

Centreville ♦ Little Rocky Run CENTRE VIEW

APRIL 6-12, 2016

25 CENTS NEWSSTAND PRICE



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/CENTRE VIEW

Del. James LeMunyon (R-67) (center) sits in the middle of the panel as the lone Republican in the group of Democrat lawmakers that spoke April 3 at the Salt Richmond Legislative Wrap-up Social Issues Forum.

Lawmakers Wrap-up Session

Unspent TANF grant money, prisoner rights among social issues discussed.

BY TIM PETERSON
CENTRE VIEW

On average, low income families in Virginia who are eligible and sign up for funds from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant receive \$269 monthly and are cut off after five years. But lawmakers say there's a lot more unexpended money available in the federal grant that, if it remains unused, could one day be taken back.

Expanding funding for TANF programs including child support, workforce training, foster care and apprenticeships was among the social issues discussed at the Social Action Linking Together Richmond Legislative Wrap-up forum held April 3 at Virginia International University in Fairfax.

A mostly Democratic panel of state senators and delegates from around Fairfax County, Alexandria and Arlington also touched on immigration, raising the minimum wage, gun control, redistricting, ending homelessness and human traf-

ficking.

Del. Paul Krizek (D-44) from Mount Vernon said the 2.5 percent increase in TANF program funding that was achieved this year in the General Assembly is "still not enough." His strategy was to "go big" and ask for a ten percent increase over the next three years. TANF, Krizek said, is a "Hand up, not a hand out."

State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) from Arlington said she called for a comprehensive review of TANF and put forth a bill that would study how the unspent TANF money could best be spent.

One reason lawmakers would be concerned about spending all the extra grant money at once, Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) said, is in case economic growth slows down and there's a sudden increase in families who are eligible and apply for TANF benefits.



Adarsh Trehan with the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area expresses frustration that theft of just \$200-worth of goods or money is a felony offense in Virginia, leading to much higher disenfranchisement than in other states where the value for federal punishment is higher.

John Horejsi of Social Action Linking Together praised Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49) for vociferously championing the apprenticeships program as the General Assembly was considering increasing TANF-related funding.

"You hit the ball out of the park when you testified," Horejsi said.

Lopez said it is good for individuals, as well as the Virginia economy. "It's getting an education as well as a paycheck," he said. "That's the key thing."

SEE END OF. PAGE 9

After 15 Years, Wolfe Admits Guilt

Writes confession saying he killed Danny Petrole.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW



Wolfe

After 15 years of denying that he ordered the killing of Danny Petrole, Justin Wolfe reversed himself last week in a handwritten confession. In it, he admitted giving the go-ahead to the man who carried out the hit. "I know that I can never make up for what I did," he wrote. "But I hope that this brings some peace to Danny's family ... I am responsible for Danny's death, even though I did not pull the trigger. If I had not been involved, Danny would never have been killed."

On March 15, 2001, Centreville High grad Petrole, 21, was shot and killed outside his Bristow townhouse. The crime involved drug-dealing and money, and the shooter — Chantilly High grad Owen Barber IV, 21, who pleaded guilty — received 38 years in prison.

Largely on Barber's testimony, Chantilly grad Wolfe was convicted of hiring Barber for the killing and, in June 2002, was sentenced to death. He was also given 33 years in prison for drug and firearm charges.

The murder exposed a drug ring

of major proportions operating in the Centreville/Chantilly area. Hundreds of thousands of dollars changed hands regularly, and Wolfe, Barber and Petrole were in the thick of it.

According to authorities — and, now, Wolfe's confession — Petrole had fronted Wolfe some \$65,000 worth of marijuana, but Wolfe, then almost 20, didn't have the money to pay him back. Wolfe said he'd been spending his own drug-dealing proceeds on cocaine and alcohol. He also said he and Barber planned Petrole's death and agreed that Barber would kill him, they'd split the drugs

Petrole was carrying and Wolfe would forgive a debt Barber owed him. Wolfe wrote that, on the night of Petrole's death, Barber stalked him in a car, while being in constant contact with Wolfe via cell phone. Then when Petrole arrived home, Barber fired 10 shots from a 9 mm Smith & Wesson through

Petrole's passenger-side window, with all but one bullet striking him. Driving away, Barber tossed the gun into a nearby intersection, where it was quickly found. Both he and Wolfe then fled the state — Barber to California and Wolfe

SEE AFTER 15 YEARS, PAGE 9

"I am responsible for Danny's death, even though I did not pull the trigger."

— Justin Wolfe

ATTENTION
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CIRCULATION
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‘Ready for All Emergencies’ First responders honored at 38th Annual Valor Awards.

BY TIM PETERSON
CENTRE VIEW

Technician Ryland Chapman and Lieutenant Lawrence Mullin with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department were preparing to return home from a deployment with Virginia Task Force 1 to earthquake-rocked Kathmandu, Nepal when another quake sent them back out for duty.

Task Force 1 is an international urban search and rescue outfit sponsored by Fairfax County Fire and Rescue. Chapman and Mullin were part of a team assisting in Nepal in May 2015.

Because most of their equipment had already been loaded for transport, they were only able to bring minimal tools for a 72-hour mission, including small axes and sledgehammers.

A helicopter took Chapman and Mullin to search for survivors that might be trapped in collapsed buildings. In one structure, they found a woman who was wedged on the ground floor with another part of the building collapsed on top of her.

After more than three hours of the rescue operation, Chapman and Mullin were able to free the woman and save themselves from continuing aftershocks and landslides.

“It was an extraordinary effort in a disastrous situation,” said Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Chief Richard Bowers Jr. “It was one of the most dangerous situations I’ve ever seen in my 40 years of experience. They could’ve been crushed at any minute.”

For their efforts, Chapman and Mullin were recognized with the Gold Medal of Honor at the 38th annual Valor Awards held March 30 at the Westfields Marriott in Chantilly.

Officers, deputies and other first respond-



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/CENTRE VIEW

From left, Chief of Fairfax County Police Edwin Roessler Jr. presents Second Lieutenant Nicholas Depippa, Police Officer First Class Frederick R. Yap, Police Officer First Class Peter T. Liu, Police Officer First Class Paul J. Blasko Jr. and Officer Jesse B. Katzman with the Silver Medal of Valor for responding to a shooting in the middle of the night and saving the victim’s life.

ers from the Fairfax County Police Department, Sheriff’s Office, Fire and Rescue Department, as well as Police Departments of the Towns of Vienna and Herndon, received the Lifesaving Certificate, Certificate of Valor and Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals of Valor.

In many cases, the responders were cited for acting “without regard to their personal safety under extremely hazardous conditions.”

“In a situation where they have to save a life,” Bowers said, “that means the motivation to do anything to maintain and preserve that life.”

For Chapman, a Fairfax resident based at Fire Station 29 in Tysons Corner, he didn’t see his actions in Kathmandu as anything out of the ordinary.

“We just have to be ready for all emergencies,” he said. “I just did what’s within my job description, what was expected of me to do.”

Chapman’s wife Taylor said the communication to families from Nepal was good, but not great, and that it was “intense” waiting for updates.

What’s more, with the extra mission Chapman was called on, he nearly missed the couple’s wedding.



Taylor and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Technician Ryland W. Chapman (left) of Fairfax nearly missed their wedding while Ryland was deployed in Nepal as part of the Virginia Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Team.

Going from being a community firefighter to launching into collapsed buildings on the other side of the planet was “strange,” Chapman said, but despite being far away, still gave him “good feeling” of helping people in emergency situations.

Leon Harris, News Anchor for ABC7/WJLA-TV and emcee for the awards, thanked all the first responders present for being the ones who are always there on the ground level for the various emergencies he reports on the news.

“You’re there to make sure every one of those has a possibility of a happy ending,” Harris said.

‘Share Your Hair’ at Westfield High School

Allie Bush, an 11th grader at Westfield High School, working with other Class of 2017 officers, will be holding a hair-cutting opportunity at school so that classmates and teachers can donate hair for Pantene’s Beautiful Lengths Program.

On Monday, April 11, the “Share Your Hair” event will be held in support of women who have lost their hair because of cancer treatments. The donated ponytails will be given to Pantene’s Beautiful Length’s program which will in turn make wigs for women fighting cancer.

This is the second year that “Share Your Hair” will be held at Westfield to support women fighting cancer. Last year, 17 people donated their hair at the event including students and a FCPS employee.

Additionally, two students who were unable to attend, cut their hair earlier



Students donating hair and stylists from Alexandre de Paris at Westfields participate in the first Share Your Hair event in 2015.

dropped off their ponytail donations at the event. The required hair donation length is 8-10 inches, but many of the students and an employee of Westfield High School donated more.

Alexandre from Alexandre de Paris Spa in Fair Lakes, and other stylists from the

salon, will be at Westfield High School on Monday to take part in the Share Your Hair event. They will help determine the correct length of the hair donation, make the initial cut, and then will cut and style those students who need to have the complete style done at the school.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Allie Bush with the ponytail donations she is mailing to Pantene Beautiful Lengths.

ROUNDUPS

Check Out Police Vehicles

The Sully District Police Station is hosting a display of its various department vehicles on Sunday, April 10, 1-4 p.m. The free event is open to public. Parking is available at the Sully Station Shopping Center, 5053 Westfields Blvd., Chantilly. Officers will be crossing pedestrians at the traffic light.

Help Library Plan for Future

The public is invited to share their opinions about what library services are needed in the community at a forum on April 12, 7-8:30 p.m. at Chantilly Regional Library.

Garza To Discuss School Budget

Superintendent of Schools Karen K. Garza's final 2016 Listening Tour meeting will be held Wednesday, April 13, at 6:30 p.m., at Chantilly High School, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly.

Garza, accompanied by the regional assistant superintendent, 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 advance online and indicate if an interpreter is needed. Additional information is available at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/listening.shtml>.

Learning about Use of Force

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Sully District Police Station will meet Wednesday, April 13 to learn how officers of the Fairfax County Police Department are trained to approach and assess decisions in potential use of force situations. This meeting will take place at the Sully District Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly, from 7:30-9 p.m.

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, April 14, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust it, as needed. Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000 to confirm dates and times.

How To Join Neighborhood Watch

Officers of the Sully District Police Station will be hosting the next Neighborhood Watch training on Tuesday, April 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sully District Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly. Email Tara.Gerhard@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-814-7051 to R.S.V.P. for the training session.

Clean Out Medicine Cabinets

Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout returns on Saturday, April 30 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly. Drop off unused or expired medications. Disposal is free.

Moving Equipment Is Sought

The Centreville Labor Resource Center is in need of moving equipment to add to its tool supplies. Requested items are back braces, lift belts, sliders and straps that are used for moving jobs.

This equipment can be checked out by workers and brought back when they complete jobs. It will ensure that they're able to complete moving jobs more safely. In addition, the CLRC is seeking Spanish-speaking people to fill a number of volunteer positions. Contact Molly Maddra-Santiago at director@centrevillelrc.org.

NEWS

'He and Erin Are Together'

Grafton Peterson, Virginia Tech victim's father, dies at 57.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Like most people, Grafton Peterson experienced both great joy and great sadness in his life. He had a long and happy marriage and two children he adored. But he outlived both his daughters and, on March 18, succumbed to a heart attack at age 57.

His first daughter, Carla, died of cancer at age 8. Still reeling from the tragedy, he became a father again, two days later, when daughter Erin was born and restored light to his heart. She was close to her parents and, at Westfield High, she was a well-liked basketball star.

But her life ended, too, in April 2007, when she was among the victims of the Virginia Tech massacre. An honor student majoring in International Studies, she was a freshman, just 18 years old.

"Since Erin died, he'd been battling different things," said his wife Celeste, of Centreville's Braddock Ridge community. "You never forget it and you never recover. Everything in your life is marked before Erin died and after Erin died."

Somehow, though, they carried on. "I really admired Grafton's strength and perseverance," she said. "Erin's death was a gut-punch for me, but he lost two children."

They established the Erin Peterson Fund to continue their daughter's dedication to education and to helping those less fortunate. They also began an annual Gospel Celebration in her memory and to raise money for the scholarships and grants given out by the fund.

This year's event will be on Saturday, April 16 — the exact day Erin died, nine years ago. Filled with joyful entertainment, it'll be held at 6 p.m. at Mount Olive Baptist Church, 6600 Old Centreville Road in Centreville.



Grafton Peterson on the golf course.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CELESTE PETERSON

Erin and Grafton Peterson in August 2006.

Grafton was a construction supervisor who was recently laid off. Yet, that was actually good news for the couple. "We were glad that he could just stay home and focus on his health," said Celeste Peterson. "He was happy and optimistic and we were making a whole bunch of plans for what we were going to do." Married 33 years, she said they mainly planned to just be together.

As a teenager, Grafton Peterson lived in Middleburg, and he and Celeste met as students at Loudoun Valley High in Purcellville. They were just friends then, but stayed in touch after graduation; and about 10 years later, they started dating. Although he was an introvert and she's an extrovert, the two clicked.

"I thought he'd make a good husband," she said. "I always felt safe and protected with him and knew I'd never want for anything. He was confident, strong and unflappable. And he was my best friend; I left home with him and never looked back."

The pair enjoyed spending time at their vacation house in Northern Neck, and Grafton Peterson liked to fish and play golf. They belonged to Mount Olive Baptist Church, and the support of the church, family and friends has helped them both cope with their losses.

"He always thought he'd go before me, so we talked about life and death," said Celeste Peterson. "He was just a wonderful husband and I cry because I miss him. But I have strong roots and I believe in the good Lord, and I know this is just the way life is. I had 18 years of the most wonderful child, and 33 years with a man who made me feel secure and loved and made me laugh. So you put it all together, and I'm just happy and blessed."

On March 25, Grafton Peterson was buried next to both his daughters in Rock Hill Cemetery in Round Hill, Va. Donations in his name may be made to the Erin Peterson Fund at www.ErinPetersonFund.org.

"I'm so happy that he and Erin are together," said Celeste Peterson. "I'm a glass-half-full kind of girl, and that's what gets me through. I just keep looking up and trusting in the Lord."

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.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION
Children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 30, 2016,

are eligible to attend kindergarten. Find the correct neighborhood school by entering your address at <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/>. Complete a packet of registration forms found at www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf or in the school office. Gather supporting documents: proof of residence in the school boundary, a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody

orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required before the student may start school, but is not required for registration. Parents who choose to delay enrollment in kindergarten by one year are required to notify the school in writing of their intent.
Greenbriar West Elementary School is now accepting

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

More Mindful, Less Lethal

New decision-making training meant to alter how police officers approach use of force.

BY TIM PETERSON
CENTRE VIEW

Making decisions can be instinctual. It can also be practical and informed, coming to the best judgement considering all variables. For police officers responding to calls where there might be a threat of violence to civilians and or themselves, their decision whether to use force and which type to neutralize the situation quickly must be a hybrid.

In Fairfax County, Police Chief Edwin C. Roessler, Jr. has begun implementing a policy change in use of force decision-making that mandates officers “use time as leverage” and attempt to slow their reaction to a situation in order to engage a supervisor and better consider the subjects with whom they’re dealing.

A recent example Roessler gave is the March 2 barricade incident where 19-year-old Sayed Robbie Javid of Alexandria came out of his home carrying what police said appeared to be pistol but was later found to be a starter revolver. After he initially refused commands to surrender, officers used “less-lethal force” including firing a 40mm rubber bullet and bean bag shotgun, as well as the K9 unit to apprehend him.

“Deployment of deadly force would’ve been legal three times in my opinion,” Roessler said at a media event held at the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy in Chantilly on March 29. But in this case, Roessler said officers successfully followed the new policy by calling in a supervisor, taking a deep breath, assessing the scene and slowing it down.

“Preserving the sanctity of human life” is the end goal, he said, which the officers accomplished.

Roessler said this “re-engineered” concept for critical use of force decision-making has been in development since he took charge of the department in July 2013. He sought input from the Washington, D.C.-based policy organization Police Executive Research Forum, visited Police Scotland and worked with the vendor Polis Solutions to craft a plan for the Fairfax County force.

In June 2015, PERF Executive Director Chuck Wexler presented the organization’s 71 recommendations at a meeting of the Fairfax County Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, including changing critical decision-making policy. Many of PERF’s suggestions were folded into the 142 recommendations the commission would eventually make to the Board of Supervisors. Those were broken down into categories including use of force, communications and



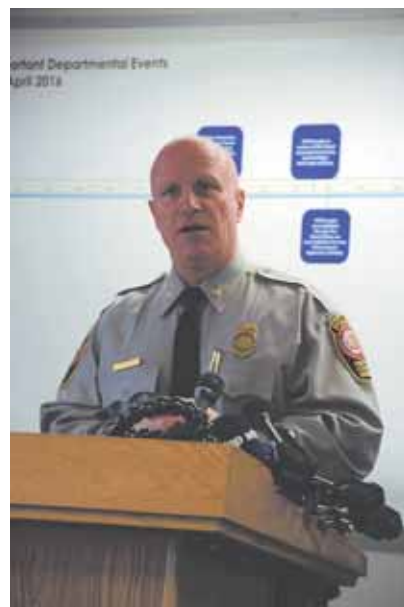
Officers (right) enter a fake residence to talk with a man role-playing as an emotionally disturbed person who was reported in the scenario to be suicidal.



Master Police Officer Peter Davila (left) said that as an extension of Crisis Intervention Team training, officers are taught to put aside any personal bias when interacting with a potentially emotional disturbed person.



Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova



Chief of Police Edwin C. Roessler, Jr.



Supervisor and Public Safety Committee Chair John Cook (R-Braddock).

mental health.

“This is a department that wanted to get better,” Wexler said at the March 29 meeting. “They embraced the ideas, which are not risk-free.”

One reporter asked whether the new model that calls for more factors to be considered before taking forceful action, as well as bringing in a supervising officer, creates a safety concern for officers who otherwise might have been more decisive in less time.

“That’s not the reality here,” Roessler answered, saying that officers were involved in customizing the training program and that care was taken to ensure the new policy wouldn’t be unsafe.

Lieutenant Matt Owens of the Sully District station said he and other officers have been coming into the new training with open minds and “don’t feel less safe at all.”

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon

Bulova applauded the “drastic and impressive” development in mindset and thought process of how officers respond to critical situations. “I was very impressed at the speed at which we’ve been able to implement a culture change,” she said.

Supervisor and Public Safety Committee Chair John Cook (R-Braddock) said that while the training is making the role of the police officer more complicated — asking them to be social workers and sociologists, among others — he’s excited for the county to be on the “cutting edge” of 21st-century policing.

“In Fairfax County,” he said, “we strive to be the best.”

Media representatives observed two training modules for officers that were supposed to reflect the policy change. One was a room with a projection on the wall showing a potential scene officers might encounter in

the field, such as a suspicious man walking around a suburban neighborhood or a bar fight. The officers were able to interact with pre-recorded video clips to work through each scenario and decide whether or which type of force would be necessary, be it pepper spray, baton, taser or firearm. Practicing communication, before using force, with subjects in context was a key part of the exercise. Afterward an instructor would review the crucial factors that led to the use of force decision, asking the officers to justify their actions.

Owens called the virtual training “invaluable” for helping keep officers’ verbal

compliance skills sharp. “It’s as close to real life as it gets.”

The second module involved officers entering the home of a man who was potentially an “emotionally disturbed person.” In the scenario, the man’s sister had called police reporting that her brother was suicidal. Upon entering the home, officers saw that the man was sitting on a couch with a large knife close by on an end table.

Officers then practiced moving the knife away and talking the man through his options for evaluation and treatment at the Merrifield health center (or Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board).

Instructor Master Police Officer Peter Davila said the exercise was an extension of Crisis Intervention Team training. The goal, he said, is to “mitigate any potential for force, focus on communication, de-escalation and talk to the individual as a human being.”

SCHOOLS

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

When Westfield High assistant principal **Harry Van Trees** realized there were not enough books for the ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) teachers to use in their classrooms, he launched a children's book challenge, asking first the Class of 2016 and then the entire student body, "What can you leave behind as a lasting legacy to future students?" Students were challenged to bring in books they were no longer reading and to put a message inside for the next person who read that book. So far, over 3,000 books have been collected.

Kayleigh Buenaga, of Centreville, was initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Buenaga was initiated at Arizona State University.

Bikash Thapa Adhikari, of Centreville, was initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Adhikari was initiated at James Madison University.

Carolyn Seltzer, of Centreville, was among 250 participants in one of the nation's largest university dance marathon fundraisers on Sunday, March 13. UD students joined the fight against childhood cancer with UDance, the university's student-run philanthropy. The organization celebrated a year's worth of fundraising during its 10th annual 12-hour dance marathon. Students raised a total of \$1,701,667.81,



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Autism Awareness

Students at Union Mill Elementary School participate in the Autism Awareness Program. The program includes six stations in the gym that are designed to create awareness of some challenges children with autism may experience.

for the Wilmington, Delaware-based Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation.

JMU students embarked on 25 alternative spring break trips around the country and world this year. The students spent the week serving others while living simply and submerging themselves in the culture of their surroundings.

❖ **Caroline Cook**, of Centreville, a finance major scheduled to graduate in

2017, traveled to Tahlequah, Okla., to volunteer with Cherokee Nation.

❖ **Taylor Bogemann**, of Centreville, a health sciences major scheduled to graduate in 2016, traveled to Chicago, Ill. to volunteer with Heartland Health Outreach.

The student-led ASB trips took place from March 5-12. Each trip focused on a social issue, such as homelessness, resettlement, environmentalism or community wellness, in a specific region.

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WHICH DIRECTION SHOULD YOUR LIBRARY GO? YOU TELL US!

Share your opinion about what library services are needed in your community at one of our public forums:

April 12, 7-8:30 p.m.

Chantilly Regional Library
4000 Stringfellow Rd. • Chantilly, VA

April 14, 7:30-9 p.m.

Kings Park Library
9000 Burke Lake Rd. • Burke, VA

An online survey will be available soon.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

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County of Fairfax,
Virginia

OPINION

Move Forward with Independent Oversight

While FCPD has embraced many critical changes, supervisors need to move forward with oversight.

Last week, the Fairfax County Police Department posted a list and progress report of 202 recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, each currently labeled as one of: implemented, in progress or under review.

Recommendations that are under review “require more review or approval from the Board of Supervisors,” according to the update.

Two landmark recommendations on independent oversight await further review and approval. One is the establishment of the Office of the Independent Auditor to review investigations of death or serious injury cases involving the FCPD; the other is to establish a Civilian Review Panel Civilian Review Panel to review complaints concerning alleged FCPD misconduct.

The delay in moving forward with these two recommendations is a missed opportunity as the trial date for Adam Torres in the murder of John Geer approaches later this month, as the county will be under public scrutiny during coverage of the trial.

Chairman Sharon Bulova established the police commission in response to public outcry over the shooting death of Geer by a Fairfax

County police officer, later revealed to be Torres, and the delay and stonewalling in release of any information about the incident. Geer was killed in August 2013. It took 17 months, much agitation and a court order in response to a lawsuit on behalf of Geer’s family before the most basic information was released. In August 2015, Torres was charged with murder and ordered held without bond.

The Public Safety Committee for the Board of Supervisors will meet in July to discuss all recommendations related to independent oversight. The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is May 10 when they will take up commission recommendations related to use of force.

Strategically, the establishment of Office of the Independent Auditor should have been one of the first actions as a result of the recommendations.

The Civilian Review Panel should also be an early priority. Contact Bulova, Supervisor John Cook who is chairman of the Public Safety Committee, and your own supervisor, and ask them to move forward.

Several pieces of good news: Fairfax County police leadership have embraced significant changes as a result of the commission recommendations and an independent report on use

of force, changes that have already had major benefits in how police respond in crisis situations. Diversion First, a plan to provide treatment rather than jail for certain people in mental health crisis who come into contact with law enforcement is up and running, a remarkable achievement. Money has been allocated in the current budget to implement changes.

The progress report is available here: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission/progressreport.htm>

Mother’s Day Photos

Mother’s Day is May 8 this year and as usual every year at this time, this newspaper calls for submissions to our Mother’s Day photo gallery.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. (We will not print your full address or contact information.) You can upload photos at www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Outrageous Budget Requests

To the Editor:

The following statement was addressed to the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Education.

We want to protest the dramatic budget increases. The County Executive presented the FY2017 Advertised Budget General Funds Revenue of \$4.01 billion which is an increase of 4.8 percent over last year’s budget. The County Executive presented the FY2017 General Funds Disbursements budget of \$3.99 billion or an increase of 4.4 percent over the FY 2016 Adopted Budget Plan. Dr. Garza presented the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) budget of approximately \$2.7 billion and requires a \$122.7 million increase over last year’s FCPS budget or 6.7 percent increase over the FY2016 Adopted Budget Plan. The difference between the advertised budget and the current request for funding is almost \$68 million equating to approximately three cents added to the current real estate tax rate. Overall expenditures of the Fairfax County Government in the FY2017 Adopted Budget Plan grand total of \$7.45 billion, an increase of \$319 million or 4.5 percent over the FY2016 Adopted Budget Plan. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Fairfax County, in calendar year 2015, the consumer price index only increased by 0.1 percent. According to Kiplinger’s magazine, the projected nationwide inflation rate for 2016 is estimated at 1.0 percent. So again as usual, year after year, the county is raising the budget double or triple or more than the increases

in the consumer price index for Fairfax County which is outrageous. How can you justify raising the budget way beyond the inflation rate?

Both the County Executive and the School Superintendent have made misleading statements about their efforts to cut the budget. The fact is that the county budget and the FCPS budget increases year after year at least double or triple or more than the inflation rate. According to the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance (FCTA) between 2000 and 2016, the FCPS spending will have increased 103 percent. During this period, FCPS enrollment increased 22 percent and staff increased by 27 percent and inflation increased 49 percent. We do support rewarding deserving FCPS teachers with moderate salary increases.

Isn’t it time to increase the retirement age for those employees under 30 to age 66? After all, union dominated states such as Illinois at age 67, Vermont at age 65, California at age 65, and New Jersey at age 65 and some other states and local governments have raised the age requirements. Based on data from the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association report issued over a year ago, raising the retirement age to 66 for all new employees could eventually save \$150 million annually. Also, dropping the DROP program could save \$31 million annually.

We look forward to your written comments. Thank you for your attention.

Charles McAndrew
Linda McAndrew
Oak Hill

Countering Terrorism With Interfaith Prayer

To the Editor:

We often see Muslims in the media creating terrorism, but the Muslims of the Ahmadiyya Community are fighting against it. On Thursday, March 31, an Interfaith Prayer service was held to mourn the loss of those who perished in the attacks at Brussels and in Lahore, Pakistan. The event was open to all who wanted to come together in peace and just share a common ground with each other.

Ibrahim Chaudhry began with reciting a few words from the Holy Quran from the fifth chapter. The verses chosen resonated perfectly with the tone of the evening, and related appropriately to the situation. It reads as follows:

“On account of this, We prescribed for the children of Israel that whosoever killed a person — unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land — it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoso gave life to one, it shall be as if he had given life to all mankind. And Our Messengers came to them with clear Signs, yet even after that, many of them commit excesses in the land.” (Chapter 5, verse 33)

Tariq Amjed, the president of the Virginia chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, welcomed the attendees stating the reason for this gathering. He mentioned that the supreme head of the community has pointed out many times of the world’s descent towards destruc

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

CENTREVIEW

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Newspaper of
Centreville
Little Rocky Run
A Connection Newspaper

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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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.

ONGOING

Tai Chi for Beginners. Through May 17, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. at King of Kings Lutheran Church, 4025 Kings Way, Fairfax. Learn slow, fluid movements to promote relaxation, balance, strength, and flexibility. Workshop fee is \$115. Visit www.inova.org/creg for more.

Carolina Shag Dance. Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m.; no partners needed; dinner menu at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.nvshag.org for more.

Open Rehearsal. Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Centreville. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires barbershop chorus invites men of all ages who enjoy singing. Free. Visit www.fairfaxjubilaire.org for more.

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.

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.fairfaxjubilaire.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.

FRIDAY/APRIL 8

Volunteer Service Awards. 8-10 .m. at The Waterford at Springfield, 6715 Commerce St., Springfield. Join Volunteer Fairfax, Chairman Sharon Bulova and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and other community leaders at the 24th Annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards Breakfast. Tickets are \$50. Visit www.volunteerfairfax.org for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 9

Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre. 6:30 p.m. at P.J. Skidoos, 9908 Fairfax Blvd. FWC Western Fairfax County Woman's Club presents "A Recipe for Murder" as a fundraiser for its Chantilly High School scholarship fund. Reservations required. \$60 per person, including tax and tip. Visit www.wfcwc.org or call Eileen at 703-378-7054.

SUNDAY/APRIL 10

T-TRAK Scale Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold an N gauge T-TRAK model train show. Admission is \$4 for adults 16 and older, \$2 for children 5-15, and free for children under 4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 15

Fairfax Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary. 10:30 a.m. at Waterford at Fair Oaks, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Attend the 36th annual Fashion and Fundraiser. Fashions to be provided by Lord & Taylor. Tickets are \$50. Call 703-250-5809 or email angelaganey@verizon.net.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Erin Peterson Fund Celebration of Life Concert. 6 p.m. at the Mount Olive Baptist Church, 6600 Old

Centreville Road., Centreville. Saturday, April 16, will mark the eighth anniversary of the Virginia Tech massacre, which took the lives of 32 victims, including Erin Peterson of Centreville. Erin's family, friends and the community will gather at the Mount Olive Baptist Church in Centreville to celebrate Erin's life and legacy during a concert featuring Patrick Lundy and the Ministers of Music and The Racy Brothers. Free. Call 818-5220-8178 or visit www.erinpetersonfund.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 20

"Honoring Those Who Served During the Civil War." 7:30 p.m. at The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Mary Lipsey, a docent for the American History Museum of the Smithsonian and for the National Archives and former president of the Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association, will present the forum, "Honoring Those Who Served During the Civil War." Free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 22-24

Used Book Sale. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Find a selection of fiction and nonfiction books for adults and children, plus DVDs, CDs and audiobooks. Sponsored by the Friends of the Chantilly Regional Library to fund special programs, renovation projects, landscaping and equipment for the library. Call the library at 703-502-3883 or Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Celebration of Women Who Impact Our Community. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2200 Centreville Road, Herndon. Women Impact Now will be hosting the 2nd Annual "Celebration of Women Who Impact Our Community." Tickets are \$30. Visit www.womenimpactnow.com for more.

Step Out with the USO. 6-11 p.m. at the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott, 45020 Aviation Drive, Dulles. The annual Step Out event is the primary source of funding for the USO Dulles Lounge which assists over 30,000 servicemen and women and their loved ones each year. Tickets are \$45 and include a raffle ticket. Visit www.usometro.org/events for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Barnes & Noble Bookfair Fundraiser. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Fairfax, 12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Fairfax Library Foundation is partnering with Barnes & Noble to host a Bookfair fundraiser supporting Fairfax County Public Library. There will be library supporters at the store all day, with special activities for visitors. Barnes & Noble will donate 10 percent of all purchases made by library supporters that day – and the five days after online – to Fairfax Library Foundation. Special guests include Martha Hamlett, author of the picture book "Just One More Game" and Kathy MacMillan, debut author of the Young Adult Fantasy novel "Sword and Verse." Free to attend. Visit www.FairfaxLibraryFoundation.org for more.



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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

APRIL

4/20/2016..... A+ Camps & Schools
4/27/2016..... A+ Camps & Schools Pullout
4/27/2016..... Mother's Day Celebrations, Dining & Gifts I
4/27/2016..... Spring Outlook 2016

MAY

5/4/2016..... McLean Day Pullout
5/4/2016..... Mother's Day Dining & Gifts II
5/4/2016..... Wellbeing
Mother's Day is May 8
5/11/2016..... HomeLifeStyle
5/18/2016..... A+ Camps & Schools, Proms, Summer Planning
Memorial Day is May 30
5/25/2016... Summer Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment

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- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Oakton Connection

SPORTS



Westfield senior Tyler Scanlon, the VHSL 6A state Player of the Year, will participate in the DMVStream.com Nova Classic on Sunday, April 10.



Westfield senior Blake Francis will play for the Fairfax North team during the DMVStream.com Nova Classic on Sunday, April 10.



Hank Johnson and the Westfield boys' basketball team won the 6A state championship on March 9.

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

Three Westfield Players to Compete in All-Star Game

T Tyler Scanlon, Blake Francis and Hank Johnson will be teammates once again. The Westfield seniors, who won the 6A state basketball championship on March 9, will be play for the Fairfax North team during the DMVStream.com Nova Challenge on Sunday, April 10 at Marshall High School.

There will be two all-star games during the event, along with a 3-point shootout and a dunk competition.

At 2 p.m., the Fairfax South team will face the Prince William team. There will be a 3-point contest and a dunk contest at 4 p.m., and the event will conclude with a the Fairfax North team taking on the Loudoun team at 5 p.m.

Centreville's William Unterkofler will also play for the Fairfax North squad.

Other Fairfax North players include: Chase Barrand (Marshall), Marty Gryski (South Lakes), Alex McNaughton (Fairfax), Nate Shafer (Langley), Tavon Tarpley (Langley), Daniel Ungerleider (Madison), Taiga Walker (Madison) and Tyler White (Marshall).

Westfield Boys' Lax Wins Three Straight

After starting 0-3, the Westfield boys' lacrosse team has won three straight, including a victory over perennial power Chantilly.

The Bulldogs defeated South County 9-6

on March 23, beat Chantilly 15-13 on March 29 and knocked off Herndon 7-5 on April 1.

Westfield will host Stone Bridge at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 8.

Chantilly Boys' Lax Falls to Robinson

The Chantilly boys' lacrosse team faced Robinson on April 1 in a rematch of last year's 6A state championship game. The result was a third consecutive loss for the Chargers.

Robinson defeated Chantilly 16-11 on Friday, dropping the Chargers' record to 2-4 overall and 0-2 in Conference 5.

Chantilly defeated Robinson in the Conference 5 and 6A North region championship games in 2015, but lost to the Rams 10-9 in double overtime in the state final.

Chantilly will travel to face South County at 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 9.

Chantilly Girls' Lax Suffers First Loss

After a 5-0 start, the Chantilly girls' lacrosse team suffered its first loss of the season, falling 18-2 to defending state champion Robinson on April 1.

The Chargers will return to action at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 8 with a home game against Oakton.

Centreville Girls' Lax Wins Fourth Straight

The Centreville girls' lacrosse team won a pair of games on Saturday, improving its record to 5-2.

The Wildcats defeated Yorktown 17-7 and beat West Potomac 19-11, giving Centreville four consecutive victories.

Centreville Boys' Lax Off to 3-2 Start

The Centreville boys' lacrosse team had its three-game win streak snapped on April

1 with a 6-5 loss to Oakton.

The defeat dropped the Wildcats' record to 3-2 overall and 0-1 in Conference 5.

Centreville will host Herndon at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, April 8.

Westfield Baseball To Host Chantilly

The Westfield baseball team will host Chantilly at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 8 in a matchup of 6-2 teams.

Westfield lost to Briar Woods 8-1 on Monday, giving the Bulldogs two losses in their last three games after a 5-0 start.

Chantilly lost to Stone Bridge 6-5 on Monday, snapping a four-game win streak.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

information for next year's Kindergarten classes. Parents of children who live within the school's boundaries should call the school office at 703-633-6700 as soon as possible.

Poplar Tree Elementary will hold its Kindergarten Orientation on Thursday, April 14, 9:15-10:15 a.m. Call 703-633-7400 for more.

Greenbriar East Elementary School will have Kindergarten Orientation/Registration on Thursday, April 21, 2:30 p.m. Call the school office at 703-633-6400 with questions.

Union Mill Elementary is currently registering new students for the 2016-17

school year. Call the registrar at 703-322-8500 or email sheri.brown@fcps.edu to make an appointment to bring completed registration forms and supporting documentation to school. Kindergarten Orientation takes place Friday, April 22, 9-10 a.m. Rising kindergarten students will have the opportunity to visit a kindergarten classroom while parents attend an information session.

THROUGH APRIL 18

Cell Phones for Soldiers. Donate unwanted cell phones to help active duty military and vets call loved ones. Drop-off at Liberty Tax, 5622-G Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Call 703-323-5580 for more.

After 15 Years Pass, Wolfe Admits Guilt

FROM PAGE 1
to Florida — but were arrested that April. Meanwhile, Petrole's murder stunned the community because he was the son of a former Secret Service agent who lived in Virginia Run. And on the surface, he was just a college student who worked part-time delivering flowers.

But when police searched Petrole's belongings following his death, they discovered \$965 in his wallet and \$17,460 in the trunk of his car. In his townhouse were guns, \$120,366 in cash and nearly half a million dollars' worth of ecstasy and marijuana. And during Wolfe's first trial, much of the testimony came from young, self-admitted drug dealers and users in the local area.

In June 2002, Wolfe received the death penalty and spent 11 years on death row. But because Prince William County prosecutors deliberately withheld information that would have impeached Barber's testimony, in 2011 and 2012, two federal courts vacated Wolfe's convictions and sentences.

Initially facing the death penalty, Barber testified he didn't know Petrole, but killed

him because Wolfe hired him. It was later revealed that prosecutors and a detective influenced Barber to say those things in exchange for his charge being reduced from capital to first-degree murder. And Barber, himself, later recanted his testimony implicating Wolfe.

During a November 2010 hearing in Federal Court in Norfolk, U.S. District Court Judge Raymond Jackson heard evidence not presented previously. Subsequently, in his July 2011 decision to overturn Wolfe's convictions and sentences, Jackson said Wolfe's due-process rights had been violated before and during his capital-murder trial.

In August 2012, citing "prosecutorial misconduct" by Prince William County prosecutors Paul Ebert and Rick Conway, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit upheld Jackson's ruling.

But with Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Ray Morrogh as special prosecutor, Prince William County decided to retry Wolfe.

The proceedings remained in Circuit Court there and, this time, the charges in-

cluded felony murder and engaging in a continuous criminal enterprise. And once again, Wolfe faced the death penalty — all the while maintaining his innocence.

With a slew of pre-trial motions, several changes in defense attorneys and a failed attempt at a Supreme Court hearing, the case dragged on for years — until Wolfe's surprising turnaround last week.

"Maybe it seems easy for me to say 'I'm sorry,' but it's actually the hardest thing I have ever done," he wrote. He said that's because it means he has to admit what he did — "which contradicts what I said at trial and the position I have taken for all of my appeals, and I am very afraid that I will let the people I love down."

In a four-page letter dated March 19, he spoke directly to Petrole's parents. Wolfe explained the details leading up to their son's death and his reasons for having him killed. He said he'd fallen behind in the money he owed Petrole for shipments of marijuana which he (Wolfe) then sold to his own customers, and he realized the best way out was to have Petrole killed.

"I know writing this doesn't ever take away all the pain I have caused you," wrote Wolfe, now 35. "I do not deserve your forgiveness, but I want you to know the truth." He ended his letter with the words, "I am sorry for what I did to your son."

His confession was officially accepted into evidence last Tuesday, March 29, by Circuit Court Judge Carroll Weimer Jr. Wolfe's attorneys also made a plea deal with the prosecution, taking the death penalty off the table.

He pleaded guilty to first-degree murder, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, plus a drug offense.

And when he's sentenced July 20, he could receive anywhere from 29-41 years in prison, minus credit for the 15 years he's already served.

Afterward, Wolfe's mother, Terri Steinberg, said, "My family continues to love and support Justin, even in this decision. It has been a long and hard journey. I know it has been hard on the Petrole family, and I will continue to pray for them to find peace."

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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.

THURSDAY/APRIL 7

Middle East Update 2016 — What's Next.

7:30 p.m. at Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. The Northern Virginia Christadelphians host an exploration of the current state of Middle East and Civil War in Syria, and how it got there. Look at different players and philosophies involved. Conclude with Scriptural look at what we should expect to happen next as events lead to return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Call 571-969-6045, email nva.ecclesia@gmail.com or visit www.christadelphians.net for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 9

Middle School STEM Conference.

8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Langston Hughes Middle School, 11401 Ridge Heights Road, Reston. Project BEST (Building Excitement for Science and Technology), a nonprofit organization comprised of students who attend or graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST), is hosting its fourth annual STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) conference for middle school students, Sci2YC (Science Innovation and Inspiration Youth Conference). Public registration for the conference is limited to 50 seats on a first come, first served basis. Interested students and parents can register at <https://projectbest.typeform.com/to/IrJsg8>. Registration is a commitment to attend and not just of interest in the event. There is no charge to attend, and lunch will be provided for the student attendees.

Annual STEM-H Expo.

10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Ernst Center on the Annandale campus of Northern Virginia Community College, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Fairfax County Public Schools will host this year's STEM-H (science, technology, engineering, math, and health) Expo, featuring information about programs at FCPS high school academies, plus student demonstrations in Fire and Emergency Medical Sciences; Robotics; Information Technology; and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration. More than 30 business, industry, and education exhibits will be available to attendees. This event is open to students in grades 6-12, parents, teachers, former academy students, and community

members. All participants are asked to register at www.fcps.edu/ChantillyAcademy/stem/stem.html.

SUNDAY/APRIL 10

4th Annual 5K Walk and Candlelight Vigil.

4:30 p.m. at Fairfax Corner Center, off Monument Drive, Fairfax. The Victim Services Section will again launch National Crime Victims' Rights Week with the 4th Annual 5K Walk and Candlelight Vigil. This free event will be held at the Fairfax Corner Center off Monument Drive in Fairfax, Virginia. Organizers invite crime victims, survivors, family members, friends, and the community to come out to raise awareness for victims' rights in Northern Virginia and show their support for all victims of crime. Free, open to the public. Visit <http://1.usa.gov/1WyTE6o> for more.

TUESDAY/APRIL 12

Library Planning Forum.

7-8:30 at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Share opinions about what library services are needed. The community forum is part of a larger public engagement initiative. Read more about the initiative at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Potomac Watershed Cleanup. 9 a.m. Join in the annual regional watershed cleanup with more than 500 sites across the watershed. For details on cleanup sites, visit www.fergusonfoundation.org.

Democratic Caucuses. Noon-2 p.m. The Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) will hold unassembled Caucuses in each of the nine Magisterial Districts (a.k.a. Supervisor Districts) in Fairfax County in the locations listed at www.FairfaxDemocrats.org/caucus2016 for the purpose of electing 300 delegates and 75 alternates, allocated to presidential candidates in proportion to the results of the March 1 Presidential Primary, as determined by the Democratic Party of Virginia. Candidates must file as either a Delegate or an Alternate, who shall be elected separately by the caucus on April 16. Any person wishing to seek election as a delegate or alternate must file with the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, received no later than 5 p.m., April 9, 2016, online or mailed in www.FairfaxDemocrats.org/caucus2016. A voluntary, non-refundable administrative fee of \$25 (which may be waived) will be charged at the time of filing. There is no charge for those wishing to attend and vote at the caucus.



Dr. Klara Bilgin, dean of the Virginia International University School of Public and International Affairs (right) welcomes legislators from the General Assembly to the Social Issues Forum and Richmond Wrap-up hosted by the Social Action Linking Together (SALT) on Sunday, April 3.

End of Session

FROM PAGE 1

Prisons, jails and treatment of inmates were another topic of discussion, as State Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30) and Del. Patrick Hope (D-47) talked about reducing high rates for phone use. Family contact by phone is critical for prisoners, Ebbin said, because "family unification is the number one predictor of success on re-entry." Ebbin and Hope have also been tackling solitary confinement, they said.

Del. Sickles also spoke about his parole bill that facilitates re-examining cases of inmates before 1995, when there was an understanding that an individual wouldn't spend 20 years in prison for a 20 year sentence. "It's outrageous it's not the priority of the state to look at each one of these cases," he said. First-time delegate Jennifer Boysko (D-86) of Herndon had her bills that would've expanded who can get a

driver's license in Virginia tabled, though she's hopeful to carry the same content next year.

Her bills, she said, "Would've impacted 6,000 people, with no fiscal impact, and be ready to be implemented by July this summer."

"This would help people get back and forth to work legally," Boysko continued. "It makes a good amount of sense."

Del. Mark Levine (D-45) spoke to the social need for more transparency in government and plugged the Virginia Transparency Caucus he helped form in Richmond. Members of the caucus (the current 12 are nearly bi-partisan) agree to having the committees for each one of their bills filmed and then published to YouTube.

"We're hoping to set a standard," Levine said. "You don't have to pass a bill to do this."

Categorical



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Although I am often left to my own devices (not a continuation of last week's column), I am rarely left to my own thoughts. Five indoor cats will do that, and much more. More importantly though, I know they are here, always. Wherever I go in our house, I'm likely to find a cat. And in so doing, there's always a conversation to be had, and/or a gesture to be made. And even though the conversations are a bit one-sided, typically, there is ample vocalization on their part to reward my initiative.

As "Hawkeye" Pierce advised Cpl. Radar O'Reilly on a long-ago M*A*S*H episode: "Loneliness is everything it's cracked up to be." And though the context had to do with Radar's widowed mother dating again, not her spending time alone after receiving a cancer diagnosis, the impact and benefits are likely the same: being able to live, work and play; at home or on the road, with some kind of companionship. Moreover, not being stuck/focused on yourself/your condition all the time also helps fend off – or at least redirect, some of the inevitable demons.

And if cancer is responsible for anything, other than tumors, it's responsible for demons. Not that one can quantify or qualify the psychological effect three words: "You have cancer" can have. Suffice it to say, exponential comes to mind. The damage is usually widespread. Every part of your life – and routine, is impacted. What was, will likely never be again, and what you had hoped might be is now located somewhere between a wing and a prayer. A definite maybe might be the best you can expect.

But the longer one survives, the more one starts to believe – in possibilities again, and reasons as well for that survival. Not that I have the keys to the kingdom or any sort of path of least resistance to follow, but I will attribute some of my unexpected survival to a positive attitude, a good sense of humor and constant companionship. Companionship which in itself prevents me from ever being stuck – too much, in my own head dealing with my cancer. Because of the nature of cat care and of coexisting with FIVE indoor cats, there is always some kind of diversion; be it food, water, litter, playing, scratching, petting, snuggling, cuddling, chastising, to consider. As a result, there's always a non-cancer driven behavior/task that forces me to think of someone other than myself. And since a diagnosis of "terminal" stage IV lung cancer will probably ("probably?") cause you to think very much about yourself, having an external force (the cats) who require you to not think about yourself, seems to balance the pile a little bit (a dog would provide the same diversion/benefit, absolutely; at present, we're between dogs, however).

As a semi example: Right now, I have one cat, "Chino" lying on my desk along the top of my writing pad, purring, staring at me while I'm writing. I have another cat, "Twinkle," playing in the next room, tossing her toy mouse around and scratching at my office door wanting in – or else. The other three cats are sleeping: in the den, the living room and in an upstairs bedroom; all in plain sight, all keenly aware of the time somehow, waiting for five o'clock dinner. And because I'm aware of all this activity/routine, I am not thinking that I have cancer. I am thinking instead that I have five cats and dinner will be soon enough and that in the interim, I probably ("probably?") need to clean their litter box, and that I only have enough wet food for breakfast tomorrow and that the black cats: "Andrew" and "Sloane," are due at the veterinarian for miscellaneous shots and that "Biscuit," "Chino's" brother has been eating everybody's leftover food lately, so much so that I'm wondering if we'll need to segregate him/them somehow, and on and on and on.

No cancer talk. No Kenny or can't he deal with his disease. Just plain, everyday, garden variety stuff. In fact, the stuff from which dreams are made, especially if you're a cancer patient. Apparently, when it's not about me, ultimately, it's me who seems to benefit.

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

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

tion and urged everyone to continue praying for everyone suffering, particularly Ahmadi Muslims who suffer intense persecution from Muslim countries for their faith. Amjed also mentioned that members of the mosque had been observing a fast for the victims of the terror attacks and will be breaking their fasts shortly after the event.

Their keynote speaker, Imam Rizwan Khan, took to the podium next to speak on the unfortunate acts of terror.

He said, "groups that are terroristic in their ideologies are spreading a message that divides people, and ISIS is a group that claims to be gathered under a caliphate which is a true representation of Islam, God forbid."

However the supreme head of the Ahmadiyya community had addressed in his Peace Symposium a short while ago, of spreading a message of peace throughout the world. Khan commented on the current situation where Islamophobia arises, stating that whenever an act of terror occurs "there's a new wave of ignorance, a new wave of fear," which causes division among us.

The reason this happens according to Khan, is due to the purpose of terrorism is to incite terror in society, to make us all scared and live in fear of each other. This is one of the reasons why it is the Ahmadi Muslim's responsibility to respond to acts of terror with "inclusiveness" by removing



PHOTO BY MOHAMMED KHAWAS BHATTI

that fear. Khan advises that one thing we could do is "to reach out to our neighbors, to reach out to those people who perhaps are becoming afraid of us, perhaps who have heard rumors about us and are becoming adverse and apprehensive to our presence in their communities, and remind them that we are fellow Americans. We are fellow citizens, and that all of us are a collective part of the United States of America."

Rizwan Khan ended with silent prayer after which those who were fasting broke their fasts and joined everyone in the refreshments.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues to strive for peace, and are currently involved in campaign called True Islam. More information can be found about the community at www.trueislam.com

Seher Chowdhry
Centreville

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HISTORY

Tour of Local Civil War Sites

Stops through Clifton, Centreville and Fairfax Station was a fundraiser for the Fairfax Railroad Station Museum.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
CENTRE VIEW

The Friends of Fairfax Railroad Station Museum held a tour of Civil War sites on Saturday, April 2. Under rainy skies starting at 8:30 a.m., 18 people rode around Fairfax Station, Clifton and Centreville for seven hours in five cars, and stopped at local Civil War sites, while tour guides John McAnaw and Blake Myers shared their history expertise.

"We're trying to keep our heritage alive," said McAnaw, who said the tour was a fundraiser for the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. "We're serious about the preservation of our heritage." Besides conducting local tours, the group also takes tours at historic sites in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

"Fairfax County has such a rich history going back to Colonial times, the Civil War and World War II," said Myers. "There are existing historical sites that tell the history of America. You have to take the time to look around you and go to the local libraries, which are huge resources for historical data, or join a local history group."

He added: "There's so much history around, you just have to get out and walk around and research the local area."

The first stop on the tour was Battery Hill Redoubt (Centreville), a fenced-in Civil War site that was built after 1st Manassas and is located off Balmoral Greens Avenue and Cannon Fort Drive, and situated next to the Westfields Golf Club in Clifton. Nine embrasures used for artillery during the Civil War have survived 154 years and are pre-



The tour group stopped at St. John's Episcopal Church and Cemetery, built in 1872, in Centreville's Historic District.

served here by Fairfax County. The cannon embrasures or mounds of dirt with openings cut out of them had a platform behind them where guns and artillery could be positioned and fired from by soldiers.

"There was a plan to turn it into a park, but no money to implement the plan," said Myers.

The second stop was "A" Fort (Redan) in Centreville, which sits behind a fence off Balmoral Greens Avenue in Clifton. Oriented toward the east, it was an open structure with a trench line leading up to it and built to protect the railroad by both sides during the Civil War. It has four or five embrasures where cannons were once positioned. Down the trench line are remains of the imbedded foundations of 12 rows of tents where the soldiers slept as well as rocks used for company cooking and remnants of latrine trenches.

Next, the cars headed down Union Mill Road in Clifton near Centreville High School where a Confederate trenchline was preserved by developers between Stonefield Drive and South Springs Drive.

The group then stopped at St. John's Episcopal Church and cemetery on Mount Gilead Road in Centreville's Historic District. On the adjacent, preserved four-acre field, 40,000 Civil War troops set up their

winter encampment in 1861-62, although some argue that number was closer to 24,000 troops. The land was recently spared from development with help from Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova and U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, who have interests in historic preservation.

"Here, a lot of lessons were learned in handling troops," said McAnaw. "Centreville was so important because geographically it was the highest point locally."

The group toured the graveyard at St. John's Church where they learned of Civil War soldiers Michael O'Brien and Dennis Corcoran being interred there in 1979. As soldiers in Wheat's Battalion, these ram-bunctious Louisiana Tigers during 1st Manassas were the first men to be executed for mutiny and bad behavior by their own soldiers during the Civil War.

Next on the stop was Mount Gilead, the oldest house in Western Fairfax County, built in 1785 and originally used as a tavern. The caretaker of 20 years, Ted McCord, an archaeologist, said during the Civil War the house was occupied by officers of both the Confederate and Union armies. The home was spared during the war and has its original flooring and is decorated in Colonial Revival-style furnishings. Outside the porch are remnants of a moat of a trench line used



The sign for Union Mills Historic Site in Centreville.

by soldiers during the war. Fairfax County acquired the property in Centreville's Historic District in 1996.

The group then headed down Pickwick Road near Leland Street in Centreville to see the Covered Way Park, which was restored by local developers. During 1861-62, the large trench coverings were used to be a way to get artillery pieces back and forth without being observed.

There are three forts situated on the Covered Way property.

From Centreville, the group drove back to Fairfax Station to see the earth works on the Nancy Meade property on Smoke Rise Lane. Snaking behind the home is a long, continuous trench that was used as a defense line that protected the Fairfax Station railroad and built by Civil War troops.

Then they headed over to the property owned by Dr. Dan DiLabriola, also on Smoke Rise Lane in Fairfax Station. His home was also built within a couple of feet of the defense line trench, now fully preserved, that was used to protect the Fairfax Station railroad.

When the tour was finished, one of the attendees, Mike Farrell of Arlington, said: "There are a lot of things that are here that I didn't know about — the trenches," he said. "I enjoyed it immensely."



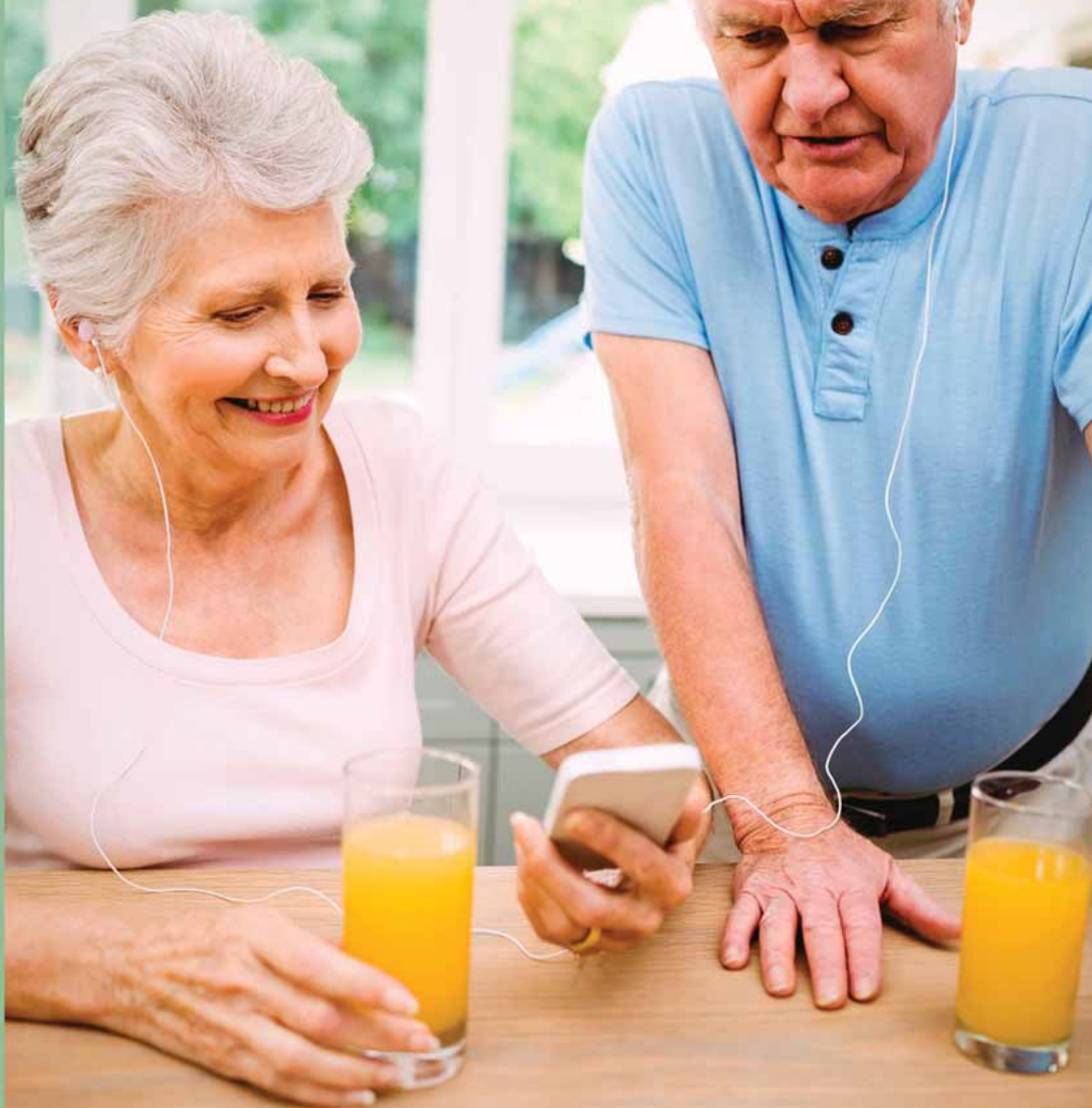
Historian Ted McCord gives a talk at Mount Gilead, a house built in 1785 in Centreville's Historic District, which was formerly called Newgate. Originally a tavern, it is the oldest house in Western Fairfax County.



The Covered Way Historic Park off Pickwick Road in Centreville. It had a long covering trench with three forts that was designed to get artillery pieces back and forth without being observed during the Civil War.

Senior Living

APRIL 2016



Centreville ♦ Clifton ♦ Little Rocky Run
CENTRE VIEW

Senior Living

Taking the Long View

BY JOHN BYRD
THE CONNECTION

Budgeted, incremental improvements are the key to effective planning, aging in place.

When they decided not to move-on after retirement, seniors Mike and Sandy Nusbaum slowly began enlarging their long-term residence with several goals in mind.

Ten years and four improvements later, the couple's Alexandria home is ideal for extended visits with children and grandchildren—and all sorts of everyday pleasures.

Home improvements can come in many sizes: life-changing or simply necessary; comprehensive, or something to please the grandkids.

The real problem is practical: how to conveniently and affordably implement a list of desired improvements—especially when experience tells you that securing a satisfactory outcome for even a basic household repair can be challenging.

In this context, it's heartening to talk with Mike and Sandy Nusbaum, retired empty-nesters who have executed mid- to large-scale renovations to their thirty-year-old south Alexandria residence in phases, about once every two years and for more than a decade.

Plainly, the Nusbaums like their house, a circa-1980s Colonial-style home where they raised three children. While somewhat space-constrained at its original 2,100 square feet, the structure's location adjacent to woodland and minutes from historic Old Town made it hard to beat.

As retirement neared, however, the couple began cautiously reassessing their home's basic assets, even briefly considering a move to a bigger place.

"You have to ask yourself whether the next house will actually improve your quality of life," Sandy Nusbaum says, recounting her thoughts of twelve years back. "When we looked at the alternatives ... we realized there were only a few things about our house that we didn't like."

AND SO IT BEGAN. Plans for incremental changes. Kitchen and screened porch. New family room and deck. Lower level. Enlarged Garage ... Facilitated by a new relationship, with 30-year veteran remodeler David Foster, principal of Foster Remodeling Solutions.

"We met some homeowners at a local home show who raved about David," Sandy recalls. "David has a low-key style, and a strong service orientation that helps us make informed decisions."

Looking back, while the remodeler's fresh design ideas were critical, the couple also appreciated his clearly-stated, always-reliable cost projections.

"WE WERE ON THE CUSP of retirement and didn't want debt," Mike Nusbaum says. "Our first thought was to make targeted improvements to the kitchen while keeping our options open for the larger family entertainment suite we might undertake as



Mike and Sandy Nusbaum have enlarged their home four times in the past ten years. Each phase has improved the home's overall functionality, which has transformed it into a preferred gathering place for children, grandchildren and extended family. The garage and storage units have resulted in a dramatic improvement in available space and eliminated clutter.



Only 150 square feet was added to the family room, but the four-window course with "eyebrows" creates a visual continuum that makes the room feel significantly larger.

we assessed the budget issue."

Foster was not only supportive of such thinking, but, as the Nusbaums learned, considers "phased remodeling" an integral part of his company's service.

"I grew up in Fairfax County and have learned my business by helping homeowners find a process that will work for them as they think ahead," he says.

Once work began, the Nusbaums particularly noted the foresight Foster brought to each improvement.

"Ten years ago, we wanted the rooms extending from the kitchen to function better as a place for entertainment. We had a small dining room that wasn't being used much. The back rooms were too dark," Sandy Nusbaum recalls.

In short order, the wall between the kitchen and dining room disappeared, replaced by a three-stool Silestone counter that has become the couple's primary kitchen gathering area. That counter surface was also positioned as a serving sta-

tion for the new elevated 16-by-16-foot screened porch that is now a much-used fair-weather dining spot.

A new window over the kitchen sink adds natural light and a lovely view of the backyard. "When you walk from the kitchen to the screen porch, it feels like you're walking in the air through the trees," Sandy says. "This gave us a wonderful re-discovery of our own backyard."

From there, it wasn't long before the Nusbaums began planning an extension of the rear family room, an open-air grilling deck and a pathway that permits children, grandchildren and guests to circulate freely through a wide-ranging suite of rooms used for social gatherings.

"It was at this point that we started having holiday gatherings for up to thirty," Sandy says. "Such fun!"

WHICH LED TO THE THIRD PHASE: Transform the 800-square-foot lower level into an exercise room that doubles as a



The first phase of a 10 year remodeling plans entailed replacing the kitchen/living room divider wall with a dining counter/serving station. The revisions allowed light from three directions. Maple cabinets and Silestone quartz surfaces provide a tonal and textural contrast.

guest suite. Here a comfortable Murphy bed folds out of a discrete closet. There's a full bath, and built-in serving station with refrigerator and microwave. The Nusbaums refer to it as "the family suite." On holidays, it can be occupied for two or three days a stretch.

Then, just last year, Foster created a second bay for the garage by building a wing off the side elevation. The new construction is supplemented by a garden shed accessed from the yard. The contents, pruning tools, mower, freed up floor space in the garage, which now (for the first time) has room for something special: two cars.

"What we really appreciate about David Foster is there are no bad surprises, and frequently there are good ones," Mike Nusbaum said. "Last year, for instance, he repaired a window that was out of warranty and didn't charge us. That kind of service encourages you to think ahead."

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com or www.HomeFrontsNews.com) has been writing about home improvement for 30 years.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOME FRONTS NEWS

Senior Living

Fairfax County's Living Well, Aging Well Summit, April 16

Living Well, Aging Well Summit hosted by Fairfax County and partners is scheduled for Saturday, April 16, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

This free event will feature a transportation and mobility expo, a technology fair, a volunteer fair, a CarFit program, health screenings, exhibits, seminars, presentations and more.

Physician, professor and geriatric medicine pioneer, Richard W. Lindsay will deliver the keynote presentation.

The summit "will offer multiple approaches to aging well and living well with a disability," said Summit Planning Chairwoman Melanie Rochon Bush, DPT, PT. She said the summit will provide abundant information on health and wellness, county services and volunteer opportunities.

Dr. Bush, director of Fairfax Rehab, Inc./Select Senior Options, is a member of the county's Long Term Care Coordinating Council, a group of local and private agencies that promote caring, inclusive and supportive communities. The council is the lead organizer of the event.

Parking is free and plentiful. Register at www.livingwellfairfax.org or call 703-324-7647. For ADA requests, call 703-324-5421.

Seminars include:

- ❖ Navigating the Medicaid Maze: Waivers, Eligibility and Documentation. Joan Irwin, Long-Term Care Self-Sufficiency Team, Department of Family Services. Learn about Medicaid's eligibility criteria, screening process, required documentation and how Medicaid funds home-based and nursing home care.

- ❖ Understanding Medicare Parts A, B, C and D. Bill Vaughan, counselor, Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program. Get the most out of Medicare.

- ❖ Healthy Habits for a Healthier You. Ana Nelson, vice president of Programs and Services, Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter. Find out how to optimize your physical and cognitive health as you age.

- ❖ Staying Active: Move, Learn, Create Margot Greenlee, director, BodyWise Dance. This dance class encourages increased mobility, social engagement and rhythmic accuracy.

- ❖ Balance, Balance and More Balance Woody McMahon, Founder, Sequoia Health and Fitness, Inc. This 1-hour interactive workshop tests your balance and offers simple ways for improvement.

- ❖ Fairfax County's Community Resources to Help You Live Well and Age Well. Sharon Lynn, director, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging; Bob MacMurdo and

Carlos Estrada, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. Learn about county services for older adults and for people with mental health, substance abuse disorders and intellectual disability.

- ❖ Social Media and Older Adults

Emily Rasowsky, Director of Marketing Strategy Social Driver. Learn about Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Skype, FaceTime and the top apps for older adults.

- ❖ Aging Well in the Community. Barbara Sullivan, executive director, Mount Vernon At Home; Michelle Scott, executive director, Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna; Matthew Barkley, director, Disability Services Planning and Development. Panelists will discuss transportation, social programs, accessibility and home safety, community engagement and the Fairfax 50+ Neighbor to Neighbor Initiative.

- ❖ Fun on the Horizon. Evan Braff, regional manager, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services; Jennifer Disano, executive director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU. Learn the benefits of participating in leisure activities that support mental and physical health.

- ❖ Connected Health: A Healthier You Through Technology. Telehealth, sometimes called Telemedicine, improves health by connecting the patient at one location with the provider at another site. Learn about telehealth in addressing diabetes and heart disease.

50+ Employment Expo

Dozens of job recruiters will be present at the 50+ Employment Expo on Monday April 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The day features seminars on changing careers, online job searching, continuing education and resume help. Recruiters include nonprofits, government agencies, healthcare, retail, technology and more.

The Expo takes place at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel at Tysons Corner, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. This site is accessible via Metro. Use the Silver Line's Spring Hill stop.

The Expo is sponsored by the Jewish Council for the Aging, Fairfax County and community partners. Free admission and parking. Registration is not necessary—just show up.

Senior Slow-Pitch Softball

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Photo by Ed Knepley

‘Shark Tank’ for Seniors

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Chantilly High School freshman Aru Rajpurohit remembers seeing her great-grandfather struggle to drink his morning tea and other beverages, his hands shaking from Parkinson’s disease.

“As a young child, it was heartbreaking to see him like this,” Rajpurohit said. “Often he was embarrassed after spilling in front of friends and family.”

Motivated by the memory of her great-grandfather, she’s always wanted to develop a solution for this problem of spilling caused by tremors. On Monday, March 28, Rajpurohit presented her invention called StabilityCup, a shock-absorbing beverage holder, at the first Assistive Technology “Shark Tank” Challenge for Fairfax County High School Students.

Six finalists from Chantilly High School, South Lakes High School and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology presented their innovative solutions for solving different problems that senior citizens face.

The challenge originated from the Fairfax County 50+ Community Action Plan Technology Committee, which has been working on an initiative called “Help People Stay in their Homes with Technology.”

Sharon Lynn, director of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, they wanted to encourage students to think about the possibilities for how technology can benefit people, “not just to make life easier in some way, but can benefit older adults, help them live at home for a longer period of time and benefit the community.”

The full 50+ plan includes 31 action items from a long-range trends and needs analysis to increasing employment and en-



Chantilly High School sophomores Megan Van Rafelghem and Christine Shan work on building their team’s “Ledge Wedge” for the Assistive Technology “Shark Tank” Challenge for Fairfax County High School Students.

High school students design and present tech products to improve older adults’ lives.



Chantilly High School freshman Aru Rajpurohit (left) displays her StabilityCup design with (right) Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield).

Partners, an information technology solutions firm for government clients that sponsored the challenge.

“This youngster, something touched his heart,” Waddell said, “and he decided was going to do something about it.”

Stride wasn’t the only product that had hurdles to develop. Waddell said he was surprised that almost all of the students had a story about how they tried to make something, it didn’t work, and they kept at it.

Waddell said he appreciated “their thoughtfulness and tenacity, to go after something like this, develop all the software and hardware solutions on their own.

“These are they types of kids we’re looking to employ,” he continued. “It’s why we do this, to show the younger generation how much we appreciate what they’re doing.”

Tanvi Nallanagula, a sophomore at Chantilly High School, was part of a team that designed and built the Ledge Wedge, an automatic light that brightens staircases to help decrease the amount of injuries that occur from falling. “Seniors are a really valuable part of our society,” Nallanagula said. “You sometimes forget that. As you talk, you can learn so many things. They still have a lot to teach us and it does no good to abandon or forget them.”

Winners of the Shark Tank Challenge will be announced at the Fairfax Area Living Well, Aging Well Summit, a free convention of vendors, resources and services for seniors scheduled for Saturday, April 16 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

For more information on the 50+ Community Action Plan, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/fairfax50plus.htm or call 703-324-5720.

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trepreneurship opportunities for older adults.

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) chairs the 50+ full committee. He said “we’ve got a long way to go” implementing initiatives like prenotification of medical conditions for 9-1-1 calls and ensuring housing options for seniors. However other projects including older adults visiting elementary schools to read and interact with

students (“Grand Involve”), and a free, ride-scheduling service (“Northern Virginia Rides”) “are moving forward at light-speed.”

Herrity is excited about initiatives like Grand Involve and the Shark Tank Challenge that engage older and younger adults, that get the generations helping each other.

“It’s the communication piece,” he said, “and getting seniors to use technology as an avenue to expand their communication and knowledge they might be missing out on.”

Srijay Kasturi, a sophomore at South Lakes High School, repurposed an ultrasonic sensor he had been developing for use with camera tripods to fashion an aid for older adults with impaired vision.

“Many seniors would rather suffer from a lack of vision than use the ‘white cane’ that blind people use,” Katsuri said. “Then they get labeled as a blind person.”

“Stride” attaches to the user’s shoe and scans up to six feet ahead within a 45-degree cone. If something’s in the way, the unit sends a vibration to a wrap around the person’s ankle.

Kasturi tested the product at both the Herndon Senior Center and Nova Labs. Though he got a lot of positive feedback, he also saw a lot of room for improvement. One user with diabetic neuropathy wasn’t able to feel the vibrations, while another was unsure of whether to go left or right to avoid the obstacle in front.

Kasturi’s initiative to go out and test the design multiple times impressed Mike Waddell, managing partner and co-founder of Reston-based Integrity One



Chantilly High School sophomores Tanvi Nallanagula (left) and Eric Kim (right) fabricate their “Ledge Wedge” design that would help better illuminate staircases for older adults.