

## 'The Lion King Jr.'

# At Langston Hughes Middle

A+, PAGE 8

### Holy Septic! Plans Change

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### Torres Pleads Guilty To Involuntary Manslaughter of John Geer

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Lauren Skinner as adult  
Nala and Jake Spray as  
adult Simba in Langston  
Hughes production of  
'The Lion King Jr.'

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lake Anne students and their mascot, the Dolphin, participate in Dolphin Dash, a race to raise funds for the School.

## Lake Anne Elementary Holds Dolphin Dash

On Friday, April 15, Lake Anne Elementary held its annual PTA sponsored Dolphin Dash. Everyone from parents, teachers, staff, students went around the circle for a “dash” to help raise money for the school. Children were challenged to get pledges for their laps

around the circle.

In addition, there were prizes for the craziest socks, hats, overall spirit and the most money raised. The top 10 children were treated to a limo ride with Principal Jill Stewart and Assistant Principal Jana Griffith.

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Engineer Ellen Hall, from Hazen and Sawyer, attempted to tell Reston residents in February why Lake Fairfax Park was the most suitable location of six studied for a septage receiving site. That's when the "septic" hit the fan. Plans are now on hold, while the county looks at more options, according to Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.



Tim Greten lives next door to the proposed septage receiving site and has well water in addition to a septic tank. "I need to fight this until hell freezes over, and then I need to fight from the ice," he said. More than 500 people recently signed a petition in opposition to earlier plans.

PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

# Holy Septic! Plans Change

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

Reston's Richard Sheehe asked on Feb. 18 if Reston residents could be assured that the county would suspend work on preliminary designs to move the county's Septage Receiving Site from Colvin Run in Great Falls to a maintenance portion of Lake Fairfax Park in Reston.

"Will the county agree to suspend any work on preliminary designs and revise the next steps to review and expand the feasibility study?" Sheehe asked. "Do we have that assurance?"

"Yes," said Thomas J. Russell, director of the Wastewater Collection Division.

Dranesville Planning Commissioner John Ulfelder also said to the engineers and officials in February, "It's clear tonight you have to broaden your feasibility study to look at non-public sites."

Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins

sent a letter last week alerting Reston residents that the county will look at additional locations for a septage receiving site, including non county-owned land.

"Attendees overwhelmingly expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed relocation to Lake Fairfax Park and voiced multiple concerns including but not limited to the impact to the various communities and Hunter Mill Road," according to Hudgins.

**DRANESVILLE SUPERVISOR** John W. Foust said he was sympathetic to concerns of Reston's residents.

"That would have been a huge mistake," he said, of the potential plans to move the septic receiving site to Lake Fairfax.

"I'm glad that site did not materialize and glad that the county will shut down the Colvin Run Receiving Facility," said Foust.

"Hunter Mill Road is a fairly historic highway, narrow and very heavily traveled and to intentionally divert truck traffic on that road is not a good idea," he said. "Access-

ing it would have created problems."

The Colvin Septage Receiving Site will be closed for safety reasons during construction for at least two years, for reasons unrelated to the relocation, Hudgins said.

The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) with consultant Hazen and Sawyer shared a feasibility study that identified six potential sites for the relocation of the Colvin Run Septage Receiving Site. Lake Fairfax Area 6 Park Operations/ Maintenance facility site received the highest ranking.

The Reston community was outraged.

According to Hudgins, "The Department of Public Works and the consultant committed to addressing the various concerns raised and will also extend the potential relocation search area to properties not owned by Fairfax County.

"Hazen and Sawyer is in the process of establishing a scope and schedule for responding to this commitment by the end of April. All activity associated with the feasi-

bility of relocating the Colvin Run Septage Receiving Site to Lake Fairfax is on hold at this time," according to Hudgins.

Septage is currently accepted at both the Colvin Run site for the north county and the Norman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control Plant in Lorton. "My expectation is we won't be building a new site. We'll see how this works out," said Foust. "If something unanticipated comes up, we may have to go to the drawing board."

**ABOUT 21,000** customers in Fairfax County don't have access to public sewer and are served by individual household septic systems that require "pump-out" every five years. Approximately 49 percent of the sewage generated in the county is from septic tanks. Approximately 3,200 food service establishments require collection from grease traps. The county's septage management program also collects waste from portable toilets at parks, construction sites, community events and races.

## Reston Association Honors Volunteers

Reston Association honored individuals, groups and community partners for their exemplary service at the 2015 Volunteer Service Awards. Ilene McNeal won Reston Association's Volunteer of the Year honor. She volunteers at the Nature Center. She works at the Welcome Desk but also fulfills many roles within the organization, including bird counter. Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. (WSSI), Northern Virginia Chapter of Trout Unlimited (NVATU), and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) won Community Partners of the Year. Together they have served the Reston community alongside RA for six years to bring trout fishing to Reston, while each playing a significant role in making the Kids' Trout Fishing Day possible.

Dan Allen, Jennie Koffman, and Dave Pfeiffer of Habitat Heroes Ambassadors



**Ilene McNeal won Reston Association's Volunteer of the Year.**

won Community Partner of the Year. The trio have dedicated hours of their time to

volunteering at nearly every Habitat Heroes event the past several years, which is held



**Dan Allen, Jennie Koffman and Dave Pfeiffer, of Habitat Heroes, Ambassadors won Reston Association's Community Partner of the Year.**

monthly from March through November.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Students in attendance led a service project to benefit food insecure elementary school children through Helping Hungry Kids.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Del. Ken Plum (D-36) attended the Saturday Student Leaders Conference at South Lakes High.

## Student Leaders Conference Held at South Lakes

**M**ore than 720 of the best and the brightest high school students from across the Commonwealth gathered together at South Lakes High School in Reston on Saturday, April 16. They were brought together by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) Ken Tilley Student Leaders Conference funded in part by the Allstate Foundation. The conference is an annual event with workshops and idea-sharing sessions that are designed to enhance students understanding of leadership,

sportsmanship and citizenship.

Students in attendance led a service project to benefit food insecure elementary school children through Helping Hungry Kids, a non-profit organization that provides weekend meals and snacks to surrounding area schools.

According to data reported by Feeding America, twenty percent or more of the child population in 38 states and D.C. lived in food-insecure households, with the District of Columbia (31 percent) and Mississippi (29 percent) having the highest rates

of children in households without consistent access to food.

One of the students who helped lead the service project, Caroline Beaulac of South Lakes High School said, "We hope that our fellow students here today from across the state will see this program and replicate it in their own town."

The Allstate Foundation has been supporting the VHSL Student Leaders Conference since 2009. They believe it's important to invest today in the next generation of change-makers who can play an active role

in shaping our collective tomorrow. "Student volunteerism and leadership is key to a young person's growth," says Kyla O'Brien, Allstate Foundation spokesperson. "This conference provides students with the resources they need to tackle social issues impacting themselves, their communities and others across the nation."

We hope they will return to their schools with energy, enthusiasm and feel empowered to start a new community service idea they can implement on their own back at their schools."

*Stainless. Slate.*



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## COMMENTARY

# Two Civil Rights Heroes

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



good things that can be said about Robert E. Simon, Jr., I consider him a real civil rights hero.

Last week gave me an opportunity to see another of my civil rights heroes, former governor Linwood Holton, who came to George Mason University to participate

in a ceremony naming one of the plazas at the university in his honor. Governor Holton served as governor of Virginia from 1970 to 1974—the first Republican to be elected governor since Reconstruction. George Mason University was interested in honoring him because he was the governor that signed the bill that converted the former University of Virginia extension to the new George Mason College. It is now the largest university in Virginia and is in the top tier of research universities in the country.

I consider Linwood Holton a civil rights hero because one of his first actions as governor after he had moved his family into the Executive Mansion was to enroll his children in the local public schools that were the segregated black schools. A picture of him walking one of his daughters into an all-black school to enroll her was on the front page of The New York Times. It was a signal to the world of the emergence of the New South where racial segregation was slowly but surely being cast aside.

I am honored to have known both men and to have them as friends. As courageous as they were, I do not think that either thought of himself as courageous. Each simply believed in doing the right thing. They are examples for all of us to follow.

About a week ago there was a memorial service for Reston's founder and namesake, Robert E. Simon, Jr., who passed away on Sept. 21, 2015. Several people gathered at the Hyatt Hotel in Reston Town Center to hear the stories and to celebrate the life of a truly remarkable man. He became head of Carnegie Hall in New York at age 23 when his father passed away. The sale of the Hall later would give him the money to buy the more than 6,000 acres in Northern Virginia that would become Reston. Drawing upon his experiences of living in Europe for extended periods of time, he would build a community that through its mixed-use design with village centers would foster the development of community.

Most remarkable for its time in the mid-1960s was his insistence that the community be open to all persons including black people. Virginia at the time was a very segregated society. Massive resistance was being used by political leaders to keep from integrating the schools as the Supreme Court had ruled nearly a decade before. Housing patterns and communities were strictly segregated. Some suggest that Bob Simon's adamant that his new community be open to all people was a response to the discrimination he felt as a Jew particularly when he was at Harvard. He was not casual in his beliefs that his new town should be inclusive; that policy made financing very difficult and for a while seemingly almost impossible. With all the other many



## PHOTO GALLERY!

### "Me and My Mom"

To honor Mom on Mother's Day, send us your favorite snapshots of you with your Mom and The Connection will publish them in our Mother's Day issue. Be sure to include some information about what's going on in the photo, plus your name and phone number and town of residence. To send digital photos, go to:

[www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday)

Or to mail photo prints, send to:

The Reston Connection, "Me and My Mom Photo Gallery," 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314  
Photo prints will be returned to you if you include a stamped, self-addressed envelope, but please don't send us anything irreplaceable. ~Reminder: Father's Day is June 19~

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# OPINION

## On the Guilty Plea of Adam Torres

**Geer's death exposed "obfuscation ... and a lack of public accountability."**

**A**dam Torres, charged with murder in the death of Springfield resident John Geer, was the first Fairfax County Police officer in the history of the department to be charged in such a death. Monday, Torres entered a guilty plea to involuntary manslaughter, with a likely sentence of 12 months, most of that already served. He has been in jail for eight months.

Geer was a Springfield resident, a remodeling contractor and an involved father, always on the sidelines of his daughters' sports games. He was unarmed, standing in the doorway of his own home with his hands raised at the time he was killed.

The police and Fairfax County refused to release any information on the case for more than a year, and only then after repeated court orders. Public outrage over Geer's death was compounded by obfuscation and silence, the failure to communicate, and a lack of public accountability. Change is in the works, but there is much work to do.

There is still much to say about the death of John Geer and its aftermath.

But today, the wisdom of his two teenage daughters is well worth reading and sharing:

### APRIL 18, 2016 STATEMENT BY THE DAUGHTERS OF JOHN GEER

"Justice is rarely a simple matter, and it would be easy to vent our anger, our outrage, our sorrow, and voice opposition to the plea bargain struck between Adam Torres and the Commonwealth. Nobody would question the rawness of our emotions and our response to it; we have lost a father, and there can be no substitute, no future moment of affection, no further opportunities to be close the man who should be present

as our greatest supporter. Torres took that away from us, the Fairfax Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County Police Department hid the truth of what happened to our dad for over a year, and there is no going back. ...

"Much like Dad's murder has repercussions for his family and the community, locking Torres in a cell will have an effect on others. Whatever his faults, Torres' wife and children did not murder our father, and it would be wrong to hurt them just to allay our own anger and pain. Robbing other children of time with their father would only make us complicit in another wrong. ...

"Where Torres failed to show prudence and mercy, we will show him and his family both.

"As for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Police Department, we remain appalled by their actions in cover-

ing up the truth and putting Torres in the position to decide life and death given what they knew about his background. Until such time that the ad hoc committee's recommendations are adopted and the policies of the FCPD are changed, we fear that these tragic events can occur again with different victims and different officers. We call upon the Board to immediately adopt and implement the Committee's recommendations without delay for the good of the FCPD and the citizens of Fairfax County.

"No family should have to suffer the loss of a mother, a father, or a loved one under circumstances like ours."

## Send in Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is May 8 this year and 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, ages of children, 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 contact information, just names and town of residence.) You can upload photos and information directly to [www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/) or email to [north@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:north@connectionnewspapers.com).

## A Bipartisan Compromise To Unclog the Region

BY JIM CORCORAN,  
PRESIDENT AND CEO,  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

**N**orthern Virginia's transportation crisis maintains a stranglehold on our regional economy and quality of life. It costs our region \$4.5 billion annually due to the countless hours we waste sitting in traffic, and has earned our region the dubious distinction as one of the most congested areas in the country. The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce has long believed that unclogging our region's transportation grid requires a strategic, regional approach. We cannot expect to retain and attract business without implementing a 21<sup>st</sup> Century transportation infrastructure.

Thankfully, however, a significant compromise struck during the 2016 Virginia General Assembly Session has the potential to address the most serious choke point in our region: I-66 inside the Beltway. Improving travel along this important economic corridor is critical to maintaining our economic competitiveness and getting our region moving again.

### COMMENTARY

The bipartisan compromise plan is the result of collaboration between the Commonwealth and localities that takes into account various jurisdictional transportation interests, creating a regionally balanced solution. Combined with the existing express lane network on I-495 and I-95 and in conjunction with new improvements to I-66 outside the Beltway, this project will provide reliable, enhanced travel options throughout the region by car, carpool, and transit. Each of these modes of travel will play a critical part in moving goods, services, and people to and from our region's key assets.

For those traveling along I-66 from points west of I-495, the scheduled improvements will contain enhancements and options including additional lanes, new bus service, and new commuter lots. Key to the plan is the ability of single-occupant drivers to use I-66 inside the Beltway during peak times for the first time in the road's history.

For those who reside inside of the Capital Beltway, this project will provide enhanced bus service, enhancements on parallel roads to

better protect neighborhoods, pedestrian access, and Metro station access improvements all geared toward providing more transportation options for residents and businesses along I-66.

Addressing much needed congestion relief on I-66 by adding an additional eastbound lane has been a priority for the Northern Virginia Chamber and the Northern Virginia business community for decades. The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce congratulates Governor McAuliffe and lead-

ers in the General Assembly for working across party lines to achieve this historic victory for the residents of the Commonwealth.

We will continue to advocate for dynamic, regional projects like this as the business community looks to maintain our status as the economic engine of the Commonwealth and a cradle of innovation in the United States. We look forward to more bipartisan successes in the years to come as we work together to enhance our regional transportation network.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## 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 ev-

ery 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

Reston  
**CONNECTION**

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## OPINION

# Spring in Reston—At Last!

BY JOHN LOVAAS  
RESTON IMPACT  
PRODUCER/HOST

I think we can say almost for sure that we've seen the last of snow and ice in Reston until next winter. The weather over the last several days has been nothing short of spectacular, perfect for opening a brew house on a lake, for example.



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

Somehow, Melissa and Jason Romano knew exactly how long to hold off opening their new chic and satisfying nano-brewery sitting right on the edge of Lake Anne. Their opening was fantastic, drawing what seemed to be thousands of thirsty people. The Brew House is lovely inside. The beers I tasted were very good and I heard rave reviews on at least one I did not try. I just hope the Brew House left some of the good weather for the upcoming openings of the Lake Anne Coffee House and Wine Bar!

When I wasn't sipping Reston Red or the Kolsch lager at the Brew House on Saturday, I spent a lot of the day outside—walking around the Lake and driving around Reston. Lots of happy people stayed outside with me to enjoy the magnificent day. All the dogs were getting long walks. (Angus, our Scottish Terrier, not only got his walks, but also got to ride top down with me to McDonald's for his special treat—straight up hamburger.) The pontoon party boats, kayaks and paddle boats could be seen all around Lakes Anne, Audubon, Thoreau, and a few on Newport, too.

Along Wiehle Avenue, hard-working volunteers scoured the sidewalks and brush on both sides of the road, picking up the omnipresent trash, leaving the area much lovelier as they went along.

This reminded me that we still have a long way to go in Reston to deal with the constant presence of trash and, worse in my opinion, the tons of recyclables—especially plastic bottles, aluminum cans and other

containers on the paths and in our otherwise beautiful lakes and streams. It is a problem given little or no serious management attention in Reston.

We need to do two things to address this Reston disgrace. First, we need a focused and continuous public education campaign—signs, T.V. and print public service messaging, and in our schools. Second, we need proper

receptacles wherever people obtain and use the products whose wrappers and containers end up on the ground and in the water. That is, trash cans with a twin recycle receptacle for bottles and cans only with clear, simple labelling. Such proper refuse and recycle management receptacles are almost nonexistent in Reston, apart from a few at the Wiehle Metro station and in a couple of places in Reston Town Center. Interestingly, one sees a great deal less ugly stuff on the ground in those locations. Meanwhile, litter is abundant at Lake Anne and South Lakes village centers, around other lakes and recreation areas and along 55 miles of pathways.

Coordinated action is needed by Reston Association, Fairfax County and private landowners.

RA, which seems to have a lot of assessment money to spend on other things, must take the lead around the lakes, recreation facilities, and on the pathways. Fairfax County should carry a share of the load, too—around its facilities, including its two community center locations and Lake Fairfax, for example.

And, the private sector, including condominiums, should do its part in the commercial areas. As a Reston resident you can make the difference. Contact RA staff or Board members and our Fairfax County Supervisor.

Tell them that it is past time to get serious about managing refuse and recycling in our special community. And, if you see this stuff on the ground, pick it up!

## Reston Crime Reports

### Notable incidents from the Fairfax County Police Blotter from April 12-15.

#### Larcenies

1600 block of Bentana Way, checks from vehicle  
11200 block of Leatherwood Drive, watch from vehicle  
1100 block of Trotting Horse Lane, briefcase from residence  
1600 block of Valencia Way, purse from vehicle  
11800 block of Sunrise Valley Drive, phone from business

2100 block of Centreville Road, merchandise from business  
200 block of Delta Glen Court, license plates from vehicle  
1700 block of Business Center Drive, wallet from business  
1400 block of Northgate Square, phone from residence  
12000 block of Starboard Drive, wallet from business

**HOME & GARDEN EXPO**  
RESTON 2016

April 30, 2016  
10 a.m.–2 p.m.  
Reston Association Headquarters  
12001 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20191

Expo presented by:  
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For more information, contact Reston Association's Member Services at [member\\_services@reston.org](mailto:member_services@reston.org) or 703-435-6530.

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# Removing a Barrier to Pomp and Circumstance

**Gowns for Grads program at George Mason provides regalia for needy graduates.**

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

When Muntaha Choudhary walks across the stage during George Mason University's graduation ceremony this May she will celebrate not only her bachelor's degree, which has been eight years in the making, but also the fact that she is the first person in her family to graduate from college.

Her financial circumstances could have put a damper on her graduation plans, however. She was not sure that she could afford the cost of purchasing a cap and gown, a requirement to participate in the graduation ceremony.

"Some people might say, '\$67, that's not a big deal,' but it is in my family," said Choudhary. "We're always on edge when it comes to money. My dad is a four-time time heart attack survivor, and any money that my family saves goes to medical bills or something. That's why it has taken me so long to graduate. I've had to pay my own tuition and help my family pay bills."

Choudhary and many other George Mason University graduates in need will have one less barrier to their graduation ceremony thanks to a new program at the university called Gowns for Grads.

Through the program, recent Mason alumni donate caps and gowns to students who can't afford the \$60-\$120 price tag for graduation regalia. The program was founded by Amanda Myers, a Mason alumna and an academic adviser in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The idea for the program was sparked when Myers was counseling a student who was nearing graduation, and had tapped out all of her financial resources to buy textbooks to complete her last semester. In fact, says Myers, the student's situation was so dire that she was on the brink of homelessness, and wasn't planning to participate in the graduation ceremony because she didn't have money to spend on the required clothing for graduation.

"I waited until the student left my office, and then I started crying," said Myers. "It was heartbreaking that something like not being able to afford a cap and gown would stand in the way of her graduation. When students have worked so hard to graduate, they deserve to be cut a break."

Since the program's inception in February, Myers has been able to meet the cap and gown needs of nearly 150 students through the generosity of Mason alumni from Northern Virginia but as far away as North Carolina and New Jersey.



**Amanda Myers started a program to provide donated caps and gowns to George Mason graduates who cannot afford them.**

Jumana Kamal graduated last year with a master's degree in Middle East and Islamic Studies. She chose to donate her graduation wear to the Gowns for Grads program.

"I very simply wanted to make it easier for at least one person who worked really hard to get to this one day," said Kamal. "If you're wondering about sentimental value, making someone else's day is much more rewarding to me than holding on to something for a keepsake."

After receiving her master's degree in Emergency Management and Homeland Security in 2013, Regina Yun kept her cap and gown and looked for a way to donate it, but didn't find one until she learned about Gowns for Grads. "I'm saving the environment by recycling and reusing and helping out a fellow student," said Yun. "I had my cap and gown packed up and ready to go. I hope a few students can get a few uses out of it."

Students who want to be considered for a cap and gown donation must complete an application and describe their financial constraints.

"Their stories are compelling," said Myers. "One student wrote, 'Eventually I became the first person in the family to earn a college degree; however, I have never been able to participate in any of the graduation cer-

## For more information

Contact Gowns4grad@gmail.com or visit: Facebook.com/GMUcapandgown.

emonies for the various levels of my academic journey due to financial constraints. I would humbly like to impress on your good offices to grant me the opportunity to rent a cap and gown to enable me to finally participate in my first ever graduation ceremony."

"Another student stated, 'I have had to pay for school out of my own pocket for years. Graduating will be the happiest day of my life, not only because I will no longer have to pay an arm and a leg, but also because I will be able to devote more time and money to helping my parents.'"

Myers designed the program to make it as easy as possible for alumni to donate. "All they have to do is send it to me and I can take care of the rest," she said. "I de-wrinkle them and use a cleaning spray to get them ready to be worn."

Mason alumni who are interested in donating and graduating students who would like to borrow a cap and gown are encouraged to send an email to Gowns4grad@gmail.com or visit: Facebook.com/GMUcapandgown.

**Jake Spray as Adult Simba (center) with Aidan Smith as Timon (left) and Chase Thompson as Pumbaa (right).**



# 'The Lion King Jr.' at Langston Hughes Middle

"The Lion King, Jr." presented by Langston Hughes Middle School to sold-out audiences closed April 16. Over ninety students were involved in the cast and crew led by director, Cheryl Dewenter and music director, Sarah Milhoan. Custom masks and puppets, stunning costumes, striking make-up, and an innovative set created an eye-popping spectacle and evocative scenes that moved many to tears. The beauty of this production is not limited to the stage. The students created friendships, uncovered talent, and discovered a passion that will always live in them.

**Vincent Prudhomme as Scar with Anand Bhandari as Zazu.**



**Lioness Ensemble with Margarita Gamarnik as Young Nala in "The Hunt."**



**Sam Barbaro as Mufasa and Shane Toland as Young Simba in "They Live in You."**



PHOTOS BY  
DAVE DEWENTER

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Suite 355, Herndon, VA 20171  
*Space is limited so please RSVP by April 22nd.*

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PHOTO COURTESY OF JAHÍ CHIKWENDIU OF THE WASHINGTON POST

**Former Fairfax County Police Officer Adam Torres (center) enters the courtroom on April 18, 2016 for what was scheduled to be the beginning of his trial for murder of Springfield resident John Geer.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAHÍ CHIKWENDIU OF THE WASHINGTON POST

**Commonwealth's Attorney Raymond E. Morrogh (center) reached an agreement with Adam Torres' defense team for a guilty plea to a lesser charge one day before the scheduled beginning of his murder trial for killing John Geer.**

# Torres Pleads Guilty to Involuntary Manslaughter of John Geer

**Former Fairfax County Police officer faced murder charges for 2013 shooting.**

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**I**t was over before it began. Neither prosecution nor defense gave opening statements in former Fairfax County Police Officer Adam Torres' trial for the August 2013 murder of Springfield resident John Geer. Instead on Monday, April 18, Torres pleaded guilty to felony involuntary manslaughter for the August 2013 incident.

Police had responded to a call that day from Geer's live-in girlfriend Maura Harrington that he was throwing her belongings out of the house. Torres and another officer talked with Geer for 40 minutes before Torres fired, hitting him in the chest.

Torres claimed Geer suddenly lowered his hands, making him think Geer was reaching for a gun.

Harrington and Geer lived together for more than 20 years and had two teenage daughters. Harrington had told Geer that she was moving out.

The Sunday before the trial was set to begin, Commonwealth's Attorney Raymond E. Morrogh said Torres' attorneys contacted him with the plea offer. Morrogh then spoke with Harrington, the family's attorney Michael Lieberman and Geer's parents.

With the deal, Torres would serve 12 months in jail, getting credit for the eight months already served. Being a convicted felon would prevent him from owning a firearm or becoming a police officer again, a priority for Harrington and her daughters, Morrogh said.

Geer's mother was "vehemently opposed



**John Geer was standing in his doorway unarmed for 40 minutes before he was shot by Fairfax County Police officer Adam Torres.**

to any agreement," Morrogh said, adding that she "wants a life sentence."

The sentencing is set for June 24, at which point the judge may accept or amend the length of Torres' sentence, or reject the plea altogether. If that happens, Morrogh said, the case would go to trial with a different judge. Torres is the first Fairfax County Police Officer in the history of the department to be charged in a shooting death.

"It's certainly not an ideal or perfect situation," Morrogh said during a press conference following the hearing, outside the Fairfax Courthouse. "My role is to get as much justice as I can, for victims and family."

Morrogh said Harrington was concerned about defense plans to call Geer's 19-year-old daughter — who was at a neighbor's house at the time of the shooting — to testify about her father's past actions and character.

Morrogh also said the defense had an

expert lined up to argue that Torres acted reasonably given the situation. "I thought we had real good evidence on where his hands were," Morrogh said, but "those are the kinds of things that can muddy the waters," for a jury.

"I weighed it all, this is my decision and I stand by it," Morrogh said.

**IN A PHONE INTERVIEW,** Lieberman said he was pleased Morrogh went with the plea deal. He said many prosecutors turn them down, but it can be difficult to get a felony conviction in cases like this with a police officer involved.

Lieberman said the family was also thinking of Torres' wife and children in accepting the plea. He supplied a statement from Geer's daughters in which they say, "Whatever his faults, Torres' wife and children did not murder our father, and it would be wrong to hurt them just to allay our own anger and pain. Robbing other children of



**John Geer**

time with their father would only make us complicit in another wrong."

The daughters cite the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Police Department, bodies which withheld details of their father's shooting from them for 17 months. That included personnel files and accounts of Torres having a history of outbursts and marital stress.

Until a \$12 million wrongful death case brought by the Geer family forcing the release of information, Fairfax County Police stood by policy they said kept them from releasing Torres' name or many other details of the shooting while investigations into the incident were ongoing.

"As for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Police Department, we remain appalled by their actions in covering up the truth and putting Torres in the position to decide life and death given what they knew about his background," the daughters' statement continues. "Until such time that the ad hoc [commission's] recommendations are adopted and the policies of the FCPD are changed, we fear that these tragic events can occur again with different victims and different officers."

**FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** Chairman Sharon Bulova and Chief of Police Edwin Roessler sent out statements following the guilty plea that offered sympathy to Geer's family and friends. Though each have previously acknowledged the case wasn't handled as well as it could have been, their statements stopped short of admitting wrongdoing. They focused more on forging ahead.

"The death of John Geer and events that followed have sparked a number of changes

SEE TORRES ENTERS, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Fifth- and sixth-graders from Terraset Elementary visit U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly's office in Washington, D.C.

## Terraset Ambassadors Visit Congress

**T**erraset's Ambassadors visited U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly's (D-11) office in Washington, D.C. on Friday April 1. District 11 covers the area in which Terraset Elementary is located.

The Terraset Ambassadors toured the the

Capitol and the Capitol Visitor Center with staff members from Connolly's staff. For some of these students it was their first visit to the U.S. Capitol. The Ambassadors are studying and practicing leadership skills in their weekly classes.

### WEEK IN RESTON

## Open House on Reston...Blueprint for the Future

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins is hosting an Open House featuring a look at proposed, planned or anticipated development activity in the Reston Transit Station Areas. The Open House will be held on Wednesday, April 20, from 6 to 8:30 p.m., at South Lakes High School cafeteria at 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston.

Attendees will have an opportunity to gather information on proposed developments along with projects envisioned for the area by Fairfax County agencies.

This event sets the stage for community dialogue on these developments and gives a perspective of how these proposals will be assimilated into our Reston community. The overall goal is to share with the community a comprehensive vision of what is being considered for the future of Reston.

For additional information, contact the Hunter Mill District Office at 703-478-0283, or email at [huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## Ribbon Cutting for a Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic Counter

Officials from Fairfax County and the Reston Bicycle Club will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, April 27, 2016, to celebrate the installation of a new automatic bicycle and pedestrian traffic counter on the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail in Reston.

The event will be held near the intersection of the W&OD and Old Reston Avenue at 10 a.m.

The counter, valued at \$7,000, was pur-

chased by the Reston Bicycle Club and donated to Fairfax County to help collect information about pedestrian and bicyclist traffic.

"The counter provides an opportunity to better document the usage of these modes of transportation, and will support the county's planning and investment in future bicycle and pedestrian improvements," said Adam Lind, Fairfax County Bicycle Program Manager.

A small number of parking spaces are available at the event site. For further information about the ceremony or to request reasonable ADA accommodations, contact Fairfax County Department of Transportation at 703-877-5600, TTY 711.

## Reston Home and Garden Expo, Saturday, April 30

The Reston Home and Garden Expo will be on Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Reston Association Headquarters located at 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston.

The expo is a one-stop shopping resource for homeowners and residents interested in the latest home improvement, remodeling and gardening products and services. "How-to" workshops and much more will be offered throughout the day.

This is a great opportunity for homeowners to get advice on interior and exterior home improvements from a variety of experts and exhibitors. The new outdoor location and expanded free event will include many exhibitors and workshops on a variety of homeowner related topics.

The event is free. For more information about the event or to see a list of sponsors call 703-435-6530; or go to [http://reston.entrprise.localist.com/event/home\\_garden\\_expo](http://reston.entrprise.localist.com/event/home_garden_expo).



Jeff Stewart, John Geer's best friend, said Geer was "exercising his Constitutional right to stand in his home," and "admittedly a little stubborn that day."



John Geer's father Don Geer said he had "mixed emotions" following Adam Torres' involuntary manslaughter guilty plea on April 18, 2016.

PHOTOS BY  
TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

## Torres Enters Guilty Plea, Sentencing Set for June 24

FROM PAGE 10

in our Police Department to include a transformation in the way officers are trained to respond to critical incidents," Bulova said in her statement. "The Board of Supervisors is moving forward with recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, demonstrating Fairfax County's commitment to maintaining the public trust and making our Police Department a national model moving forward."

The county recently posted a progress report online for the implementation of the commission's 142 recommended policy changes. (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission/progressreport.htm>).

In a statement, Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said, "The process to resolve this sad chapter in Fairfax County history has been lengthy and frustrating, much to our own doing."

Though some policies have been changed or updated, including a Diversion First program to direct nonviolent offenders with mental illness to receive treatment services rather than jail time, Fairfax County has yet to adopt or implement an independent auditor or citizen oversight board — two of the recommendations receiving considerable attention.

Roessler's statement added, "The men and women of the Fairfax County Police Department have fully cooperated with all authorities during this investigation. The action of one former employee is not reflective of the honorable work done day-in and day-out by all members of our Department."

Geer's best friend Jeff Stewart, who witnessed the 2013 shooting and went on to serve on the Fairfax County Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, re-

sponded critically to Roessler's words.

"They weren't compliant," Stewart said in a phone interview, "otherwise we wouldn't have had to involve the federal Justice Department and [U.S.] senators."

Morrogh handed his initial investigation of the incident to the U.S. Attorney Dana Boente, later explaining that Fairfax County Police were withholding information from him. And U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, got involved in November 2014 when he sent formal inquiries to Roessler and Boente about the stagnant case.

**AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE** following Monday's hearing, Morrogh commented on the Fairfax County attorneys who advised the Board of Supervisors to go along with not releasing the information, saying, "I've never seen anyone act like that. I hope it never happens again, it was dead wrong."

"Because of that, we were left with nothing for 17 months," said Stewart, "which in itself is a crime."

What's important now is keeping pressure on the supervisors to make sure a review panel is enacted and they develop some timeline policy for handling these situations."

Near the conclusion of the hearing, Torres said he was "truly sorry for my actions" and "heartbroken" for Geer's children. "No words I can say today ... adequately express my remorse."

Geer's father Don said he didn't hear the apology in the courtroom, and that it was the first one he'd heard from Torres.

"A little late in coming," he said. "Nothing on this has been done in a timely manner."

# SPORTS



Herndon sophomore Renee Kohler converted a penalty kick late in Monday's match to give the Hornets a 1-0 victory over Chantilly.



Head coach Nick Stames and the Herndon girls' soccer team picked up their first win of the season Monday.

## Kohler's PK Gives Herndon Girls' Soccer First Win

Hornets beat Chantilly, snap seven-match losing streak.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

After finding different ways to lose seven straight matches, the Herndon girls' soccer team capitalized Monday when it had the chance to win one.

After a Herndon player was fouled in the box in the 78th minute, sophomore Renee Kohler converted the ensuing penalty kick and the Hornets held on for a 1-0 victory over Chantilly at Herndon High School.

It was the Hornets' first win of the season after an 0-7 start, which included a 1-0 loss to Potomac Falls on April 11 that ended with a Herndon own goal in double overtime. Herndon hadn't lost a match by more than two goals, but the Hornets had yet to win until knocking off a Chantilly program that reached the state tournament last season.

It was Herndon's first win over Chantilly in more than a decade.

"In regards to the season, we're [0-7] coming in, but we'd never been blown out in any game," Herndon head coach Nick Stames said. "We've been right there. We've been talking to the girls; I think we've lost a game just about every way you could lose it coming in. We told them to be patient, stay with the system. We're telling you the right things to do but you need to stay with it. They did tonight and got a great result."

"What can this do? Certainly it builds some confidence in knowing, OK, we are



Herndon's Caroline Glazier, left, and Chantilly's Sofia Oliveira go for the ball during Monday's match at Herndon High School.

doing the right thing. We just beat a really, really good team. I told them to enjoy the win but we've got to come back tomorrow and go to practice because we have a game on Wednesday. I told them ... we're taking baby steps, but this was a huge step right now."

Kohler, whose converted PK accounted for the only goal of Monday's match, said the victory can be a turning point for Herndon's season.

"I knew, because we only had about 2 minutes left, I'm like, this is our game," Kohler said. "We're breaking the curse of

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

all the losses. Push it out of the way — we're starting new. ... I think that this will turn it around. We're finally motivated. We're more confident that we actually came back from all these losses. Now, I think this is the start of our season."

Kohler is one of Herndon's top offensive threats.

"We initially had her as an attacking center-mid, but now I think she's going to stay as a winger," Stames said. "We've tinkered with a lineup and I think right now we've found the combinations that we want and her being wide left seems to be one of the

combinations we've found because we found some other girls I think we can fit into the middle of the field and do very well in there."

Sophomore forward Olivia Duston can impact a match with her speed.

"She gives us some length because now we don't have to worry about finding her feet underneath," Stames said. "We can go over the top and she's got the speed to beat and she can run with anybody."

The loss dropped Chantilly's record to 3-4-2, including 1-2-1 in Conference 5.

"Herndon is a very feisty, hard-working group, and they always play hard against us," Chantilly head coach Melissa Bibbee wrote in an email. "They had played a tough schedule prior to last night, so their record meant nothing."

What did Bibbee tell the Chargers after Monday's loss?

"We just need to move on and get better on the offensive end," she wrote. "It's unfortunate that a very questionable PK had to decide the game."

Herndon, which improved to 1-3 in Conference 5, will travel to face Hylton at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20. The Hornets will host Marshall on Monday, April 25 before closing conference play with a road match against Robinson on April 27.

Chantilly will travel to take on Edison at 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 21.

"I couldn't be more proud of these girls," Stames said. "It's awesome. Just a great win. It feels good to win a game. A little sigh of relief comes out. Now, we've got to get back to work and figure out next game."

### SPORTS ROUNDUPS

#### Oakton Boys' Soccer Improves to 7-0-1

The Oakton boys' soccer team defeated Robinson 4-1 on Monday, improving its record to 7-0-1 overall and 4-0 in Conference 5.

The Cougars will host Briar Woods at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20 and will close conference play with a home match against Westfield at 7:15 p.m. on

Thursday, April 28.

#### Oakton Girls' Soccer Wins Seventh Straight

After opening the season with a 1-0 loss to Madison, the Oakton girls' soccer team has yet to lose.

The Cougars improved to 7-1 with a 4-2 win over Robinson on Monday. Oakton is

4-0 in Conference 5.

The Cougars will host Briar Woods at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20.

#### Madison Girls' Soccer Remains Undefeated

The Madison girls' soccer team defeated Yorktown 1-0 on Monday, improving its record to 7-0-1.

The Warhawks will host McLean at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, April 25.

#### Madison Girls' Lax Improves to 7-1

The Madison girls' lacrosse team defeated McLean 10-9 in overtime on April 15, improving its record to 7-1.

The Warhawks' lone loss came against Oakton on April 2.

Madison, which improved to 5-0 in Conference 6, will host Langley at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26. The Saxons won their first 11 games.

# CALENDAR

Send announcements to [reston@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:reston@connectionnewspapers.com). The deadline is noon on the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 20-24

**Reston Friends Big Spring Book Sale.** Call for times. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Browse thousands upon thousands of great books in great condition. 703-689-2700.

## 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-SATURDAY/APRIL 22-24

**"Legally Blonde - The Musical."** Check for showtimes. Herndon High School, 700 Bennett St., Herndon. Ages 13+. \$12. [www.herndonadrama.org](http://www.herndonadrama.org). 703-810-2341.

## 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](http://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](mailto:fling@HerndonRestonFISH.org).

**The Celebration of Women Who Impact Our Community.** 10 a.m.-noon. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2200 Centreville Road, Herndon. Hosted by Women Impact Now. Celebrating and honoring 4 women who are making a difference in the community. \$30. 571-244-6808. [womenimpactnow.com](http://womenimpactnow.com).

**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](http://novadogmagazine.com/events).

## SUNDAY/APRIL 24

**Pets and Claws Pet Resource Expo.** Noon-2 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Information on pet care, training, nutrition, emergency situations, day care, and more will be



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Juggler and comedian Jonathan Austin will entertain audience at the Reston Community Center on Sunday, May 15.**

available from local businesses. This Expo will take place inside RCC Hunters Woods. Pets, other than service animals, are not allowed inside the building. Free. [restoncommunitycenter.com](http://restoncommunitycenter.com).

**Mutts Gone Nuts.** 11 a.m. 3 p.m. CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Disorderly duo Scott and Joan Houghton and their hilarious pack of pooches have created a comedy dog thrill show like no other. \$5/\$10. [restoncommunitycenter.com](http://restoncommunitycenter.com).

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 27

**The Big Read Herndon, Writing the American Familia.** 6-10 p.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Meg Medina with Special Guest Kwame Alexander. Mayan dancer Acoatzin Torres will perform. Free. 703-956-9560. [www.artspaceherndon.com](http://www.artspaceherndon.com).

## THURSDAY/APRIL 28

**Dollars and Sense.** 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. A monthly book discussion group that focuses on business leaders and markets. April's title is "A Random Walk Down Wall Street" by Burton Malkiel. 703-689-2700.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 30

**Classic Cinema Series: "Rashomon."** 2 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Akira Kurosawa's masterful period drama. Japanese with English subtitle. Adults. 703-689-2700.

**2016 Reston Home and Garden Expo.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Reston

Association Headquarters, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. How-to workshops and much more will be offered throughout the day. Free. 703-435-6530.

**Bicycle Safety Rodeo.** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Reston YMCA, 12196 Sunset Hills Road, Reston. Children will complete 8 safety stations and earn their bicyclist's license. Children must bring their own bicycles and helmets. The Reston Bike Club will also be doing bicycle & helmet inspections. Contact [Ashleigh@reston.org](mailto:Ashleigh@reston.org) or 703-435-6577 for details.

## SUNDAY/MAY 1

**Spring Backyard Burn Trail Running Series.** Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Five or 10-mile trail running race on some of the best trail networks in Northern Virginia. Race 4 in a series of four. <http://www.ex2adventures.com/byb-spring.php>

## SUNDAY/MAY 1

**March for Babies.** 10 a.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Sign up to walk and fundraise at [marchforbabies.org](http://marchforbabies.org) or call 1-800-525-9255. Follow on on [www.facebook.com/marchofdimesmdnca](http://www.facebook.com/marchofdimesmdnca) and [www.twitter.com/MODMDNCA](http://www.twitter.com/MODMDNCA).

## FRIDAY/MAY 6

**PACOdC Season Finale.** 7:30-9 p.m. United Christian Parish of Reston, 11508 North Shore Drive, Reston. Pro Arte Chamber of Orchestra of Greater Washington's final concert. Free-\$25. [www.PACOdC.org](http://www.PACOdC.org). 571-483-8444.

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## SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

### 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

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## Comparatively Speaking, It's All Relative

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Not quite admitting to being any more of a drag than I already am, but having had cancer now for seven years and nearly two months, has been hard to ignore (believe me, I've tried), but easy to embrace. What I mean by that is: There seems to be a sub-conscious "governor" (have you ever rented a U-Haul? A "governor" is a device that keeps the engine under control, thereby preventing miles-per-hour from exceeding a certain speed) that keeps my emotions from bursting any seams. As much as I try to attempt it, I just don't/can't/won't get as excited and/or as passionate about things as I used to, pre-cancer. Oh, I still want the Red Sox to win and for Duke to lose, but I don't suffer as much when neither scenario plays out.

And while I'm admitting things, it's not only my subconscious that is acting out/controlling my behavior, it's also my conscious mind, as in when I'm in touch/aware of my emotions/actions (or lack thereof). As my oncologist once said to me about cancer, in reply to a question I asked him about blaming it for my hair turning prematurely gray: "You can blame the cancer for anything," he said, and so I shall. Nevertheless, having an extraordinarily convenient excuse: cancer, might explain most (but not all) of my behavior, and it doesn't bring me much comfort. And so I rationalize some of that unexplained behavior as self-preservation. It doesn't make me particularly proud, however. Still, having survived cancer for as long as I have certainly does, but it's not enough to put a bounce in my step. (Or maybe that's merely the neuropathy in my feet flattening my gait?)

But it's probably not my actual steps that matter. It's more likely my attitude while I'm stepping. And though I'd much rather my feet not hurt, my reality is: I'm alive, quite unexpectedly (based on my original prognosis), so damn the neuropathy and full speed (more like half speed) ahead. And though I may not move as fast as I used to (who among us actually can?), I am still moving and breathing. I'm just not the man I used to be, and I can live with that because I'm still living. I just wish I could exercise a bit more control. But if I've learned anything during this cancer experience, it's that ceding control and accepting certain realities – within reason, and without giving in or giving up too much – is a prudent course of reaction to an incredibly difficult set of circumstances: diagnosed with a "terminal" form of cancer at age 54 and a half; and one for which there is no right or wrong pursuit. Any port in a storm I say, and stage IV non-small cell lung cancer certainly qualifies as a storm, as challenging as any Mother Nature could muster. The difference being, this storm never ends, it only changes in severity and frequency. Right now, the storm is constant. Either I learn to live with it or I die trying. And minimizing the bad and maximizing the good is part of that process.

If only there was a way to find some place (like "the vault" from "Seinfeld") where I could store my cancer diagnosis and only acknowledge it when absolutely necessary. Wishful thinking, but hardly rational. But what choice does one have, really? Unless you think outside the box, it may very well be a box (more like a rectangle, actually) where you'll soon find yourself not thinking at all.

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

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Eight students from Fairfax County Public Schools — all attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) — have been named semi-finalists in the 2016 Intel Science Talent Search. The students, with their project names, are:

❖ Jake Cui, A Machine Learning Approach to Identifying Ordered Binding Regions on Order-disorder Protein Interfaces.

❖ Tarun Kamath, Marked Decreases in Pediatric and Young Adult Solid Organ Cancer Mortality in the United States Since 1940: Analysis and Hypotheses.

❖ Ava Lakmazaheri, Brain-actuated Robotics: A Logic-based Approach for Multimodal Programming and Operation of Assistive Humanoid Robots.

❖ Austin Mills, Demonstrating the Development of Heavy Metal Resistance in Non-tolerant Multigenerational Brassica rapa.

❖ Kunal Shroff, The Relationship Between Lethality and Genomic Instability in Euploid and Aneuploid Yeast Cells Expressing Pathological Huntingtin.

❖ Matthew Sun, Hyperacute Temporal Resolution with a Neural Population for Biologically Plausible Firing Rate Change Detection.

❖ Jason Wei, Improving Lateral Flow Immunoassay Sensitivity by a Palladium-catalyzed Dye Reaction.

❖ Michael You, Two-degree-of-freedom Bubble Oscillations in Elastic Vessels and its Application in Sonar-induced Marine Mammal Injuries.

The 300 semifinalists were chosen from more than 1,750 entrants and will receive matching awards of \$1,000 along with their school.

This is the 75th year of the Science Talent Search, which Intel has sponsored since 1998, providing \$1.6 million in awards and scholarships to contestants.

**Michaela Gaughan** of Oak Hill has been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2015 semester at St. Mary's College in Indiana.

Herndon residents on the Dean's List at Washington University in St. Louis for fall 2015 include **Azeez Abdikarim**, School of Engineering and Applied Science; **Kate Hao**, College of Arts and Sciences; **Snigdha Srivastava**, College of Arts & Sciences,

**Abdulaziz Nabil Alshenaiber** of Reston graduated from the University of New Haven with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering from Tagliatela College of Engineering.

**Micaela Sturm**, of Oak Hill, has been named to the dean's list at Quinnipiac University for the fall 2015 semester

**Ryan Gulledege**, of Herndon, been named to the University at Albany Dean's List of Distinguished Students for fall 2015

**Brenda Kamga**, of Reston, is on the Dean's List for the Fall 2015 semester at Mars Hill University in North Carolina.

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