

Chantilly **CONNECTION**

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

CONNECTION
FAMILIES

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Narrator Will Mosier (left) and Noah Tajudeen, who plays the title role in Alliance Theatre's production of "James and the Giant Peach Jr."

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Having Adventures, Finding a Family

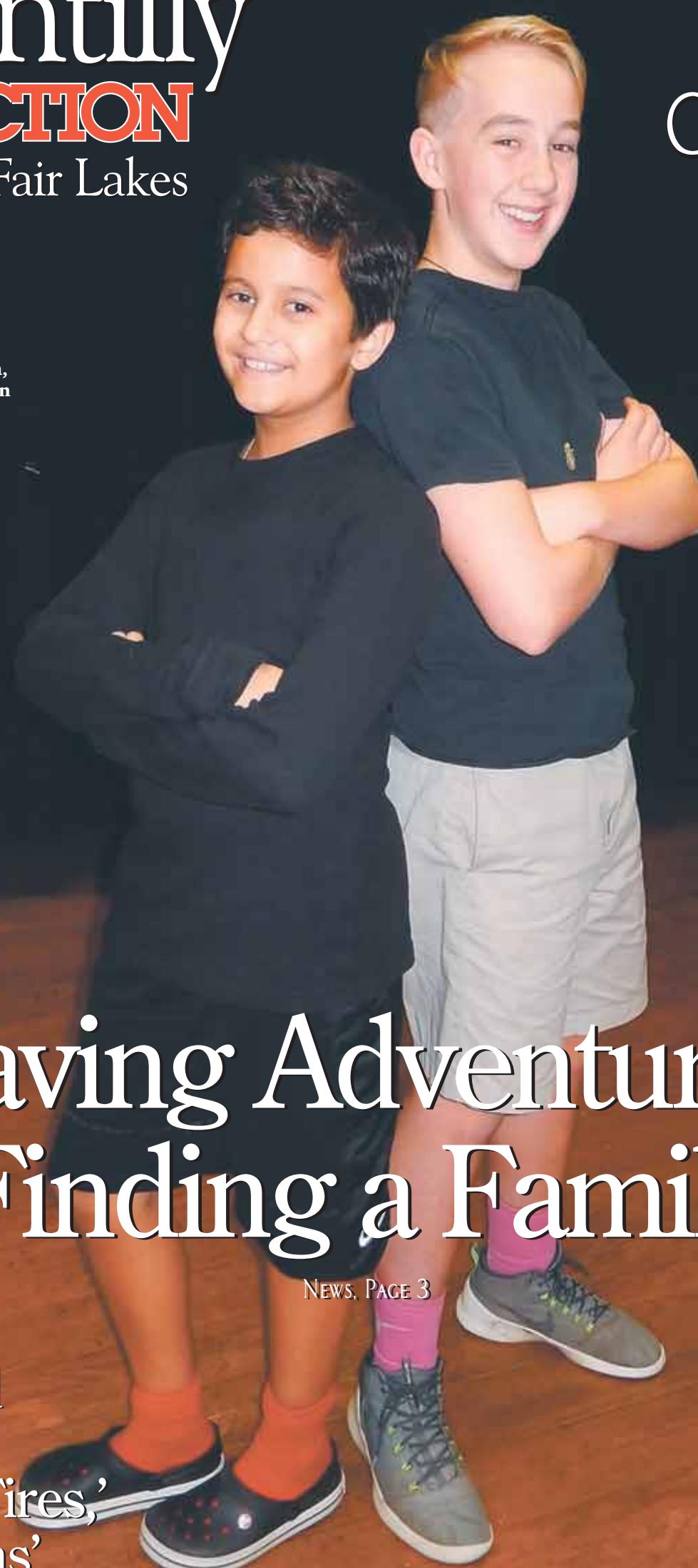
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Quenching 'Fires,' Saving 'Kittens'

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OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 1, 2016

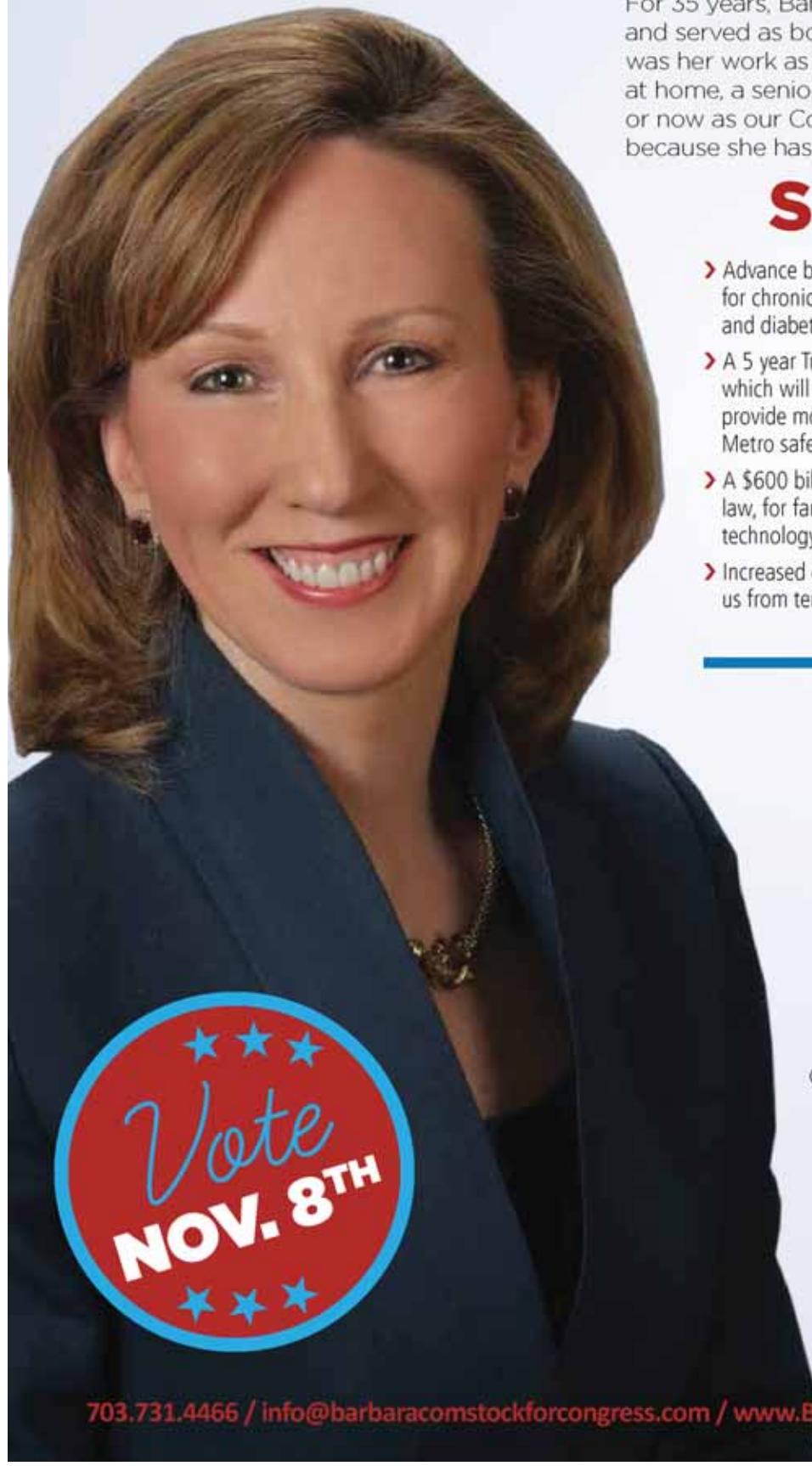
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VOTE TUESDAY, NOV. 8!

CONGRESSWOMAN

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A LIFETIME OF SERVICE IN THE 10TH DISTRICT



For 35 years, Barbara Comstock has lived, worked, raised a family, started a business and served as both Delegate and Congresswoman in the 10th District. Whether it was her work as a senior Justice Department official, a small businesswoman, a Mom at home, a senior aide and counsel in Congress, a Member of the House of Delegates or now as our Congresswoman, Barbara knows the challenges facing the 10th District because she has lived them with us and fought for us to get results on our priorities.

SHE GETS RESULTS

- Advance breakthroughs in 21st century cures for chronic disease such as cancer, Alzheimer's and diabetes.
- A 5 year Transportation Bill, signed into law, which will help relieve traffic congestion, provide more transportation funds, and make Metro safer and more accountable.
- A \$600 billion tax relief package, signed into law, for families, small businesses and our technology and defense businesses.
- Increased defense and cyber funding to protect us from terrorism.
- Human Trafficking legislation, signed into law, that cracks down on this growing crime and protects women and children.
- Started two Heroin Task Forces to battle the heroin scourge in our communities and advancing legislation to increase education, treatment and prevention.
- Started the "10th Congressional District Young Women Leadership Program" for junior high and high school young women.

**"I ask for your vote on
Tuesday, November 8th.**

As your Congresswoman, I will continue to work tirelessly to strengthen our national security and protect us from terrorism; advance breakthroughs in 21st century cures for chronic diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's and diabetes; promote a 21st century economy with more opportunity and higher wage jobs; provide transportation funding and solutions; and fight the growing problem of human trafficking and heroin abuse in our community."

Barbara Comstock

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Paid for by Comstock for Congress

Having Adventures, Finding a Family

Alliance Theatre presents “James and the Giant Peach Jr.”

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When 10-year-old James loses his parents, he has to live with his two mean aunts. But things get better when he discovers a magic potion that grows a gigantic peach. James then befriends a collection of singing insects that ride the peach on an adventurous journey across the ocean.

That's the premise of author Roald Dahl's “James and the Giant Peach Jr.” Alliance Theatre's upcoming musical about courage and self-discovery. Featuring a cast and crew of 35, it'll be presented Nov. 5-20, at Mountain View High in Centreville.

All the actors are in grades three through 12, and Director Maggie Swan says they're all talented thespians, singers and dancers. “Those playing insects even had to study the insects they're portraying and put their characteristics into their roles,” she said. “For example, the worm doesn't like to be touched and the grasshopper makes a clicking noise, even though their characters have human attributes.”

“We're using costume pieces and hats, more than makeup, to show who they are,” she continued. “So the grasshopper wears a green tuxedo and the ladybug wears a pillbox hat. The characters are so cute and fun that everyone will love them.”

A magical narrator will help tell the story and make things happen. And, said Swan, “The set's going to be really cool. It was designed by D. Scott Graham and built by the crew and parents, and Leslie Ross is painting it. There'll be a huge peach that's really a jungle gym with different levels. And it'll be like looking inside a peach.”

Swan said the audience will like “all the



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The cast of Alliance Theatre's “James and the Giant Peach Jr.”

quirky characters, plus the story about how James finds a whole, new life and family in some unusual ways. People of all ages will be able to relate to this show.”

Portraying James is Noah Tajudeen, 11. “He's very lonely, but naive,” said Noah. “He's curious about things, but also sentimental because his parents passed away without saying goodbye to him. But as the story progresses, he gets more adventurous and confident and makes lots of new friends.”

Noah likes his role because, he said, “In real life, I can be loud and rambunctious, but James is shyer. He has a lot of growth in this story and goes through many changes, including heartbreak, which I find interesting to play and explore. And it's exciting

having the lead role — that's pretty cool.”

His favorite song is “On Your Way Home,” which he sings at the beginning. “James is wanting to go home and wishing his parents were still alive,” said Noah. “He's sad because he doesn't have any family and wants someone to love him.” Overall, though, he said, “This show is so incredibly funny and all the characters each have hilarious lines that will make the audience laugh. It also has a sweet message that family and love are the most important things.”

High-schooler Noelle Buice plays a ladybug. “She's very maternal, sweet and loving and turns the group of insects into a family,” said Buice. “She also steps in to become James's ‘mother’ after his parents die.”

To Go

Show times are: Nov. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 at 2 p.m., and Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m., at Mountain View High School, 5775 Spindle Lane (off Braddock Road) in Centreville. For ticket prices and other information, go to www.thealliancetheatre.org.

Buice loves her character because, she said, “I'm always looking out for my own friends. And she's so kind and considerate of everyone, and helps settle conflicts, that I feel like I can relate to her. She also wants everything perfect and in order; otherwise, she gets anxious.”

She says audiences “will love the show's whimsy. It's funny, but with an underlying message of caring and acceptance and that everyone can find their true family.”

Portraying James's Aunt Spiker is high-schooler Dayna Balough. “She's a really nasty person,” said Balough. “She thinks very highly of herself and only takes James in so he can do all the chores for her. His other aunt, Sponge, lives with them, and both aunts try to get him involved in pickpocketing with them.”

It's Balough's first time playing a villain and she's having a great time. “You can be as mean as you want onstage,” she said. “And I get to shriek and make random noises.” She said the audience will like “going on this great adventure with James, as well as the variety of the characters' different personalities. And the music is lively and upbeat, with some sad songs, too.”

Franklin Middle seventh-grader Tim Gustafson plays several characters in the ensemble — James's father, a police officer, a seagull, a New Yorker and Buzz, a Hollywood agent. “Buzz is demanding, full of himself and likes to get things done,” said Tim. “I have fun playing him.”

Tim likes the number, “Property of Spiker and Sponge,” sung by the aunts, vagrants and the police. “It's a catchy song that you can sing for days,” he said. All in all, said Tim, “People will like the show's creative costumes and energetic songs. And they're going to love the story — it's amazing.”

Wigging Out at Union Mill

Teachers, staff wear colorful hair in support of Melissa Kees.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Sure, teachers at Union Mill Elementary wear candy-colored wigs on Fridays. But that doesn't mean they're not serious about educating their students — it shows they're standing by a colleague.

That colleague is fourth-grade teacher Melissa Kees, now in her fifth year at the school. “I love Union Mill and I wanted to teach at the same school where my kids went,” she said. “They're now fourth- and sixth-graders there.”

All was fine for Kees until last winter,

when she discovered an enlarged lymph node on the left side of her neck. She didn't go to the doctor until June; and the first week of July, she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

“I was shocked because I never go to the doctor and wasn't expecting it,” she said. “I'm 41, and it usually affects people in their 20s and 60s, so it was surprising. And I have no family history of it. But they said it responds well to treatment and I should have a good outcome.”

Meanwhile, Kees has a long road until then. She began chemotherapy in August and, after her third round, her blonde hair fell out shortly after school began in September. It had begun slowly and, said Kees, “I'd told my [teaching] team that, if it kept falling out, I'd just shave it all and wear a wig to school. And teacher Michelle

SEE WIGGING, PAGE 13



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAURA QUINN

Union Mill Elementary teachers and staff members wear colorful wigs to show their support for teacher Melissa Kees (front row, in white shirt).

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to chantilly@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.

SOBER-RIDE FOR HALLOWEEN

Free Cab Rides. Saturday, Oct. 29, 10 p.m. through Sunday, Oct. 30, 6 a.m. Area residents, 21 and older, celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI (8294) and receive a free (up to a \$30 fare) safe way home. AT&T wireless customers can dial #WRAP for the same service.

Visit www.soberride.com.

ROTARY CLUB

Chantilly/Centreville Rotary Club, 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. every Tuesday at Eggspectation Restaurant, 5009 Westone Plaza, Chantilly. Join the men and women of the Rotary Club for their weekly luncheon meeting and meal. Rotary is a service club actively involved in the community. Email Charles@keenerinsurance.com to join the group as their guest.

THROUGH NOVEMBER

Aqua Exercise Flex Passes will be on sale throughout the month of November at Fairfax County Park

Authority RECenters and online. Pass holders can use the flex passes to attend any water exercise class, space permitting, at the county's nine RECenters. The Park Authority is offering a 10 percent discount on the purchase of a 20-visit pass and a 15 percent discount on a 30-visit pass. The passes are valid for four months from the date of purchase.

FRIDAY/NOV. 4

Canned Food Drive. 7 p.m. at Chantilly High School, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Chantilly High School is holding their annual "Best Fans Bring the Most Cans" Food Drive competition against Westfield High School during the

varsity football game. Community members are asked to donate canned food. The fans with the most cans by weight will win and be announced during halftime. Food will be donated to Western Fairfax Christian Ministries Food Pantry and will directly benefit members of the community. Email janineapalmer@gmail.com for more.

THROUGH NOV. 4

Food Drive. At Sheehy Infiniti of Chantilly, 4145 Auto Park Circle, Chantilly. Sheehy Auto Stores will collect canned goods and non-perishable food as part of the company's annual Fall Harvest Food Drive to benefit Feeding America.

SATURDAY/NOV. 5

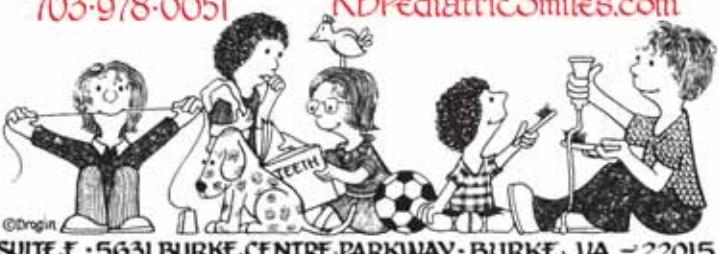
Free Water Workouts. 2-5 p.m. at all nine Fairfax County RECenters. The Fairfax County Park Authority is hosting Aquathon 2016 events. This free program for teens and adults allows participants to sample the wide variety of water exercise classes available at the RECenters. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks or call 703-324-8662.

THURSDAY/NOV. 10

Registration Open House. 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Clifton Children's Academy, 14315 Compton Road,

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Sara Bunin, D.D.S.**
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NOVEMBER 8TH!

Paid for by LuAnn Bennett for Congress



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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Centreville. Bring your child and come take a tour of the campus. Clifton Children's Academy will be holding registration for spring and fall 2017. Call 703-968-8455 for more.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 16

Registration Open House. 9:30-

11:30 a.m. at Clifton Children's Academy, 14315 Compton Road, Centreville. Bring your child and come take a tour of the campus. Clifton Children's Academy will be holding registration for spring and fall 2017. Call 703-968-8455 for more.

TUESDAY/NOV. 29

Registration Open House. 9:30-

11:30 a.m. at Clifton Children's Academy, 14315 Compton Road, Centreville. Bring your child and come take a tour of the campus. Clifton Children's Academy will be holding registration for spring and fall 2017. Call 703-968-8455 for more.

FRIDAY/DEC. 2

Registration Open House. 9:30-

11:30 a.m. at Clifton Children's Academy, 14315 Compton Road, Centreville. Bring your child and come take a tour of the campus. Clifton Children's Academy will be holding registration for spring and fall 2017. Call 703-968-8455 for more.

THURSDAY/DEC. 8

Registration Open House. 9:30-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Donating Care Bags

The Lane's Mill Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter provided the residents of Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter/Kate's Place with Care Bags. "We truly appreciate donation of Care Bags to the residents of Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter. They are given to the families upon their arrival at the shelter. The Care Bags had all the necessary supplies and toiletries and were so nicely packed in the cutest tote bags. We thank the Lane's Mill Chapter for their support. It means so much to us and the families that we serve," said Brian Ricks, director of Programs and Services (Region IV). With Ricks, above, is Lane's Mill Chapter member Valerie Sink.

11:30 a.m. at Clifton Children's Academy, 14315 Compton Road, Centreville. Bring your child and come take a tour of the campus. Clifton Children's Academy will be holding registration for spring and fall 2017. Call 703-968-8455 for more.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Residents can "E-cycle" at the I-66 transfer station. It is free but residents may be asked to show proof of residency. Personal waste only. The I-66 station is located at 4618

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

CAREER FAIR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29TH

8:00 TO 11:00AM



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OPINION

Bulova: Vote Yes

A legally binding commitment that 70 percent would go to the Fairfax County Public Schools.

By SHARON BULOVA
Chairman, Board of Supervisor

I was elected chairman in 2009, just as the Great Recession settled over this country like a stubborn storm cloud. The market value of property in Fairfax County plummeted, resulting in historic reductions in both residential and commercial tax revenues. At the same time, more people than ever turned to the county for assistance. Former County Executive Tony Griffin's prediction, in the throes of the Recession years, that "this will be our new normal" has proven prescient.

Recovery from the recession has been sluggish, exacerbated by the effects of sequestration and cutbacks in our commercial sector's bread and butter, federal contracting. To maintain fiscal equilibrium; real estate tax rates were raised, hundreds of millions of dollars were eliminated from the budget, salaries were frozen and reductions-in-force require our workforce to do more with less. County cost-cutting measures that were accepted as necessary when the Recession first materialized eventually have caused some "fraying around the edges," per The Washington Post, (April 2, 2016). I am providing this backdrop to lend some context to our board's decision to put the question of a meals tax to the voters.

In Virginia, towns and cities are allowed a greater array of revenue tools, including the right to adopt a meals tax. Most cities and towns within and around us have a meals tax: Alexandria, Arlington, Herndon, Vienna, Falls Church, Fairfax City, Leesburg, and Manassas. Counties on the other hand must rely primarily (almost 80 percent of our budget) on real estate and property taxes to provide local services. Other revenues are capped or controlled by the state.

Counties in Virginia (which were rural farmland when early tax authorities were allocated) are only able to implement a meals tax following a successful voter referendum. This question will be put to Fairfax County voters on Nov. 8.

If the referendum is successful, and a 4 percent tax on restaurant

meals and prepared foods is adopted, it would raise almost \$100 million, equivalent to over 4 cents on the Real Estate tax rate. The language on the ballot question becomes law and revenue from the meals tax must be used per the ballot language.

If authorized by the voters, the Board of Supervisors would hold a public hearing to adopt an ordinance defining specifics of the tax. Already we have made the legally binding commitment that 70 percent would go to the Fairfax County Public Schools. The School Board has committed that its share, estimated to be about \$70 million in new funding, would be used primarily to address teachers' salaries, which have lagged behind those in neighboring jurisdictions. Fairfax County today is spending \$800 less per pupil than in 2008.

The remaining 30 percent would go toward other county needs, including public safety, parks, libraries, and mental health. The meals tax is intended to diversify and enhance county revenue — to supplement and not supplant — support for school and county services.

While our county continues to work hard to identify efficiencies and to stimulate our commercial tax base, we are also hoping to diversify the local revenue available to provide the quality services our residents value and rely upon — top notch schools, safe communities, and compassionate human services.

I am proud to lead Fairfax County, one of the best-managed, safest and well-educated jurisdictions in the country. Residents love Fairfax because of our great schools and because we are a safe and welcoming community. Maintaining that quality is a top priority for the Board of Supervisors and our partners on the School Board. It isn't, however, a simple or easy job given constraints under state law.

I hope you will vote "yes" on the meals tax referendum on Nov. 8.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday.

Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely

edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor, Chantilly Connection

1606 King St. ♦ Alexandria VA 22314

Call 703-778-9415 or email chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com

Reject the Meals Tax

"A closer look at school spending shows that the intentions of the School Board are to delve into more political correctness and social engineering."

By TOM DAVIS
Former U.S. Representative

On Nov. 8, Fairfax County voters have an opportunity to cast a powerful vote for themselves, and for better government by voting "no" on the proposed Meals Tax. A "no" vote will send a message to the county Board of Supervisors that

COMMENTARY higher taxes should not be routine, and that county

leaders must focus on better management, and more importantly, the School Board, more efficiency, and greater respect for taxpayers.

The ballot language for the meals tax referendum was carefully worded to avoid guarantees for how the money will be spent, while pro-tax forces want voters to believe it will be used for teacher pay raises and property tax relief.

In fact, there are no guarantees for this at all. To remedy this glaring political error, a public relations campaign has been launched, partially at taxpayer expense, by teacher unions and some on the county board, to try to convince voters that the board's intentions are to use the new revenue for teacher pay hikes even though no such requirement exists.

Voters shouldn't buy the argument, and they shouldn't approve the new tax.

A closer look at school spending shows that the intentions of the School Board are to delve into more political correctness and social engineering. One example, is their recent release of an RFP to identify a community convener to

"study" and bring about the name change of Jeb Stuart High School, despite the fact that the Stuart-area population and students oppose the change.

There are a number of problems with a new tax on prepared foods and meals, but most troubling is the very regressive nature of this proposed new tax. The tax would be imposed on all meals at restaurants and carry-out, in addition to prepared food sold at convenience stores, food trucks, etc. — meals that are necessities, not luxuries, for many working men and women, and busy families. The new tax would also be levied on all ready-to-eat foods including a long list of items such as deli foods and grocery store rotisserie chickens.

While there are many other problems with the proposed tax, it's also troubling because it confirms an unhealthy focus by county leaders on higher taxes and more revenue as opposed to better management.

Earlier this year, county leaders passed a \$100 million increase in property taxes — also presumably to fund education. Now, they're back in front of voters asking for another \$100 million in the form of the Meals Tax.

Easy money makes for bad management. In 1992, as board chair, I supported a meals tax. The county budget was in terrible shape coming off a real estate depression that saw our commercial tax base collapse. Voters rejected the tax, we took the opportunity to reorganize our budget from top to bottom and two years later were named the Best Financially Managed County in America. The budget problems today are nothing of that magnitude. And with no guarantees as to how the money will be spent, plus the current School Board's spending proclivities. I am voting no.

It's important that voters reject this, join me in voting "no" on the Meals Tax.

Tom Davis is former U.S. representative and past chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

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NEWS

Local Writers Honor Students

The Writers of Chantilly, a not-for-profit organization of local professional and aspiring writers in Chantilly, honored the winners of the 4th Annual Student Writing Contest, sponsored by the Writers of Chantilly and the Chantilly Regional Public Library, at the Chantilly Regional Public Library on Sunday, Sept. 25.

For this year's contest, students in Fairfax County were invited to write an original essay, short story or poem on the theme of "Re-write the Ending to ..."

The winning entries, along with works by members of the Writers of Chantilly, will be published in an anthology, "Re-write the Ending to...," later this year.

1st Place

Ashely Yang – "My Name is Betsy" – Frost Middle School

2nd Place

Katherine Simpson – "My Sister's Trojan Horse" –

Langston Hughes Middle School

3rd Place

Zack Krajnak – "Look Back and Smile on Perils Passed" – West Springfield High School

4th Place

Aya Khalafalla – "A Permanent Wrong" – West Springfield High School

5th Place

Elin Choe – "Another Chance" – Rocky Run Middle School

The Writers of Chantilly meet twice monthly at the Chantilly Regional Library to encourage and support writers 18 and over at all levels. Newcomers are welcome. WOC has published several anthologies, the most recent being "Secrets, Lies and Sighs," available on Amazon.com or through the Fairfax County Public Library system. Visit writersofchantilly.blogspot.com.

SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

Five FCPS students have been named finalists in individual contests by the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA). **Sam Willett** was named as a finalist in Illustration for Westfield's

"The Watchdog." These students are among just 10 finalists in their respective categories and were chosen from entries submitted nationwide.

Thirty-one FCPS students have been named to the Virginia Honors Choir for 2016. They include **Sarah Gallagher, Joel Lee**, and alternate

William Suh from Chantilly High School; and **Emily Rakes, Evan Kohnstam**, and **Jonathan Cottrell** from Westfield High School. This select choir is open only to the top 125 singers from around the Commonwealth of Virginia, and is the highest honor a choir student can attain during his or her high school career.



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PEOPLE

From Home-Based to Storefront Business

It began with a cheesecake contest at Greenbriar West Elementary School.

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON
THE CONNECTION

Longtime Fairfax resident Kimberly McDonald is proof that there is more than one way to forge a path toward success. In October, McDonald celebrated the six-month storefront anniversary of her full-service, award-winning bakery, Simply Desserts. To mark the occasion, Simply Desserts sold its cupcakes at half-price all day on Saturday, Oct. 15, six months to the date of the store's opening in Gainesville's Virginia Gateway Promenade shopping center.

While Simply Desserts is relatively new as a storefront success, McDonald has been running her own dessert business for more than nine years, starting with cheesecakes and ultimately expanding to custom and wedding cakes that have won multiple industry awards.

"I've always loved the food and restaurant industry," McDonald said. "I always loved to bake and create cakes for my children growing up. When my youngest was in her last year of high school, I wondered what I might do with my time with all my children out of the house. My very good friend suggested I start the business I dreamed of doing."

McDonald first realized she had a knack for baking years ago when she entered one of her masterpieces into a cheesecake contest at Chantilly's Greenbriar West Elementary School, where her two sons and daughter all attended through sixth grade. As the years went on, that annual baked goods event became a cheesecake showdown between McDonald and her neighbor.

"I started the business selling cheesecakes," McDonald said. "It was something I



Kim and Alex McDonald

had learned to do while working as a catering manager in a prior job. Soon after, my nephew asked me to create his wedding cake. From there, I was asked to do other creations."

As she tackled more baked good challenges, she also learned more about the business side of baking as a catering manager for a local company.

The business, originally called To a Tea LLC, started in the kitchen of McDonald's Fairfax home. By 2012, McDonald and her then three-person staff had expanded their offering to elaborately decorated, personalized cakes for weddings, birthday parties and all special occasions.

McDonald has worn many hats, and attributes her entrepreneurial triumphs to every single one of her puzzle pieces that make up her life experience. She served nine years in the United States Air Force, and left the service to raise three children — all of whom graduated from Chantilly High School.

"A lot of my business experience came from my time in the Air Force and other jobs I've had since," McDonald said. "I was in the Air Force for what I thought would

be a 20-year career when I had my first child, Matthew. I then decided to stay at home and work various jobs part time. When I started the home-based business, I realized after a couple of years that I needed to remodel the kitchen to accommodate more ovens and refrigerators. Then, a few years after that, I realized I wanted and need to take the next step and look for a store front. Also — I wanted my house back."

While McDonald said there are advantages to a home business, citing the lack of commute or need to "dress up," McDonald knew it was time for the transition when Simply Desserts simply outgrew her kitchen, even with its renovations.

"The disadvantages were conducting consultations in the home on weekends when more activity was going on in the house," she said. "Although my youngest, my daughter, Kellie, had left for college, my two older sons returned home to live. Plus, I have three dogs and it required effort to keep them separate from the kitchen, and the barking was still annoying anytime someone came to the house. When the business really took off in 2010, I needed to hire decorators and expand into other rooms of the house. I knew I needed to make that elusive jump to a storefront, something I dreamed of having since making my first cake."

McDonald said the support of her family has been integral, especially from her husband, who has watched her evolve into a full-fledged businessperson.

"Everyone has been extremely supportive," McDonald said. "I think after a couple years, my husband was very surprised I was turning a profit. He started out treating my business as a hobby that kept me busy. He's turned that thought around and is my biggest supporter."

She brought her son, Alex, into the store as a full-time team member, who is responsible for the store aesthetic and manages the front of the store.

"Having a painting business of my own, I had the ability to take time and help her as

she launched the storefront," said Alex McDonald, a professional artist.

"I told her I would not cross the door into the kitchen, but that I would do everything she needs done outside of that," he said. "If you were to put my role on a piece of paper, it's whatever the boss asks me to do. The list is endless: customer service, taking orders, operating the register. I open, I close, and I do social media and all the artwork. My mom wants the whole business to look like a home, because all of her customers over the last 10 years know her as a business out of her kitchen."

Working at Simply Desserts full-time has given Alex McDonald the opportunity to watch his mother grow in a different realm and realize her potential.

"Now that I've learned so much myself, and watched her progress, I see firsthand that she is so much more of her business owner than a baker," he said. "Her quality of work has always been amazing, but she didn't have so many moving parts and logistics to coordinate when she was at the house. She's dealing with all these other people, and I've seen my mom adopt a new, different type of professionalism."

Recently, the wedding website "The Knot" recognized Simply Desserts with its Weddings Hall of Fame Award. Other names in the industry have done the same, and awards from the past few years decorate the walls of the store.

Among the changes over the past couple of years, McDonald now has 10 employees to help with the continuing increase in demand. One of McDonald's goals was to continue with the actual craft instead of shifting into a full-time management role. Unfortunately, though, this means that she often works what her son calls "100-hour weeks."

"For anyone thinking about pursuing their passion this way, I would say, 'be confident, believe in yourself, and surround yourself with people who believe in you,'" Kimberly McDonald said. "Find someone who has a small business that can provide you with advice."

ROUNDUPS

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, Oct. 27, 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 them, 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, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

Joint Land-Use Meeting

The Sully District Council of Citizens Assns. and the West Fairfax County Citizens Association land-use committees will meet together Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7 p.m., at the Fair Oaks Public Safety Facility, 12300 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway in Fair Oaks. Topics include a proposed zoning-ordinance amendment on wineries in the residential-conservation district, a Chick-Fil-A in Sully Plaza, and a riding and boarding stable on Bull Run Post Office Road in Centreville.

Food Donations for WFCM

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' food pantry needs donations of 1-2 pound bags of rice; fruit juice; jelly; red, white or black beans (can or bagged); canned vegetables (no green beans or corn needed); macaroni and cheese; can pasta; pasta sauce; and pasta (spaghetti, rotini, elbow, etc.).

Toiletries needed, which WFCM clients cannot purchase with food stamps, include diapers, toothpaste, shampoo and solid deodorant.

Bring all items to WFCM'S food pantry's new location at 4511 Daly Dr. Suite J, Chantilly from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Mon-

days through Fridays.

Contact Terri Kelly at tkelly@wfcmva.org if willing to coordinate a food drive.

Volunteer Drivers Are Needed

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406 or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

NEWS



New SCA Officers

Poplar Tree Elementary School inducted SCA officers and representatives on Oct. 20. The SCA officers for this school year are President Elena Benson, Vice President Eva Jaber, Secretary Jonas Denenberg, and Treasurer Caroline Donovan. Also in the photo are Principal Sharon Williams, Assistant Principal Holly Walker, and SCA Teacher Stephanie Sniffin.

PHOTO
CONTRIBUTED

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

West Ox Road, Fairfax and open from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. from Monday-Saturday and from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Sundays. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/recycling/electric-sunday.htm.

SUPPORT GROUP

Support Groups. Jubilee Christian Center of Fairfax is having its "Living Free" support groups for the spring on Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m. The support groups are free, and will cover "Stepping into Freedom,"

"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 on Sundays, 10:10 a.m. 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. For information or to register, call 703-383-1170, email livingfree@jccag.org or see www.jccag.org.

Fair Oaks Parkinson's Support Group for people living with Parkinson's disease, caregivers and family, meets on the fourth Saturday monthly, 10 a.m.-noon at Sunrise at Fair Oaks, 3750 Joseph Siewick Drive,

Fairfax. Call 703-378-7221 or visit www.fairoaksparkinsons.com for more. **Telephone Support Group for Family Caregivers of Older Adults.** 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month. This telephone support group is designed to help caregivers of older adults share experiences, gain support and get important information without having to travel. These are one-hour free sessions. Find out more and register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ and click on Caregiver Telephone Support Group.

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Mark Hartley, MD

Wednesday, November 9, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Reston Hospital Center, Classroom C, West Wing

"The Latest Advancements in Total Shoulder Replacement"

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Tuesday, November 15, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
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orthovirginia.com/joints

PEOPLE

Training Service Dogs

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON
THE CONNECTION

The Deely family of six, longtime Centreville residents, have been puppy raisers with Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) since 2008, when all four children were still living at home and all hands were on deck when it came to training their household's first future assistance dog.

Recently, the Deelys welcomed their fifth CCI puppy, a golden retriever-labrador mix named Duchess. And, if all goes according to the CCI plan, in approximately two years, Duchess will become one of the many service dogs that the non-profit organization, provides at no charge to people with disabilities.

According to the CCI website, since its 1975 inception, CCI has placed more than 5,000 trained, qualified service dogs into the hands of owners whose limitations make them eligible for full-time canine assistance. Already in 2016, 173 dogs have graduated through the full CCI training program, which begins with families like the Deelys. These volunteers take on these puppies, nurturing and training them for 18 months, when they relinquish the dogs back in the hands of CCI for the advanced training portion of their preparation.

Cathy Deely, mother of four, said that CCI has been wonderful to work with, and that it has been an honor to be involved with a program that enriches the lives of so many people. What indirectly led her family to CCI about 10 years ago was a set of circumstances that made her own family's needs not so drastically different from those of the people that CCI serves.

"Maggie is the main trainer in our family," Cathy Deely said. "When she was eight years old, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor and had both surgery and radiation. Before the surgery, which was on her optic nerve, I knew there was a possibility that she could lose her eyesight. Although that wasn't a likely outcome, there had been some talk about guide dogs. Then, Maggie had an opportunity with Make-A-Wish, and

I don't know if overhearing those discussions was the reason, but Maggie's wish was to raise a service dog."

At the time, Maggie's older siblings encouraged her to consider a vacation, tickets to the Super Bowl, or other experiences more common for kids to yearn for, but the youngest Deely remained firm in her decision.

"Her desire was to raise a service dog," Cathy Deely said. "Make-A-Wish got us in touch with CCI. And, since raising one of these puppies requires the volunteers to cover all the expenses — getting them neutered, making sure they have their shots, keeping them healthy — Make-A-Wish covered all the costs of our first dog."

Maggie, now a senior at Westfield High School, doesn't see her childhood wish 10 years ago as extraordinary.

"I was set on getting a dog, but my parents didn't think we were ready to get a dog, which is a commitment for so many years," Maggie said. "One of our contacts at Make-A-Wish suggested looking into a service dog program — a shorter commitment — and we fell in love with the idea."

While it is sad saying goodbye to a puppy you grow to love and respect over the course of the 18-month training cycle, Maggie said that the ability to understand just how much the puppies will ultimately contribute makes it easier to let go.

"When you give the dogs back after a year and a half, CCI organizes it so that the return is at the same time as the graduations of the dogs that made it through the advanced training," Maggie said. "So, we get to see the ceremony where the dogs who matriculated get paired up with their new families. Seeing the awesome things that our dog could one day be doing makes the 'goodbye' process so much easier."

Cathy Deely said that she learned that roughly 45 percent of the volunteer-raised puppies graduate from the program to become successful service dogs. So far, two of the dogs that the Deelys raised have achieved this goal.

"The first dog we raised became a service dog for an Iraq War veteran who had lost an arm over there," Deely said. "He came home and spiraled into a deep depression. We've talked with him several times over the years. He travels now, giving inspirational talks and helping veterans get back into active lifestyles. He develops prosthetics for people in similar situations to his. The dog we raised helps him travel and do what he does for these veterans."

Being part of such a positive domino effect is one of the many reasons that the Deelys have remained steadfast in their dedication to the program.

"My take on it is that the dog was instrumental in his recovery," Cathy Deely said. "It's why we wanted to do this again and again."

The fourth dog the Deelys raised, Louisa, was their second CCI puppy to graduate and

Family opens its home and heart to future assistance dogs.

home and everyone pitched in," Cathy Deely said. "Back then, everyone had a chance to walk her and feed her. New puppies are a lot of work, and, at this point, three of the kids have gone off to college, and I just have Maggie at home, so now it's her project."

More than half of Maggie's childhood has involved raising CCI service dogs, and she acknowledges that the experience has likely influenced her professional aspirations. At the very least, CCI has confirmed that her calling involves animals.

"I've always wanted to work with animals, and now, I do consider one day becoming one of the paid trainers at one of the CCI facilities," Maggie said. "I plan on pursuing wildlife or environmental conservation in college."

Cathy Deely has noticed other changes in the way everyone approaches the CCI puppies now.

"With the first dog, we were very 'by the book,'" she said. "We didn't bond as much because we were very conscious about keeping the dog on track. Now that we are familiar with what exactly the dogs need to know and by when, the process is a little more relaxed. I feel like I've gotten to bond more with our more recent puppies. So, you'd think it would get easier to say goodbye to the dogs when they go back to CCI, but in some ways, it gets harder."

Bidding farewell to Duchess is far from Cathy Deely and Maggie's minds though, as they currently find themselves again at the beginning of a CCI puppy-raising adventure.

"Duchess cried all night for the first week we had her, but she's doing just fine now and is already learning fast," Cathy Deely said. "It's great because she's picking up a lot of what she needs to know from Prue, who of course knows all the same words and commands we use for CCI."

While the Deelys won't deny all the hard work that goes into raising a CCI puppy, they said it's definitely worth it for people who are in the right situation to be fully committed. It takes at least a village to get a CCI puppy ready for service pethood, and Cathy Deely said she appreciates other members of this village just as much as she adores the actual puppies that for a time become a part of her family.

"You absolutely, without question, have to want to do it," Cathy Deely said. "But, aside from being a part of the great work CCI does, we also keep raising these dogs because of all the people you meet through the process. Part of your responsibility is to take the puppy you raise to classes, which are run by CCI people and are offered all over the area. They are just some of the most wonderful people you could ever meet, including one woman I have learned so much from, who is currently on her 17th CCI dog. Everyone involved with CCI is so amazing and you never feel alone because everyone, especially the repeat volunteers, are incredible resources."



Duchess

went to an 8-year-old with a muscular ailment. In learning more about Louisa's journey, the Deelys realized that these dogs make a difference in ways one can't even fathom.

"Louisa really helped her new owner, Emma," Maggie said. "She had the ability to move her arms and legs, but to do so, Emma had to go to regular therapy. Louisa gave her a real incentive to work hard at her therapy, though. Petting a dog and being able to hold a leash has really helped Emma's strength and coordination. A dog gave her incentive to give everything she had to stay as strong and she could. I get that, too. Physical therapy might seem silly or boring to a young girl, but being able to play with the dog you love is important."

The other two dogs, which Cathy Deely said are still incredible animals, have found forever homes within the family — one with her family and the other with her sister's family.

Generally, the CCI dogs that do not become service dogs often serve Bomb Squads and Fire and Rescue Departments. Others, as in two of the Deelys' cases, go back to the volunteer raisers as permanent pets.

Deely also clarified that the reason for her now fulltime pet dog, Prue, not matriculating from the program was by no means due to a significant flaw. While endearing for the Deelys, Prue's harmless yet excited bark that she still can't always contain made her ineligible for life as a service dog.

"CCI has to be really picky, but that worked out for us," Cathy Deely said. "Prue is an amazing dog, and adopting her as a pet has been great."

What started out as Maggie's childhood dream, the very first CCI dog that the Deelys welcomed into their home, was a family project. After committing 18 months of their lives to this dog and to the program, all six Deelys attended their own training in New York.

"When we started, all four kids were at



Maggie Deely and Duchess

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Government Center Farmers Market

Market. Thursdays through Oct. 27, 3-7 p.m. at Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

Cox Farms Fall Festival. Through Oct. 31, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at 16521 Braddock Road, Centreville. The Fall Festival features hayrides, giant slides, rope swings, the Cornundrum Cornfield adventure, the Imaginature Trail, and all sorts of farm animals and their babies. Tickets are \$6-17. Visit www.coxfarms.com for more.

Fields of Fear. Through Nov. 5, 7:30-11 p.m. at Cox Farms, 16521

Braddock Road, Centreville. The friendly Imaginature Trail takes a dark turn for Fields of Fear, transforming into The Forest: Back 40. Tickets are \$6-17. Visit www.coxfarms.com for more.

White House Ornament Sale.

GFWC Western Fairfax County Woman's Club is selling 2016 White House Christmas ornaments. This year's ornament honors our 31st President, Herbert Hoover. The ornament, inspired by a White House fire on Christmas Eve, 1929, is a fire truck carrying a Christmas tree. Ornaments are \$21. Call 703-378-6841 or 703-378-6216. It is possible to order previous years' ornaments.

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY/OCT. 26-29

"Peter and the Starcatcher." 7 p.m.

at Chantilly High School, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Join the Chantilly Drama Department this fall as they present Rick Elice's play, Peter and the Starcatcher, an adaptation of an imaginative twist on a well-known story (Peter Pan). Tickets are \$12. Visit www.chantillyhsdrama.com for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/OCT. 28-30

Chantilly Library Used Book Sale. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday and 1-4 p.m. on Sunday at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Free to attend. Call the library at 703-502-3883 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/ events.

SATURDAY/OCT. 29

CBC Fall Festival. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Chantilly Baptist Church, 14312 Chantilly Baptist Lane, Chantilly. Free give away of clothing, household items and toys. A free car show, health education and screenings, food, games, and activities for the entire family. Free. Visit www.chantillybaptist.org for more.

Clifton Haunted Trail. 7-10 p.m. at Chapel Road, Clifton. This annual event winds through Clifton's 8 Acre Park. Admission is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. Visit cliftonhauntedtrail.com.

SUNDAY/OCT. 30

Dancing With My Baby. 10:30-11 a.m. at NOVA Natural Birth Center, 4200a Technology Court, Chantilly. Connect through movement, dance,

yoga, and the expressive arts as you and your family share in learning simple dance routines to music, practice yoga poses, relax, and create art. Admission is on "pay what you can" basis. Visit brigitwhite.com/dancingwithmybaby for more.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 2

Civil War Forum. 7:30 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Preservationist and former Topographer, Ed Wenzel, will discuss his recent book, "Chronology of the Civil War in Fairfax County, Part I." Free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

FRIDAY/NOV. 4

Author Event. 7:30 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center's Board Auditorium, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Brandon Mull is the author of the bestselling Fablehaven, Beyonders and Five Kingdoms series as well as titles in the Spirit Animals series. Books available for sale and signing. Cosponsored by the Friends of the Pohick Regional Library and the Friends of the Richard Byrd Library. Ages 7 to adult. Sign up at 703-324-8428.

FRIDAY-TUESDAY/NOV. 4-8

Cox Farms Fall Festival. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at 16521 Braddock Road, Centreville. The Fall Festival features hayrides, giant slides, rope swings, the Cornundrum Cornfield adventure, the Imaginature Trail, and all sorts of farm animals and their babies. Tickets are \$6-17. Visit

www.coxfarms.com for more.

SOBER-RIDE FOR HALLOWEEN

Free Cab Rides. Saturday, Oct. 29, 10 p.m. through Sunday, Oct. 30, 6 a.m. Area residents, 21 and older, celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI (8294) and receive a free (up to a \$30 fare) safe way home. AT&T wireless customers can dial #WRAP for the same service. Visit www.soberride.com.

SUNDAY/OCT. 30

Fall Festival and Trunk or Treat 4:30-6:30 p.m., at Centreville United Methodist Church, 6400 Old Centreville Road, Centreville. Children of all ages are invited to the event that includes food, games, a bounce house, costume parade and creatively decorated trunks with lots of treats. Admission is free. Visit centreville-umc.org for more.

MONDAY/OCT. 31

29th Annual Mall-O-Ween. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Fair Oaks Mall is having an indoor Halloween event, where children can visit can visit "spooktacular" experiments in the shopping center's Grand Court as well as visit multiple candy and face-painting stations. The public is welcome to attend this free, family-friendly event and costumes are encouraged. Visit www.shopfairoaksmall.com.

Anniversary. Tickets are \$200. Visit www.homeaidnova.org for more.

SATURDAY/NOV. 5

Civil War Soldier Campfire. 5:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. In 1861 and 1862, Confederate soldiers camped at Walney Farm, and the property was overrun by Union soldiers after the Second Battle of Manassas. Join a reenactor and settle in for a Civil War Soldier Campfire. Practice drilling and see a musket-firing demonstration. Try some hardtack that soldiers commonly ate, followed by s'mores. Tickets are \$10. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence or call 703-631-0013.

15th Anniversary HomeAid Northern Virginia Gala & Auction. 6:30-8 p.m. at Westfields Marriott Washington Dulles Hotel, 14750 Conference Center Drive, Chantilly. HomeAid Northern Virginia celebrates its 15th

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 5-6

Cox Farms Pumpkin Madness. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at 16521 Braddock Road, Centreville. Bring an old Jack-O-Lantern and destroy it by using the high drop, squisher, smasher, or stomping ground. Tickets are \$6-17. Visit www.coxfarms.com for more.

Mini Maker Faire. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Barnes & Noble, 12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive, Fairfax. A wide range of events for every age, ability and interest. Weekend-long celebration will feature coding and programming, 3D drawing, exploration of mechanical builds, motorized enhanced mechanisms, augmented and virtual reality, and Flint Hill School students will demonstrate some of the team's current project. Free. Call 703-278-0300 for more.



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Quenching 'Fires,' Saving 'Kittens'

Children enjoy Oct. 15 open house at Fire Station 17 in Centreville.



Conner Gates, 4, aims a fire hose at a pretend fire with help from recruit firefighter Sean Smith, while firefighter Phil Sica looks on.



Jett Chow, 2-1/2, wears his new fire hat.



Ellie Freeman, 3-1/2, climbs down a ladder after rescuing a toy kitten from a tree.



Ready to rescue a toy kitten trapped in a tree is Ryan Ohn, 3-1/2.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Michael Adere, the Boy Scout Food Drive organizer (in the hat) and other Boy Scouts and volunteers at last year's event.



Westfield High School students volunteered at last year's Boy Scout Food Drive. Sarah Pak, Nicole Ruckert, Lauren Peters and Summar Morgan sort donated canned goods.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Help Feed Area's Hungry During 29th Annual Scouting for Food

Scouts of all ages will be distributing plastic bags to homes on Saturday, Nov. 5, and return to pick up the food on the morning of Saturday, Nov. 12 for the 29th annual Scouting for

Food collection. Scouting for Food is held every fall prior to Thanksgiving. Local food banks rely on it to stock their shelves for the upcoming holiday months, when food demands are the greatest. Items in highest

demand include: canned protein (tuna, salmon, chicken, peanut butter); soups and stews (beef stew, chili, meat-based soups); 100 percent fruit juices (all sizes); grains (pasta, whole grain pasta, rice, brown rice,

boxed macaroni and cheese); cereals (multi-grain, low sugar cereals, oatmeal); canned vegetables; canned fruits; condiments; and hygiene products (diapers, toilet paper, tissues, soap, toothpaste).

NEWS

Wigging Out at Union Mill

FROM PAGE 3

LaBarbera asked if they could wear wigs, too."

Kees's father lives in Las Vegas and knew the treatment would probably make her lose her hair. So, she said, "He thought it would be fun to send me some showgirl wigs." So the night she lost her own hair, she texted her team that they'd all wear the wigs at school, the next day, Sept. 9, and they did. But that was just the start.

"Since then, some of the staff has decided it'll be Fun Wig Friday each week," said Kees. "A large portion of them purchased wigs to wear, and my dad sent more, too." Because she has to undergo chemo for six months total, she won't finish until the first week of January. So until then, Union Mill will be an extra-colorful place.

"The school administration and staff, and the community, have been incredibly supportive," said Kees. "If I have to be gone, we have the same substitute who can step in immediately. I have chemo every other Thursday; so I leave school at lunch and come back on Monday, and it gives me time to recover. I feel more tired and have less energy afterward, but I feel more like myself before each treatment."

Furthermore, she said, "My students have been amazing. Every day, someone brings



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAURA QUINN

Melissa Kees's son Mason (in middle, underneath all the arms) and his fourth-grade class wear "Kees Strong" #StandUpToCancer bracelets in honor of his mom's cancer battle. All Union Mill fourth-grade students and teachers are wearing them.

me in cookies, cupcakes or homemade cards. Or they'll give me drawings of a purple ribbon, because violet is the Hodgkin's Lymphoma color. I'm overwhelmed by the love and support that's been there for me from the entire school

and neighborhood community."

"I'm incredibly grateful and thankful for all of it," continued Kees. "And on those days when I'm feeling down or sorry for myself, it gives me my strength — and I know I have help, if or when I need it."

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Police Respond To Fatal Crash

Fair Oaks Police District officers responded to the report of a crash on Sully Road (Route 28) near Lee Jackson Memorial Highway (Route 50), Friday, Oct. 21. Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit were called to the scene to investigate.

Around 6 a.m., a 1996 Dodge Truck, driven by a 29-year-old man from West Virginia, was traveling south on Route 28, approaching the exchange with Route 50, when his truck became disabled and he moved it to the far right shoulder. According to police, at about the same time, a 2016 Yamaha R3 motorcycle, being operated by a 19-year-old man, was traveling south on Route 28 at a high rate of speed and in a reckless manner. The motorcycle struck the rear of the disabled truck. The rider of the Yamaha, Haroon Jameel, was separated from the motorcycle and the sports bike continued to slide along the roadway, when a third driver, a 51-year-old man struck it with his Toyota Corolla. Jameel, of Black Rock Terrace in Aldie, was transported to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Speed does appear to be a factor in this crash.

Crash Reconstruction Unit detectives would like anyone who witnessed this crash to contact them at 703-280-0543, or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Two Much

By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having just been there and done that, I have to tell you, it was a gruesome week. Although I'm fine now (I know, it's a relative description), this past week, I was not. And what specifically I am referring to is, the odd confluence of two recurring elements of my cancer existence: a CT Scan and a chemotherapy infusion. Not at the same time, of course, but at the same place and for the same reason: being an active cancer patient.

The CT Scan (scheduled quarterly), though not a difficult, invasive or time-consuming procedure doesn't generally result in an immediate interpretation/assessment from my oncologist/their radiologist. Quite the contrary. Typically, I wait up to a week for results (as I've occasionally written about in the past). Certainly not ideal, but over time (seven-plus years) and hill and dale, I've been able to assimilate the wait into my life and go on about my business, semi-normally; it's been more difficult for my wife, Dina, however, to do so. Nevertheless, with respect to the CT then, the waiting is the hardest part. It's all psychological/emotional. There are no physical side effects, the side effects are all mental: fear, loathing, anxiety, stress, among many similarly impactful affects. It's not all bad, but it is all-consuming. I'm really only ever sure how I'm doing cancer-wise, when I receive my results, since rarely have I been symptomatic.

On the other hand, the chemotherapy infusion, which presently alternates/occurs every four/five weeks, does not — for me — generally, have any psychological/emotional side effects. It is what it is, and whatever it was or will be, I'm way past having any anxiety or stress about the process or the reasons for it. However, there are/I do experience physical side effects (which unfortunately do weaken my emotional resolve): fatigue, lethargy and most significantly, eating challenges which keep me from eating "normally" for up to a week. This lack of food/comfort, results in a lack of energy, lack of interest/motivation, messed up sleeping pattern and a fragile emotional state. I derive no pleasure from eating and my overall mood reflects that very necessary element — for me, I'm miserable.

In and of themselves, this post-CT-Scan-waiting and post-chemotherapy-infusion-not-eating are difficult, but manageable. However, having them occur during the same week — which had never happened before, was not exactly like being between a rock and a hard place but rather like being under a rock and in a hard place. Not only was there a wait and a weight, there was the inescapability of it to consider. I had no place to go emotionally/psychologically. Aside from there being no rest for this weary stage IV lung cancer patient, there was no respite or reprieve, either. I couldn't stop myself from going down, so down I went.

And there was nothing I could do to stop it, although there was everything still needing to be started. But all I could do was sit tight (literally), and sure enough, as is the pattern, about six or so days later on the Thursday afternoon following the preceding Friday infusion and the Wednesday CT Scan, I received an email from oncologist with the news "CT looked good. Brain MRI clear." "Great news," as I replied, "with which I can live." Coinciding as well as it usually does, with the eating fog beginning to lift and the transitioning from not eating to eating a bit to eating normally beginning to occur.

It was a bad week to be sure. Not only was I whipsawed, I was undercut, too. I had nothing to hang onto, not even my hat. I just had to endure and try to remind myself what my Auntie Irene so often said: "This too shall pass." And as of Saturday night at 1:53 a.m., as I sit and write this column, it mostly has. Thank God!

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



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SPORTS



PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR/THE CONNECTION

Westfield's Eugene Asante #8 carries ball across goal line for a touchdown.

Westfield, Centreville 35-0

BY WILL PALENSCAR
THE CONNECTION

On Friday, Oct. 21, one of the best rivalries in the region was played. A total of five state championships in football have been earned at Centreville and Westfield since 2000, Centreville in 2000 and 2013, Westfield in 2003, 2005 and 2015. Since 2011, Centreville or Westfield has been in four of the five state championship games.

Westfield came into the game after a thriller with Robinson when Brian Delaney kicked a FG with three seconds left to give the Bulldogs a 29-28 victory. Centreville came in with a dominant performance over Herndon, 49-17. Young and old packed Francis L. Dall Sports Complex in Chantilly despite rain being forecast. Many of the kids on these teams played youth sports together in SYA or CYA.

Westfield was happy to have Joey Free, Kevin Petrillo on defense and Jean Marc-Tsetou back after injuries had held the three out of recent games.

Coach Chris Haddock from Centreville reported that Lamar Horner had an ankle injury and Dylan Cooper had a knee injury.

After a scoreless 1st quarter, Westfield capitalized with 9:01 remaining in the quarter when Nolan Cockrill rushed in from 1 yard out.

Later in the 2nd quarter Sean Eckert exploded for a long TD reception only to have it nullified because of a Westfield penalty. Two plays later, Westfield called the same play and Eckert took Rehman Johnson's pass 66 yards to the end zone with 3:13 to go in the 2nd quarter. Coach Kyle Simmons saw Centreville left the same personnel in as the negated touchdown, so he called Eckert's number again. Westfield went into half up 14-0.

In the 3rd quarter, Westfield capitalized three more times. Eckert would score his

second touchdown of the game with a 35-yarder. Teammate Ivory Frimpong then took another Johnson pass 31 yards for the Bulldogs with 5:29 in the 3rd quarter. Johnson would connect on 7 of his 13 passes for 163 yards and 3 TDs. Eugene Asante, would rush in from 7 yards out with 3:01 left in the 3rd quarter.

Neither team would score in the 4th quarter. Westfield would defeat # 14 Centreville 35-0. Centreville had not been shutout since a game at Robinson in 2011, 27-0. Westfield coach Kyle Simmons told his players after the game, "Winning is a great deodorant. It covers up what stinks. Don't let winning make you ignore the things you need to get better at."

Westfield's Sean Eckert caught four passes for 107 yards and 2 TDs. Eugene Asante carried the ball nine times for 40 yards and a TD. Centreville averaged less than 4.5 yards a carry on 39 carries and was led by Mark Brown, who rushed for 54 yards.

Westfield improves to (6-2) (3-0), and will play Herndon (1-7)(0-3) on Friday. Centreville falls to (6-2) (2-1) and will host Chantilly (4-4) (2-1) on Friday.



Westfield's Sean Eckert #2 scored 2 TDs and Ivory Frimpong #4 scored another.

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FAMILY CONNECTION

Teaching Gratitude and Charitable Giving

Experts offer suggestions for instilling these practices in children.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As the holiday season approaches, many begin to think about expressing thankfulness and giving to those who are less fortunate. Teaching gratitude and establishing a sense of charity in children also becomes a priority for many parents.

Those lessons should begin long before it's time to put the turkey in the oven or trim the tree, however. Experts say practicing gratitude and demonstrating charitable giving year-round in age-appropriate ways are keys to raising compassionate children.

In fact, regular conversations between parents and children about charitable giving and gratitude increase the chances that youngsters will be willing to give to charity, according to a recent study. Research from the Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy showed that children whose parents spoke to them



PHOTO COURTESY OF INTERFAITH WORKS

Local charities such as Interfaith Works offer families a variety of opportunities for benevolence this holiday season.

about the importance of giving to those in need were 20 percent more likely to give than those who parents did have such conversations.

"The conversations don't need to

be formal or contrived," said Marcia Rosen, a marriage and family therapist in Bethesda, Md. "They can be as simple as sharing an experience about helping a friend who might need help run-

ning an errand, so we change our plans so that we can give the gift of our time to a friend. There are plenty of examples all around us everyday."

"The ability to empathize and take another's perspective increases as a child gets older and less egocentric," said Dr. Linda Gulyan, a professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington. "For example, make a thank you note to grandma for the birthday gift. With little kids, there might be a positive consequence for writing a note, for example [saying] 'After you write the note, we can watch the video.' As kids get older, have them take Grandma's perspective: 'You know how it feels to be appreciated, don't you?'"

Encourage children to find their own ways to express gratitude and give charitably. "For example, when thanking their soccer coach for helping them all season, have them come up with ways to thank him, even if it's clumsy or kid-like," said Gulyan. "[Parents] often do it for them. For example, parents

take up a collection of money from other parents and then they buy and present a fancy gift to the coach, and the kids are not that involved."

"Gratitude often relates to expectations and entitlements," said Amy L. Best, chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University. "It is important that young people develop some sense of entitlement. They are entitled to dignity and have rights of care. Without a sense of entitlement, claims to care, recognition, justice and dignity are more difficult to articulate. But too much entitlement can elevate expectations to too a high a level so that disappointment prevails and gratitude is difficult to muster."

Children must learn to be in the moment to take those chances, however. "Dwelling too much in the past, through endless rumination for instance, or always looking to the future undermines our ability to just be, to soak in and soak up a moment," said Best. "Consideration of past, present and future should be in healthy balance. Young people are often pressured to focus on the future, and some feel a sense of hopelessness toward the future. Both make it difficult to be in the moment.

"Cultivating mindfulness of self and your connection to others and the world is important," she added. "It is important to understand the suffering of others and to feel a sense of empathy toward the struggles of others to feel gratitude. Too much ambivalence toward others, or too focused on the self, makes it difficult to cultivate a disposition of gratitude."

Local charities offer a variety of options for families interested in giving this holiday season and throughout the year. Interfaith Works, a Montgomery County, Md. nonprofit organization with a goal of meeting the needs of the poor and homeless, holds annual drives for coat and cold-weather gear including mittens, scarves and hats. The organization is opening a new women's homeless shelter and is in need of supplies. "We need things like sheets, blankets and pillows to make the women feel at home and welcomed when they move into their new residence," said Charlotte Garvey of Interfaith Works. "So families can shop online for the ladies."

For more information, visit www.iworksmc.org.

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