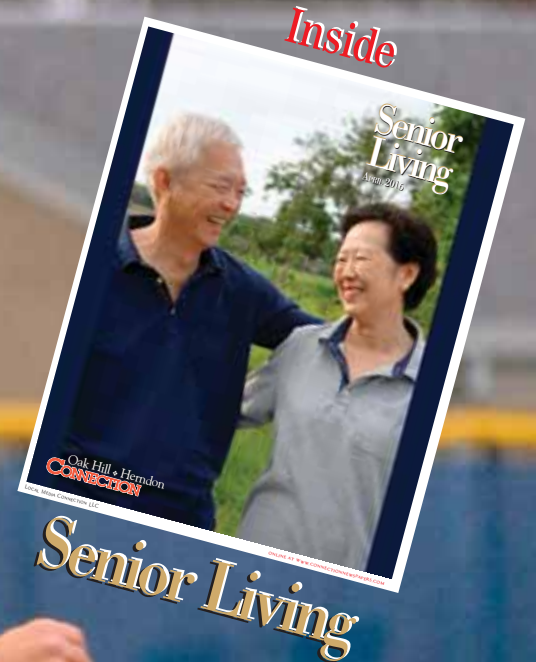


Oak Hill Herndon CONNECTION



Herndon pitcher Antonio Menendez threw a no-hitter against South Lakes on April 2.

No-Hitter

SPORTS, PAGE 8

Speaking Japanese at Fox Mill Elementary

NEWS, PAGE 12

The Taste of Mom's Soup

NEWS, PAGE 6

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Lawmakers Wrap-up Richmond Legislative Session

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

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

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 trafficking.

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.

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."

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



John Horejsi of Social Action Linking Together introduces some of the social issues to be discussed at the April 3 Richmond Legislative Wrap-up.



State senators Barbara Favola (D-31) (center) and State Sen. George Barker (D-39) (left) discuss how to better use unexpended and available funds from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant.



Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86) explains her three bills with regards to expanding who can get a driver's license in Virginia.

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.



Del. David Bulova (D-37) (right) welcomes members of the Social Action Linking Together to the Richmond Legislative Wrap-up Social Issues Forum at the Virginia International University campus in Fairfax, located in his district, on Sunday, April 3.



Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34) (left) discusses a scholarship she's proposed.



Del. Ken Plum (D-36) explains his bills that would have made the Earned Income Tax Credit refundable and also raised the minimum wage.

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION



State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) said the 2016 General Assembly Session did not see much progress in terms of redistricting, but that it was a "real breakthrough year" for firearms control.

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 Keam (D-35) said five of his bills were passed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D), including a provision that if a school violates the class size requirement as set in the Virginia Code, school systems now have a mechanism to do something about it.

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."

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>

Send in 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 and information directly to www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to north@connectionnewspapers.com.

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cooper Middle Students Learn Coding

BY CHRISTY GAO
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENT

As the use of technology rises across the globe, so does the use for computer programming. However, as evidenced by the lack of young programmers, this fundamental skill is not being taught to the people who need it the most: students. In the 2016 State of the Union, President Obama said, “In the coming years, we should build on that progress, by providing Pre-K for all and offering every student the hands-on computer science and math classes that make them job-ready on day one.” In the spring of 2015, Cooper Middle School announced that they will have an Intro to Coding course available as an elective for the 2015-2016 school year. As expected, the new elective gained lots of popularity and many students



Coding class at Cooper Middle.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

chose it as their elective. The course, taught by teacher Lisa Walsh, is currently the first and only coding class offered to FCPS middle-schoolers. As one student taking the class said, “You learn how to code games that can help you in life for other opportunities.” Another student in the new class said, “You can creatively express yourself through the programs you make.” These are just a few of the

many things that Cooper students have said about the first FCPS middle school computer programming class. The actions of Cooper Middle School and teacher Lisa Walsh show that FCPS is taking initiative in order to solve the lack of student programmers in the United States by giving middle schoolers to opportunity to learn a valuable skill: coding.

Inappropriate Use of FEMA Relief Funds

To the Editor

Your recent article “Fairfax County Schools to Apply for FEMA Relief Funds” is another example of attempting to exploit the American taxpayers.

I visualize the typical American taxpayer as a middle class couple living in the heartland of our country. They have two children. They go to church every week. They don’t smoke, don’t use illegal drugs, and use alcohol in moderation. Their children go to school each school day. They vote in every election. They must struggle financially even when the economy is strong, but they pay their bills, and they pay their taxes. They pay for their children’s education, and they save for their retirement.

I don’t feel that it is appropriate for the Federal government, which consists of millions of such middle class families, to pay for the removal of snow at Fairfax County Public Schools.

Dave Elmore
Great Falls

Oak Hill & Herndon CONNECTION

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Climate Solutions Summit Held in Oakton

Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, a Northern Virginia nonprofit that helps faith communities respond to climate change, hosted a summit in Oakton to bring faith leaders and local officials together.

Secretary Brian Moran, Virginia's chief resilience officer, was joined by Chairman Pat Hynes of the Fairfax County School Board and Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville). Leaders from congregations as diverse as Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in McLean, Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, and the All Dulles Area Muslim Society in Sterling encouraged officials to commit to robust action on climate change. Secretary Moran shared details on the Commonwealth's Clean Power Plan, which is Virginia's response to the first-ever national standard on carbon pollution. Chairman Hynes released results on Fairfax County Schools' exploration of solar power and announced an upcoming "Get to Green" dashboard. Supervisor Foust announced the launch of Fairfax County's first energy use website, which reveals how much energy county facilities use and empowers citizens to advocate for efficiency.

Interfaith Power and Light of D.C., Maryland, and Northern Virginia shared important context on how Northern Virginia's sustainability policies relate to those of the region as a whole. Secretary Moran will share area faith leaders' messages on climate change with Gov. McAuliffe.



Secretary Brian Moran, Chairman Pat Hynes of the Fairfax County School Board and Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) discuss climate change initiatives.



Attendees discuss how to more effectively engage with elected officials.

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Katharine Mardirosian.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



The Taste of Mom’s Soup

Profile: Katharine Mardirosian of 100 Bowls of Soup.

BY ALEXANDRA GREELEY
THE CONNECTION

When you first enter Herndon’s iconic store, 100 Bowls of Soup, herbal fragrances surround you and they may even transform your ideas of soup. Next, you will notice a busy open and spacious kitchen, with several ladies chopping vegetables, stirring broths, and combining assorted ingredients into soup pots. Finally, if you have the chance, you can chat with Katharine Mardirosian, who started off her business at a farmer’s market and McLean’s Organic Butcher years ago.

Why soup? Well, as it turns out, Mardirosian says that soups “are the ultimate nourishing meal,” dishes she enjoyed as a child, especially on cold winter nights. But when she visited her mother-in-law in Romania and watched her make real chicken soup in a stockpot, her life changed. “With this slowly simmering simple meal,” she said, “her apartment became so aromatic, so full of goodness. I thought, ‘This is what food should taste like.’ It was my epiphany...comfort food beyond soothing.” That inspired Mardirosian to make weekly chicken soups for her children. They embraced her homemade soups, though she admits her son was rather picky about his choices. “He’ll eat only minestrone, chicken soup and chili.”

Although not a professional chef, she began making soups in larger quantities from scratch, and experimenting with different flavors and ingredients, using citrus, various vinegars, and spices. Mardirosian tested various soups on friends and family, and began thinking seriously about a soup-making business, admitting that her first year was a real learning curve.

Her rather daring approach to soup making, however, has launched her from a small, at-home business with one or two outlets to a big storefront location with a large professional kitchen. And she attributes this final step forward to her intermediate setup in Vienna’s Maple Avenue Market, which features organic, local produce and wholesome products. There she was able to pro-

Recipe

Caraway Cauliflower
Cauliflower, toasted caraway seeds and mustard give this soup its unique flavor and creamy texture.

Serve 5 to 6
1 large cauliflower (about 2 pounds)
2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, peeled and diced
1 1/2 to 2 quarts filtered water
1 teaspoon dried mustard
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
Salt and pepper to taste
Chop roughly all the cauliflower, stalks and florets, and discard only the outer leaves
Heat the olive oil in a medium pot. Add the diced onion and cook over medium-low heat until onions are wilted. Add the chopped cauliflower and filtered water, just until the cauliflower is covered and barely floating. Bring to a boil, and reduce the heat to low; simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the cauliflower is tender.

Meanwhile, gently toast the caraway seeds in a skillet. Cool briefly and grind in spice grinder until they become a fine, almost powdery. Add ground caraway, mustard, and a pinch of salt and pepper to pot. Turn off heat and puree with an immersion blender until smooth. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

duce larger batches of soup and stock for wholesale and also sold freshly made specialty soups, all of which earned her a loyal customer base.

Now celebrating her first anniversary at her Herndon kitchen, she says that this effort has been very successful, with both the wholesale deliveries to the Mom’s Organic Market locations and her retail, in-store business rapidly expanding. The business also caters to area offices and a nearby private school. She has an active staff, all of whom are dedicated soup makers and have the ultimate goal of producing 100 varieties of soup. To date, says Mardirosian, they produce a core of 40 different soups, many seasonal, stocks and bone broths, making about 200 gallons a week.

She noted that among the favorites are the chicken and meat-based stocks, specialty soups, and such vegan offerings as French onion (made with mushroom stock), caraway cauliflower and a new Thai coconut sweet potato. “Our mission is to help people eat better food,” she said. “Having our own store and an open kitchen allows us to get face to face with our customers. We’re able to offer a full spectrum of soups that satisfy vegan, vegetarian, gluten free and paleo diets.”

100 Bowls of Soup, 279 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Phone: 703-466-5130. Hours: Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

News

Herndon-based K12 Rallies Behind American Idol ‘Top Three’ Finalist

BY LISA SPINELLI-WHITE

As a top three finalist on “American Idol,” singer Dalton Rapattoni, 20, is rocketing to stardom—and Herndon-based K12 Inc., an online school curriculum provider, is helping rally the votes to catapult Dalton into the number one spot.

“We are thrilled for Dalton Rapattoni and all his success,” said Allison Cleveland, executive vice President of School Services at K12. “An online education powered by K12 allows creative minds, like Dalton’s, the ability to pursue their passion while receiving a world class education.”

K12 and its partner school Texas Virtual Academy, Rapattoni’s former middle school, have been using school Facebook accounts, internal email systems and blogs like Learning Liftoff to help rally votes for the singer who blogger Perez Hilton calls “radioactive.”

Kiva Rapattoni, Dalton’s mother, credits TXVA—a free online charter school using the K12 curriculum, and his teacher, Paula Mobley, for helping with her son’s success during a stressful time.

“TXVA was a real blessing when we needed it,” she said.

K12 provides families an important alternative when brick-and-



Dalton Rapattoni

mortar schooling is no longer the best option. In seventh grade, Dalton received treatment for bipolar disorder and missed multiple weeks at his brick-and-mortar school. After learning her son would need to repeat an entire school year, Kiva opted to enroll Dalton in TXVA.

“We found Dalton didn’t have any trouble getting started at TXVA. He caught up on his studies quickly and our family had a great experience with the school.”

The Rapattoni family was drawn to the K12 curriculum for its flexibility. Dalton could complete an entire week of lessons in a day and then move onto assignments at his own pace, allowing him time to



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Dalton Rapattoni performing at Six Flags.

hone his music skills. Meanwhile, in the classroom, Mobley’s innovative teaching style helped keep Dalton’s creative juices flowing.

“I had an assignment on data conferences and asked students to turn in samples of graphs in PowerPoint format. I gave everyone the option to use a more creative format if they wished to,” said Mobley. “Dalton chose to write a song about data conferences. He

turned on the microphone in our online classroom and sang the assignment.”

After K12, Rapattoni attended the prestigious Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, Texas, and then moved to Los Angeles to pursue music full-time in the boyband, IM5. To follow Dalton’s success, watch “American Idol” Thursdays on Fox.



Firefighters fight the fire from the outside after deteriorating conditions forced them to abandon an interior attack.



PHOTOS BY BC WILL BAILEY/COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT
Firefighters encounter smoke and fire from the garage and attic upon arrival to the house on Windsong Drive in Oakton on Tuesday, March 30.

Fire Ravages Oakton House Oil-soaked rags cause of fire, said investigators.

A fire caused approximately \$652,500 in damages to a house on Windsong Drive in Oakton on Tuesday, March 30 at 1:45 p.m.

Some 60 firefighters waged an interior approach to the fire but conditions forced them to move outside to contain it.

According to investigators, im-

properly discarded rags soaked with linseed oil was the cause of the fire. The fire was deemed accidental.

No one was in the house, which

had working smoke alarms, at the time.

Three firefighters were taken to the hospital for minor injuries.

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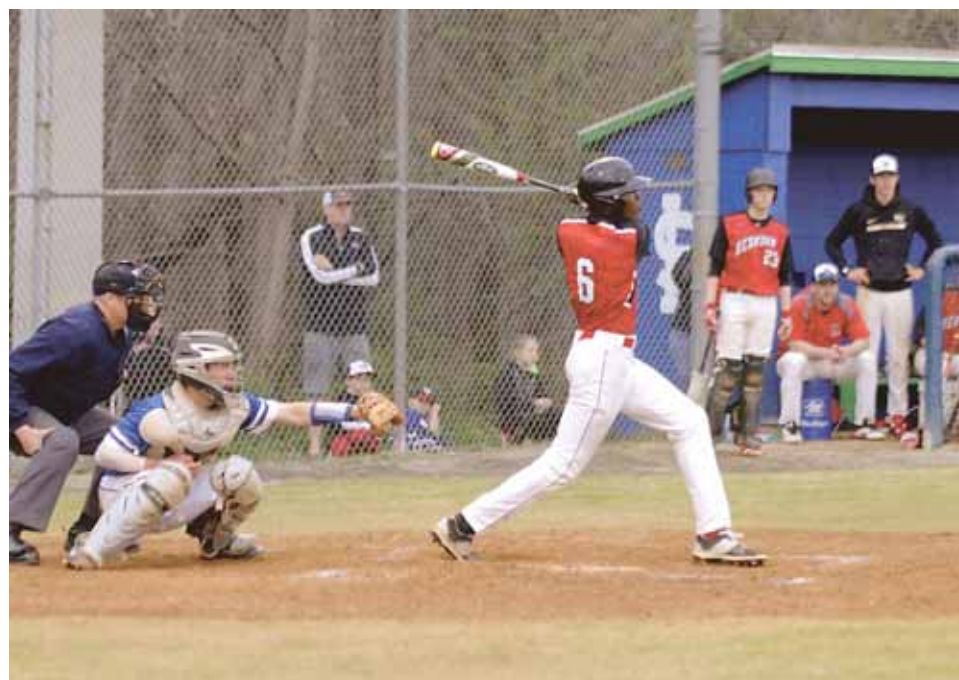
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Herndon pitcher Antonio Menendez struck out 10 batters during a 2-0 win over South Lakes on April 2.



Herndon right fielder Jabbari Smith scored one of the Hornets' two runs against South Lakes on April 2.

Herndon Pitcher Menendez No-Hits Rival South Lakes

**Hornets beat
Seahawks 2-0,
improve to 5-1.**

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

At first, Herndon pitcher Antonio Menendez wondered why his teammates weren't talking to him. When he realized what was going on, the junior right-hander went out and gave the Hornets — and everyone else in attendance — something to talk about.

Menendez, a Wake Forest commit, threw his first varsity no-hitter and the Herndon baseball team defeated rival South Lakes 2-0 on April 2 in Reston.

Menendez said his teammates, following a baseball custom, weren't talking to him while he was in the midst no-hitting the Seahawks. However, the side-arm hurler didn't realize what was happening until late in the game.

"I didn't notice it until the bottom of the fifth inning," Menendez said. "I looked up and I started to think, 'Why is no one talking to me?' and I realized that I was throwing a no-hitter and I kept my mouth shut and didn't want to jinx it."

MENENDEZ walked two, hit two batters and struck out 10, including six in the final three innings. He did not allow a runner to reach third base.

Menendez threw 86 pitches, including 53 strikes, and tossed a first-pitch strike to 17 of the 23 batters he faced.

"To be honest, this was typical," first-year Herndon head coach Mark Rueffert said. "No-hitters aren't typical, obviously, but he's been throwing like this all year — keeping hitters off balance, mixing his pitches and he's always around the zone. I don't want to sound conceited or cocky, but I'm not surprised."

Herndon scored both of its runs in the



South Lakes starting pitcher Brian Lawson allowed Herndon two runs in 4 2/3 innings on April 2.

top of the fifth inning. Junior shortstop Austin Boynton drove in the game's first run with a sacrifice fly, scoring third baseman Ryan Ferguson. With two outs, right fielder Jabbari Smith scored from second base on an infield single by center fielder Devin Vigneault.

Two runs were more than enough for Menendez, who pitches predominantly from the side, but will throw an overhand fastball and curveball. He said his sidearm fastball has been clocked at 87 mph and his overhand fastball has reached 91 mph.

On Saturday, Menendez's slider was particularly effective.

"He mixed up his pitches well," said South Lakes shortstop and leadoff hitter Marty Gryski. "He can really spot any pitch, really at any time he wants. He was out there

throwing 3-0 sliders, 2-0 sliders — even though he does throw hard, his offspeed puts him on another level."

Menendez said he "didn't throw anything besides sliders" in the bottom of the seventh, when he struck out a pair.

"Once people start swinging and missing like that, I just start continuing to get in their head, throw different pitches," Menendez said. "As soon as I can get in the batter's head, they have no idea what's coming and I feel like I own them as a pitcher."

The victory improved Herndon's record to 5-1.

Rueffert said pitching has played a significant role in the Hornets' strong start. Senior Graham Seitz, Herndon's No. 2 starter, was supposed to pitch part of Saturday's contest, but the coaches decided

"As soon as I can get in the batter's head, they have no idea what's coming and I feel like I own them as a pitcher."

— Herndon junior Antonio Menendez

to let Menendez go for the no-hitter.

"I consult with my coaches on lots of things," Rueffert said, "and we didn't have to talk for very long about whether or not we were going to leave him in or how long we were going to leave him in [because of] how he was throwing."

SOUTH LAKES starting pitcher Brian Lawson suffered the loss. The senior allowed two unearned runs and three hits in 4 2/3 innings. He walked one, hit one batter and struck out three.

The loss dropped South Lakes' record to 7-3. The Seahawks are looking to build off the success of last season, when the team qualified for the region tournament for the first time since 2003. South Lakes' trip to regionals included a first-round upset of Conference 7 champion Lake Braddock.

"Our goal is to win a district championship," said second-year South Lakes head coach Morgan Spencer, a former Herndon assistant, "and get back into the region (tournament) and try to make some noise."

Herndon will host Broad Run at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 7.

"A no-hitter against our biggest rival," Herndon catcher Alex Hurd said, "is [a confidence booster]." South Lakes was scheduled to face Madison on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Seahawks will travel to face Washington-Lee at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 8.

"We're a really good baseball team," Gryski said. "We struggled tonight, obviously, but that's not how we play baseball here. It was a tough night."

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Founder's Day Exhibit. Through April 25. JoAnne Rose Gallery, Reston Community Center, 1609 Washington Plaza, Reston. In honor of League of Reston Artists founder Patricia MacIntyre. Free. leagueofrestonartists.org.

New Forms and Horizons: Abstract Art and Sculpture. April 5-May 1. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Featuring contemporary landscape artist Jorge Luis Bernal and sculptor Eric Garner. artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

Joyful Color in Reston. April 7-May 5. Reston Art Gallery and Studio, 11400 Washington Plaza W, Reston. Joan Kelly's colorful acrylic paintings of Reston scenes will be on exhibit in unison with Founder's Week, a celebration of the life of Reston founder, Robert E. Simon, Jr. RestonArtGallery.com.

Herndon Town Calendar Photography Competition. Deadline June 7 at 2 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon and the Council for the Arts of Herndon present the Sixth Annual Herndon Town Calendar Photography Competition. Professional and amateur photographers are invited to submit entries to the Herndon Town Calendar Photo Competition. Subjects for all entries must be located within the corporate limits of the Town of Herndon. artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

Emerging Visions: Contemplating Community. March 15-April 9. Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., 103, Reston. Fairfax County high school students the opportunity to work directly with GRACE's curatorial staff to create thoughtful, well-crafted artworks that will be exhibited in the gallery. This year, GRACE is dedicating its celebration of Youth Art Month to Bob Simon's vision for a New Town. www.restonarts.org. 703-471-9242.

Integral Tai Chi. 12:30-2 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays through March 30. Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace St., Herndon. Integral Tai Chi is a combination of traditional Chinese Tai Chi and Qi Kong. The movements come from both forms of practice, in addition to yoga movements in the warm up section. Students need to bring their own yoga mat, a towel and water. Free-\$5. 703-464-6200.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 6

IIIT Lecture. 6-7:30 p.m. IIIT Library, 500 Grove St., Suite 200, Herndon. "The Cleric, the Cardinal, and the Qur'an: A Little-known Chapter in the History of Christian Engagement with Islam" by Dr. Paul Shore. 703-230-2846.

THURSDAY/APRIL 7

Best of Reston Awards and Gala. 6 p.m. Hyatt Regency Reston, 1800 Presidents St., Reston. Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the special partnership between the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce and Cornerstones. cornerstonesva.org. 571-323-9570.

FRIDAY/APRIL 8

Fairfax Volunteer Awards. 8 a.m. The Waterford, 6715 Commerce St., Springfield. Join Volunteer Fairfax, Chairman Sharon Bulova and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and other community leaders to



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Circa Blue will perform on Saturday, April 8 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Herndon. The event is part of the Weekend Bluegrass Concert Series.

celebrate the work of volunteers. Purchase tickets by April 4. \$50. For information and tickets go to www.volunteerfairfax.org.

Author Talk Linda Frank. 8 p.m. Congregation Beth Emeth, 12523 Lawyers Road, Herndon. Discusses "The Lost Torah of Shanghai." 703-860-4515.

Empty Bowls Fundraiser. 5:30-8 p.m. Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. For a small donation, guests receive a simple supper of soup, bread, beverage, and dessert, as well as a handmade ceramic bowl to keep as a reminder that there are those in our community with empty bowls. \$25/\$30/\$15. givingcircleofhope.org.

Senior Tea. 1-2 p.m. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Seniors visit the gallery and view current exhibit and have a cup of tea. Free. artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

The Rhythmic Circus. 8 p.m. CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Innovative performance company infuses its unpredictable blend of hard-hitting tap, high-spirited humor, and finger-snapping tunes into one amazing show. \$20/\$30. restoncommunitycenter.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 9

Reston Founder's Day. Noon. Lake Anne Plaza, 11404 Washington Plaza W, Reston. Join the fun, with Reston Chorale as Reston marks its 52nd Anniversary and celebrates the 102nd birthday of founder Robert E. Simon, Jr. Free. www.restonmuseum.org.

New Forms and Horizons Reception. 7-9 p.m. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Features artist Jorge Luis Bernal and Eric Garner. artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

Science Innovation and Inspiration Youth Conference. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Langston Hughes Middle School, 11401 Ridge Heights Road, Reston. Hands-on activities, presentations. Register at <https://projectbest.typeform.com/to/IrJsg8>.

Bluegrass Concert Series. 7:30 p.m. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. Circa Blue, a fresh, new band on the bluegrass scene, will perform. \$15. Under 12 free. <http://hclbluegrass.wordpress.com>.

SATURDAYS/APRIL 9, 23

Pet Photography Classes. 3-6 p.m. 433-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon. Love taking pictures of your pets but wish they would turn out better? Learn tips and tricks from professional pet photographer Terry Wingfield of Wingfield Photography. Bring your dog and your camera to this exciting

interactive class. \$45/\$65. Register at novadogmagazine.com/events.

TUESDAY/APRIL 12

Design and Wine: Spring Wine Glasses with Cheryl Wilson. 7-9 p.m. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Workshop on finding passion within to create beautiful wine glasses. \$30. artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

The Folk Club of Reston-Herndon. 7:15. Amphora Diner Deluxe, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. Harpeth Rising is a Kentucky-based trio consisting of Jordana Greenberg (violin, vocals), Rebecca Reed-Lunn (banjo, vocals), and Maria Di Meglio (cello, vocals). \$9/\$10. restonherndonfolkclub.com.

FRIDAY/APRIL 15

Voce Chamber Singers. 8 p.m. St. John Neumann Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston. American choral classics featuring the world premiere of a new Voce commission by DC-area composer, Stephen Caracciolo. \$25. voce.org/tickets. 703-277-7772.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Lake Anne Brew House Opening. 10 a.m.-11 p.m. Lake Ann Village Center 11404 Washington Plaza West, Reston. Ribbon-cutting ceremony at noon. lakeannebrewhouse.com.

Bluegrass Concert Series. 7:30 p.m. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. The Country Gentlemen Tribute Band will perform. \$15. Under 12 free. <http://hclbluegrass.wordpress.com>.

THURSDAY/APRIL 21

Healthy at 100! 10 a.m.-noon. Dranesville Church of the Brethren, 11500 Leesburg Pike, Herndon. Giant's (McLean) in-store nutritionist, Amanda Barnes, RDN, will share tips and tricks to be healthier. Free. 703-430-7872.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

B.B. King Tribute Concert. 7:30-10 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Featuring "Slam" Allen. \$20. Free to children under 12. artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

FISH Fling Gala and Fundraiser. 6-11 p.m. Hyatt Dulles Hotel, 2300 Dulles Corner Blvd., Herndon. Festive music, dancing, games and prizes, auctions, dinner, dessert and wine. For more information, contact fling@HerndonRestonFISH.org.

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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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NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jim Black's photograph, "Hole in the Wall," is one of the entries in the Reston Photographic Society's exhibit celebrating the centennial of the National Park Service. The exhibit runs through June 26 at the JoAnn Rose Gallery, Lake Anne Community Center in Reston.

National Park Photographs Sought

The Reston Photographic Society, a special interest group of the League of Reston Artists, invites photographers to enter images of national parks in the RPS at Lake Anne show by May 10.

Entries will be judged and at least \$1,000 in prizes will be awarded at the reception on Sunday, June 5, from 2-4 p.m. at the

gallery. The exhibit runs from May 24 through June 26 and is free and open to the public 9 a.m.-8 p.m. throughout the week at the JoAnne Rose Gallery, Reston Community Center at Lake Anne, 1609 Washington Plaza, Reston, VA 20190. Visit leagueofrestonartists.org for more information on this and other events.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 6

The Future of the American Suburb: Lessons from Reston. 7-9 p.m. Jo Ann Rose Gallery, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. By Patrick Phillips, CEO of Urban Land Institute. Free. restonmuseum.org.
Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities. 7:30 p.m. Gatehouse Administrative Center Room 1600, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church. Guests are welcome to observe and/or provide public comment at any meeting. 703-204-3941 or TTY 703-204-3956. fcps.edu/dss/ACSD.

TUESDAY/APRIL 12

Library Forum. 7-8:30 p.m. Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Help plan the libraries' future by sharing your input. fairfaxcounty.gov/library. 703-324-8319.

Post-Secondary Education and Employment Workshops. 7-9 p.m. Woodson High School Cafeteria, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. For students with IEPs and their parents. Register at 703-204-3941.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 13

Ask the Doctor: Orthopedic Info Night. 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Dr. Bradley Boyd, an orthopedic specialist at Fair Oaks Hospital, will discuss common orthopedic problems, injuries, and treatment options. Adults. Registration 703-689-2700.

THURSDAY/APRIL 14

Social Security Seminar. 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Find out how the changes will impact you and what options you may still have to maximize your Social Security income. Ages 62 and older. Registration 703-689-2700.

Library Forum. 7:30-9 p.m. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Help plan the libraries' future by sharing your input. fairfaxcounty.gov/library. 703-324-8319.

MONDAY/APRIL 18

Reston Photographic Society Meeting. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Reston Community Center, Room 6, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Photographers of all skill levels are invited to share information and enjoy guest speakers, workshops and group critiques. Nonmembers welcome. leagueofrestonartists.org.

TUESDAY/APRIL 19

Autism and Safety. 7-8:30 p.m. Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1, Room 100, Dunn Loring. Learn Safety risks for individuals with special needs, proactive steps to reduce the risk of potential dangers, resources available in the community for emergency preparedness, safety guidelines and more. Register at 703-204-3941 or <http://www.fcps.edu/dss/osp/prc/resources/events/documents/AutismSafety.pdf>.

THURSDAY/APRIL 21

Healthy at 100! 10 a.m.-noon. Dranesville Church of the Brethren, 11500 Leesburg Pike, Herndon. Giant's (McLean) in-store nutritionist, Amanda Barnes, RDN, will share tips and tricks to be healthier. Free. 703-430-7872.

FRIDAY/APRIL 29

Annual Spring Event: Luncheon & Silent Auction. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. International Country Club, 13200 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Hosted by Assistance League of Northern Virginia to benefit its Operation School Bell programs. Event will feature a presentation on Identity Theft and Personal Safety. \$65, \$30 is tax deductible. lindamshilts@gmail.com or 703-424-6652. www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

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Speaking Japanese at Fox Mill Elementary

The school showcases Japanese Immersion Program.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

A total of 246 first- through sixth-graders at the Herndon school that are enrolled in the Japanese Immersion program. That 246 represents an impressive 40 percent of the entire student population.

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins was actually the honored guest of the day, spending time with principal Brian Moose and several of the parents and students involved in the program. Hudgins was personally invited to visit the Japanese Immersion program in action by Alison Malzahn, one of the co-chairs of the school's PTA Japanese Cultural Committee, who has a sixth-grade son and a third-grade daughter who learn some core subjects in both English and Japanese as participants. Hudgins was chosen because she was quoted by news station WTOP as questioning whether "Japanese immersion is our mission" in Fairfax County Public Schools.

Malzahn would answer a definitive "Yes" to that question. Enrollment in the program is by a lottery system, without prior testing or proven aptitude. "That means that 'average' students have the opportunity for exposure to an exceptional educational experience ...

that fosters future leaders who will thrive in an increasingly global economy. That is the outcome that parents are looking for from our school system," insists Malzahn, who has no Japanese roots or any real ability in the language by her own admission.

PARENTS Nozomi Hoshi, Amanda Owens and Karina Cote agree with Malzahn, and all four moms say that increased confidence in both academic and life skills for their children has been another welcome, yet unexpected, benefit of what Owens described as "something of a gamble." Owens' roots are back in Kent, in the United Kingdom, and she said that the decision to place her daughter in the program "wasn't easy." And it hasn't always been easy for her, but "it has really paid off." Her daughter Elizabeth joined the immersion classes when she was in the first grade at Fox Mill. Today she is freshman at William and Mary, where her mom says "she is realizing just how good her Japanese is, and how unique this experience has made her." Elizabeth was the only freshman chosen as a school delegate for a recent trip to Japan. Owens was so pleased at the results she has seen for her daughter that she was thrilled that her younger children – ninth- and sixth-graders - wanted to carry on the new family tradition. "My kids are very different from each other, but for all three of them, I have seen them flourish, grow in confidence. If this is a little edge we can help them get in their lives, I am glad we can do it."



Adults, from left: Nozomi Hoshi, Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins, Fox Mill Principal Brian Moose, Amanda Owens and Karina Cote are all smiles with a few of the Fox Mill Elementary students who participate in the school's Japanese Immersion Program, where they are taught many core subjects in English and Japanese.



Matsuri 2015: Alison Malzahn and her Japanese Immersion student daughter Keira, now a third grader at Fox Mill, pose on the bridge at the school's 2015 Japanese Festival. At the event, first-graders performed, showcasing their Japanese skills, and there were karate demonstrations, food samples, crafts and traditional Japanese games for all to enjoy. This year's festival is scheduled for May 6.

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The immersion classes are also a way to build community, says Malzahn. Many of the students have parents in the military and the State Department, who have been or will be exposed to other cultures. "This helps continue that exposure or prepare them for future adventures." Quite a few of the children have a parent who is foreign-born.



Fox Mill Elementary Japanese Immersion students will be performing on April 16 at the Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival in the District. Last year, young Gavin, son of Alison Malzahn who co-chairs the school's PTA Japanese Cultural Committee, performed in the event. Mom and son both sport traditional Japanese happi coats in the photo.

"The program has given us a way to build and cross bridges with the entire family," she noted. "Instead of living separated in pockets, we have found that our involvement in the program and our outside-the-classroom activities like the upcoming school Japanese Festival in May, have brought our diversity together."

Japanese native parent Hoshi admits that getting involved has benefited her as well as her first grade daughter.

"I know that my English is improving and it is good to make friends and be part of the community." Hoshi and her husband chose to live in the area, despite his daily commute to Andrews Air Force Base, just so that their daughter could attend Fox Mill for the program. "I was trying to teach her Japanese at home, but she is doing better in both languages here with these wonderful teachers." Mom Karina Cote thinks you can never learn too many languages or enough about other cultures. From a Japanese-Brazilian background, Cote can speak Japanese, Portuguese and English and, like Hoshi, chose the area largely for the reputation of Fairfax County schools, and for Fox Mill's Japanese Immersion Program in particular. "Programs like these," she says, "give our children the skills to face the changes and pressures of the future. They really learn to think creatively, outside-the-box, and in more than one language!"

"I was trying to teach her Japanese at home, but she is doing better in both languages here with these wonderful teachers."

—Nozomi Hoshi

"It is wonderful to see how these young students have progressed in their language skills," observed Supervisor Hudgins after her visit. "Having introduced foreign language in our school as a parent PTA member, I understand the importance of foreign language as part of early and continuing education."

HUDGINS expressed the hope that every FCPS student could have this opportunity, while acknowledging that her role in determining the future of such programs is limited. "While we have heard loud and clear from the supporters of the language programs, this message will, hopefully, not be lost on the School Board who must set their priorities and make their funding decisions."

"We all realize that the budget is tight, and it's only getting more difficult to fund all of the things our schools need," said Malzahn, "but this program represents a miniscule portion of that budget, and gives back so much more to the students, the families and the community."

Senior Living

APRIL 2016



Oak Hill ♦ Herndon
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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 screen-

ings, 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. There will be time afterwards for questions.

- ❖ 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 Bruff, 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 April 18

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.

For more information, go to www.accessjca.org/50plusjobexpos.

If you are an area employer who would like to exhibit, call Micki Gordon at 301-255-4209.

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VIRGINIA HOSPITAL CENTER

Luxury Condos are a Growth Market for Seniors

Active retirees seek options for independent living, including condos in Alexandria, Arlington, Tysons, Reston, McLean, Bethesda and Chevy Chase, among others.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Joyce and Don Lipman decided to move out of their Potomac, Md. home, they opted for a high-end townhouse instead of a retirement community. They gained a cosmopolitan environment and lost the burdensome maintenance of a large home.

"My husband always hated taking care of the grounds and he didn't want to pay someone to do it, and we weren't ready for a retirement community," said Joyce Lipman, who is 71. "Now I can walk to the shopping center and to my doctor's office. I couldn't believe it the first time I was able to go without my car. It was like a new lease on life."

When another active retired couple decided to downsize and move out of their home, they opted for a high-end condominium instead of moving to a retirement community. They enjoy traveling and own a beach home where they often spend time. When it came time to design their new living space, they sought the help of Kelley Proxmire of Kelley Interior Design in Bethesda, Md.

The couple wanted "a pretty, yet practical home and also a place they could lock and leave on a moment's notice," said Proxmire.

Condominiums and townhouses are growing in popularity for midlife couples because unlike large homes, they don't require a lot of maintenance, and they offer opportunities for living independently.

"In the next three to five years, luxury condominiums are going to be extremely popular with that age group, those who feel the colonial home is too big and they don't want the ... mentality of retirement communities," said Debbie Miller, an Arlington-based associate broker with McEneaney



Kelley Proxmire designed plush interior for a retired couple who downsized from a larger home into a luxury condominium.

"In the next three to five years, luxury condominiums are going to be extremely popular with ... those who feel the colonial home is too big and they want the freedom of locking and leaving their home."

— Debbie Miller, McEneaney Associates

Inc. who specializes in the 55 and over real estate market. "Luxury condominiums provide a great option."

Miller says that in addition to proximity to shopping, dining and public transportation, amenities such as a 24-hour concierge

service that can handle requests such as meal delivery and grocery shopping make high-end buildings sought after among well-heeled retirees.

The buyers Miller works with are looking for condos "that provide a 'lock-and-leave' advantage for residents who ... like to travel or who spend six months here and six months elsewhere."

Such condominiums are prized and often hard to obtain.

"There are some that are very exclusive and [others that] don't come on the market very often," she said. "I sold a unit in the Rotonda [in McLean] a year ago and had multiple offers that were all cash."

ONE REASON THAT retirees opt for condominiums over retirement communities is freedom without restrictions, such as the frequency or length of stay for overnight guests. "In a retirement community, your

grandchildren might only be able to visit for two weeks. Condos provide more of an independent feel," said Miller. "Owning a condo allows them the opportunity to pay the condo fee and come and go as they please and someone else takes care of the maintenance."

Another reason is proximity, with a condominium community more likely than a retirement community to be in an urban environment like Arlington, Reston or Tysons.

Among the most favored luxury condominium properties in Northern Virginia, says Miller, are The Palladium of McLean, Midtown at Reston, the Porto Vecchio in Old Town Alexandria, and the Turnberry Tower in Arlington.

"There are many other high-rises that appeal to the 55 and older crowd due to convenience and lots of amenities and that are walkable," she said.

Gerontology experts offer perspective for retirees who are looking to buy a new home. "The main thing is to consider safety," said Beverly Middle, DNP, RN, Assistant Professor of the College of Health and Human Services in the School of Nursing at George Mason University. "Communities where there are other older adults tend to have services in place to support them."

Middle recommends using evidence-based design when creating dwellings suitable for seniors. "It's a new science that's geared toward older adults and is very specific to their needs," she said.

Addressing retirees' desire to live a vibrant and active life that takes freedom and safety into consideration, some retirement communities are working to broaden their appeal to a wider group of seniors. For example, Sunrise Senior Living, based in McLean, created a Live With Purpose program which offers residents structured programs that include activities for volunteering and learning.

"No matter your age, each of us has interests, desires and activities that make us feel whole and help contribute to a meaningful, healthy life," said Rita Altman, senior vice president of Memory Care & Program Services for Sunrise.

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Photo by Ed Knepley

Senior Living

Taking the Long View

BY JOHN BYRD
THE CONNECTION

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



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.

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 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 station 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 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 days at 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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