

Members of the O'Neill James School of Irish Dance posed before performing at last year's Showcase.

PHOTO BY  
BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW



## Music, Dancing, Food and More

**Sixth annual Centreville International Showcase is set for April 30.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

Everything from Korean drumming to Irish dancing, Guatemalan music and food from around the globe — it'll all be part of the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Centreville International Showcase. The evening of fun is set for Saturday, April 30, from 5:30-9 p.m.

Putting on the event is the Centreville Immigration Forum (CIF) and hosting it is Korean Central Presbyterian Church (KCPC) at 15451 Lee Hwy. in Centreville.

"Our hope is that holding it at KCPC will be a wonderful opportunity for expanding this com-

munity event," said event Chairman and CIF member Carol Robinson. "We have some awesome performers and restaurants participating. And what's exciting, too, is that this even further celebrates our embracing of diversity, from the food to the entertainment to the volunteers."

The Showcase has become so popular that it outgrew its previous venue and KCPC opened its doors to this multicultural event. And actually, said Roger Pyon, a member of the church's Community Outreach group, it's a natural fit.

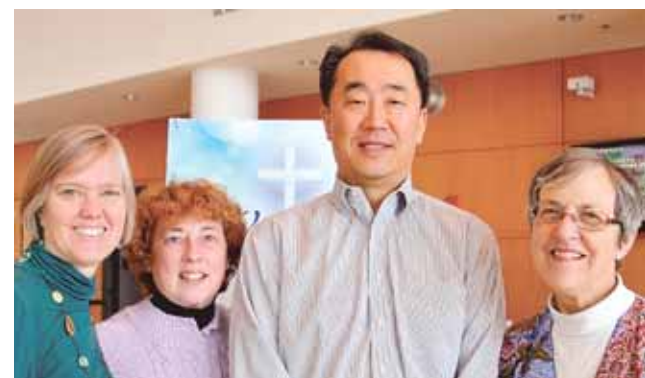
The CIF runs the Centreville Labor Resource Center (CLRC) and, said Pyon, "We've been giving financial support to the CLRC since it started, but we wanted to do something active and hands-on. And our senior pastor, Eung Ryoo, wanted to open the church to the community and be more inclusive."

There'll be a full slate of international entertainment, including Korean drummers and twins Sanjana and Sanyuktha Srikanth performing a traditional Indian dance. Tinkuy will play the music

of the Andes, The O'Neill James School of Irish Dance will do step dancing, and Jung Ok Lee and the MaeHwa Dance Team will perform the Korean Fan Dance. Also performing will be Guatemalan dance group, Grupo Artístico Conquistando Sueños. It's comprised of people who both use and help operate the CLRC, and many of them are responsible for founding the Centreville International Showcase. This year, they'll do a "convite," a traditional dance done in colorful and festive costumes.

In addition, the Washington Area Senior Harmonica Group — whose mem-

SEE SHOWCASE, PAGE 6



Members of the Centreville International Showcase planning committee include (from left) Terry Angelotti, Carol Robinson, Roger Pyon and Alice Foltz.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Torres Enters Guilty Plea

**Former police officer's sentencing set for June 24.**

BY TIM PETERSON  
CENTRE VIEW

It 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 F. Morrogh said Torres' attorneys contacted him

SEE GUILTY PLEA, PAGE 2



John Geer



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAH CHIKWENDU OF THE WASHINGTON POST

**Left, Adam Torres pleaded guilty to felony involuntary manslaughter for the 2013 shooting death of John Geer, who was standing with arms raised in the doorway of his home.**

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# Guilty Plea

FROM PAGE 1

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 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

SEE GUILTY PLEA, PAGE 12



## Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Fairfax County and Prince William County Public Hearings

All hearing times are 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
A brief presentation at each hearing will begin at 7:00 p.m.

**Monday, May 23, 2016**

Oakton High School Cafeteria (Entrance #1 or #14)  
2900 Sutton Road, Vienna, VA 22181

**\*Tuesday, May 24, 2016**

VDOT Northern Virginia District Office  
4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030

\*Visit [Transform66.org](http://Transform66.org) to view a live stream of this hearing at 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 25, 2016**

Piney Branch Elementary School Cafeteria/Gym (Entrance #1)  
8301 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, VA 20136

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), will host hearings, pursuant to § 33.2-1820(B) of the Code of Virginia, to present the complete set of draft Request for Proposals (RFP) documents for the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway project and provide an opportunity for public comment on the draft comprehensive agreement. In addition, VDOT will provide information and receive comments from the public regarding its intent to change the existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) designation on Interstate 66 from HOV-2 to High Occupancy Toll (HOT-3) when construction on I-66 Outside the Beltway is opened to traffic in late 2020.

Stop by to learn more about the project, discuss your questions with VDOT staff, and attend the formal presentation.

Review the latest project information and schedule at [www.Transform66.org](http://www.Transform66.org) or at the hearings.

Give your written or oral comments at the hearings or submit them to Susan Shaw, Megaprojects Director, at the VDOT District Office address above. You may also e-mail comments at any time to [Transform66@VDOT.Virginia.gov](mailto:Transform66@VDOT.Virginia.gov). Please reference "Transform 66 Outside the Beltway" in the subject line. Comments must be postmarked, emailed or delivered to VDOT by June 10, 2016 to be included in the public hearing record.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: 0066-96A-297,P101 Federal Project: NH-066-1(300) UPC: 105500

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## Teen Job Fair at Chantilly High

The 2016 Teen Job Fair will be held Saturday, April 23, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. in the Chantilly High School cafeteria, 4201 Stringfellow Road.

## Braddock/Pleasant Valley Lane Closures

Drivers can expect nighttime lane closures, including total stoppages each lasting up to 30 minutes, at the intersection of Braddock and Pleasant Valley roads now through Saturday night, April 23 for final paving associated with the roundabout project, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The Thursday night closures will occur from 9:30 p.m. until 5 a.m. the following morning.

Friday night's closures begin at 10 p.m. and will last until 8 a.m. Saturday, April 23. All work is weather permitting.

Motorists are advised to use alternate routes.

## Legislators To Discuss Issues

Del. Jim LeMunyon (R-67) will host a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly. This is a shared town hall meeting with state Sen. Chap Petersen. No RSVP is required to attend and the meeting is free and open to the public.

LeMunyon will provide a legislative update on the recently concluded 2016 General Assembly session.

## Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, April 28, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust it, as needed.

Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000 to confirm dates and times.

## Clean Out Medicine Cabinets

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

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Taking the Audience on a Joyride

## The Alliance Theatre presents "The Addams Family."

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

**G**omez, Morticia, Lurch and the rest of the gang from the classic TV show, "The Addams Family," will come to life onstage when The Alliance Theatre presents the musical comedy of the same name. The show runs three weekends, April 29-May 15, at Mountain View High, 5775 Spindle Court in Centreville. Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with Lucas, a nice, young man from a respectable family, but hers is anything but normal. And when the Addamses host his family for dinner, the two worlds collide and hilarity ensues.

The cast and crew of 30 has rehearsed since January, and the scenes take place inside a rundown castle with a monster gargoyle head on the wall, cobwebs, purple drapes and candelabra. Playing the patriarch, Gomez Addams, is Centreville's Jim Mitchell, an Alliance veteran making his return to the troupe in dramatic fashion.

"Gomez is a Spanish, Latin lover, proud of his romantic prowess and of his family," said Mitchell. "He's a good father and absolutely adores his wife. He's the very funny head of an offbeat family, trying to hold everybody together, even when they're moving in opposite directions."

Although Mitchell's acted steadily, it's been six years since he's worked with Alliance. And, he said, "I'm having a ball. I'm back with many of my old friends in this show. At times, Gomez is campy, and at



**Meet the Addams family: From left are Mike Cash, Grace McCarthy, Noah Tajudeen, Jim Mitchell, Joey Kelesides Olson, and Lucia LaNave.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID JAYNES

## To Go

**Show times** are Friday-Saturday, April 29-30, May 6-7 and May 13-14, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 15, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$16-18 at [www.thealliancetheatre.org/](http://www.thealliancetheatre.org/).

times, he's serious, so the role runs the gamut from comedy to touching sentimentality." In "Happy/Sad," Mitchell sings about the conflict of Gomez having a child growing up and leaving the nest and him being happy and sad at the same time. "And as a father who's gone through that, it really gets to me," he said.

Calling the comedy "timeless," Mitchell said, "From the opening number, we're going to grab the audience by their collars and take them on a joyride through the whole show. They'll hear beautiful voices singing wonderful songs and they'll see amazing dancers acting out those songs, plus terrific acting. This show has it all."

Grace McCarthy portrays Gomez's wife, Morticia. "She's headstrong and almost

mystical," said McCarthy. Her movements are slow because she lives in the moment and knows she has everybody's attention. She's dark and dreary, but in her own, loving way."

"She lets Gomez run the household until she feels like he's doing it wrong, and then she'll take over," continued McCarthy. "They're absolutely in love and, even after 25 or 30 years, it's just complete passion and they think exactly alike."

McCarthy said Morticia is dominant without being boisterous and "I've really tried picking up my character's nuances and subtleties. It's a challenging role, but I'm a singer, myself — that's my sweet spot — so her songs are a breeze for me. My favorite is 'Secrets,' it's a saucy tango and I get to be angry in it and belt it out at the end."

She said this show has "a special kind of happiness that's hard to achieve in everyday life, and it'll make the audience want to be in that happiness and be part of that

SEE ADDAMS FAMILY, PAGE 11

## 'Let's Hear It for the Boy' Westfield High presents musical, "Footloose."

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

**T**he music, story and costumes will transport audiences back to the '80s when Westfield High presents the musical, "Footloose," in the school theater. It's Westfield's Cappies show and features a cast and crew of 55.

"What a great way to end a beautiful year," said Director Susie Pike. "The cast is energized by the music and they're really having fun. We've got great singers, dancers and actors who mesh well together, and it's nice to work with students who have so many talents."

The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, April 29-30, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 1, at 2 p.m. Seating is reserved; tickets are \$10 for students and in advance via [www.whsfootloose.weebly.com](http://www.whsfootloose.weebly.com) and \$12 at the door.

Senior Connor Rudy plays Ren, a high-school student who's just moved from a big

city to the small town of Bomont, Texas, that's just outlawed dancing. "He's trying to adjust, but dancing is a passion of his," said Rudy. "He's witty and likable and falls in love with the daughter of the preacher [Eni Oyeleye] who banned dancing."

Rudy enjoys playing Ren because "I like the sarcasm and wit he puts into each line. And it's great to finally be able to play a character who likes dancing as much as I do."

His favorite number is "I'm Free/Heaven Help Me." "It's fast and upbeat and I sing and dance in it," said Rudy. "This song has so much intensity and it's when Ren realizes the law needs to be repealed." He said the audience will love hearing all the music from 'Footloose' that they grew up with, especially the title song and "Holding Out for a Hero."

Portraying Ariel, the preacher's daughter, is sophomore Molly Van Trees. Ren, Ariel and their classmates unite to dissolve the rules in hopes of having a senior prom.

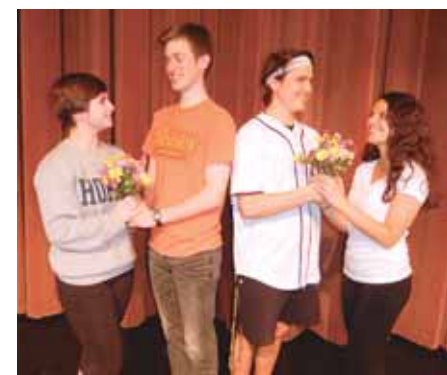


PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

**The romantic leads in Westfield High's production of "Footloose" are (from left) Molly Van Trees and Connor Rudy, and Keegan Garant and Shaina Greenberg.**

"Ariel's a complex character," said Van Trees. "Around her parents, she's demure. But she wants to be fun, flirty and wild; and around her friends, she gets to be herself. She's good at navigating between the two worlds she

SEE 'LET'S HEAR', PAGE 5

CENTRE VIEW ♦ APRIL 20-26, 2016 ♦ 3

# Becoming Aware of Child Sex Trafficking

**The problem extends throughout northern Virginia.**

*This story is part of a series focusing on sex trafficking in Northern Virginia.*

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
CENTRE VIEW

She stands on the sidewalk outside the mall with her backpack full of 7th grade science and math books. An older man pulls up and she gets in the backseat of his car. He drives her to a nearby motel and sells her for sex a number of times that same afternoon before she returns to her unsuspecting parents. In the beginning, the victims often return home; later they may disappear and become part of a network, or be driven to other locations including massage parlors. Human trafficking of young teens, mostly girls, has become growing problem in Northern Virginia, according to those involved in the issue. Sometimes the girl is complicit, having been enticed by an attractive older man or teenage boy and slowly groomed until she thinks she loves him. Other times she has gotten herself unknowingly tangled in gang-related activity and is threatened if she wants out.

**THE PROBLEM** is complex: lack of awareness by teenagers at a vulnerable age, the skill of traffickers to manipulate and groom their victims, the ease of recruitment through the internet, a busy world where parents, teachers or friends don't ask enough questions about changing behavior, insufficient law enforcement penalties or resources and the denial that it couldn't happen here.

According to Melissa Snow, child sex trafficking specialist for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), this Alexandria-based organization has seen an increase in reporting of endangered and runaway children in Virginia. She says one out of five reported in 2015 became a victim of sex trafficking. Seventy-four percent of those were missing from child welfare care which means they already had experienced a fractured home life or came from abusive families.

"The victims often feel inside they are dirty and won't amount to anything. The biggest thing is to get them to understand victimization, what it is," said Deepa Patel, executive director of Trauma and Hope in Springfield.

While many may be puzzled about how a young girl, maybe even their neighbor, could get caught up in this web, Snow said, "We see constantly the importance of online traffickers. They can build trust so quickly because the victim is in her own home where she feels comfortable. The trafficker will spend incredible time finding out the teen's worries, hopes for the future and then use it against her."



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/CENTRE VIEW

**Frank Wolf, former U.S. representative from Northern Virginia, reads from the study he commissioned from the Polaris Project in 2011. It identified 21 cities in Northern Virginia with 82 Asian massage parlors suspected of sex trafficking.**

Patel said: "We all have vulnerabilities, I'm a therapist and I have vulnerabilities; we all do on any particular day."

Beth Saunders, president of The Just Ask Prevention Project in Northern Virginia, said, "Trying to change is a cultural shift. We need to open up a dialogue, not making talking about human trafficking taboo." Just Ask concentrates on education and prevention working with businesses, schools and law enforcement to "put ourselves out of business by ending teenage sex trafficking."

Just Ask describes itself as "a public awareness campaign designed to expose the growing prevalence of teen sex trafficking in Northern Virginia and to inspire our community to end the scouting, manipulation and recruitment of our teenagers."

Saunders says she was aware of international human trafficking in her prior role as a business executive. The moment she knew it was a local problem was when her good friend at George Mason University's Transnational Crime and Corruption Group discussed teenage sex traffic here in Northern Virginia. "There is still a mindset, and I was guilty as well, of thinking trafficking was bringing girls from another country," she said. "These girls aren't trafficked; we have the infrastructure set up right here."

**WHEN DID** then U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-10) realize there was human trafficking of young girls and decide to do something about it? "I think it was gradual," he said. "Back in the 1990s on a congressional trip to Albania, we drove by a house where it was pointed out young women had been sexually trafficked." Wolf said, like many others, he assumed this took place in places like Albania. "Then I started to have people come and tell me sexual trafficking of young girls was happening right in our local neighborhoods."

borhoods."

Since Wolf was then chairman of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Commerce-State-Justice, he had money inserted in appropriations legislation for a study of local Asian massage parlors by the Polaris Project in 2011. The Polaris Project is an anti-trafficking organization that administers the national human trafficking hotline. Wolf and Polaris Project Executive Director Bradley Myles at the time acknowledged there are legitimate businesses performing massage therapy that are meeting all the rules and regulations and not offering sexual favors. But Polaris looked through Web sites where men post information on which massage parlors are most likely to provide sexual services and identified 82 in Northern Virginia.

Polaris did not do any further investigation but felt the circumstantial evidence was there to start a vigorous law enforcement probe. The Polaris Project listed 21 cities in Northern Virginia. Wolf held up the a copy of the study. "I can't give you this," but he began reading: "Alexandria, 6, Annandale, 7, Arlington, 2, Herndon, 8, Springfield, 7, Falls Church, 5, Vienna, 12." He read on. "Most people are stunned when they find out it is occurring right here in Virginia." The massage parlors are difficult to close down because they are sometimes large operations run by individuals who understand licensing and zoning regulations, who move women from place to place and, if under suspicion, just open a new massage parlor in a different location, he said.

Wolf also had money inserted into appropriations legislation setting up a Gang Task Force across Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax and including the FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

He noted the Brenda Paz case in 2003: "She was a 17-year-old girl in the inner circle of a local M-13 gang. She decided she wanted to get out and turned in a lot of information to law enforcement that they didn't have at the time. She was put in witness protection. But the gang found out and planned her killing in a Holiday Inn in Fairfax. They took her to Meems Bottom Covered Bridge in Shenandoah County and brutally slit her throat." Wolf said fear can be one of the factors that keeps young girls from exposing their situation.

When did recognition of the problem begin for U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) who was active on the issue of human trafficking in the state legislature representing the 34th District before filling Wolf's congressional seat in 2014? Comstock said she thought it was when she met a woman in her 20s or 30s who had been a victim when

## Resources

### National Human Trafficking Resource Center

1-888-373-7888  
nhtrc@polarisproject.org

### Just Ask

President Beth Saunders  
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Fairfax, VA 22030  
FCPDHumanTrafficking@fairfaxcounty.gov  
1-888-373-7888

### National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

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Executive Director  
5415-C Backlick Road  
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Cell: 571-366-0086  
deepa.r.patel1@gmail.com

she was a 13-14 year old. She learned that Virginia had one of the lowest ratings of enforcement against human trafficking in all the states. During 2012-13 she co-patroned a number of a bills in the state legislature addressing the growth of gangs and increasing the penalty from a misdemeanor for soliciting a minor age 16 or 17 and under for prostitution to a Class Six felony and soliciting a minor under 16 to a Class Five penalty. Comstock worked with Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) who sponsored Virginia's first stand-alone human trafficking statute. Hugo said last July after it went into effect, "Until today, Virginia was the only state in the nation without a decided human trafficking law and was one of only two states that did not specifically criminalize sex trafficking."

Comstock said Fairfax County Detective Bill Woolf was instrumental in recommending legislation to her that was needed. "He said we are on the street and we need legislation to increase penalties," she said. "Woolf is a knight in shining armor; he has done so much for this cause."

Woolf said, "I saw the need and started working it." He continued, "Traffickers work in the schools. Victims come from every high school in the county."

Sometimes it is a high school student recruiting in his own school. Elizabeth Payne, coordinator for Health, Family Life Education and Physical Education for Fairfax County Public Schools, said a new education program established in the county's middle and high schools in 2012 seems to be getting results. She said Woolf recently told her about a middle school student who heard about sexual trafficking in her class and realized this was happening to her friend. The girl told an adult teacher she trusted and the victim was recovered along with several other girls in the same school. "I think Detective Woolf was the first one to break a case, and they just kept coming. It involved so many of our students in high schools of different ethnicities and demographics. We knew we had to do something."



# 'Let's Hear It for the Boy'

FROM PAGE 3

lives in. However, she lost her brother – and the whole town ignores that – which is hard for her to deal with.”

Van Trees likes her role because “Ariel’s such a cool character. I get to be kind of wild and I really enjoy performing.” She especially likes the song, “Let’s Hear It for the Boy,” because “Every time I hear it, it puts a smile on my face and I want to dance. You never get tired of it, it’s such a cute number.”

She said people will enjoy Westfield’s fresh, new interpretation of such a classic show. “Everyone in the cast is so talented and brings such unique qualities to their characters that they stand out in their own ways, even in the ensemble,” said Van Trees. “It’s a joy to work with them.”

Senior Shaina Greenberg plays Rusty, Ariel’s best friend and part

of her “posse” of buddies. “They’ve known each other since they were children and both tease and support each other,” said Greenberg. “Rusty’s a little awkward. She and this guy, Willard, have always had a connection, but are too shy to talk to each other. She also has a lot of attitude and spunk and has to have the last word.”

“I love playing Rusty,” she said. “She’s a teenager like me, so I have similar experiences to draw from – being awkward with boys and standing up for a friend – so it’s easy for me to connect with her.” Greenberg said the audience will like the show’s high energy, lights and upbeat music. “And they’ll be able to recognize people they know in the personalities of the small-town characters,” she added. “It’s the ‘80s and everything is larger than life and really entertaining.”

Portraying Willard is senior Keegan Garant. “He’s Ren’s best friend and the comedic relief,” said Garant. “He’s a lovable character who adds less of a sense of urgency to the show. He’s laid-back, goofy and universally liked by the whole town. He’s also Rusty’s love interest, but doesn’t quite know how to express his feelings to her.”

Enjoying his role, Garant said, “Willard isn’t well-educated, but he is fun-loving and I can add a high level of energy to him. I also get to bring my precise,



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

**Townspeople and choreographers:** Standing, from left, are Diana Witt, Morgan Perigard, Sarah Damers, Embrey Grimes, Zach Schwartz and Kaley Haller; and, sitting, from left, are choreographers Sarah Bresnahan and Meredith Mehegan, plus actors Andrew Sharpe, Aubrey Cervarich and Shaina Greenberg.


comedic timing to this character. And people will like my song, ‘Mama Says,’ which is hilarious. It’s about the lessons Willard’s mama taught him, but they’re really stupid and can’t be applied to real life – yet he takes them seriously.”

Overall, said Garant, “The audience will get a happy vibe from the show. It’ll bring energy to their hearts and make them want to get out of their seats and dance.”

The scenes take place in the high school, church and town and, said Director Pike, “My tech students have done an amazing job of designing a multi-level set, complete with stained-glass windows. They’ve worked hard to make this set special. It really warms my heart to work with all the kids because they’re so much fun, they make me laugh every day.”

She said the audience will love the show’s high-spirited, high-school attitudes, and it’ll bring back “fond memories of ‘80s high-school days and its music and, most importantly, the clothes. The girls will have jeans jackets, leg warmers, ugly prom dresses, big hair and lots of purple eyeshadow.” And the boys will have mullets, cowboy hats and boots.

“This musical has a wonderful message that teenagers can teach adults as much as adults can teach them,” said Pike. “The kids simply want to be able to dance again, and they prove they can be responsible.”

Join us for the 3rd Annual  
**Simply Savvy Shopping**  
**Spring Extravaganza!** 

Sunday, April 24, 2016 • 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.  
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**The Virginia Run Community**  
**Spring Yard Sale!**  
**Saturday April 30th**  
**8:00 AM- 2:00 PM**  
**rain or shine**


In addition to numerous individual resident yard sales, the Westfield High School Crew team and the Virginia Run Elementary School 6th Grade Celebration groups will have Mega Multi Family yard sales to raise funds to support their group efforts.

The crew team's sale location will be at  
**15267 Eagle Tavern Way.**


Helaine Newman and Paula Ferrara-Garcia are the official organizers and will be compiling the treasure map of all of the families participating in this community event with a listing of items that they plan to sell.

They will be distributing maps at the corner of Wetherburn Drive and Pleasant Valley Road the morning of the sale.


Questions? Contact Paula or Helaine



**PAULA FERRARA-GARCIA**  
C: (703) 216-6730  
pferrara@welchert.com



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If your property is currently listed for sale with a broker, this is not intended as a solicitation of real estate.



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# OPINION

## On the Guilty Plea of Adam Torres

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

Adam 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 covering 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 [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com).

## Showcase

FROM PAGE 1

bers belong to KCPC and St. Paul Chung Catholic Church — will play a selection of music from around the world.

"Living, shopping and dining out in Centreville is a true, international experience, said CIF President Alice Foltz. "The Showcase reflects the amazing opportunities that we have to share our lives and traditions, right in our community."

Attendees will enjoy a variety of food, including Mexican, Salvadorian, Italian, Peruvian and Indian. Restaurants participating will be Two Amigos, Guapos, Ciao Osteria, Chicken Latino, Tandoori Village, El Quetzal and Cuna del Sol. And the women of Alpha Delta Kappa will provide desserts and snacks. There'll also be a silent auction featuring items such as: Vacation getaways to a cabin in the Pennsylvania mountains, four tickets to a Washington Nationals game; a quilt; baskets of wine, coffee, food and makeup; gift certificates for massages, manicures, oil changes and restaurant meals; and a free, one-month gym membership plus three personal-training sessions.

The CIF sponsors the Showcase each year to bring the community together for an evening of fellowship and fun. Admission is free; the event raises money to help support the CLRC through a 50-50 raffle, food purchases and a silent auction. Tickets for dinner may be purchased in advance at the CLRC or via [www.centrevilleinternationalshowcase.org/](http://www.centrevilleinternationalshowcase.org/)

CLRC Director Molly Maddra said people will love the Showcase because it's an evening of fun for the whole family. "We invite everyone to enjoy the many cultures that make up our community," she said. "And we're thankful for the support of over 20 community partners, including KCPC and 10 area restaurants. This event will showcase the diversity of Northern Virginia, and KCPC is the perfect backdrop for something that highlights so well the amazing culture in the Centreville area."

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 30, 2016, are eligible to attend kindergarten. Find the correct neighborhood school by entering your address at <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/>. Complete a packet of registration forms found at [www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf](http://www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf) or in the school office. Gather supporting documents: proof of residence in the school boundary, a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required before the student may start school, but is not required for registration. Parents who choose to delay enrollment in kindergarten by one year are required to notify the school in writing of their intent.

**Greenbriar West Elementary School** is now accepting information for next year's Kindergarten classes. Parents of children who live within the school's boundaries should call the school office at 703-633-6700 as soon as possible.

**Colin Powell Elementary School** will hold kindergarten registration on Monday, March 28, 1:30-3:30 p.m. and Tuesday, March 29, 5:30-7:30

p.m. Due to time constraints, parents are asked not to bring children along.

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

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

**Union Mill Elementary** is currently registering new students for the 2016-17 school year. Call the registrar at 703-322-8500 or email [sheri.brown@fcps.edu](mailto:sheri.brown@fcps.edu) to make an appointment to bring completed registration forms and supporting documentation to school.

Kindergarten Orientation takes place Friday, April 22, 9-10 a.m. Rising kindergarten students will have the opportunity to visit a kindergarten classroom while parents attend an information session.

**Centre Ridge Elementary School** in Centreville is open for Kindergarten Registration for the school year 2016-17. Call 703-227-2600.

### THURSDAY/APRIL 21

**Homeschool Day at Sully.** 10 a.m.-noon at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Sully Historic Site hosts Homeschool Day. Bring homeschool students or groups for a fun, hands-on learning experience designed to enrich understanding of Fairfax County circa 1800. This program is for students ages 5-12. \$10 per child and \$5 for adult chaperones. Call 703-437-1794 or visit

# CENTREVIEW

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Newspaper of  
**Centreville**  
**Little Rocky Run**  
A Connection Newspaper

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

**Published by**  
**Local Media Connection LLC**

**1606 King Street**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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A Connection Newspaper





# ENTERTAINMENT

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

## ONGOING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Live After Five.** Fridays at 5:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway. Every Friday night a band plays on the patio of the winery. Free

to attend. Visit [www.wineryatbullrun.com](http://www.wineryatbullrun.com) for a full schedule.

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

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

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

## FRIDAY/APRIL 22

**Writing Conference.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at NOVA Manassas, 6901 Sudley Road, Manassas. Timothy Denevi, assistant professor of creative writing at George Mason University, will present a session called "Writing Narratives, Memoirs and Nonfiction." Prince William County Poet Laureate Robert Scott will discuss poetry. After lunch, Dackeyia Q. Sterling will talk about publishing and marketing techniques as well as how to write what publishers want. Free. Visit [www.novamawritingconference2016.eventbrite.com](http://www.novamawritingconference2016.eventbrite.com).

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 22-24

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

## SATURDAY/APRIL 23

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

**Rose Bush Sale.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at 14300 Green Trails, Manor Gate Clubhouse, Centreville. Thirty varieties available. Admission available with purchase of \$15 membership. Call 703-371-9351.

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

**Artful Living.** 7-10 p.m. at Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Fairfax-based non-profit Our Daily Bread invites the public to attend Artful Living, a juried art show and community event in association with the Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival. Attendees will enjoy a juried art show featuring works by local artists that will be available for sale, vote for their favorite work, enjoy live music by local Latin-jazz band

Batida Diferente, appetizers, wine and a craft beer tasting. Tickets are \$45 in advance and \$50 at the door. Visit [www.ODBFairfax.org](http://www.ODBFairfax.org).

## THURSDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 28-MAY 1

**Centreville Library Used Book Sale.** 3-8:30 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, 1-3 p.m. Sunday at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Proceeds benefit the library. Free to attend. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

## FRIDAY/APRIL 29

**Film Screening: "Healing Voices."** 3 p.m. at City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 N. St., Fairfax. Screening of a new documentary, "Healing Voices" that explores real-life stories of individuals working to overcome the extreme effects of their illness and integrate their experiences into their lives in meaningful ways. Free. Call 703-324-7006.

## FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 29-30

**"The Man Who Came to Dinner."** 7 p.m. at Chantilly High School, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. This spring, the Chantilly Drama Department will present Kaufman and Hart's "The Man Who Came to Dinner," a comedy set in the late 1930s. Famous radioman, Sheridan Whiteside, slips outside the house of the well-to-do factory owner, Ernest Stanley and his family. Whiteside is confined to the Stanley's house until he recovers. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. Visit [www.chantillyhsdrama.com](http://www.chantillyhsdrama.com) for more.

**"Footloose."** 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. Saturday at Westfield High School, 4700 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. The Westfield Theatre program presents "Footloose." Tickets are \$10 in advance or with student ID, \$12 at the door. Visit [www.whsfootloose.weebly.com](http://www.whsfootloose.weebly.com).

## SATURDAY/APRIL 30

**Plant Sale.** 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at Giant Food, 5615 Stone Road, Centreville. Perennials, annuals, and herbs for sale. Proceeds maintain planter boxes at Sully Governmental Center and other civic projects. Free. Visit [centrevillegardenclub.blogspot.com](http://centrevillegardenclub.blogspot.com) or email [centrevillegardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:centrevillegardenclub@gmail.com).

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

**Centreville International Showcase.** 5:30-9 p.m. at Korean Central Presbyterian Church, 15451 Lee Highway, Centreville. See marimba players, Indian and Guatemalan dancers, among a variety of other cultural performances, food, and more. Free. Visit [www.centrevilleinternationalshowcase.org](http://www.centrevilleinternationalshowcase.org).



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## Historic Blenheim

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No parking at Blenheim site, shuttle from Fairfax High School (3501 Rebel Run)

*Proceeds benefit restoration of Historic Blenheim.*

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## PHOTO GALLERY!

### "Me and My Mom"

To honor Mom on Mother's Day, send us your favorite snapshots of you with your Mom and Centre View 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:  
 Centre View, "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~





Herndon's Caroline Glazier, left, defends Chantilly's Laurel Buck.



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/CENTRE VIEW

Katie Abt and the Chantilly girls' soccer team fell to 3-4-2 with a 1-0 loss to Herndon on Monday.

## Kohler's PK Gives Herndon Girls' Soccer Win Over Chantilly

**Chargers fall to 3-4-2 overall, 1-2-1 in Conference 5.**

BY JON ROETMAN  
CENTRE VIEW

**A**fter 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.

"We controlled the game in pockets," Chantilly head coach Melissa Bibbee wrote in an email, "but failed to finish on our opportunities."

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."



Chantilly's Katie Colonna, right, and Herndon's Morgan Johnson go for the ball.

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

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

**"We controlled the game in pockets but failed to finish on our opportunities."**

**— Chantilly girls' soccer coach Melissa**



# Removing a Barrier to Pomp and Circumstance

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

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
CENTRE VIEW

**W**hen 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 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.

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 ceremonies 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.

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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 subconscious "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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## Addams Family

FROM PAGE 3  
family.”

Playing Wednesday is Lucia LaNave. “She’s always been the icon of darkness, and the story’s about her almost morphing into someone with feelings who wants to know what love is like — that’s what she gets with Lucas,” said LaNave. “She’s often hesitant to let herself go, except when she’s with him.”

“I love this role because I get to explore this level of love,” she continued. “And I’m optimistic and cheery, so it’s fun to play someone who’s my polar opposite. She also has amazing songs. I like singing ‘One Normal Night,’ in which Wednesday’s begging her family to be normal for just one night. And ‘Pulled’ is my big solo about her being pulled in a new direction. It introduces the new Wednesday, and you see her change before your eyes — it’s very cool.”

LaNave said people will both enjoy and relate to this show’s “sweet story about family dynamics.”

Kathy Young plays Grandma. “She’s 102, and I can’t wait ’til they make me up to look that old,” said Young. “She’s a feisty, little thing; nobody knows whose grandmother she is, but she’s part of the family. Grandma’s a lot of fun and makes her own herbs, potions and remedies. At some point, she tries to be normal, but she doesn’t understand what normal is. She has a soft spot for [her grandson] Pugsley, but is mainly spunky. She’s energetic and witty and has some great lines.”

Young especially likes the show’s opening number, “When You’re an Addams,” because there’s finger-snapping and the family’s ancestors come out of their crypt. She said the audience will love the play’s funny characters, and “The music is great. The cast gels so well together, and it’s just a fun show, all the way around.”

Portraying Uncle Fester is Mike Cash. “He’s zany and unpredictable, a romantic and funny,” said Cash. “He has great songs, including a romantic number, ‘The Moon and Me,’ a beautiful ballad. And he has great quips and punchlines. It’s wonderful playing him because I get a license to be ridiculous — which is my specialty.”

Besides that, said Cash, “It’s a 10-year reunion for me and my cast mates from Alliance’s 2006 production of ‘The Wizard of Oz.’ I was the Scarecrow; Billy Clay, the Tin Man; Jim Mitchell, the Cowardly Lion; John Totten, the Wizard; and Kathy Young was in the ensemble. And we all had great chemistry, which we’re re-creating now.”

Cash said most of the leads are seasoned actors and the audience will be transported somewhere else for two hours “to enjoy themselves and forget all the things that weigh them down. They’ll laugh from start to finish.”

“The whole cast is fantastic,” added Director Leslie Anne Ross. “This is the role of a lifetime for Jim — he’s perfect for it — and Grace has a fabulous singing voice. The mainly female dancers comprising the chorus of Addams family ancestors are all phenomenal, and the audience will love all the singing, dancing and funny double entendres.”

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TOWN CODE

MAY 4, 2016

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Clifton Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at the Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton, VA 20124, at 7:30 P.M. to review and implement proposed changes to the Town Vehicle Ordinance and other items pertaining to the administration of vehicles in the Town Code Chapter 7. The proposed changes are available for review and downloading on the Town's website at [www.clifton-va.com](http://www.clifton-va.com) and a hard copy may be examined at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton VA, 20124. All interested parties are invited to attend and express their views with respect to the proposed changes to Clifton's Town Code.

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# Guilty Plea

FROM PAGE 2  
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 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 re-

main 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."

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.

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

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