standards: Exterior & Interior•Retail Sales•Food Establishments•Entertainment Establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Design Standards: Exterior & Interior•Retail Sales•Food Establishments•Entertainment Establishments•Services•Repairs•Retail equivalents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Design Standards: Exterior•Retail Sales•Food Establishments•Entertainment Establishments•Services•Repairs•Retail equivalents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•No Design Standards**•All uses as permitted by the Zoning Ordinance

* Other uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance may be approved, on a case-by-case basis, by the County Board.

** Other adopted design standards may apply.

Restrictions and classifications of Arlington County streets.

Deadbeats

Arlington County pursues child support payments.

BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

You should always pay your child support. But if you live in Arlington, you might want to take special care that the check in the mail makes it out on time. If you've been ignoring the court warnings about falling behind on payments, there's a good chance your face could be on the Arlington Sheriff's Office's "Deadbeat Parents" wall.

The program, started in 1996, targets enforcement of outstanding court-issued warrants for parents who are delinquent in their child support payments. The Sheriff's



Lt. Richard Laureano and Deputy Daisy Barbadillo with the Deadbeat Parents board.

PHOTO BY
VERNON MILES
CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

Office distributes "Top 5 Most Wanted Deadbeat Parents" posters and fliers throughout the area.

In the first year of the program, 36 parents were arrested on warrants for delinquent child support payments. Between July 2014 and 2015, the Sheriff's Office arrested 73 parents significantly behind on their payments. According to Deputy Daisy Barbadillo, who currently manages the program, the cases keep stacking up faster than the office can solve them. Barbadillo says that one or two new warrants for delinquent on child support come in every week, and they often only close one every two weeks.

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NEWS

Retirement Party But of course she will never retire.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

It was the retirement party for Gail Arnall, executive director for 10 years of Offender's Aid and Restoration (OAR). "But," as her friend from 1973, Belle O'Brien, said as she is putting flowers on each table, "if you believe she is retiring, you don't know Gail."

Arnall looks to the door of California Tortilla on Wilson Boulevard. "I can't believe my brother and sister from Arizona are here." Arnall's twin sister has just arrived with her brother. "Did you recognize her; she has white hair because she was born 10 minutes earlier." Arnall's brother, Bill Crotts, is a former offender who spent 6-1/2 years in prison. But she says it didn't influence her accepting this job; she had actually started it before he was incarcerated. She speculated it is ironic that this happened after she had already accepted this position.

OAR was established in 1974 by a group of women from Arlington who volunteered in the jails and saw a need for ongoing support of prisoners and ex-offenders. OAR's slogan is Strengthening Community Through Second Chances. Today it serves the county of Arlington and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church by working with individuals who have been incarcerated in Arlington or Alexandria detention facilities or anywhere in the country and are returning to one of these locations as well as individuals who are mandated by the Arlington or Falls Church courts to complete community service hours.

Arnall came to OAR from her own company, Phoebus Communications, where she did long-distance interactive learning projects for rural schools for 17 years. "The last one I did was called Safety Net and went to juvenile correctional facilities." That's what got her interested in this area. Since Arnall had been doing national projects she decided she needed to do something local. Arnall answered an ad in the Washington Post and ended up as OAR's executive director.



Gail Arnall with her staff and friends share a memory at her retirement party as executive director of OAR.

When she came to OAR, the budget was \$700 million with \$150 million in kind. Now it is \$1.2 million. The staff has grown and stabilized. "It is very important for our clients to have continuity." And she says one of the important things that has made her proudest is that her staff's salaries are now commensurate with those in other social services agencies. The number of clients serving community service has grown and, "Another thing that is so great about this jurisdiction is they can also pay their court fees through community service."

Dave Wiley, chair of the OAR Board, stops by to congratulate Arnall. "We can't make what we say positive enough," he said.

Arnall has faced obstacles. She says when she first took this job, no one wanted to talk about prisoner reentry or fund it. There was a sense that if people had messed up, they got what they deserved. She added that there is a lot of fear so she takes clients with her so people can see the former offenders as they really are, "Otherwise people just get their impressions from TV."

She has spent most of the past year doing outreach and some advocacy so that people understand what is going on in the criminal justice system. She adds that churches and civic groups are among the quickest to accept the need for helping prisoners with reentry.

She said it feels strange for people coming out of prison. "They think, 'People are being

nice to me; what do they want?' They have to learn a different reality. OAR welcomes them back and lets them know they want the person to be part of the community." Arnall said she is excited about a new intensive evidenced-based re-entry program starting this month based on the idea that before you can help a prisoner come home you have to know their risk factors. They come back with no family support or job to the same people they knew before they went in. There is a new 12-week class twice a week with a curriculum to help the prisoners change what they are thinking before they come out and to tailor their reentry plans directly to their risk factors.

Arnall said she had told the board when she was 70 she would retire. "But at 69, so many things I wanted to do were done. It was time, and I had a couple of things I wanted to do." So she asked if she could stay involved with OAR but not run it. Now her title is development and outreach consultant.

One of these projects is in Prince George's County which has 14,000 people return from incarceration each year but no reentry program. They have put in a proposal to the state of Maryland for funding a planning process. If funded, the organization that will likely lead this effort has asked Arnall to serve as an adviser.

OAR serves Arlington and Falls Church and also works with Alexandria, where they will be expanding their opportunities including providing services inside the Alexandria Detention Center, providing one-on-one employment assistance to clients released in Alexandria and working with families. For the last two years OAR received just over \$24,000 each year from the Alexandria Fund for Human Services to support its reentry program in Alexandria. They set up office hours on Fridays at Downtown Baptist Church on South Washington where they provided one-on-one case management and group classes. Arnall points to the success of the OAR program. In Virginia 26 percent return to prison after a year but in OAR among people who stay in the program, it is 8 percent.

Gardening Saved a Life

Mary Ulrich has a dream. She wants to set up a transitional Dream House for the two former prison inmates who currently work for her in Path to Freedom, her landscaping business, and for other workers to come. She wants to "grab hold of these guys," teach them, and to have a greenhouse in the back. Ulrich keeps her workers busy and they don't have time to get into trouble. But she added, "I don't just hire anybody; they have to be driven to change and want to take care of themselves."

Ulrich understands where they come from because she spent 8 and a half years in prison herself.

While she was there, she took gardening classes and got technical certifications in seven different areas. She taught other inmates the last five years and was in charge of the annual prison plant sale, open to the public, that on a budget of \$4,000 made \$14,000 in three hours.

She picked out all of the seeds, told each of her prison students what to grow, and knew how to grow all of the perennials. "It saved my life in prison where everyone is lying around with nothing to do. It was my peace. This might sound strange. But my grandfather was into plants a lot and he died while I was in prison. Working with plants was spiritual and reminded me of my grandfather. It helped me heal when he died," she said.

Two and a half years ago, when Ulrich got out of prison, she went to every nursery in Northern Virginia. "When they found out where I got my training, prison would be a deal breaker. It was the worst feeling in the world to get all ready for your interview and then get turned away."

In the next couple of years Ulrich got involved in the "ban the box" initiative that re-



Mary Ulrich used the proceeds from her first jobs to buy a scooter. She packs up her "little shovel and pair of shears" in her duffel bag and sometimes a few plants between her feet. OAR had been giving her metro tickets but she says the scooter freed her up to go wherever she got a job.

SEE GARDENING SAVED. PAGE 5

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Gardening Saved a Life

FROM PAGE 4

quired prospective workers to check a box on their job application indicating if they had ever been incarcerated. Then Ulrich went on a trip with Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR) to the Cherrydale Baptist Church and, “I spoke out about how nobody would hire me.” She said Geoffrey Gradler, a church member, hired her on the spot to do his lawn. “He offered to get me eyeglasses and a doctor’s exam but I didn’t want anybody to give me anything. So I worked for my glasses.” And OAR helped her with business cards. “They do give you an alternative way to live.”

“Geoff gave me a yard to work in. I would go there every day. It was my office in his backyard.” Then a neighbor hired her and that was the beginning. Now most of her clients are in Alexandria but some in Arlington, two in D.C. and a couple in Maryland. She says she likes networking. “It uses your hustling skills, but it’s legal.”

Ulrich said, “Community members are a lot better to give you a

break than a businessman. For them it is all black and white. And a community person has more to lose by taking a chance. They are letting me in to their home, the most precious part of their life.”

She said OAR encouraged her, and she saw one of their therapists every week. They didn’t tell her “I can’t. Everyone else told me what I needed to do and that I couldn’t start my own business.”

In the beginning OAR gave her metro tickets so she could get around but that limited where she could go for jobs. She was able to save money and buy herself a scooter. That freed her up to go wherever she needed to go. She rode it to jobs carrying her duffel bag with a little shovel and some pruning shears “and sometimes a few plants between my feet.”

Before, she couldn’t get a job, and now she gets a contractor discount.

She said, “This day is teasing me,” and tries to get in a little more work before the rain comes back again.

— SHIRLEY RUHE

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ENTERTAINMENT

TACT Finishes Run With 'Twelve Angry Men'

After 20 years of local theater productions, company set to close shop.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The American Century Theater (TACT) in Arlington is staging "Twelve Angry Men" as its final play, now through Aug. 8, at Gunston Theatre Two — culminating 20 years of staging local theater productions, and finishing off with the show that started it all.

TACT Artistic Director Jack Marshall is also the co-founder who directs an all-star cast of TACT veterans. He said the reason that he chose it for the last production was because "no other show more perfectly embodies what the company has been trying to achieve over the last 20 years."

To begin with, it was a production that he directed back in 1992 that sparked the idea for the company in the first place. "Twelve Angry Men" was the reason we are a company," he said.

He was contracted to do the play by the Association of Trial Lawyers of America for their board meeting at the Georgetown Law Center for one showing. Afterwards, they got to talking about there being no big drama productions by important writers like Tennessee Williams or Arthur Miller or Eugene O'Neill that were being produced by local community theater in D.C. during that time period.

After bouncing the idea off a few people and a visit to the Arts Incubator Program, which was just getting started in Arlington under the auspices of Jon Palmer Claridge, the idea was born to start their own theater company. "So we got a chance. We got a test run at this space (Gunston), and I said, let's do 'Twelve Angry Men' again."

"Twelve Angry Men" originated as a live teleplay by Reginald Rose in 1954; it was made into the 1957 film starring Henry

Fonda with elements of film noir. Written and co-produced by Rose and directed by Sidney Lumet, the film tells the story of a jury made up of 12 all-white men as they deliberate the guilt or acquittal of a defendant accused of killing his father.

Marshall, whose background is a lawyer, describes the play as a 12-person continuous scene "where none of the actors ever leave the stage for more than a second," he said. "One giant conversation. No one ever uses anyone's name. It's improvisational, ideally by nature. Like the film, it's about a whole jury. It's about what makes every one tick and switch back and forth ... It's a great experience."

Marshall said the show gave him the chance to cast the six or seven actors that have done the most work for TACT, and given the company their talent and time, and made it into what it is today.

"Every one of these 12 actors were invited by me personally," he said. "Everyone said 'yes, for the last TACT show I want to do it.'"

The ensemble includes five of the original cast members and all of them have worked in other shows and with each other, at TACT.

"They all know me. They are actors I've directed in shows in the double-figures. They know each other. We had instant trust and instant ensemble. I know how they like to work," said Marshall, who directed the show on four different occasions. "We got off to a flying start and we've been able to get into layers in this wonderful script that I've never touched before. It's a constant revelation and a constant joy to be able to do this with brilliantly talented people, but friends. There couldn't be a better final show."



PHOTO BY JOHANNES MARKUS

"Twelve Angry Men" is now showing through Aug. 8 at Gunston Theatre Two in Arlington.

At its beginning, he said he couldn't get the stage version of "Twelve Angry Men." "Those days, the only way we had that script was my wife had transcribed it off a tape recording of the movie," he said. "The film script worked beautifully on stage. It's continuous, it's in real time, it's an hour and 50 minutes intense."

Steve Lebens plays the role of Juror # 8, acted by Henry Fonda in the movie version, who starts off the problem that the jury has to face because he is the only one that will not vote guilty at the beginning of deliberations. "It's that classic story of one person standing up against a group of people who are of a different opinion," he said. "A lot of other jurors do see me as the troublemaker."

He added: "The challenge of finding this character's journey, and how he changes in the course of this two hours of deliberations, and where his flaws are — that was really fun to find."

He said it's a fun story to follow to see how it's going to come out — and how the audience is going to arrive at a solution. "But for everyone, I hope that they find it a compelling and fun night of theater with a great ensemble."

Mike Replogle plays Juror # 3, one of the main antagonists in the production. "He believes the boy is guilty and that all the facts point to the guilty verdict," he said. "He's one of these guys who likes to follow the rules; he doesn't like people to mess around too much with the rules."

He added: "What you'll see is that most of these people have their own agendas that sometimes have very little to do with the case itself ... about whether the boy is innocent or guilty."

In the original production that opened American Century Theater, he played Juror # 8. Now he's turning around and playing the head of the opposition. "And I have to tell you it's a real mind job. I have to think about it in a different way than I did before ... And I say, 'Wait a minute; no one can be that positive. You're a jury; you need to discuss this. It's a human being's life.'"

The American Century Theatre is staging "Twelve Angry Men" through Aug. 8 at Gunston Theatre Two, 2700 South Lang St in Arlington. Tickets are \$35 and \$40. To purchase tickets, call 703-998-4555 or visit www.americancentury.org.

Interviews for this story were conducted by Emily Morrison.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Make Your Own Pizza Summer

Activity. Tuesdays and Thursdays, through Aug. 27., 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Redrocks Neapolitan Bistro. At this summer event each child will be able to decorate a chef hat, then with the guidance of a master chef, will make their own pizza from start to finish. Other activities will be available. Tickets are \$10-15. Call 703-920-0706.

"Twelve Angry Men." Through Aug. 8, at various times at The Gunston Arts Center, Theatre II, 2700 S Lang

St. The American Century Theater perform their adaptation of the play detailing the story of dissenting jury members in a murder trial. General admission tickets are \$26-29 and \$23 for students and seniors. Visit www.americancentury.org.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Through Aug. 6, Wednesdays-Saturdays 8 p.m., Sundays 2 p.m. at Synetic Theater, 800 S Bell St. Watch a Shakespearean comedy about love and identity. Tickets are \$35 and up; \$20 and up for students; senior citizens and military receive a \$5 discount. Visit www.synetictheater.org.

"Screenshot" Exhibit. Through Aug. 23, Wednesday-Sunday, 12-5 p.m. at the Wyatt Resident Artists Gallery at Arlington Arts Center, 3500 Wilson Blvd. Roxana Alger Geffen's "Screenshot" exhibit reflects an interest in the structure of domestic life and the schedules and patterns

that order a life with small children. Geffen uses the graphics and content from the computer game Minecraft as a source of material for her solo exhibition. Free. Visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org/studios for more.

Crystal Screen. Mondays through Aug. 31 at sunset at 1851 S Bell St. Courtyard. Watch a projected film under the stars. This year's theme is espionage. Free. Visit www.crystalcity.org.

Barre in the Park. Thursdays through Sept., 6-7 p.m. at Gateway Park, 1300 Lee Highway. Lava Barre provides an outdoor fitness class focused on the ballet barre. Free. Visit www.rosslynva.org.

Fashion Truck Fridays. Last Friday of the month through September, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the corner of Lynn St. and Wilson Blvd. or the Plaza at 19th and N Moore St. Fashion trucks The G Truck, Curvy Chix Chariot, Tin

Lizzy Mobile Boutique, Zoe's Shoe Bar, The Board Bus, TNTN Unique Designs, Sheyla's Boutique, and The Pink Armoire will rotate their schedules to appear. Free to attend. Visit www.rosslynva.org for more.

"PLAY: Tinker, Tech & Toy" Art

Exhibit. Through Oct. 11, Wednesday-Sunday, 12-5 p.m. at the Arlington Arts Center, 3500 Wilson Blvd. "PLAY" is an exhibition that examines games and play through the lens of contemporary art. Free. Visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org/exhibitions/play for more.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 29

Lucky Gnocchi Day. 11 a.m.-11 p.m. at Piola, 1550 Wilson Blvd. Find all-you-can-eat Gnocchi served with a choice of sauces. Price varies. Visit www.piola.it.

"Chick Lit" Book Swap. 7-8 p.m. at Westover Branch Library, 1644 N

McKinley Road. Bring in used romance novels and swap them. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us.

Open Mic Night. 8 p.m. at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Free. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com or call 703-522-8340.

THURSDAY/JULY 30

Plaza on 19th Beer Garden. 4-8 p.m. at Plaza on 19th, 1901 N Fort Myer Drive. Listen to live music and drink wines from Washington Wine Academy. Must be 21 or older to enter. Free to attend; drinks \$5, food prices vary. Visit www.rosslynva.org.

Painting Party. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at P. Brennan's Irish Pub & Restaurant, 2910 Columbia Pike. Paint Ireland landscapes. Tickets are \$40. Visit www.pbrennans.com.

White Ford Bronco. 7 p.m. at Pentagon Row, 1101 S Joyce St.

ENTERTAINMENT

D.C.'s all-'90s band White Ford Bronco plays live. Free. VIP tickets, which include local beer and food samplings, start at \$10. Visit www.pentagonrow.com.

FRIDAY/JULY 31

David Koechner Live. 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. at Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike. Actor from “The Office” and “Anchorman” performs. Tickets cost \$22. Must be 21 or over unless accompanied by adult/guardian. Visit www.arlingtondrafthouse.com.

Pebble to Pearl. 8 p.m. at Lubber Run Amphitheater, 200 N Columbus St. Fusion of punk, rock and blues sounds. Free. Visit www.arlingtonarts.org.

Double Feature Concert. 9 p.m. at Iota Club & Café, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Live performances by Jumpin Jupiter and Izzy and the Catastrophics. Tickets are \$12. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com.

Open Mic & Talent Showcase. 10 p.m.-12 a.m. at Busboys and Poets, 4251 S Campbell Ave. All performers are welcome at this event hosted by Benny Blaq. Tickets are \$5. visit www.busboysandpoets.com.

SATURDAY/AUG. 1

Kickball Tournament. 7:30 a.m. at Long Bridge Park, 475 Long Bridge Drive. Local nonprofit Bridges to Independence, which provides transitional housing and other services for homeless women and families, is hosting a “Safe at Home” Kickball Tournament. Registration cost is \$750 for teams of 10-15. Visit www.arlington-kickball.com for more.

Book Talk. 10-11 a.m. at Busboys and Poets, 4251 Campbell Ave. Todd Green, author of “The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West,” will be discussing his book. Free. Visit www.thefearofislam.com.

Austrian Wine Class with Klaus Wittauer. 3:30-5 p.m. at Screwtop Wine Bar, 10205 N Fillmore St. Klaus Wittauer is responsible for much of the wine imported into the U.S. Attend this class to learn about and taste various wines. Contact Screwtop Wine Bar at 703-888-0845.

Youth Open Mic. 4-6 p.m. at Busboys and Poets, 4251 South Campbell Ave. Monthly series that features student poets, singers, musicians and actors. \$5 cover. Visit www.busboysandpoets.com.

Concert. 5-9 p.m. at Westover Beer Garden & Haus, 5863 Washington Blvd. Listen to jazz performed by The Star Dust Dance Band with Bill Cleary and other Arlington residents. Free. Visit www.westovermarket.com.

Music Performance. 6-8 p.m. at Netherlands Carillon, Arlington Blvd. and Meade St. Classical music artist Doug Gefvert will be performing. Free. Visit www.nps.gov or call 703-289-2555.

257th Army Band. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Pentagon Row, 1201 S Joyce St. The band of the Nation's Capital teams up with Rock at the Row for a special Saturday night concert. Free. VIP tickets, which include local beer and food samplings, start at \$10. Visit www.pentagonrow.com.

Author Event. 7-8 p.m. at One More Page Books, 2200 N Westmoreland Street #101. Author T.L. Leon will be speaking about his book, “The Rainbows Inside of Me.” Free. Visit www.onemorepagebooks.com/events.html.

David Koechner Live. 7 and 10 p.m. at Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike. Actor from “The Office” and “Anchorman” performs. Tickets cost \$22. Must be 21 or over unless accompanied by adult/

guardian. Visit www.arlingtondrafthouse.com.

Sara Gray. 8 p.m. at Lubber Run Amphitheater, 200 N Columbus St. Country singer who has opened for the Zac Brown Band and Miranda Lambert. Free. Visit www.arlingtonarts.org.

Benefit for the Josh Anderson Foundation. 9 p.m. Early show 4-6 p.m. at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Performances for all ages from groups, The Landing and Plexus. Call 703-522-8340.

SUNDAY/AUG. 2

Signature Theatre Open House. 12-8:30 p.m. at Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. Live performances, demonstrations, master classes, exclusive conversations with artists, the debut of the Signature Voice Competition, a special Cake Off – Cake Decorating Competition and a Broadway on the Plaza grand finale. Free. Visit www.sigtheatre.org.

The Loop. 6 p.m. at Lubber Run Amphitheater, 200 N Columbus St. The acoustic rock group covers old classics along with their original material. Free. Visit www.arlingtonarts.org.

MONDAY-SATURDAY/AUG. 3-29

Art Show. 5-8 p.m. at Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Drive. Attend the new art show, “Hiding in Plain Sight,” which includes paintings that have concealed images. Free. Visit www.galleryunderground.org/events/.

TUESDAY/AUG. 4

Book Club. 1-2:30 p.m. at Shirlington Branch Library, 4200 Campbell Ave. Discuss “The Garden of Evening Mists: A Novel” by Tan Twan Eng. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us/eventscalender/.

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 5

Open Mic Night. 8 p.m. at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com or call 703-522-8340.

WEDNESDAYS/AUG. 5, 12, 19 AND 26.

Expert Garden Talk. 7-8 p.m. at Arlington Central Library, 1015 N Quincy St. Aug. 5, the discussion topic is “Vegetables for Fall”; Aug. 12, the discussion topic is “Composting: Why and How”; Aug. 19, the discussion topic is “Food Preservation: Canning, Drying, Freezing” (Arlington Central Library Auditorium); Aug. 26: “Tour of Central Library Gardens.” Free. Visit library.arlingtonva.us.

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY/AUG. 5-9

Arlington County Fair. Various times at Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 Second St. South. Explore exhibits and entertainment as well as rides. Ride prices vary, indoor exhibits and entertainment free. Visit arlingtoncountyfair.us.

THURSDAY/AUG. 6

The Reagan Years. 7 p.m. at Pentagon Row, 1201 S Joyce St. America's premier 1980s tribute band plays live in concert. Free. VIP tickets, which include local beer and food samplings, start at \$10. Visit www.pentagonrow.com.

Young Adult Panel Discussion. 7-8 p.m. at One More Page Books, 2200



IMAGE COURTESY OF ANNA SCHALK



IMAGE COURTESY OF REBECCA MCNEELY

From top left: “Catching the Dream,” “Sunset over Wetlands,” “Bottles by Candlelight”

‘Hiding in Plain Sight’

Gallery Underground’s “Hiding in Plain Sight” exhibit features work in which artists were challenged to hide an icon somewhere within completed work. Viewers are encouraged to look closely to find the symbols. The exhibit will run alongside the August Members Show, Aug. 3-28 at 2100 Crystal Drive. The joint opening reception will be held on Friday, Aug. 7, 5-8 p.m. Visit www.galleryunderground.org for more.



IMAGE COURTESY OF JANE COONCE

N Westmoreland St., #101. Featured speakers are Dahlia Adler, Jessica Spotswood, Miranda Kenneally and Lindsay Smith. Free. Visit www.onemorepagebooks.com/events.html.

Stewart Huff Comedy Show. 8 p.m. at Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike. Comedian Stewart Huff performs live. Tickets are \$5. Call 412-695-4807.

Outdoor Movie. 8:45 p.m., weather-permitting, at Central Library lawn, Washington Blvd. side, 1015 N Quincy St. Watch “Empire Records” (1995), rated PG-13. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us/eventscalender/.

FRIDAY/AUG. 7

Art Show Opening Reception. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Dr. Enjoy wine and food and discuss “Hiding in Plain Sight”, a new art show juried by Arlington Artists Alliance members. Free. Visit www.galleryunderground.org.

Run With A Ranger. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. at Bluemont Park, 601 N Manchester St. Patrons age 12 and older may participate in a 3-4 mile run with a park ranger along County trails. No registration required. Call 703-525-0168 or email bdurman@arlingtonva.us for more.

Wine Tasting. 6:30-8 p.m. at One More Page Books, 2200 N Westmoreland St. #101. Taste new wines and foods. Free. Visit www.onemorepagebooks.com/events.html.

Arlingtonians Skate at Kettler. 7:10-8:10 p.m. at Kettler Capitals IcePlex, 627 N Glebe Road, Suite 800. Arlington County residents are invited to take advantage of a \$1 fee for both admission and skate rentals at the IcePlex. Visit www.kettlercapitalsiceplex.com.

U.S. Air Force Band Concert. 8 p.m. at The Air Force Memorial, 1 Air Force Memorial Drive, Arlington. This concert is offered as a public service. Outdoor concerts are subject to weather cancellation. Free. Visit www.usafband.af.mil.

Sarah Colonna Live. 10 p.m. at Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike. Comedian from

“Chelsea Lately” performs. Tickets cost \$22. Must be 21 or over unless accompanied by adult/guardian. Visit www.arlingtondrafthouse.com.

SATURDAY/AUG. 8

Refinery29 Style Festival. 1-6 p.m. at the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, 1100 S Hayes St. Refinery29.com has teamed up with Simon Malls for a day of musical performances, curated indie boutiques and shopping opportunities, a “Beauty” and “DIY Stage.” Free to attend. Visit www.simon.com/stylefestival for more.

Musical Performance. 6-8 p.m. at Netherlands Carillon, Arlington Blvd. and Meade St. Classical music artist Margaret Pan will be performing. Free. Visit www.nps.gov or call 703-289-2555.

Concert. 8:30 p.m. at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Performances from The Beanstalk Library, Quiet Hollers, Ms. Shevaugn and Yuma Wray. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com or call 703-522-8340.

Sarah Colonna Live. 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. at Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike, Arlington. Comedian from “Chelsea Lately” performs. Tickets cost \$22. Must be 21 or over unless accompanied by adult/guardian. Visit www.arlingtondrafthouse.com.

SUNDAY/AUG. 9

Iota Poetry Series. 6- 8 p.m. at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Free. Local poets read work aloud. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com or call 703-522-8340.

MONDAY/AUG. 10

Mount Vernon Children’s Theatre Auditions. 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. Auditions for the production of “Mary Poppins.” Ages 8-10 tryout from 5:30-7 p.m., ages 11-18 from 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Visit www.mvct.org.

TUESDAY/AUG. 11

Artist Talk and Reception. 7-8:30 p.m. at Cherrydale Branch Library, 2190 N. Military Road. Artist talk and reception at “Ice and Sky,” an exhibit of images by Great Falls photographer Robin Kent who spent a week photographing the Antarctic Peninsula earlier this year. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us/locations/cherrydale-branch-library/.

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 12

Spanish Inspired Art Jam. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Jaleo, 2250 Crystal Drive. Paint Spanish-inspired art, eat and drink. Tickets are \$20-25 dollars. Visit www.artjamzdc.com/crystal-city-artjamz-at-jaleo/ to purchase tickets.

Open Mic Night. 8 p.m. at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com or call 703-522-8340.

THURSDAY/AUG. 13

The Rockets. 7 p.m. at Pentagon Row, 1201 S Joyce St. American cover band host a night of dancing and fun. Free. VIP tickets, which include local beer and food samplings, start at \$10. Visit www.pentagonrow.com.

Outdoor Movie. 8:45 p.m. at Arlington Public Library, 816 S Walter Reed Drive. Watch “The Great Gatsby” (2013), rated PG-13. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us/eventscalender/.

FRIDAY/AUG. 14

The United States Air Force Band-Concert Band & Singing Sergeants. 8 p.m. at The Air Force Memorial, 1 Air Force Memorial Dr. Attend a wreath-laying ceremony at 7:45 followed by a concert, “Honoring the Greatest Generation.” Admission is free. Visit www.usafband.af.mil.

Wytold Lebing Quartet. 8 p.m. at Lubber Run Amphitheater, 200 N Columbus St. Wytold has played original pieces alongside the National Symphony Orchestra. Free. Visit www.arlingtonarts.org.

Illinois De-Commit Ohanian Faces Uncertain Future

Bishop O'Connell softball standout training in California.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Patty Maye Ohanian arrived in Mission Viejo, Calif., on Friday to train for what she called her “most important” travel softball tournament of the year.

Ohanian, a rising junior pitcher and slugger on the Bishop O'Connell softball team, plays travel ball for the SoCal Bandits, a Huntington Beach-based branch of the Illinois-based Beverly Bandits. Ohanian and her teammates will compete in the 16U premier division of the Premier Girls Fastpitch tournament Aug. 1-8.

Travel softball tournaments are nothing new to Ohanian, a competitive and driven athlete who has dedicated countless hours to her craft. But this tournament has taken on added importance after a coaching change at the University of Illinois shifted Ohanian's softball future into a state of uncertainty.

Ohanian spent most of her 10U-16U travel seasons playing for the Vienna Stars. She also played one season with Virginia Glory and attended multiple camps with the goal of getting noticed by college coaches.

Ohanian's hard work paid off with a full scholarship offer from the University of Illinois. Ohanian, then a freshman at Lake Braddock Secondary School, committed to the Fighting Illini.

The following year, Ohanian transferred to Bishop O'Connell and excelled in both the pitcher's circle and the batter's box. She posted a 1.75 ERA in 44 innings pitched, and batted .594 with nine home runs and 57 RBIs in 30 games. She was named VISAA state Player of the Year and was a first-team All-Met selection by the Washington Post.

“People ask me [about the effects of committing early] a lot,” Ohanian wrote in an email. “They ask me if I got lazy. They ask me if I stopped practicing. The answer is: No. I don't play softball for the scholarship.

I play softball to be the best I can be. I am not naturally the ‘perfectly built softball player.’ I'm ‘too short’ to be a pitcher, and I'm ‘not from the right area.’

“Every day I take off, someone else is taking advantage of it. The only thing that changed for me was how much more I knew I had to work hard to compete in the Big 10. Everyone who watches me play tells me I seem very intense, and I am. I mentally challenge myself every pitch of every game because I know how intense college will be. I play because I love to compete, with myself and others. I want to see how far I can take this thing.”

Things were going smoothly for Ohanian until Terri Sullivan, who spent 16 years as head coach of the Illinois softball program, announced in early June that she would retire. Ohanian, who listed Sullivan as one of the main reasons she committed to Illinois, retweeted the coach's retirement announcement from the Illini Softball Twitter account.

“Going into my unofficial visit, I was timid, knowing nothing about the university,” Ohanian wrote. “When I met the coaches, I felt unbelievably at home. The head coach that recruited me, Coach Sullivan, and her assistants, Coach [Donna] DiBiase and Coach [Katie] O'Connell, were exactly what I was looking for in coaches. They were athletic, and energetic. My personality fits well with that type of leadership. After looking into the university, I found out how great of a school it was academically, too.”

How did Ohanian react to the news of Sullivan's retirement?

“My initial reaction was very upset,” she wrote. “I was sitting in [O'Connell] Coach [Tommy Orndorff's] office during lunch one day when I got a text from one of the recruits telling me what had happened. As I said before, one of the main things I liked about the school so much was her, and once she was gone it felt like what I had imag-

ined it to be like was all gone.”

Less than a month later, Illinois hired Tyra Perry as head coach. According to Ohanian, “the commitment fell through about a week later.”

“Pitching is a hard thing,” Ohanian wrote. “Some coaches want power pitchers, some want junky movement pitchers. Some want 6-foot-tall girls and some want girls like me (5 feet 8). The new coach and I weren't a good fit, personality-wise or pitching-wise.”

After committing early in her high school career and seemingly saving herself from a stressful process down the road, Ohanian finds herself uncommitted entering her junior year.

“The early college softball recruiting has gotten out of hand,” Ohanian wrote. “Girls in the seventh and eighth grade commit to colleges. There was no specific reason why I committed then, to be honest. It was normal. I was right on schedule with all other 2017 pitchers who want to compete at the highest collegiate level.”

When asked what she meant by softball recruiting getting “out of hand,” Ohanian mentioned several reasons.

“I said that because softball is one of the earliest sports that recruit,” Ohanian wrote. “Girls in the seventh and eighth grade commit to college, similar to me. The problem with this is that five or six years is a long time in the collegiate athletics business. Coaches can change, and even more than once, in that time period. Girls can peak early, and not get any better from their eighth grade year on. Or, girls can peak late, but by the time they're up to speed, spots are already filled.

“The early recruiting puts players, parents, and coaches in tough positions and forces them to make decisions that seventh and eighth graders should not be making. A lot of the time, everything works out, but the amount of times things change or go wrong after a player commits early and then de-commits for various reasons is growing



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Bishop O'Connell rising junior Patty Maye Ohanian de-committed from the University of Illinois during the summer.

too fast.”

Ohanian is confident everything will work out. “On my travel team, we have girls going to DePaul, ASU, Louisville, Southern Utah, and Miami of Ohio, but we also have many other girls who have not committed,” Ohanian wrote. “All that changes now is that I go back into the pool of girls who are not committed. There are plenty of Division I schools who still need pitchers and hitters. I know what I want in a school, I know how far away I want to go, and what I like and dislike in programs and coaches now. I truly believe I learned a lot from this experience.”

Next up for Ohanian is the Premier Girls Fastpitch tournament.

“This tournament is the most important of the year, so it was definitely important all year long,” Ohanian wrote, “although now that I de-committed, I know the importance of performing well in front of all the scouts that will be at the tournament.”

SWIM NOTES



WGCC's Richard Gentry breaks boys' 14&U CCSDA breaststroke record.



WGCC's Mackie Repke swims boys' 8&U free.



WGCC's Caitlin O'Connor swims girls' 8&U breaststroke.



WGCC's Lindsay Lukehart swims girls' 14&U backstroke.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

WGCC Defends Division A Title

On July 20, the five top teams of the Country Club Swimming and Diving Association gathered for the Division-A “Divisional” Championship swim meet. The Washington Golf and Country Club Lightning have easily defeated all of their competition this season and this meet was no exception.

The Lightning's speed, depth, and power were too much for the other teams. WGCC defended its title as Division A champs and continued its undefeated season.

The final scores were: WGCC 425; Kenwood 285; Army-Navy 235; Congressional 169.5; and Chevy Chase 101.5.

Richard Gentry broke a CCSDA league and WGCC team record in the boys' 14&U 50-meter breaststroke, with a time of 31.04 (he broke his own record that he had set earlier this season).

Double winners for the Lightning were: Jack Carman (boys' 12&U IM, fly); Ryan Baker (boys' 18&U IM, back); Petie Nassetta (girls' 14&U free, back); Kiera Johnson (girls' 10&U back, fly); and Luke Bernasek (boys' 10&U back, fly).

Single winners were: Amanda DiMeglio (girls' 12&U IM); Avery Nassetta (girls' 12&U free); Will Scribner (boys' 8&U breast); Lily Darcey (girls' 10&U breast); Liam Thomson (boys' 10&U breast); Charlotte Thomson (girls' 12&U breast); Richard

Gentry (boys' 14&U breast); George Cranwell (boys' 18&U breast); Kate Loper (girls' 8&U fly); and Jillian Johnson (girls' 14&U fly).

Winning relay teams for the Lightning were: boys' junior medley relay (Thomas Outlaw, Rajan Bhargava, Arav Bhargava, Mackie Repke); girls' senior medley relay (Petie Nassetta, Amanda DiMeglio, Kirby Nassetta, Rowan Clancy); and boys' senior medley relay (Ryan Baker, Richard Gentry, Jack Carman, Lucas Zidlicky).

Pursuing Child Support Payments

FROM PAGE 3

Currently, there are 224 warrants for delinquent child support for 170 parents who, at least at one point, lived in Arlington.

"We have to investigate and execute a lot of addresses that aren't valid," said Barbadillo.

Once the police determine that the parent doesn't live at the listed address, the police go to social media. The police have several online outlets they use to investigate current whereabouts of the parents in question, but often it can be as easy as checking Facebook.

In cases where it isn't easy, Barbadillo says their next step is to cross the courtyard to the jail and see if the parents had previously been arrested. If they had, Barbadillo says she checks the visitors and contact lists. Often, though, the "deadbeat parent" comes to them, in one way or another.

Many of the cases are resolved when the parent is arrested for another crime, and it's discovered that he or she is also delinquent on child support payments. But Barbadillo also says one of the most common cases is that someone either failed to realize they were behind on their payments or underestimates the gravity of violating a court order. Once they're contacted by the Sheriff's Office, many parents immediately turn themselves in and pay what they owe, Barbadillo says. Many owe money from years ago and didn't realize that the overdue pay-

ments don't expire when the child turns 18. This is why, when calling employers searching for the employee, Barbadillo says she'll never tell them why she's looking for the individual. If the parent is holding down a steady job, Barbadillo says she wouldn't want to compromise that in an attempt to extract the due payment.

According to Lt. Richard Laureano, parents who can't make the payment because of job loss or other circumstances can petition a judge for a reduction in payments.

"We're enforcers of the law," said Laureano, "the court establishes the restitution."

There's no equivalent program in the rest of Northern Virginia as aggressively pursuing "deadbeat parents." Barbadillo says budget cuts at many departments have been a major reason. But Major Susie Doyle, director of administration in the Arlington County Sheriff's Office, said the only funding that goes into the program is the single deputy working as the program's primary contact. Additionally, Doyle noted that there is no overtime for the Deadbeat Parents program, it's in addition to her regular work as a Sheriff's Deputy.

"It's all on her dedication and her initiative," said Doyle. "She does this on her own."

"I have a child, I know it's expensive," said Barbadillo. "It's not fair for one parent to have to handle that on their own."

New Retail Plan Approved

FROM PAGE 3

problems with the retail plan. The restrictive red did shrink, but many remain issues remain. We need more policy flexibility."

Like Burick, Pryor pointed to the example that hair salons would be unable to operate in red spaces, as would dog-care locations in areas listed as "light industrial."

"The existing structure does not allow for technological advancement, flexibility, or modern businesses that are constantly evolving," said Pryor. "The Retail Plan is proposing even more restrictions against retail equivalent, personal services, and innovative out-of-the-box concepts. We will lose economic growth and businesses to other, less onerous jurisdictions. There's still too much restrictive red."

On the County Board, even among those who supported the plan, there was acknowledgement that deep concerns remained about the Red Streets.

"We do still need the Red Streets," said County Board Member Jay Fissette, "but we want to expand

the range of services. We should open up red to more than what is there now: personal services and repairs, not just retail equivalents."

The County Board tinkered with the language of the plan, including adding services and repair uses to the Red Streets' potential stores. Additional wording specified that the resolution is not regulatory, but guidance.

"It was not a good plan when it started out," said County Board Member John Vihstadt, "but it's made leaps forward and ... we've made a number of positive adjustments. There is no codification in this document."

However, County Board Member Libby Garvey wasn't sold on the plan and was the only vote against its approval.

"The people who have to make it work and the people we serve are saying it's too prescriptive," said Garvey. "If you've got the people who need to make this happen telling us it's not going to work, I'm thinking it's not going to work."

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 8/12/2015.....HomeLifeStyle
 8/19/2015...A+ Camps & Schools – Back to School – Private Schools
 8/26/2015.....Newcomers & Community Guide Pullout

SEPTEMBER
 9/2/2015.....Wellbeing
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On A Tangent



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I live day-to-day or even month-to-month, but I do live – in my head anyway – quarter-to-quarter; that interval representing the usual and customary time between my recurring diagnostic scans. The time when the rubber hits my road. The time when push comes to shove. The time when my oncologist tells me whether my warranty has been extended for the next three months or not. Not that I anticipate that my time will run out that quickly after a disappointing scan result; still, bad news seems to travel faster and cause adverse consequences quicker than good news causes relief, a sort of “disharmony,” to quote James Cagney from the movie, “Mister Roberts.”

But what else is new? Nothing, really. Because to live the life of a cancer survivor is way better than not living, or casting yourself as a victim, which, for those who know me, know I never do. Where’s the future in that? Blaming, “woeing-is-meing,” “self-disatisfying?” To what end? Misery might like company but it’s boring to be around miserable people. And to survive a potentially devastating and depressing set of circumstances – expected or not – associating and/or being exposed to/subjected to people who look at life through black-rose-colored glasses provides no help whatsoever.

I don’t want to feel better about myself by being around people who feel worse about themselves. I want to feel better by being around people who feel good and act/behave positively. Strength may indeed come from numbers, as they say; but when you’re a cancer patient/survivor, strength comes from attitude: yours, your fellow cancer survivors and the people with whom you surround yourself. I don’t want to have overcome someone else’s negativity. I want to be overcome by their positivity. I want/need to feel good about everything I do/attempt to do. I don’t want/definitely don’t need to feel/be made to feel bad about anything. Granted, it’s a subtle line between encouragement and disappointment where you might be suggesting one thing and minimizing another. Yet, finding a middle ground becomes imperative. Not that cancer patients’ psyches are fragile and easily affected by the words and deeds of others; however, cancer does exert some subconscious and even unconscious control and consequently, you might end up feeling/emoting/reacting differently than you ever have or ever anticipated. As an example: I tear up regularly while watching television, and not just at “tear-jerkers,” either: news, weather, sports, comedies, dramas, fiction, non-fiction; anything, everything.

Mastering one’s domain, in a non-Seinfeld-type context is crucial to surviving a cancer ordeal. Taking the ups and downs and all-arounds in some sort of stride, even two steps forward and one step backward isn’t so bad. At least your net movement is forward. And forward is the goal. Certainly I’m not looking forward to my next scan in October but it is something to look forward to; it’s progress, sort of; it means that life is still being lived. It’s not ideal, but ideal left the building on February 27, 2009 when I received my initial face-to-face diagnosis/prognosis. Nevertheless, I remain positive about my negative. In my opinion, the alternative serves no purpose.

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

LETTERS

Lift U.S. Ban On Oil Exports

By NICOLETTE NYE

Forty years ago, at the height of the 1970s energy crisis, Congress passed a law banning exports of oil from the lower 48 states. The law was intended to limit America’s dependence on imported oil by keeping domestic oil from leaving the country. It was not successful – oil imports continued to climb for decades. But the law stayed on the books.



The export ban isn’t just unhelpful, it’s actually doing damage to the economy, consumers and to national security. The good news is that momentum is building in Congress on legislation to lift the ban on U.S. oil exports. Doing so would create jobs, enhance energy independence, strengthen national security, and would cost American taxpayers nothing.

America’s energy picture in 2015 differs vastly from what it was in 1975. Technological innovations in exploration and production have made the U.S. the world’s leading oil and gas producer. The energy boom has been a vital component of the country’s long, difficult recovery from the “great recession,” accounting for the majority of the net job creation over the past five years. Even here in the east coast region, oil production has tripled in just the last five years. It’s important to keep this economic growth going.

The reasons for repealing the oil export ban are numerous. The export ban is helping prop up world oil prices by keeping American crude off global markets. That’s helping our oil-producing adversaries like Russia and Iran, and hurting our oil-importing allies who would prefer to buy American oil instead. It’s also hurting American consumers. Studies on the economic impact of the export ban show that we are paying up to 13 cents a gallon more for gasoline than we would without the ban.

Legislation has been introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate to repeal this outdated law. Doing so will benefit consumers, bolster our economy, and enhance our national security. Repealing this 40-year old law is the right thing to do for our country and for Virginia.

Nicolette Nye is vice president of communications and industry affairs at the National Ocean Industries Association, a retired U.S. Navy chief petty officer and a resident of Arlington.

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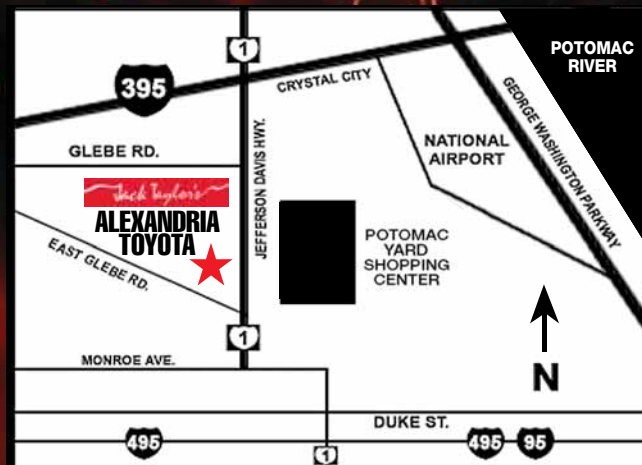
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