



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Day Prom

From left are Westfield High's Sara Hall, Tommy Nash and Brigitte Schultz. Story, more photos, page 3.

In Compliance, In Advance

School Board members respond to Obama transgender bathroom guidance.

BY TIM PETERSON
CENTRE VIEW

When a student in Fairfax County Public Schools identifies as transgender and they bring it to the attention of their school staff, the school brings in the student's parents and together they work out a tailored bathroom plan: where to use single-stall facilities on campus that will make the student feel most comfortable.

That's the current practice in the school system with a population that exceeds 186,000 students, according to School Board At-Large member Ryan McElveen.

McElveen believes it's also in compliance with new national guidance released Friday, May 13 by the Obama administration, that transgender students should be allowed to use the bathroom of the sex with which they identify.

The bathroom issue was already a controversial topic a year ago, when the previous board voted in favor of adding "gender identity" to its nondiscrimination policy. Even though, as McElveen and others admitted, the policy change would not change anything in

practice in the schools.

"We knew it was the right thing to do at the time," McElveen said in an interview after Friday's announcement. "[The guidance] clarifies we were on the right path then."

Opponents voiced concerns for the privacy and safety of their students. They worried about other students taking advantage of the bathroom policy to harass their children. But so far, McElveen said, he hasn't heard a single case of someone identifying as transgender then getting into a bathroom and causing trouble.

After the board's policy change, they appointed a special consultant to review the school system's policies and practices regarding discrimination and transgender students. The consultant is meant to compare FCPS with

best practices in other schools around the country and report back as to how closely Fairfax County complies.

The consultant's work is ongoing, McElveen said, without giving an estimated completion date. "We continue to work to ensure we're in compliance, that all our students are afforded the same

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"We knew it was the right thing to do at the time."

— School Board At-Large member Ryan McElveen

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'The Chance to Be Like Other Teens'

Students attend Day Prom at The Waterford in Fair Oaks.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

At last week's prom, the students attending ate pizza, visited with friends, danced and sang along with the music. But this wasn't just any prom — it was the Day Prom for special-education students with intellectual disabilities.

Yet it came with all the bells and whistles, fun and excitement of proms everywhere. And the 250-some students from 11 schools at the Thursday, May 12, event at The Waterford in Fair Oaks had a wonderful time.

"It's a great place where they can just be themselves," said Chantilly High special-ed teacher Patti Caplan. "It's a joyful event."

Chantilly had seven students there, Westfield High, 21, and Centreville High, 24, including four regular-education students in the Best Buddies Club. Westfield instructional assistant Sara Hall said the prom lets the students "interact with other people, and in a different environment."

"It gives our children a chance to experience a prom like other students do," said Westfield instructional assistant Brigitte Schultz, sitting next to student Tommy Nash, wheelchair-bound but smiling. "And the kids get so much joy out of the prospect of dressing up and getting their hair and makeup done, that they might not otherwise have been able to experience."

"They're loving it; they're all out there dancing," said Westfield special-ed department chair Melissa Gordon, pointing toward the dance floor. She said the students were also enjoying the pizza, sandwich wraps, cheese, fruit, vegetables and chocolate cake. And, she added, "The cotton candy, this



Student Marafi Badr makes cotton candy for the prom guests.

year, was a big hit." Most of all, though, said Gordon, "This gives them the chance to be just like any other teenagers. The social piece is important for them, and they get to just let loose and enjoy themselves."

Caplan said Chantilly's special-ed students "either weren't invited to the regular prom or didn't have someone there with them to help them navigate it. But they prepare for the Day Prom. We start early in the year in our Life Skills classes, discussing formal and semi-formal etiquette and dress. We also show them how to navigate a buffet line politely, how to make small talk and how to have good manners."

The students are also shown photos and videos of the Day Prom, and their teachers discuss the event with their parents. "And this year, Reston Limousine donated its time and a limousine with a wheelchair lift for us," said Caplan. "It was super fun. The driver put on the radio, and the kids were singing, the whole time. We wished we had a longer drive. And except for eating, they've been on the dance floor here, the whole time."

Linda Lee, a speech/language pathologist at Chantilly, said this prom is "a wonderful opportunity for the students to get to learn

how to use their social skills" outside of the classroom. "This also gives them a chance to reunite with students they know from other schools and with former classmates who've gone on to other schools," said Lee. "They also get to see friends they know from church, Special Olympics, Challenger Baseball and other activities."

Noting that the Day Prom's theme was "A Day to Remember," she said it really will be for the students, "as they look at their photos and reflect back on all the fun they had."

Chantilly junior Jeffery Creighton called his first prom fun and said he liked the cake and enjoyed dancing. He likes music, especially Bon Jovi. "The prom is excellent," said classmate Adithya Mathuria. "I like everything about it and I also love the chandeliers."

Another classmate, Obida Khawatmi, said his favorite singer is Jason Derulo and he, too, was having fun dancing. He also liked eating the pizza and cotton candy. As for classmate Shantell Martin, she said, "It's fun visiting with friends. And I like the food and the music; Ariana Grande is my favorite singer."

Special-ed teaches Kathleen McGuire and Tommy Lamb co-sponsor Centreville High's



Among those attending the Day Prom from Centreville High are (from left) Sam Rowan, Kathleen McGuire, Jayde McMillan and Jack Erickson.

Best Buddies Club, which promotes friendships between regular-ed students and those with intellectual disabilities. "The Day Prom is the highlight of the year for all these kids and their teachers," said McGuire. "Coach Lamb works on the dances with them; this year, he taught them the Whip, the Nae Nae, the Wobble and the Quan."

Meanwhile, McGuire worked with the Best Buddies offers and peer helpers, coordinating who'd come to the prom. She said one of the high points of everyone's high-school career is prom, and "this gives the [special-ed] students the chance to meet students from other schools and dance and just have a blast."

"What's awesome is that, oftentimes, the students get a chance to reconnect with kids from middle school, elementary school or summer programs they've been to," said McGuire. "And at the same time, it's great for the teachers to reconnect with students they taught before and haven't seen in a while. It's incredibly rewarding for the teachers to see how much the kids have grown and matured. You see their futures and possibilities for tomorrow, and what

SEE ENJOYING, PAGE 5



Students and teachers smiling, laughing and having fun.



Good times at the Day Prom at The Waterford.

Displaying Work at Chantilly Pyramid Art Show



Ishita Thatavarthi, Oak Hill, grade 3.



Marissa Prem, Poplar Tree Elementary, grade 5.



Joelle Kang, Poplar Tree, grade 2.



Shannon McCullough, Chantilly High, sophomore.



Peter Palli, Oak Hill, grade 4.



Nidhish Sorate, Oak Hill Elementary, grade 2.



Maximus James, Brookfield Elementary, grade 6.



Emma Gustafson, Chantilly, sophomore.



Hazel Flynn, Poplar Tree, grade 4.



Paula Munte, Lees Corner Elementary, grade 6.

PHOTOS BY
BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Enjoying Prom

FROM PAGE 3

great people they're becoming."

Centreville junior Sam Rowan, current Best Buddies Club secretary, joined the group when she was a freshman. "I worked with special-ed kids when I was in the Peer Helping Program at Liberty Middle School," she said. "I helped the kids in their classrooms and wanted to do it again."

This year, said Rowan, Centreville's Best Buddies did a friendship walk, went to a school football game together, went bowling and held a Valentine's Day dance. Then came a Bring Your Own Buddy rave in March and fun on a miniature golf course in April.

McGuire noted that the Elizabeth Ann Healy Foundation — established in honor of a Clifton teen who died of cancer in 2009 — has been a "huge supporter" of Centreville's Best Buddies for the past two years. "They gave us donations funding the trips and activities we've done all year long," said McGuire. "And because of their support and generosity, we're one of the most active chapters in the Best Buddies Capital Region."

At the Day Prom, Centreville sophomore Jayde McMillan said she was enjoying "the music and dancing and doing the Cupid Shuffle. And it's fun eating pizza and meet-



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS

Standing (from left) are Chantilly students Jeffery Creighton, Adithya Mathuria, Carmen Guevara, Obida Khawatmi and Anthony Phan, and seated is Shantell Martin.

ing new friends."

Agreeing, classmate Jack Erickson said, "I like the wrap sandwiches and hanging out with everyone. I also like dancing and Michael Jackson."

Happy with the way things were going, Rowan said, "There's energy everywhere. The kids see people dancing and they want to dance, too. And I like how everybody knows everybody and treats everyone the same. People don't see the disabilities — they just see each other as people."

CAPPIES REVIEW

More Than Dinner'

BY DIANA WITT
WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Most dinner guests only stay for the evening, but in Chantilly

High School's production of "The Man Who Came to Dinner," Sheridan Whiteside's unexpected stay brings chaos to the Stanley household. In this wacky tale of mischief and mayhem, the characters learn that good can come from the pandemonium of life.

Written by George Kaufman and Moss Hart, "The Man Who Came to Dinner" is a three-act comedy play. It first premiered at the Music Box Theater in NYC in 1939. A film adaptation starring Monty Woolley came out in 1942. The story follows Sheridan Whiteside, a larger-than-life radio personality, when he is invited to have dinner with the wealthy Stanley family. Before Whiteside



PHOTO BY R. DAVID ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Megan Dinneen and Steven Schwarz

can even make it in to the house, he slips on the Stanley's front steps and injures his hip. Confined to a wheelchair, Whiteside must stay in the Stanley home longer than just one evening. However, his wheelchair does not stop him from causing disorder. With his large telephone bills, wacky house guests, and even a few loose penguins, Sheridan Whiteside turns the Stanley household upside in this wild, laugh-out-loud production.

Playing the title role of Sheridan Whiteside was Adam LeKang. LeKang hilariously delivered Whiteside's scathingly caustic jests confidently with im-

SEE MORE THAN... PAGE 6

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OPINION

In Search of Diversified Revenue

Fairfax County residents can expect to see meals tax question on November ballots.

Local governments pay for almost all of local services, including schools, by taxing a single industry, property owners.

In Fairfax County, property taxes pay for 65 percent of the budget. In Arlington, which has more revenue options as an urban county, property taxes pay for 57 percent of everything. In the City of Alexandria, property taxes pay for 58 percent.

EDITORIAL It costs more every year to provide a consistent level of services, and the sources of revenue available to local governments in Virginia are very limited, forcing an outsized reliance on property taxes. The reason is that localities in Virginia have only the power explicitly given to them by the General Assembly, and the General Assembly allows very few options for localities to collect revenue.

Alexandria and Arlington already have a 4 percent meals tax on top of the 6 percent sales tax, and it's evident that the robust restaurant scene in both areas has not suffered as a result. Would-be diners do not drive to Fairfax County to avoid the tax. But whether Fairfax County can collect a meals tax will be up to voters in November, pending the Board of Supervisors putting the question on the ballot.

A meals tax is not a silver bullet, but it does add one more source of revenue. A 4-cent meals tax is roughly equivalent to the 4-cent increase in property taxes that Fairfax County residents will face this year. But the property tax is levied on people with no relationship to their ability to pay. The meals tax is related to spending, a more progressive approach, and will also collect taxes from non-residents.

This is one of the wealthiest regions in the country, and the highly educated population

has high expectations. Schools, public safety, recreational facilities, transportation, human services and other services and facilities cannot be allowed to atrophy because real estate values are flat. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors was correct to provide what Chairman Sharon Bulova called a "booster shot," mostly to schools but also to other needs in the county.

What is needed for the future is access to other, more diversified forms of taxes. While it is a pipe dream given the disposition of the General Assembly, what is really needed is to give localities a portion of the income tax. In the meantime, locals will have to press the state to pay for its fair share locally, and to allow increases in cigarette taxes and other possible sources of revenue.

— MARY KIMM

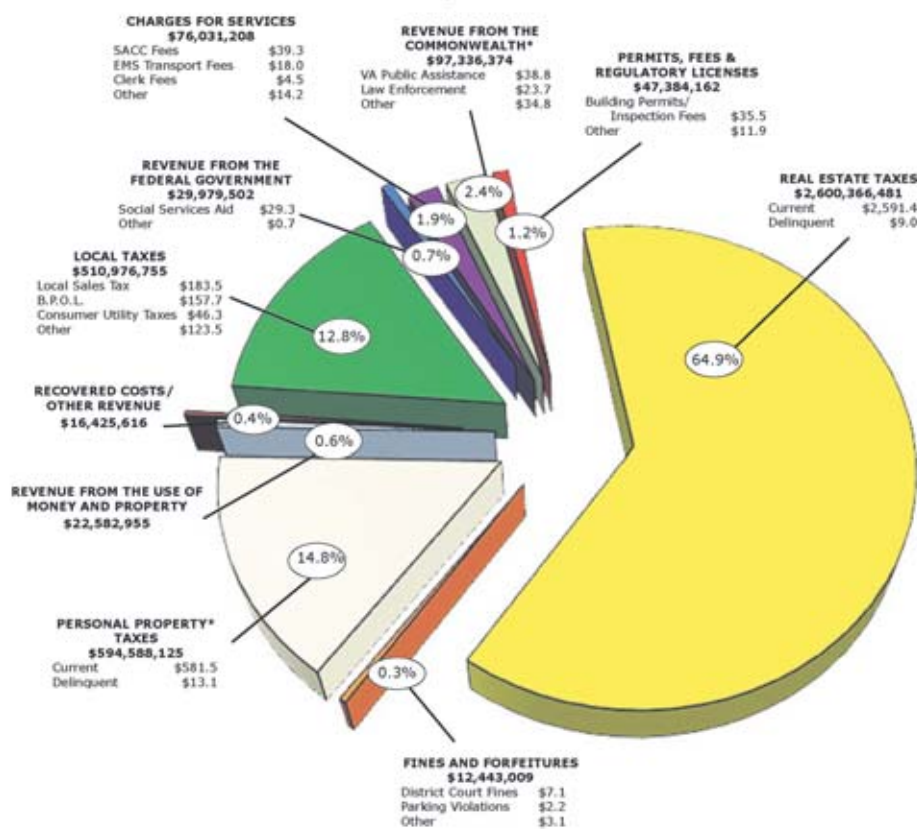
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'The Man Who Came to Dinner' at Chantilly

FROM PAGE 5

peccable timing. He was bound by a wheelchair for virtually the entire play, but managed to embody the outlandish and vivacious persona. LeKang created many unique and believable relationships onstage, most notably with his loyal secretary, Maggie Cutler, played by Adriana Castillo. The pair demonstrated the ups and downs of employee and employer, snapping at each other one moment and sharing a friendly giggle in the next. In addition, Castillo adorably captured Maggie's joy and sadness of her romance with newspaper man Bert Jefferson. Jefferson, played by Jack David,

acted as the calm in the middle of the storm. David firmly characterized the dependable and serious, yet charming Jefferson.

Two of Whiteside's guests, Beverly and Banjo, were portrayed by Michael Rosegrant and Connor Cragg. The duo both showcased comedic skill in witty moments with Whiteside. Their bold movements and sharp vocalizations made for entertaining performances. Whiteside's nervous nurse, Miss Preen was played by Olivia Madigan. Madigan amusingly depicted many droll moments of confusion as she got caught up in the flurry of activity in the household. A hilarious cameo per-

formance was given by Marka Doolittle, who played the senile old lady, Harriet.

A gorgeous dual level set adorned the stage. Standout pieces included a grand and glittery Christmas tree and luxurious white sofas. Commendable props included the crate of penguins and the human-sized gold sarcophagus. The set transitions were almost unnoticeable, masked by good lighting and a quick crew.

Confusion, chaos, and commotion created comedy in Chantilly High School's production of "The Man Who Came to Dinner." The cast and crew certainly made an ordinary dinner into so much more.

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Teacher Wins John Marshall Foundation Award

Cathy Ruffing teaches Law in Action, AP Government at Centreville High School.

By STEVE HIBBARD
CENTRE VIEW

Cathy Ruffing, 50, a teacher at Centreville High School, received the 2016 John Marshall Foundation Teacher Award and \$2,500 prize on May 2 at the Richmond Bar Association's Annual Law Day Luncheon. She was nominated for the award by Craig Perrier, a Fairfax County high school curriculum specialist.

Ruffing, of Fairfax Station, teaches AP Government and Politics as well as Law in Action, an introduction to law course, for which she wrote the curriculum 10 years ago for the county; now the class is taught in half of Fairfax County high schools.

"It's a great honor to win the award," she said. "I love all things Supreme Court, so to win an award named after the most famous chief justice, it's very exciting."

David Jagels, principal of Centreville High, calls Ruffing a hard-working and enthusiastic teacher who makes her classroom come alive. "Her love of teaching and learning is contagious and therefore, her students speak highly of the lessons they learn under her tutelage," he said, adding that her engaging and personable demeanor helps her to create a positive classroom climate where students are challenged regularly to take risks and to elevate their thinking skills.

Ruffing grew up in Delmont, Pa., outside of Pittsburgh, and went to the University of Pennsylvania and majored in Russian language and Soviet studies. She has been teaching in Fairfax County public schools for 25 years; first at Mount Vernon High School for 11 years, and the remainder at Centreville High. She is married to husband



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cathy Ruffing of Centreville High School.

John and the couple has a daughter named Emma, age 15.

An avid runner, Ruffing has run three marathons, and is a coach for her daughter's Girls on the Run club. She is also the faculty liaison for the Ice Hockey Club at Centreville High.

In her classroom, she said: "We do a lot of current events; what's in the Supreme Court right now, what's in the news right now, and we have a lot of guest speakers who come in who speak about professions and the law." One former student came back recently to talk to her students about his journey from high school to law school and preparing to take the bar.

Ruffing said her government students

write a proposal for a bill, usually in pairs, that will make the lives of Virginians better. They research a problem, a solution and write a proposal for a bill. They have a special partnership with state Sen. George Barker of Clifton (D-39), and send him a list of their most promising ideas. His staff researches them and chooses one to actually write a law for the Virginia Senate. Some of their ideas have become law and one was written into regulation, she said.

"Her love of teaching and learning is contagious and therefore, her students speak highly of the lessons they learn under her tutelage."

— David Jagels, Principal,
Centreville High School

"We had one about wearing seat belts in the back seat, and one that became a regulation was about mandating that daycare centers do radon testing in the basement," she said.

This year a bill (SB 438) was proposed by a senior named Asees Sekhon, then proposed by Barker, amended and passed through the Virginia General Assembly, then signed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe. Sekhon's bill would prohibit secondary schools from mandating that students turn over their social media user names and passwords. The problem was that some coaches required athletes to turn over their user names and passwords so that coaches can see all their social media activity, not just what they decide to make public. Ruffing said that 16 different states proposed similar legislation this year. On June 20, there will be a signing ceremony with the governor.

"It was exciting for all of the students and for me to watch a bill go through the process and have a vested interest in its passage. And I believe strongly in his bill, and I was happy to see it pass," she said.

Another exciting event happened last May 22, 2015, when she took her students on a tour of the Supreme Court and met with Justice Sonia Sotomayor who did a Q&A. "She was so inspirational and so down to earth; she speaks to the students as if they are peers and legal scholars. She didn't talk down to them. It was an amazing experience for everybody," she said.

Eight years ago Ruffing established the Model Judiciary Team at Centreville, which is run by the young lawyers division of the American Bar Association. They start building a team of 26 people in late September and prepare for a mock trial that takes place at the Fairfax Court House in January. She said some schools progress to the appellate round where attorneys argue appeals, usually in February, and Centreville has been one of the teams selected to go to Richmond to argue before the Virginia Supreme Court. "The best teams from Virginia get to go to Richmond for that," she said.

They didn't win their appeal on April 29 this year, but last year the team won it and was named the best overall advocates for the Commonwealth of Virginia; those students were seniors Michael Morrow and David Bennett.

On being a good teacher, Ruffing said the most important thing is to make the topics relevant to the students, which is very easy to do with government and law, she said. "We had a lot of things going on with the primaries and Supreme Court justice vacancies, so it's relatively easy to make it relevant."

She added: "With the law course, it's easy to find examples of what's going on and put it into practice right away through simulations."

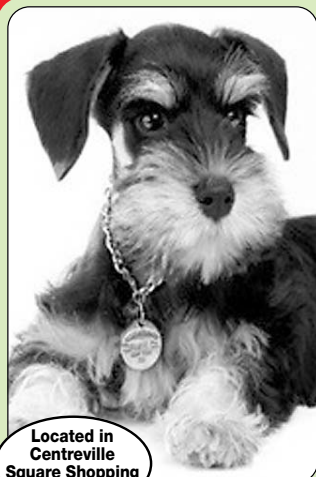
To educate her students, she said she uses NPR and CNN Cable in the Classroom, which she calls school-appropriate. "You don't have to worry about anything being offensive; it's also very concise," she said.

PHOTO GALLERY!

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Centreville starting pitcher Carter Egbers struck out 12 in six innings against Herndon on Saturday.



Centreville third baseman Cameron Ray helped the Wildcats beat Herndon on Saturday with an RBI single.

Centreville Baseball Keeps Season Alive

Wildcats pitcher Egbers strikes out 12 in six innings, gets no decision.

BY JON ROETMAN
CENTRE VIEW

Starting pitcher Carter Egbers struck out 12 in six innings and the Centreville baseball team led 4-2 when Conference 5 Co-Pitcher of the Year Carter Bach came on to close out Herndon and extend the Wildcats' season.

Things didn't go as planned.

Bach, a tall left-hander who will pitch for Wake Forest, surrendered two runs in the top of the seventh and the game went to extras. While it would have been easy for the Wildcats to lose their composure after watching their ace fail to hold a lead, Centreville capitalized on some Herndon miscues the following inning and kept its season alive.

Centreville's Cristian Sanchez scored on a wild pitch in the bottom of the eighth inning and the Wildcats, seeded No. 3, defeated No. 6 Herndon 5-4 in the opening round of the Conference 5 tournament on Saturday at Centreville High School. The Wildcats secured a berth in the 6A North region tournament and were scheduled to face No. 2 Westfield at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday in the conference semifinals, after The Connection's deadline.

Sanchez reached base on an error with one out in the bottom of the eighth. The next two batters were each hit by a pitch, loading the bases. With Chris Hannah at the plate, Herndon pitcher Antonio Menendez delivered a wild pitch that allowed Sanchez to score the winning run.

"It just shows that we'll never give up,

regardless of what the situation is," Egbers said. "We could be down one, down 10, we're going to fight until ump says it's game [over]."

Egbers received a no decision, but put Centreville in a position to win. The junior left-hander allowed two runs on five hits in six innings. He walked two and struck out 12.

Centreville head coach Scott Findley described Egbers' performance as "absolutely phenomenal."

"He's really grown as a pitcher here in the past month, two months," Findley said. "He developed a changeup. ... Last outing against them, he threw it some, but not like he threw it today. He threw it every fourth or fifth pitch."

Bach earned the win, allowing two runs — one earned — on two hits in two innings. He struck out two and walked none.

Centreville scored four runs in the fourth inning, including an RBI single by third baseman Cameron Ray and an RBI double by Egbers. The first two Wildcat batters reached on Herndon errors.

Herndon managed just two hits through five innings against Egbers before scoring a pair of runs in the sixth. With two outs, catcher Alex Hurd and left fielder Joe Wright came through with back-to-back RBI singles for the Hornets, cutting the

Centreville lead in half.

With Herndon trailing 4-2, first baseman Graham Seitz led off the top of the seventh with a solo homer to left off of Bach. With one out, a single by third baseman Ryan Ferguson and a Centreville throwing error gave Herndon runners at second and third with one out. Center fielder Devin Vigneault then tied the score at 4-all with a sacrifice fly.

How were the Hornets feeling after tying the score in the seventh?

"In one word," Menendez said, "I'd say confidence."

Centreville would score the game-winning run in the bottom of the eighth, however, ending Herndon's season.

Menendez, a junior right-hander who is committed to Wake Forest, pitched a complete game for Herndon and suffered the loss. He allowed five unearned runs and just three hits in 7 1/3 innings. The Co-Conference 5 Pitcher of the Year walked two, hit six batters and struck out eight.

"It takes more than just great pitching," Herndon head coach Mark Rueffert said. "You've got to have defense behind, hitters have got to hit at the plate. It's a team game for sure, but Antonio did exactly what we'd expect Antonio to do: keep us in the game."

Hurd and Ferguson each had two hits for Herndon.

Centreville Softball To Host Westfield

The No. 1 seed Centreville softball team will host No. 4 Westfield in the Conference 5 tournament semifinals at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18.

The Wildcats finished atop the Conference 5 regular-season standings with a 9-1 record, earning the No. 1 seed and an automatic berth in the 6A North region tournament.

Centreville wrapped up the regular season with a 12-8 win over Westfield on May 12. Kristen Lundquist had three hits and three RBIs for the Wildcats.

The conference championship game is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Friday, May 20 at Westfield High School.

The Wildcats are coached by Donnie Dutton.



PHOTO BY GENINE LUNDQUIST

Senior center fielder Emily Geist and the Centreville softball team are the No. 1 seed in the Conference 5 tournament.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Jubilee Christian Center of Fairfax is continuing its "Living Free" support groups in June on Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m. The support groups are free, and will cover "Concerned Persons Group" (for family and friends of addicts), "The Image of God in You," and "Handling Loss and Grief." There are also support groups meeting on Sundays, 10:10 a.m. 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. For information or to register, call 703-383-1170 or visit www.jccag.org.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 20-21

2016 Women's Conference. 7:15-3 p.m. at Grace Covenant Church, 4598 Brookfield Corporate Drive, Chantilly. The Women of Grace Covenant Church present the 2016 Refresh Women's Conference: Transform. The speaker will be writer Sharon Jaynes, Vice President of Proverbs 31 Ministries. \$80 before May 1st; \$95 thereafter. Contact Shamika Shahid at sshahid@gracecov.org or 703-318-7073. Visit www.tinyurl.com/WOG-2016TRANSFORM for more.

Language Immersion For Young Children

Experts tout the benefits of an early start.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
CENTRE VIEW

When Martha Davis' daughter Alice was ready for kindergarten, she decided to enroll her in a Spanish language immersion program. Davis, who is the assistant dean for World Languages at Northern Virginia Community College chose Mt. Vernon Community School in Alexandria.

"I know personally the benefits of knowing a second language and I wanted my daughter to experience that," she said.

Davis, also a Spanish professor, says that the benefits of such immersion programs range from boosting cognitive functioning and confidence to accent acquisition and social skills development. "Speaking with a native or near-native accent significantly eases communication, particularly with people unaccustomed to interacting with non-native speakers," said Davis. "This in turn can help boost the confidence of the non-native speaker and can provide the encouragement needed to continue language study."

Numerous studies suggest the brain-boosting power of early exposure to a second language as another benefit of immersion programs for young children, says Ana Lado, Ph.D., professor of Education at Marymount University in Arlington.

"Cognitively, kids who learn two languages in preschool and really young children tend to score better on abstract thinking all the way into high school," said Lado. "If you know that in one language there is one word for chair and it includes foot stool and sofa chair and lounge, and in another language you have three different words it makes your brain think more abstractly."

The sooner children gain exposure to a second language, the easier it is to acquire, says Davis who contrasts her daughter's feelings with those of some of her adult students, "who feel that speaking another language is strange or foreign," which impedes their language acquisition," she said.

"I have found that if students can identify them-



PHOTO COURTESY BY CHRIS REYNOLDS

Martha Davis reads a book written in Spanish with her daughters, 6-year-old Alice (right) and 4-year-old Jane. Alice is in a Spanish immersion program at Mt. Vernon Community School in Alexandria.

selves as a speaker of the language of instruction, regardless of their level of proficiency, they enjoy learning the language more and acquire it more easily," said Davis. "This year Alice has begun to sign her name 'Alicia' on her Spanish homework."

Local language immersion programs offer classes for children as young as 10 months old. They use songs and games to teach language in a way that is pleasurable for students. "Starting when they're young helps language develop organically and naturally," said Amanda Michetti of Language Starts, which offers classes to children in Alexandria, Fairfax, Arlington, Reston and Bethesda. "The classes are conversation based with a little bit of reading and writing."

Hilary Javier has three children, ages two, three and four, who take Mandarin Chinese at Language Starts. She wants them to be citizens of the world, and believes exposure to a second language is important in achieving that goal. "You don't have to translate anything into English," said Javier. "They really do understand from picking it up naturally in the immersion setting. There is this special window when they are young to expose them to different cultures they would not never been exposed to, even noticeable in their mannerisms in the classroom."

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Clutter



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Either it's the cancer/seven-plus years of chemotherapy, or it's my age. Regardless, information retention and recall is not quite what it used to be. What goes in doesn't exactly come out, or if it does, it's somewhat after the fact. I wouldn't say it's embarrassing yet, and it hasn't led to any speech impediment-type of hemming and hawing. But it has led to something, other than this column, that is.

I haven't quite resorted to index/flash cards, nor am I avoiding human interaction as a way to minimize the awkwardness. I am still going about my normal business – or lack thereof, and wondering if time is on my side or has it been usurped by powers greater than me. And since there's no real definitive answer, I'll try to stop questioning whether what I think I'm experiencing is inevitable or am I, as any Three Stooges aficionado would appreciate: simply "a victim of circumstance."

Granted, I may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer, but if we're invoking utensils here, neither am I a spoon. I can accept the fact that in the knife category, I'm closer to a butter knife than I am to a steak knife; meaning I get the job done, probably with less haste, but likely with more waste. Nevertheless, the job gets done and more often than not, it's without further ado. And while I'm using ado/adieu, I don't feel as if this lack of recall/retention is indicative of me bidding adieu. However, it does give me pause about my status as a long-time (in the stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer world, when one's prognosis was originally "13 months to two years," seven-plus years is a long time) survivor. Maybe I'm simply experiencing what any person nearing the age of 62 does. It's not the cancer, it's dare I say/hope: middle age. Although I'll admit I may be on the downside of it, and approaching what I'll call "older" age (not "old" age).

But let's be honest here, when an oncologist advises you at age 54 and a half that your prognosis is at best two years and that he can "treat you but can't cure you," and that perhaps, "you should take that vacation you've always dreamt of," not only does your middle age (or what's left of it) rapidly disappear, so too does your "older"/"old" age.

Quite unexpectedly then, given your prior good health and no history of cancer in your immediate family, your mind/brain quickly gets overloaded with facts, figures, feelings and fears it had never considered before. Ergo the clutter. Not that there's a limited amount of space in your head for all this new/never-expected information, but it does seem to crowd out more familiar, less impactful stuff. At least that's my story/rationalization and I'm most definitely sticking to it.

But my reality is: I am stuck with it, unfortunately. No cure doesn't exactly conjure optimism. Nevertheless, as a long-suffering Boston Red Sox fan (until 2004, that is, when "the curse" was finally broken as the Sox won their first World Series in 86 years), hope springs eternal, and so I remain ever hopeful. It's just that occasionally, I have difficulty remembering/articulating that hopefulness – among other things. No worries though. I know the information is still in my head, somewhere. I'm sure I'll get it out, eventually.

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

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PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/CENTRE VIEW

Citizens were actively engaged in the discussion leading up to the Fairfax County School Board's 10-1 vote in favor of adding gender identity to the district's nondiscrimination policy.

Already in Compliance

FROM PAGE 1

respect and dignity based out our policies."

Fairfax County Public Schools didn't release a formal response to the guidance. And when contacted, Chairman Pat Hynes declined to speak on behalf of the entire board.

"It's my personal opinion," Hynes said in an email, "that the board's decision of last spring to include gender identity in the FCPS non-discrimination policy is in line with the guidelines just issued by the Obama administration."

The guidance from Obama also suggests that noncompliance may cost some schools their federal funding. When this was brought up as a possibility during the May 2015 board meeting to change the nondiscrimination policy, School Board representative for the Springfield District Elizabeth Schultz questioned the Constitutional authority of such an action.

Now that it's come up again, She hasn't changed her tune.

"We're in a situation where we 'Jumped the Shark' as a board," Schultz said. "Those who were politically motivated to do so, made a political statement, as did the President, the Attorney General, the Department

of Justice, on Friday.

"If the statement is: 'You will comply with blank or else, you will lose federal funding,' then what can't be put in the fill in the blank?" Schultz continued.

If the Obama administration were to follow through with cutting funding to schools, Schultz is critical of the impact it would have on cutting programs for low income students in schools.

"Are you writing a check for transgender bathroom access off the backs of poor hungry kids?" she said. "This has been foisted upon the nation's school districts with little regard for operationalizing and paying for such effort."

At this point, McElveen doesn't anticipate any further board discussion, unless another member asks for some. Or the consultant completes their review.

But Schultz thinks it will continue to be a topic on the forefront.

"We are going to watch a huge diversion of public attention and money, to the wrong things, instead of toward promoting rigor and achievements by the nation's students," she said. "This is problematic in so many ways. It's not something I relish being right about."

ROUNDUPS

Body Found in Pond

Shortly after noon on Monday, May 16, Fairfax County Police officers were called to the 6200 block of Ridge Pond Road for the report of what appeared to be a body in a pond located behind an apartment building. The body of an unidentified female was pulled from the pond shortly after 3 p.m. by members of the Fairfax County Police Department Underwater Search and Recovery Team.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact Crime Solvers electronically by visiting www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text-a-tip by texting "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES(274637) or by calling 1-866-411-TIPS(8477), or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Teen Dating Violence Prevention

Parents will be able to learn about teen dating violence at a workshop at Westfield High School, May 19, 7 p.m. The speaker will be Heather Sarmiento, M.Ed., prevention and education coordinator, from the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services.

Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, May 26, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary.

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

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

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

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

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

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

English Conversation Group. Saturdays, 3 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice English with a group

of students and adults. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.wineryatbullrun.com for a full schedule.

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

PET ADOPTIONS

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

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

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

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

THURSDAY/MAY 19

Band Spring Concert. 7 p.m. at Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road. The Band Program was rated an Honor Band, this year, through a rigorous assessment program. Free. Call 703-476-3536 for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 20-22

Fit Food Race Weekend. 6-8 p.m. Friday, 7 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Saturday (race), 9 a.m.-11 a.m. at various places in Fairfax. John Hancock Life Insurance has teamed up with Cooking Light and Health magazines to produce cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs, including former

"Top Chef" contestant Jennifer Carroll, food and beverage samples, fitness classes, and more including a 5K run in Strawberry Park. Tickets are \$55 per event or \$160 for all. Visit www.fitfoodierun.com/fairfax-virginia for a full schedule and more.

SATURDAY/MAY 21

Meritage Blending Class. 1 p.m. at Paradise Springs Winery, 13219 Yates Ford Road, Clifton. Rob Cox teaches the art of wine blending. Participants will have the opportunity to create and taste their own blends and ultimately take home a bottle of their own signature Meritage blend. Tickets are \$55 for non-members, \$5 for members. Visit www.paradisespringswinery.com for more.

Clifton Caboose Twilight Run. 6 p.m. at The Barn, 7139 Main St., Clifton. 5k Run & 1 mile Fun Run/Walk. Course begins just a few feet from the Triangle (intersection of Clifton, Newman and Main Streets) and ends at the starting point. The scenic course winds down a gently rolling country road, across a creek and past a horse or two. Water provided on course. Registration is \$21 for 5K, \$15 for 1 Mile. Visit www.SignMeUp.com/113094.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 21-22

Fairfax Ballet: "Coronation of the Fairy Princess." 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 4 p.m. Sunday at Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. The Fairfax Ballet Company presents "The Coronation of the Fairy Princess," a story ballet, featuring a fairy named Lily and her three sisters, Nixie, Fay, and Blossom, as they prepare for Lily's

WEDNESDAY/MAY 25

Meet the Snowbirds. 12-5 p.m. at Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, 14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. Meet Canada's elite military aerobatic flight demonstration team. The squadron will not be flying at this event. Call 703-572-4118 or visit airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy for more.

FRIDAY/MAY 27

7th Annual JazzCats Festival. 7 p.m. at Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road. The selected students for JazzCats have been preparing for this performance all year. Additionally, Joseph Henson of the United States Army Blues will be performing. Free. Call 703-476-3536 for more.

MONDAY/MAY 30

Rose Show Competition. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, Fair Oaks, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Share by exhibiting and creating rose arrangements with coaching from award winning rosarians. Merrifield Garden Certificates awarded for best entries. Rose experts will be on hand to answer questions about all aspects of rose gardening. Hosted by Arlington Rose Foundation. Free. Call 703-371-9351.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 1

OAR's 2016 Jazz and Wine Fundraiser. 7:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. OAR has reserved the full winery and guests will be provided with exclusive access to the entire winery grounds. The Gregg Byrd Band will provide live jazz music. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and Virginia wines will be available. Tickets are \$50. Visit www.oarfairfax.org/2016-fundraiser for more..

SATURDAY/JUNE 4

Civil War Living History Day. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 1200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. This Living History Day will introduce visitors to the life of the common soldier during the American Civil War. Demonstrations will include the essentials of camp life. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; children 5-15, \$2; adults 16 and older, \$5. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

Reema Samaha Remembrance Cabaret. 6 p.m. at Westfield High School, 4700 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. The Cabaret features professional and up and coming dancers, singers, and comedy sketch artists from around the DMV, New York and Chicago. This event is in memorial of Virginia Tech massacre victim Reema Samaha. Free, but donations accepted. Visit www.angelfundva.net for more.

"Light the Night" Fun Run. 6-10 p.m. at Fairfax County Police Department Emergency Vehicle Operations Track, 3725 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Run in support of the Special Olympics Virginia. Free. Visit www.firstgiving.com/torchrunva/LETR-Fairfax-Light-the-Night.

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