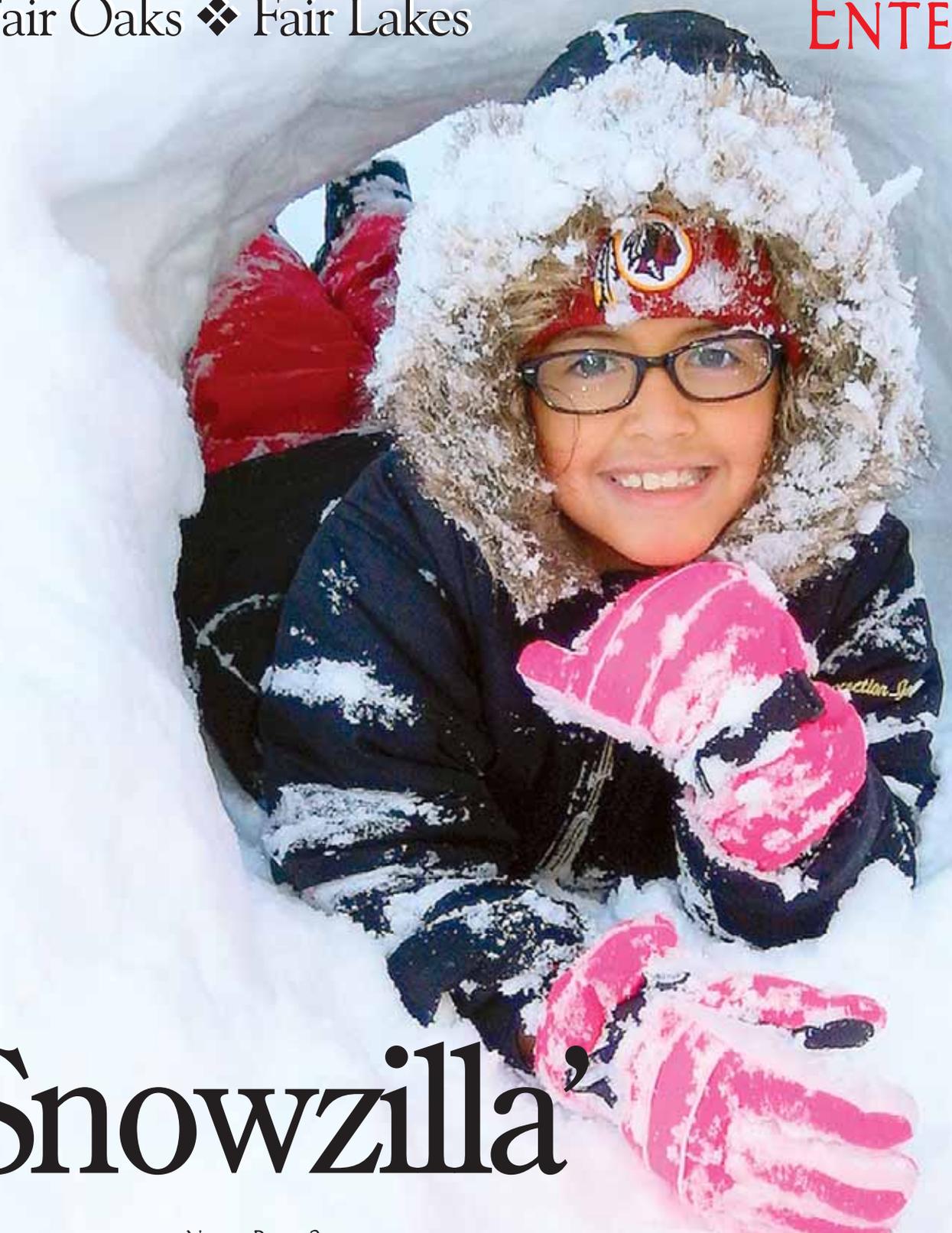


Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ❖ Fair Lakes

WINTER FUN & ENTERTAINMENT,

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Sophia Sentz, 8, looks out of her snow tunnel on Sunday morning.

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

'I've Got a Golden Ticket'

"American Idol" sends Westfield's Sara Sturm to Hollywood.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It's too early to know whether Centreville resident Sara Sturm will be the next American Idol; but at least, she has a chance. That's because, after auditioning on the singing-competition show that aired Jan. 13 on national TV, she received a golden ticket to Hollywood.

"I was nervous and so scared when I went on, but it was so worth it," said the Westfield High senior. "I believed in myself that I could get the golden ticket; and when I got it, I was just in shock. Then I ran outside to my family and we had a celebration."

Her parents are Judy and Bob Sturm of Sully Station I, and her brother Josh is a junior at James Madison University. She's been in choir all four years at Westfield and is team manager of the boys' varsity lacrosse team. She's also a pop/R&B singer who hopes to major in voice at Middle Tennessee State University or Belmont University after graduation.

Sturm's goal is to "make it in the music industry and become a professional singer. I can't imagine doing anything else, at this point." She just turned 18, but was 17 when she auditioned for "American Idol" last August in Philadelphia. "I've been watching all these [music-competition] shows for years and thought, 'I can do that, too,'" she said.

In 2014, she tried out for a similar show, "The Voice," and, out of 50,000 hopefuls nationwide, Sturm was chosen as one of the top 100 contestants. But all the coaches' teams filled up moments before it was her



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Siblings Sara and Josh Sturm at the viewing party.



Celebrating her ticket to Hollywood are (from left) Josh, Sara, Judy and Bob Sturm; Sara's uncle, Brian Pullen; and her grandmother, June Cowles.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
CH PHOTOGRAPHY

turn to audition for them. Yet, she didn't give up — and she also attracted the attention of the producers and vocal coaches. So the following year, she was invited to audition for FOX-TV's 15th and final season of "American Idol."

Besides attending school, Sturm is also a hostess/waitress at Chantilly's Eggspectation restaurant. And during her audition before judges Jennifer Lopez, Keith Urban and Harry Connick Jr., she mentioned some funny things that had happened at her job. "They loved how Eggspectation was a play on words," said Sturm.

Then she wowed them with her rendition of the song, "Lips Are Movin,'" by Meghan Trainor. "It's an upbeat song that I thought really fit my voice and personality," said Sturm. The judges agreed, giving her three "yes" votes.

Lopez called her "fearless" and a "really good singer," and Urban said he also liked Sturm's confidence. "I think you're pretty special and have a sound that belies your years," Connick told her. "I think you're adorable and I liked your voice."

Then, unable to resist a few puns, Urban said, "You did meet our 'eggspectations.'" Handing Sturm her golden ticket, Lopez said, "Just a little yolk." And Connick said, "Omelet [I'm going to let] you through to Hollywood."

Afterward, said the teen, "It went well; but when I first saw them, I was so star-struck. I thought, 'OMG, this is real.' And Jennifer Lopez literally generated light."

On Jan. 13, Eggspectation hosted a viewing party for Sturm, her family and friends so they could all watch her audition on TV together. The gathering of some 70 people included her friends from school, coaches and her choir teacher.

"Everyone was so excited, they started screaming when I walked into the room," she said. "And it was crazy seeing myself on TV — it's an experience I'll never forget."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Sara Sturm with her golden ticket.

musicians," said Bob Sturm. "My dad played backup piano for [legendary jazz trumpeter] Tommy Dorsey, both my sisters went to Juilliard and I studied voice in college. My wife and I and our whole family are incredibly proud of Sara."

"I'm just really excited about her future," added her brother at the viewing party. "She's an amazing talent and, from here, she can only go up. Anything's possible. And seeing everyone who came here tonight, you can see how much she means to other people."

to other people."

After Sturm's performance, she got 300 new followers on Instagram, and even country music superstar and former "Idol" winner Carrie Underwood tweeted and told Sturm she's "adorable."

The show doesn't allow her to reveal how things went for her in Hollywood, so fans will just have to keep tuning in to find out. Meanwhile, she said, "Thank you to all my friends and family who supported me. And anyone out there who believes in themselves shouldn't hold back; take that opportunity [to follow your dream] and don't wait."



From left are Sara Sturm with friend and Westfield grad Justine Johnson.

PHOTO BY
BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION

'Snowzilla,' the Blizzard of 2016

Last weekend's (Jan. 22-23) historic blizzard closed schools, government, stores and businesses while burying the local area in more than 30 inches of snow. Here are some photos taken in Fair Oaks.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS



Andre Walter takes a break from shoveling out his car to pick up his son, Sirron, almost 2.



Lula Sentz, 4, peeks out of the snow tunnel she built.



Kate Chung, 2, is proud of her snowman.



Ryan Jones takes his children, Cooper, 2, and Ellie, 9, for a walk in the snow.



A woman braves Saturday afternoon's driving snow to clear off her car.



Sam Zandi shovels the wall of snow barricading his vehicle.



Early Sunday morning, a dad digs out his buried car while his son looks on.



During Saturday's (Jan. 23) blizzard, all that's visible of the cars in the foreground are their windshield wipers.

'Disappointing, Not Surprising'

Bills to rein in predatory lending die in Senate committee.

Have you ever paid 36 percent interest on a loan or credit card? Not likely. It's an outrageous rate, especially given that the actual cost of money is close to zero right now.

But right now, some people in Northern Virginia are paying more than 200 percent on loans secured by their car title. These are people who are both financially desperate and financially unsophisticated, who likely assume that regulation would keep a lender from bleeding them dry with unrestricted interest rates.

Predatory lending is a local issue, with car title lenders congregating in lower income areas like along Route 1 in the Mount Vernon area, and also queuing up near the border with Prince George's County, Md., where car title lending is illegal.

Earlier this week, a Virginia Senate committee killed a bill that would have capped consumer loan interest rates at 36 percent. It's hard

EDITORIAL

to believe, but right now there are no limits to the interest rates that can be charged in Virginia. And car title lenders, which are not consumer loans, often have effective interest rates of more than 200 percent.

"Predatory lending is a major problem in the U.S. 1 Corridor," said Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36), who introduced the failed legislation to curb predatory lending. "Car title lenders have been abusing this loophole by charging rates over 200 percent. ... To rein in car title lender bait and switch tactics, I am proposing to limit interest rates on consumer finance loans at 36 percent." But that effort died in a Virginia Senate Committee this week.

Between 2010, when the Virginia General Assembly gave the green light to the car title lending industry, the total number of locations more than doubled from 184 to 395.

Some legislators claim this is a free market and personal responsibility issue, that people who have no other options should be able to turn to high interest lending as a last resort. But most people who turn to these loans would be better off without this last resort.

"It's a trap, and although it's presented as a loan it's really loan-sharking," said Jay Speech,

executive director of the Virginia Poverty Law Center. "People who get into this end up much worse off than when they started."

We all pay the price when an industry preys on the poor. People who lose their cars can lose their jobs, then relying on the frayed and inadequate safety net.

Michael Pope, who wrote about car title lending abuses when he worked for the Connection and Gazette Packet, recently completed a multi-part investigative series on predatory lending for WAMU, which you can listen to here: http://wamu.org/the_debt_trap

When his series concluded, the message of the damage of predatory lending seemed to resonate. Legislation to rein in the abuses of 200 percent interest seemed destined to make a difference.

This year, it will not.

Attorney General Mark Herring tweeted, "disappointing, not surprising" on Monday in response to the news that all four bills that sought to limit predatory lending were voted down in committee.

Disappointing, but not surprising. A sad commentary.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to centreview@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.

THROUGH JAN. 31

Affordable Care Act Enrollment Assistance.

Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) is scheduling Saturday appointments with Certified Application Counselors to assist individuals to apply for and select a health plan. Free. Call 571-748-2580 or visit www.getcoveredamerica.org/connector for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 4

Nomination Deadline. Volunteer Fairfax invites organizations to nominate volunteers who have provided outstanding service to an organization. Details are available at www.volunteerfairfax.org. Nominees will be honored at the 2016 Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards breakfast on Friday, April 8 at the Waterford at Springfield.

THURSDAY/FEB. 11

Sully Democratic Showdown. 8 p.m. at The Bungalow, 13891 Metrotech Drive, Chantilly. Watch the last Democratic debate before the Iowa caucuses, conduct a Sully straw poll of the candidates, meet new Democratic friends and enjoy free appetizers. The event is open to anyone who wants to participate. RSVP at sullydems.org/showdown or email to events@sullydemocrats.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 18

Scholarship Application Deadline. The Joyce-Gillespie-Harrington Educational and Charitable Foundation, Inc., invites applicants for its 36th Annual Jewel Scholarship award. The \$1,500 scholarship is awarded to 10 local students aspiring to pursue an undergraduate degree at an accredited college or university. The scholarship assists with tuition and other educational expenses. For over 36 years, JGH has recognized and awarded certificates of achievement and scholarships to high achieving, socially and/or economically disadvantaged students during its annual awards program in June. Visit www.JGHFDN.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

Mentor Training. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at 10777 Main St., Fairfax. The Naomi Project, a program of Our Daily Bread, is seeking volunteers to mentor at-risk pregnant or newly parenting women who live throughout Northern Virginia for a year or longer, as appropriate. Mentors work one-on-one with a client to achieve a healthy pregnancy, develop parenting skills and plan productively for the future. There is a nonrefundable registration fee of \$35 to cover materials for the training session, background check and lunch. Spanish-speaking volunteers are especially needed. Application and additional information available at: www.odbfairfax.org/NaomiProject. Contact: 703-860-2633 or naomiproject@outlook.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 29

Superintendent's Listening Tour. 6:30 p.m. at Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen K. Garza invites students, parents, employees and community members to participate in these upcoming sessions. Garza will provide an update on the budget, strategic plan, classroom initiatives, and listen to ideas, comments, and questions from the audience. Those planning to attend are asked to register in advance online and indicate if an interpreter is needed. Visit www.fcps.edu/news/listening.shtml for more.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Residents Can "E-cycle" at the I-66 transfer station. It is free but residents may be asked to show proof of residency. Personal waste only. The I-66 station is located at 4618 West Ox Road, Fairfax and open from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. from Monday-Saturday and from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Sundays. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/recycling/electric-sunday.htm for more.

DONATIONS

Cell Phones for Soldiers is accepting donations of old cellphones so that troops can call home. Patrons may drop off donations at 14215E Centreville Square, Centreville.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HANNAH WARNICK

'Jack and Jill and The Beanstalk'

Take two popular fairytales, add a couple gigantic puppets and mix well, and the result is Chantilly High's upcoming children's show, "Jack and Jill and the Beanstalk." It's set for this Friday, Jan. 29, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 30, at 2 and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 31, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$5 at the door or via www.chantillyhsdrama.com. In photo, the Jacks and Jills are (back row, from left) Patrick Collins and Caroline Woodson and (front row, from left) Gabe Ribeiro and Emily Fareid.

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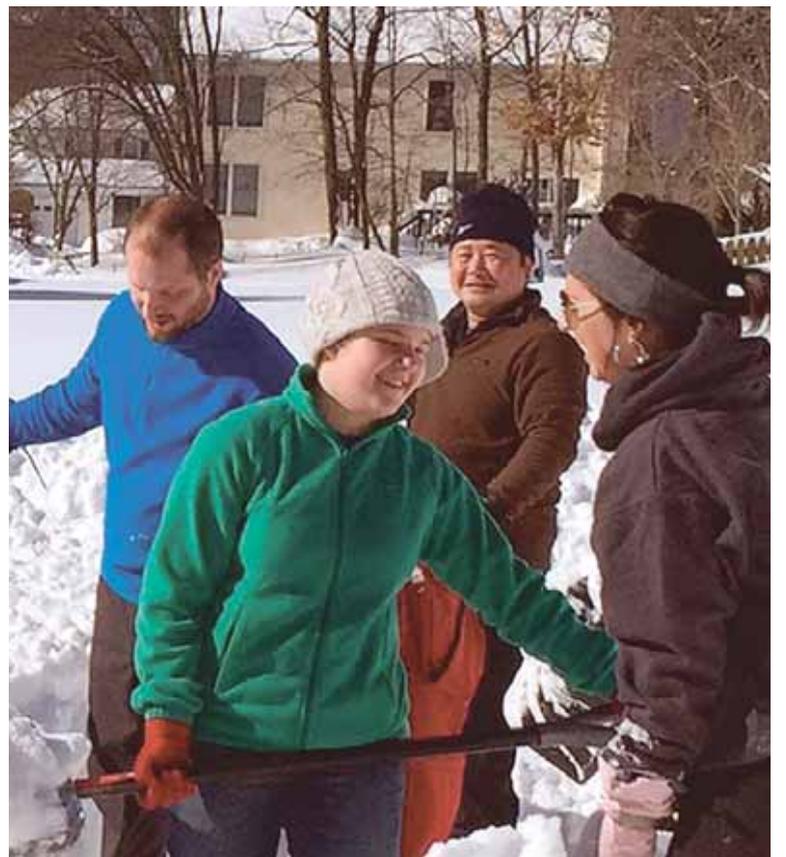
WINTER FUN



Rachel Denenberg, 7, in front of the impression that the Chantilly family's mini-van left in the snow.



Jonas Denenberg, 9, in front of the snow in the Poplar Tree neighborhood.



Manorgate community pulls together to shovel out a private road. The Gregory, Ahn, Blaint and Hansen families have fun digging out their 150-foot pipestem after the 2016 blizzard.



Bill Behm, owner of bluefrog plumbing and drain, of Fair Oaks.



Bill Behm's dog Nantucket.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax County Region

3rd Annual Casino Night

Saturday, March 12, 2016
7:00 - 11:00 pm
The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner*

Tickets
\$100 per person
\$180 per couple

Enjoy:

- Open bar
- Dinner buffet
- Dancing
- Casino games & funny money!

Use your funny money winnings to enter to win fabulous prizes. And new this year - special prizes for our top winners!

www.bgcgw.org/fairfax
For tickets and sponsorship information

* Special \$119 overnight room rate available

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WINTER FUN & ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to chantilly@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

Santa Through the Ages. Through Jan. 31, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. daily, except Tuesdays, at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. This exhibit of Santa figures depicts Santa through different time periods. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$6 for students, and \$5 for seniors and children. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov for more.

Fine Art Exhibit at Clifton Wine Shop. Through Jan. 31, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at The Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St., Clifton. This exhibit includes landscapes, watercolors, and acrylics from artist Michele Frantz. Free. Visit www.artguildofclifton.org.

Toddlin' Twos. Tuesdays, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Early literacy storytime with songs and activities included. Age 2 with caregiver, free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Storytime for Three to Fives. Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Stories and activities for children age 3-5 with caregiver. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

English Conversation Group. Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

English Conversation Group. Saturdays, 3 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

English Conversation Group. Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Plant Clinic. Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. A neighborhood plant clinic with horticultural tips, information, techniques, and advice. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

ESL Book Club. Mondays, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Meet and discuss a book chosen by group. Free. Call 703-830-2223 with questions and to reserve a spot.

ESL Book Club. Every other Saturday, 11 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Adults learning English are welcome to meet and discuss a book chosen by the group. To find out book title, call 703-502-3883.

Lego Block Party. Every other Tuesday, 3 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Legos will be provided for an afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Duplo Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Develop and reinforce early literacy skills for reading success. Ages 1-3 with adult. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Live After Five. Fridays at 5:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway. Every Friday night a band plays on the patio of the winery. Free to attend. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com for a full schedule.



Above: Adriano Oddi of Burke checks out N Gauge electric train set-up, Kent Smiley of Alexandria (right) stands by at the Fairfax Station railroad museum. Right: Daniel and Lauren Denner play with the caboose at the museum, one of many attractions on display.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON

Family Fun at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Most Sundays, except for major holidays, the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum is open for tours 1-4 p.m. Patrons may also find a number of special events including a hands-on day (Jan. 31), T-Trak model train displays (Feb. 14 and March 20), and a bring your own train day (March 13). Admission is \$4 for people 16 and older, \$5 for special events, \$2 for children ages 5-15, and free for children 4 and under. The museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Visit www.fairfax-station.org for more.

Singing. 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Clifton. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires rehearse every Wednesday which includes training by an award-winning director. Visit www.fairfaxjubilaires.org for more.

Legos Kids Club. Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Thousands of Legos for children to play with. Ages 6-12. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Starlight Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Stories under the stars for ages 4-8. Wear pajamas and bring stuffed friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

PET ADOPTIONS

Adopt a Cat or Dog. Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Visit www.lostdogrescue.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Saturdays, 12-3 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Highway. Visit hart90.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Sundays, 1-4 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit aforeverhome.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit www.lostdogrescue.org for more.

MONDAYS/THROUGH MARCH 7

Castles & Catapults Workshops. 1-2 p.m. or 4:45-5:45 p.m. at Children's Science Center, 11948 Fair Oaks Mall, Fair Oaks. Children will learn about science and engineering principles, like gravity, buoyancy, and simple machines, presented in the context of medieval times.

Activities include building towers, boats, draw-bridges, and catapults as well as designing medieval coats of arms and jewelry. The earlier session can be customized for homeschooled children ages 7-12, the second session is for grades 4-6. The price per participant is \$160. Visit www.childsci.org for more.

Science Solutions Workshops. 2:15-3:15 p.m. at Children's Science Center, 11948 Fair Oaks Mall, Fair Oaks. Children will apply science, math and engineering solutions to help the owners of the "E.Z. Science Journal." They will create sand clocks, design an experiment, build a stronger egg carton, solve knot puzzles, design journal cover art, sketch and construct a new invention, and develop more efficient delivery routes. The price per participant is \$160. Visit www.childsci.org for more.

WEDNESDAYS/THROUGH MARCH 9

Science Solutions Workshops. 4:45-5:45 p.m. at Children's Science Center, 11948 Fair Oaks Mall, Fair

Oaks. Children will apply science, math and engineering solutions to help the owners of the "E.Z. Science Journal." They will create sand clocks, design an experiment, build a stronger egg carton, solve knot puzzles, design journal cover art, sketch and construct a new invention, and develop more efficient delivery routes. This session is for grades 1-3. The price per participant is \$160. Visit www.childsci.org for more.

SATURDAYS/JAN. 23-MARCH 12

Castles & Catapults Workshops. 10-11 a.m. at Children's Science Center, 11948 Fair Oaks Mall, Fair Oaks. Children will learn about science and engineering principles, like gravity, buoyancy, and simple machines, presented in the context of medieval times. Activities include building towers, boats, draw-bridges, and catapults as well as designing medieval coats of arms and jewelry. This session is for grades 1-3. The price per participant is \$160. Visit www.childsci.org for more.

Science Solutions Workshops. 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. at Children's Science Center, 11948 Fair Oaks Mall, Fair Oaks. Children will apply science, math and engineering solutions to help the owners of the "E.Z. Science Journal." They will create sand clocks, design an experiment, build a stronger egg carton, solve knot puzzles, design

journal cover art, sketch and construct a new invention, and develop more efficient delivery routes. The price per participant is \$160. Visit www.childsci.org for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 29

Magic Show: Michael Cantori. 7 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Experience magic, psychology, hypnosis, etc. Tickets are \$32-40. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com/events.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/JAN. 29-31

Sugarloaf Craft Festival. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday at Dulles Expo & Conference Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center Drive, Chantilly. Find more 250 artists and craft designers. Tickets are \$8 in advance for adults, \$10 at the door, free for children 12 and younger. Visit www.sugarloaforcrafts.com for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

Winter Waterfowl Hunt. 7 a.m. starting at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Hunt along the wetlands and the coast for water birds. Tickets are \$36. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Preschool Open House. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at The Learning Experience, 4150 Pleasant Valley Road, Chantilly. Learn more about the preschool and the Make Believe Boulevard program dedicated to play and a curriculum comprised of sign language, science, math, social studies, and technology lessons. Free. Call 703-378-7391 or visit <http://chantilly.tlechildcare.com/>.

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center Open House. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, 14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. Go behind the scenes and talk with curators, conservators, archivists, and other Museum experts; see objects not on public display; and participate in unique activities, tours, and on-stage presentations. Call 703-572-4118 or visit airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy.

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Groundhog Day. 2:30-3:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn the story behind Groundhog Day and some interesting facts about this animal turned weather forecaster. Visit the Walney garden groundhog home and play some groundhog games. Tickets are \$6. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

Technology Tour. 2 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join Ellanor C. Lawrence Park historians and learn about the types of technology the Machen family used to improve their lives in the 1800s. Tickets are \$5. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SATURDAY/FEB. 6

Family Discovery Day. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Centreville Virginia Stake Center, 14150 Upperridge Drive, Centreville. Discovery Day is a family history fair providing activities for every age group seeking to know more about their ancestors. Free. Call 703-307-1365.

Heritage Family Day: African American Pioneers in Aviation and Space. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, 14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. Learn more about the accomplishment of African Americans in the fields of aviation and space exploration. Free. Call 703-572-4118 or visit airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy.

Recipes from the Hearth. 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. In the 1794 kitchen, learn about Thornton, the enslaved cook of the Lee family. Make beaten biscuits like the ones that were served in the dining room, and corn pone, a staple of the enslaved community's diet. Compare the recipes and taste the difference. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site.

Superbowl of Wines. 3 p.m. at Paradise Springs Winery, 13219 Yates Ford Road, Clifton. Compete in a blind tasting of Paradise Springs wine. Tickets are \$25 per person, \$20 for wine club members. Call 703-830-9463 for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Sipping and Painting. 11 a.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Instructors will give you step by step instructions on painting the wisteria plant. Tickets are \$40 for members, \$45 for nonmembers. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com/events for more.

more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 11

Civil War Lecture. 7-9 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Kevin Knapp will give a presentation titled, "The Use of Balloons by Union and Confederate Armies During the Civil War." Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ce or call 703-830-2223.

FRIDAY/FEB. 12

Friday Night Flights: Chocolate. 7 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Find Bull Run wines paired. with Abby Rose Chocolates. Tickets are \$20-30. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com/events.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 13-14

Presidential Trivia. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Brush up on your knowledge of the Declaration of Independence, discover what kinds of animals the presidents had for pets, and test knowledge with early American presidential and political trivia games, such as the Preamble Scramble. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$6 for students, and \$5 for seniors and children. Call 703-437-1794 or visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/>.

SUNDAY/FEB. 14

Valentine's Day Tea. 2:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Listen to poetry and drink tea at the Machen Farm with your favorite sweetheart. A costumed interpreter will share a Walney mystery love poem, then invite participants to write and share verses with the group. Leave with a poem framed in Valentine-card style. Tickets are \$10. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Valentine Wine Pairing Dinner. 6:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Find a four-course wine pairing dinner with Bull Run wines. Tickets are \$115 for members, \$130 for nonmembers. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com for more.

Valentine's Day Wine Dinner. 8 p.m. at Paradise Springs Winery, 13219 Yates Ford Road, Clifton. Find a four-course dinner paired with Paradise Springs wine. VIP tickets are \$149, \$129 for wine club members. General admission tickets are \$129, \$119 for wine club members. Call 703-830-9463 for reservations.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

Heritage Family Day: African American Pioneers in Aviation and Space. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, 14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. Learn more about the accomplishment of African Americans in the fields of aviation and space exploration. Free. Call 703-572-4118 or visit airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy.

"The Work of Their Hands." 1-4 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Many of the technologies that help us predict the weather, cook, process material and thread into clothing, and help cure our ills, were founded in earlier centuries. Learn what new and interesting 18th century items Richard Bland Lee had in his house that reflected the current scientific technologies. Learn how they were used and make some of them to take home and use. Tickets are \$6. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/.

historic-site.
Secret Forest. 5 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn the winter secrets of evergreen cedar and hardwood forest. Discover how helping the land to heal may help the community. Tickets are \$5. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Train Display. 1-4 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK group will have running N Gauge model trains. Tickets are \$4 for those 16 and older, \$2 for youth, and free for children 4 and younger. Visit www.fairfax-station.org for more.

Technology Tour. 2 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join park historians and learn about the types of technology the Machen family used to improve their lives in the 1800s. Tickets are \$5. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SUNDAY/MARCH 6

Jane Austen Tea. 1 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Discuss the leading men in Jane Austen's novels, "Emma" and "Persuasion." Tickets are \$28. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/.

SATURDAY/MARCH 12

Family Day: Women in Aviation and Space. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, 14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. At this family day, learn about the significant contributions women have made despite the many challenges they faced. The day will feature presentations by women in the field, hands-on activities, and stories. Free. Call 703-572-4118 or visit airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 12-13

Barrel Tasting Weekend. 12-5 p.m. at Paradise Springs Winery, 13219 Yates Ford Road, Clifton. Guests will enter the barrel room in a small group and proceed through three different stops to taste nine different wines directly from barrel. Also, find food pairings along the way. Tickets are \$25, \$15 for members. Call 703-830-9463.

SUNDAY/MARCH 13

Bring Your Own Model Train and Layout Day. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Layouts can be of any scale. Tables provided for \$10 per table. Max of two tables per participant. \$25 deposit is required and will be refunded that day minus the \$10 participation fee. No refunds for no-shows or cancellations. Participation fee waived for Museum members but registration is needed. Visit www.mkt.com/fairfaxstationrailroadmuseumonlinestore for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 19-20

Barrel Tasting Weekend. 12-5 p.m. at Paradise Springs Winery, 13219 Yates Ford Road, Clifton. Guests will enter the barrel room in a small group and proceed through three different stops to taste nine different wines directly from barrel. Also, find food pairings along the way. Tickets are \$25, \$15 for members. Call 703-830-9463.

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SPORTS

Westfield's Karl Practiced on Turf in Basement

A snowstorm caused Fairfax County Public Schools to cancel athletic events from Thursday, Jan. 21 through Wednesday, Jan. 27. Some areas received more than 20 inches of snow during the weekend, according to the National Weather Service, creating a break from competition for local high school athletes.

SNOWSTORM Q&A

Westfield sophomore field hockey player Mackenzie Karl shared her storm experience via email.

Q: In what city do you live?

A: I live in Centreville.

Q: How did the amount of snowfall in your neighborhood compare to what you thought would fall?

A: I did not think it was actually going to snow as much as predicted. I thought probably just a foot.

Q: What, if any, preparations did you and your family make for the storm?

A: My mom went grocery shopping on Thursday to make sure we had enough food.

Q: What did you do to pass the time during the storm?

A: I slept a lot, watched movies, went outside, and practiced.

Q: Did you play in the snow? If so, what did you do?

A: I took our dogs outside and ran them around in the snow and I did help my mom shovel [Sunday].

Q: Were you able to exercise/practice during the storm? If so, what did you do?

A: Before the storm came, my mom and I brought a piece of turf we have along with a rebound board into the basement so I could practice.

Q: Do you play any other sports at Westfield? Do you play field hockey year-round? Are you playing a sport now?

A: Last year I was on the girls' varsity lacrosse team. I do play field hockey year-round and right now I am playing indoor with my club team named Rampage.

— JON ROETMAN



PHOTO BY WILL PALENSCAR

Sophomore Mackenzie Karl and the Westfield field hockey team won the 6A North region championship in the fall.

SPORTS BRIEF

Cuomo Breaks Centreville Swim Team Records

The Centreville High School swim team competed at the 27th Annual Kecoughtan Invitational in the Virginia Beach area. The meet consisted of 31 teams from across Virginia.

Lexi Cuomo broke two Centreville High School records when she placed second in the 100 backstroke and fourth in the 200 free.

Cuomo, Thalia Constanza, Esther Lee, Gabby Kuehhas placed fourth in the 200 freestyle relay and sixth in the 200 medley relay. Noah Desman placed eighth in the 100 free and Gabby Kuehhas placed eighth in the 500 free.

Looking for Umpires

Northern Virginia Baseball Umpires Association is in need of umpires for youth leagues, high schools, and collegiate-level baseball and volleyball games. Experience is helpful, but not required. Will give classroom and field training to help in acquir-

ing skills needed. Contact John Porter at 703-978-3601 or assignor@umpires.org.

Potomac Field Hockey Registration

Registration is now open for Potomac Field Hockey's spring FUNdamental program for Pre-K through second grade and Youth Rec league program for grades 3-8. No experience necessary. Once-weekly team practices with games on Saturdays. Technical skills sessions included. Season begins March 28 and runs through June 4. For more information or to register, visit www.potomacfieldhockey.org or email info@potomacfieldhockey.org.

Field Hockey Coaches, Umpires Needed

Coaches and umpires are needed for our upcoming spring season. Umpires needed for youth games on Saturdays. Send coach inquiry to info@potomacfieldhockey.org; send umpire inquiry to umpire@potomacfieldhockey.org.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cadet of the Month

Sophomore Jonathan Sison (left) of Centreville accepts the December 2015 Cadet of the Month award from Marine Military Academy Superintendent Col. R. Glenn Hill. The cadet who receives this award is nominated by his drill instructor for his exemplary attitude, conduct and leadership. In addition to the recognition he received Jan. 15 in front of the MMA Corps of Cadets, Sison will be treated to a dinner hosted by the MMA superintendent and his wife. Sison, a first-year cadet, plans to attend New York University and major in film studies. He is the son of Yukari and Earl Tortorich, and Ramon Sison.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pajama Donations

On Dec. 17, preschool and elementary school students from eight Chesterbrook Academy locations in Centreville, Chantilly, Clifton, Fairfax and Herndon joined together at Chesterbrook Academy Kids Campus in Chantilly to sort toy and pajama donations they collected and pack them up for delivery. The toys were donated to children in the Northern Virginia area through the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. The 117 sets of pajamas collected were donated to the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter in Fairfax, which assists families experiencing homelessness.

SCHOOLS

Back Row, from left, are Stuart Morrison and Louis Perna. Front row, from left, are Jillian Van Daele, Dariya Banta and Jane Kearns.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cookie-Fueled Success

Latin students of St. Veronica School in Chantilly saw cookies as the secrets to their success on the Certamen circuit. Certamen, Latin for “contest,” is the name of a competition of Latin scholarship, pitting teams from schools public and private, middle and high, in fast-paced rounds of questions and answers.

The St. Veronica Certamen teams of 2015-2016 have placed first, second or third in every competition they have entered. Sixth graders Mary Hitchcock, Thomas Keating, Harrison Deitz, Jacob Van Daele and Sohal Sudheer compete in the Level 1 division; Level 1-Advanced team includes seventh graders Dariya Banta and Stuart Morrison and eighth graders Jane Kearns, Jillian Van Daele and Louis Perna.

Jenifer Scott, Latin teacher at St. Veronica, has been sponsoring Certamen teams for eight years, and said this current roster is her most successful yet. Since each Tuesday after-school practice begins with sharing Oreos, the team says maybe it’s the cookies that are bringing the magic.

Competitions are held throughout the region and can involve as many as 18 other schools. Three teams of up to four students compete in rounds of questions and answers, with top teams advancing to the finals. Students field questions about Roman history

and culture, Latin grammar and vocabulary and classic mythology. Eighth grader Jane Kearns, captain of the Level 1-Advance team, is in her third year on the team.

Brother and sister competitors Jillian (8th grade) and Jacob (6th grade) Van Daele agreed that being on the Certamen team has the added bonus of helping them in Latin class.

Sixth grader Sohal Sudheer, new to Certamen and St. Veronica’s, said the best part of being on the team “is the spirit of the competition, the rapid thinking, I just love the thrill.”

SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com. Photos are welcome.

Six Fairfax County public schools and 13 teachers and teams of teachers have been awarded Apple IMPACT Grants for Schools and Teachers by Apple Federal Credit Union. School level grants provide \$5,000 to each winning school, and teacher level grants provide up to \$2,000 to winning teachers and teams of teachers.

The school grant award winners include: **Centreville Elementary** for Global STEAM Classroom Initiative, written by Kelly Baugh and **Franklin Middle School** for Digital Citizenship and Social Media in Middle School, written by Andrea Jones. The teacher grant award winners include **Michelle LaBarbera**, of Union Mill Elementary, for Engineering is Elementary.

Kaylynne Wattlelet, a freshman majoring in middle level education, from Centreville, has made the president’s list at Coastal Carolina University (Conway, S.C.) for the fall 2015 semester.

Rachel Simons, a sophomore majoring in biology, from Centreville, made the fall 2015 dean’s list at Coastal Carolina University (Conway, S.C.).

Mary Perkins, of Centreville, a senior international relations major at York College of Pennsylvania, has been named to the dean’s list for the fall 2015 semester.



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"Your Blood Pressure is a Little High, Mr. Lourie"

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



"You think? I'm a little nervous right now. I'm waiting for scan results from last week." (I mean, it's not as if my life depends on them or anything.) As much as my blood pressure, heart rate and temperature are vitally important, the CT Scan of my chest matters more. Although, I'm not so naive to think that those other readings couldn't indicate trouble/potential trouble. Nevertheless, I still feel, with the limited knowledge I have, that – and I don't want to get political here – my CT Scan trumps your vital signs. "If you need to get a reading, why don't you come back in 15 minutes after I've met with the doctor?"

Thankfully, the scan results were/continue to be, amazingly encouraging. When my oncologist came into the examining room where I was sitting and waiting – and trying to remain calm, with my life/immediate future hanging in the balance, he said, rather nonchalantly, that my "scan was great" and that I was his "miracle patient": surviving nearly seven years now since my stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) diagnosis in late February, 2009. He then sat at the computer and asked me the standard questions about pain, headaches, stroke-like symptoms, the neuropathy in my feet, need to re-order any prescriptions, new or worsening symptoms; all of which I answered in a non-complicating way: "No. No. No." He typed in my responses and then suggested, while smiling, that we were negotiating. Not completely understanding his reference, I asked what he meant. And what he meant was, given my "miracle" status, the possibility of extending, yet again, the interval between my chemotherapy infusions, from four weeks to five (see column dated 11/25/15 entitled "All Four It") and extending as well my every-three-month CT Scan to every four or even six months and likewise extending the interval for my PET Scan to yearly. All of which sounded wonderful, but we were still "negotiating."

My oncologist's concern/goal/intention in these discussions is, and always has been, the quality of my life (after all, I do have cancer). And when I've had a particularly difficult post-chemo week, as I experienced most recently, and told him as much, he feels as if it's a week of my life that he's sort of taken away and won't be able to ever give back. Extending the intervals is his way of trying to get me more good weeks and/or increasing the length of time between bad weeks.

However, there are no protocols, clinical studies or history even, for him to consult to determine how best to treat me: "me" being a stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer patient who's alive, reasonably well and still undergoing treatment SEVEN YEARS after originally being "prognosed" to die within "13 months to two years." At this point, he said, it's more common sense and patient preference that dictates how we proceed.

Ergo, these conversations are all about me. My doctor makes suggestions/considerations and listens to my concerns (make that anxieties) and DOES NOT direct/push/control the outcome/decisions that are ultimately made. Together, we attempt to sort through my objections/assumptions/presumptions/misunderstandings, etc., to figure out a way forward that balances the quality of my life with the effectiveness of my treatment.

Unfortunately, there's no patient handbook – that I know of – called "Cancer for Dummies." If there were, perhaps I wouldn't mind navigating this minefield of life-altering, death-defying – hopefully – choices, that constantly present themselves. Then again, at least I'm still alive to have choices – and normal blood pressure, most of the time.

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

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTLOOK

Positive 2015 Market Spurs Upbeat Outlook

Experts predict continuing positive trend.

By ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The final figures are in, and it looks like the 2015 local housing market was a modest winner. Coming off a banner 2013, the 2014 market left buyers, sellers, agents, brokers and lenders all feeling a bit edgy when the previous year's successes did not spill over into the next year. But despite a bit of a rollercoaster ride, 2015 closed with annual regional sales 9.4 percent higher than 2014 — their highest since 2006. Data for the region, that includes the general Metro area, as well as specifics for Fairfax and Arlington counties, the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church and Alexandria, and the towns of Herndon, Vienna and Clifton is supplied by RealEstate Business Intelligence, L.L.C. (RBI), an arm of the local MLS system.

In the first half of the year the normal buying pattern was disrupted by a number of factors, not the least being the long and difficult winter which pushed the start of the spring market from late January or February to mid-March.

"The hottest real estate season lost a solid month of sales," said Reston-based Keller Williams agent Andy Krumholz. "Then it ended earlier than normal, as well," he added. "Normally lasting until late June before the summer slowdown, this past year the market went to sleep in May and stayed that way through Labor Day."

TO EVERYONE'S RELIEF, the second half of the year saw a real pick up in real estate action. Virgil Frizzell, the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR) chairman of the board, noted "a strong fall market and sometimes a flurry of bidding wars" that helped overcome the slow start, even with the jitters that came as the world waited for the anticipated increase in the Fed Funds Rate by the Federal Reserve, and the adjustments to be made as new closing laws went into effect.

According to the RBI data, Fairfax County had the most closed sales in 2015, increasing 9.6 percent over 2014. Alexandria came

in with a 9.4 percent increase, Fairfax City with 7.9 percent, Arlington with 3.9 percent and Falls Church with 3.8 percent.

Among the jurisdictions, Fairfax County also saw the highest increase in new listings, up 14.6 percent over the previous year, a trend that Anita Lasanky, CRB, managing broker-vice president Long and Foster Realtors in North Reston can attest to. "We're a 60 percent/40 percent listing versus sales organization and it was a brisk year for us," she said, although at the moment "there's not a lot of inventory." Chairman Frizzell agrees that "our region could always benefit from affordably priced new homes that will help our renter population make the move to home ownership."

In terms of sales pricing, Lasanky's opinion is that it was an almost neutral market year. "Buyers couldn't 'steal' a house, but sellers couldn't easily sell a property not in good condition. There was quite a bit of negotiating during many of the transactions."

Krumholz agreed with that assessment. "Even as inventory increased and some sellers were adjusting their sales price expectations, buyers were remaining selective. Homes that needed repairs or improvements languished on the market."

The RBI numbers show that both Lasanky and Krumholz were right in their thoughts about pricing and the average days on the market (DOM) of a given property. The region saw only a 1.1 percent increase in the median sales price. Behind D.C., Arlington County and Alexandria City led the way, with increases over 4 percent. In Fairfax County median sales prices were 3.2 percent higher in 2015 than in 2014. Only Falls Church saw a year-over-year decrease, dropping 1.4 percent, but keeping the "most expensive location crown" among the Northern Virginia locales with a 2015 median sales price of \$690,000. At 22, days on the market increased slightly for all of the areas analyzed, but even those increases did not depress the overall sense of market health, since the two-day increase in the

advance online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016ListeningTour6YZ7PCY and indicate if an interpreter is needed.

Comment on I-66 Project

The Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Tier 2 Revised Environmental Assessment (EA) is now available for public review and comment until Feb. 4. The Revised EA is based upon the Preferred Alternative design concept for the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway project. The project consists of two express lanes alongside three regular lanes in each direction, with space in the median for future transit; dedicated express lanes access points; safety and operational im-



Frizzell

median DOM from 2014 is still 41 days less than the DOM high of 68 in 2008, and not far off the lowest DOM level recorded in the past decade of 15 days in 2013.

SO WHAT DO THE EXPERTS take from this plethora of information as they look to the 2016 market? NVAR CEO

Ryan T. Conrad believes the positive trends will continue throughout the year. "Our region's sales pace last year reflected that there was homebuyer confidence," he stated in a recent NVAR press release, and "serious homebuyers will understand that their buying power will be strongest in the early part of the year" considering further expected rate hikes from the Federal Reserve.

Lasanky, with her 40 years of local experience, is looking at 2016 to be "as good, if not better, than 2015." Asked if she saw the current Wall Street woes as a challenge to the market, she replied the effect might just be the opposite. "With interest rates still so low, the volatility of the stock market might just steer people more toward real estate as the safer bet." Lasanky also feels that the recent easing of some of the regulations and requirements could make home-buying more of a possibility, especially for younger and first-time buyers.

Frizzell is equally positive about the 2016 outlook. "Millennials are starting to make the move," he said. Several of his rental clients are now on the hunt for homes of their own. Armed with the RBI data, his own expertise, and encouraging information provided from the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis, Frizzell thinks that continued employment growth and a more balanced economy in the region might make 2016 "one of the best years ever."

Links to data and analysis by locale can be found on the NVAR website, www.nvar.com. Those interested in comprehensive data on the region including housing, job growth by sector and wages and more, can visit the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis website at www.cra.gmu.edu.

provements at key interchanges throughout the corridor; new transit services, such as new and expanded park and ride lots and bus service; and corridor-wide bikeway, trail and sidewalk improvements.

The Revised EA may be viewed on the project website at Transform66.org.

Replenishing Food Pantry

Fairfax County's annual "Stuff the Bus: Helping Fairfax Families" program will arrive on Saturday, Feb. 6, at the Clifton Giant, 5740 Union Mill Road to benefit Western Fairfax Christian Ministries. All donation hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ROUNDUPS Garza's 2016 Listening Tours

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen K. Garza will hold five listening tours in 2016, and invites students, parents, employees, and community members to participate. The local session will be held at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 29 at Centreville High School.

Garza, accompanied by the regional assistant superintendents, will provide an update on the budget, Strategic Plan, classroom initiatives, and other happenings in FCPS and listen to ideas, comments, and questions from the audience. Those planning to attend are asked to register in ad-

NEWS



Troop 1995



Venture Crew 5



Troop 2878

Honoring Veterans

Boy Scout Troop 1995, Venture Crew 5 and Girl Scout Troop 2878 from the Chantilly/Centreville area headed out to Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery in Maryland on Dec. 12 to participate in the Wreaths Across America (WAA) Event. Almost 1200 wreaths were placed on gravesites located in Lot L. Approximately 600 people helped place the wreaths. As they laid the wreath beside the tombstone,

they spoke the veterans name, said a prayer and thanked them for their years of service.

The next WAA event is Dec. 17. Wreath donations will be taken through mid-November. To order wreaths, log onto wreathscrossamerica.org and request location MDCHVC. To help support local Scout troop, search for their group and a portion of the donation will go towards that group along with a wreath at a tombstone.

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