



Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

‘I Felt, ‘At Least I’m Somebody’

NEWS, PAGE 3

Improve Driver Laws,
Reduce Road Deaths

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Long View on
Legislative Power

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Hornets Sting Bulldogs

SPORTS, PAGE 11

Doc Carmichael
and daughter
Tina Diep
Carmichael.

ROUNDUPS

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, Feb. 16, 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.

Dulles Suburban Center Meetings

As the Dulles Suburban Center Study enters into its second phase, the Advisory Group has set its schedule for the next several months. Residents are invited to attend the meetings and hear what the group is discussing regarding land use in the Dulles Suburban Center. The upcoming meetings will be held at 7 p.m. at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly, on Feb. 21, March 6, and March 21.

Specific meeting topics will be posted on the Dulles Suburban Study website <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/dullessuburbancenter/meetings.htm> closer to the date of each meeting.

Blood Drive at Fire Academy

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, in partnership with INOVA Blood Donor Services, will be hosting a blood drive at the Fire and Rescue Academy, 4600 West Ox Road, Fairfax, on Friday, March 3 from 12-5 p.m. Call 1-866-256-6372.

Several Volunteers Needed

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries at 4511 Daly Dr. Suite J, Chantilly seeks individuals to volunteer for the following:

❖ Volunteer(s) to clean office and bathroom, Tuesday or Thursday, either 8:30-9:30 a.m. or 2:30-4 a.m.

❖ Volunteer(s) to answer phones and schedule appointments, Tuesday and Thursday, 2 - 4:30 p.m. Requirements: good phone skills, personable, able to conduct pantry tours. Interview and completed application required.

❖ Volunteer(s) for Client Services Intake, Monday and Friday, 9:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. Requirements: Spanish speaker preferred, ability to work with clients, able to conduct pantry tours. Interview and completed application required.

❖ Volunteer for Food Pantry, bagging clients' food choices, Thursday, 10:45 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. Requirements: must be able to stand for long periods of time and lift at least 25 pounds. Interview and completed application required.

CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Sully District Police Station.

HIT AND RUN/ARREST: Stonecroft Boulevard/Westfield Boulevard, Feb. 11, around 8 a.m. Officers responded to a report of a hit and run crash with significant property damage and an injured victim. Fairfax 1 responded and located the suspect about a mile away from the victim's car. A 29-year-old Fairfax man was arrested, taken to the Adult Detention Center, and charged with DWI, felony hit and run, and disregarding a red light.

BURGLARY: 6000 block of Rockton Court, Feb. 6, around 8 p.m. A homeowner reported that someone entered the house and took property.

BURGLARY: 14100 block of Sullyfield Circle, Jan. 25, 7:39 a.m. An employee reported someone entered the business and took property.

BURGLARY: 5500 block of Quail Court, Jan. 24, around 1:50 a.m. Police responded for a report of a someone breaking into the garage of a house. Nothing was taken.

BURGLARY: 5800 block of Ausable Way, Jan. 24, around 6:20 a.m. Police responded for a report of someone breaking into the garage of a house. Nothing was taken, but the homeowner also noticed someone had gone through their vehicle and taken cash.

BURGLARY: 13500 block of Smallwood Lane, Jan. 24, around 2:15 p.m. A homeowner reported that someone came into the home through a kitchen window and took property.

FEB. 13 LARCENIES
13300 block of Connor Drive, purse from vehicle

FEB. 9 LARCENIES
14800 block of Edman Road, purse

from vehicle
5600 block of Pickwick Road, merchandise from business
5600 block of Stone Road, wallet from business

STOLEN VEHICLES
14400 block of Cool Oak Lane, 2010 Ford Explorer

FEB. 8 LARCENIES
5400 block of Clubside Lane, property from residence

FEB. 7 LARCENIES
6000 block of Rockton Court, property from residence

FEB. 6 LARCENIES
14700 block of Basingstoke Loop, cash from residence

4100 block of Dawn Valley Court, license plate from vehicle
14000 block of Lotus Lane, mail from residence

5300 block of Sammie Kay Lane, cash from vehicle

13200 block of Scotch Run Court, wallet from vehicle

5000 block of Westone Plaza, cash from vehicle

14000 block of Willard Road, license plates from vehicle

FEB. 3 LARCENIES
4100 block of Auto Park Circle, tires from vehicle

FEB. 2 LARCENIES
12100 block of Beaver Creek Road, key from residence

14500 block of Meeting Camp Road, wallet from vehicle

FEB. 1 LARCENIES
6700 block of Jenny Leigh Court, passport from vehicle

14500 block of Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, beer from business

JAN. 31 LARCENIES
13000 block of Ivakota Road, batteries from vehicle

JAN. 30 LARCENIES
4100 block of Auto Park Circle, cash from business

14800 block of Stonecroft Center Court, tires from vehicle

JAN. 27 LARCENIES
4600 block of Stonecroft Boulevard, cell phone from business

JAN. 26 LARCENIES
5100 block of Westfields Boulevard, liquor from business

JAN. 25 LARCENIES
14400 block of Compton Village Drive, property from residence

JAN. 24 LARCENIES
5600 block of Kertscher Terrace, property from residence
4800 block of Stonecroft Boulevard, wallet from person
5600 block of Braddock Farms Way, keys and wallet from vehicle.

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Centreville Baptist Church
(703) 830-3333 www.cbcva.org

Centreville United Methodist Church
(703) 830-2684 www.Centreville-UMC.org

Sully Site Receives Grant

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board approved a Mastenbrook Matching Fund Grant request from The Sully Foundation, Ltd. (TSF) at its meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 25.

The \$18,350 in grant funds will be used to replace the extensive brick edging system in the historic garden at Sully Historic Site.

For more information, or to apply for a matching grant, visit at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/mastenbrookgrant.htm> or call 703-324-8591.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

'I Felt, 'At Least I'm Somebody'

Centreville woman meets birth father after 45 years.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Tina Diep Carmichael and Joe Nguyen have a good life together in Centreville's Sully Station II community. But nothing came easy for them. They didn't meet until they were mature adults with their own lives. And considering their turbulent, violence-filled childhoods, it's a wonder they survived, at all.

Both were born in Vietnam, products of Vietnamese mothers and American servicemen fathers, and each didn't find those fathers until recently. And for Carmichael — who just added her dad's name to hers a few months ago — the news about him came the same week she was diagnosed with cancer.

"My mother left me when I was just 3 days old, and I was raised by adoptive parents in Vietnam," said Carmichael. "When I was around 8 years old, I heard a neighbor talking about me being adopted and I asked my parents, and they said I was."

Nguyen's situation was similar, except his mom stuck around and raised him after his dad, like Carmichael's, returned to the U.S. But for the Amerasian children left behind, life was hell on earth.

"We looked different from everyone else," said Nguyen. "Our hair and eye colors and complexions were different, so we stuck out like sore thumbs. There's a whole generation of us, and the other kids teased us and hit us."



Back row, from left, are Joe Nguyen, Tina Diep Carmichael, and Doc and Keri Carmichael; (front row) Tina's children, Cindy and Bryan Diep.

"They'd say, 'Go back where you came from; you don't belong here,'" said Carmichael. "The other kids would beat me up and tear my clothes."

Nguyen called the physical and verbal abuse "normal, day-to-day activities," noting that since the Amerasian children were outnumbered, they were easily bullied. "It was politically motivated," he said. "Vietnam is a Communist country and we were the children of the enemy."

Finally, he and his mother moved to the U.S. in 1983, in search of a better life. Carmichael and her family came here in 1988, first to New York City and then to Pennsylvania. Neither one knew the other,

but both joined a Facebook group for Amerasians. Both hoped to find their birth fathers, and they began corresponding with each other, eventually met and hit it off.

Carmichael thought Nguyen looked cute, and he was attracted to her because "She was full of joy and had a smile that brightened up my world." By then, he was a U.S. Air Force veteran living in Fairfax and working for the federal government, and she'd owned a nail salon in North Philadelphia for 22 years. She moved to Virginia in June 2016 and they settled together in Centreville, where she's a nail technician at Sully Nails.

But while they were still corresponding,

Nguyen searched for his biological father and found him (see related story). So he helped Carmichael do the same. Through the Facebook group, he said, "We tried to help other Amerasians in Vietnam prove their identity and come to America. They had no papers, but DNA tests tell you the percentage of European blood in your body, so they could take these tests and know their fathers were American."

Carmichael took her DNA test in December 2015. She'd ordered it earlier and it arrived the day she and Nguyen met. Then, using ancestry.com, it took him 10 months to build her family tree and find out her father's last name.

Nguyen messaged her dad first, but got no response, so he contacted the dad's wife and daughters, and daughter Michelle responded. "She's a real-estate agent, and I saw a photo of her on her Facebook page with the phone number of her company on it, so I called her," said Nguyen. "And in early November 2016, I texted her saying I was looking for my wife's biological father and he could be related to her."

Nguyen said it was important she call him, especially if her father was in Vietnam during the timeframe when Carmichael was conceived. When Michelle did call, she said she'd contacted her mom, Keri — who asked her husband if it was possible Carmichael was his daughter, and he said yes.

"The mom wanted to talk to me to make sure I was real," said Carmichael. Keri also spoke with Nguyen and made an impression on him. "She was concerned about Tina and wondered how she was," he said. "She asked, 'How was her childhood? Who raised her? Was she happy? Did she have a good life?' She was very motherly, not angry or suspicious that Tina wanted something from

SEE CENTREVILLE WOMAN, PAGE 4

A Reunion Decades in the Making

Local man finally finds his family.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Born in Vietnam to an American father serving in the Navy and a Vietnamese mother, Joe Nguyen was raised by his mom. His dad left the country never knowing she was pregnant.

He found out he had a child, a year later. But he didn't know if it was a boy or a girl until three years ago, when Nguyen contacted him after an extensive search. Unbeknownst to Nguyen, his father tried to find him, too, but to no avail.

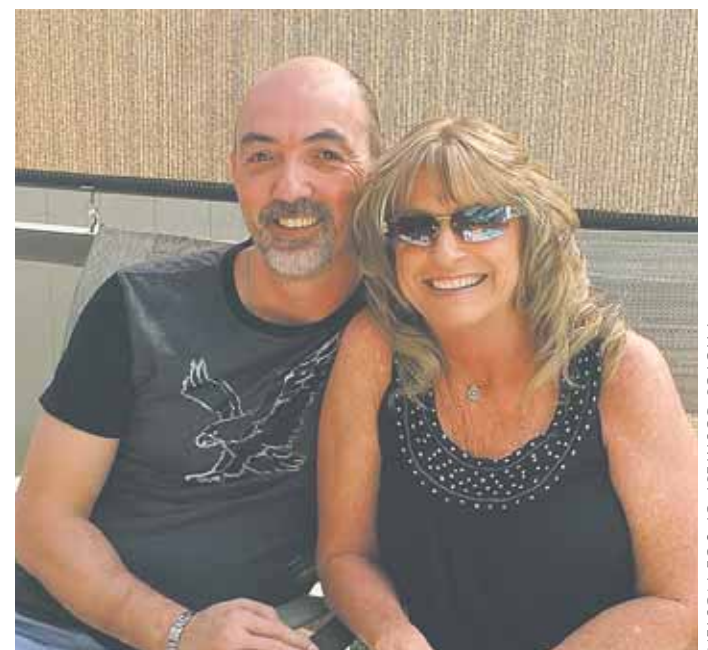
"After the Vietnam War ended, my dad came back to the U.S. and worked for Raytheon with many Vietnamese employees under him," said Nguyen. "And every time one of them went to Vietnam to visit relatives, he gave them my mom's name and address and asked them to look us up."

Trouble was, Nguyen and his mother kept moving. As a child of an American, he was

SEE A REUNION, PAGE 4



The first meeting of Joe Nguyen and his oldest sister Cindy in December 2013.



Joe Nguyen and his sister Susan saw each other in person Thanksgiving 2016.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOE NGUYEN

Centreville Woman Meets Birth Father After 45 Years

FROM PAGE 3
them.”

“And that made me happy to know she was concerned about Tina’s wellbeing, even before there was definitive evidence about who her father was,” said Nguyen.

“And my dad said, ‘Even if she’s not mine, if she wants me to be her father, I will be,’” recalled Carmichael. “I was so overcome with emotion, I cried. And he told me I have three sisters. So I texted Michelle and she called me and we quickly became close.”

Since it takes six weeks to get DNA results back from ancestry.com — and both Carmichael and her father, Donald “Doc” Carmichael, were anxious to get the answer quicker — they both took LabCorp DNA tests and, two days later, got the results.

Meanwhile, Tina Carmichael had had pain in her left breast and was on the way to Philadelphia to see her doctor when Nguyen got a phone message that the DNA test results were in.

An email confirmed with 99.9-percent certainty that Doc indeed was Tina’s father. And when Carmichael returned home, Nguyen told her in person.

“I couldn’t believe I knew where I came from,” she said. “I grew up with no mom or dad, so I felt, ‘At least I’m somebody.’ Still, it took a while for me to really believe it. But now I have a family.”

Overjoyed, Doc and Keri immediately bought tickets to fly from their home in Albuquerque to visit Carmichael. “But five days later, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and they were arriving two days later,” said Carmichael. “I was happily decorating the Christmas tree to welcome my parents when I got the news, and I just dropped everything. I thought I was going to die.”

But when Doc and Keri arrived, they went



From left are Keri and Doc Carmichael, Tina Diep Carmichael and Joe Nguyen.

to Carmichael’s doctors’ appointments with her and told her she’d make it. “My dad said, ‘God didn’t bring you here to take you away from me,’” she said. “And for a minute, seeing him, I almost forgot, I was so happy — and then it would hit me again.”

She and Keri bonded, too, and Carmichael calls her “Mom.”

They flew home after a week, but returned for a month when Carmichael underwent a double mastectomy, Jan. 13. “All the time I was in the hospital, my mom and dad were on each side of me, holding my hands,” she said. “They also took care of

me when I came home. I’m 45 years old, and I finally had a mom tuck me in at night and give me a kiss. It meant a lot to me to have their support and to have them here; they were worried about me and cared about me.”

“We’re both fortunate because our dads and their wives and children accepted us and love us,” added Nguyen.

Now 65, Doc was just 19 when he went to Vietnam, and he now wants to help other Vietnam veterans find their children. And, said Nguyen, “There are still a lot of them out there.”



Tina Diep Carmichael and Joe Nguyen in their home at Christmas.

“I’m so lucky,” said Carmichael. “At the same time I was going through cancer, my dad showed up.” She has two daughters, herself, Cindy, 26, and Michelle, 19, and a son, Bryan, 9. “Eighteen months ago, I was a single mother, raising my son alone,” said Carmichael. “I raised all three alone and put my daughters through college.”

And that’s important, said Nguyen, since “As Amerasians, people often told us — because we had mixed blood — we’d never amount to anything.”

“But I proved them wrong,” said Carmichael. “I’ve had a successful career and I have a good home and people who love me.”

A Reunion Decades in the Making

FROM PAGE 3

an outcast. “The Communists took over, and my mom and I were nomads, traveling from one place to another,” he said. “We weren’t welcome anywhere.”

His father, David Salisbury, was married and had four children before going to Vietnam. “He didn’t tell his wife about me until I found him,” said Nguyen. “He kept it a secret. But she was very understanding and she loves me. I have two new sisters and a brother; another sister died at age 18 when a drunk driver hit her on her way home from Homecoming.”

Salisbury was in the Navy for 24 years and, according to his daughters, he was “a charmer.” So, said Nguyen, “They weren’t surprised he had another child out there somewhere. Now we’re all close and, when I visited them in Florida, his wife made me breakfast every day, hugged and kissed me and said, ‘Good morning, son.’”

Nguyen and his own mother came to the U.S. in 1983, settling in Rochester, N.Y. “President Reagan passed the Reunification Act to get the Amerasian kids out of Vietnam and unite them with their American fathers in the U.S.,” he said. “And I’ve helped

three other people find their fathers here.”

Now 50, Nguyen served in the Air Force for 22 years, retiring in Dover, Del. But in 2013, he moved to Fairfax County when he got a job writing contracts for the federal government, which he still does. And he never gave up hope of finding his father.

Through ancestry.com, he did a DNA match, found a cousin who lived in Fairfax and learned his father’s last name. Then the cousin and her aunt helped him find his dad’s name in their family tree.

“I used Facebook to track him down and started searching his name, and his friends list gave me the names of his family members,” said Nguyen. “So I contacted him and told him I believed he could be my uncle, or possibly my dad, and told him where I was born and raised.”

But almost a year passed before Salisbury responded. He was in his 70s and, although his granddaughter in California had set up his Facebook page, he never looked at it. “Then she visited him and said, ‘You’ve got to check it so we can keep in touch,’” said Nguyen. “And that’s when he found the message from me.”

Salisbury called him immediately and

they met that summer, June 2014, in Newport Richie, Fla. Yet although they were strangers, it didn’t feel that way.

“It was like reuniting with someone I hadn’t seen in a few years,” said Nguyen. “I felt like I knew him all my life, so there was an instant connection. I never resented him as a child, and my mom never said anything bad about him to me.”

Nguyen has also become close to his sisters and spent Thanksgiving with them and their parents. His brother lives in Indiana and Nguyen hopes to meet him soon. Meanwhile, he urges any Vietnam veterans in this same situation to order a DNA kit and try to find their wartime children, and likewise for their offspring.

“Most of us Amerasian kids don’t want anything from them, like money,” said Nguyen. “We’re strong to have survived what we did as kids. When I find a dad, the [adult] child asks if the dad’s alive and if he’s healthy and being taken care of. They want to make sure he’s OK; if not, they’ll step in and help him. Now, when I see a homeless vet in [Washington], D.C., I wonder if that’s someone’s dad who’s trying to find his child.”



David Salisbury (left) and Joe Nguyen met in summer 2014 for the first time.

NEWS

Improve Driver Laws, Reduce Road Deaths

Virginia's highway safety report card marked in red.

BY BILL BRONROTT
THE CONNECTION

Clifton resident Debbie Sausville represented Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) at a recent Capitol Hill news conference where Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) issued "report cards" rating all 50 states and the District of Columbia on their progress toward adopting 15 optimal laws that scientific studies, data analysis and real world experience show are effective at preventing death and injury on roadways.

The D.C.-based highway and auto safety watchdog group unveiled its "2017 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws" report as a call to action for lawmakers in every state capital to close gaps in 15 laws covering seat belts, child booster seats, teen graduated driver licensing programs, motorcycle helmets, impaired driving, and texting while driving.

The Advocates' report rated each state Green (good), Yellow (caution) or Red (danger) based on the number of the 15 traffic safety measures enacted into law.

Advocates' vice president of governmental affairs Cathy Chase, a resident of Falls Church, revealed that, "Virginia received a Red report card and was rated among the worst performing states in the nation for having adopted only five of the 15 laws. The Commonwealth is lacking a front and rear primary enforcement seat belt law, booster seat law, six of seven teen driving provisions, and an open container law."

The neighboring states of Maryland, West Virginia and North Carolina earned Yellow ratings, and the District of Columbia and Delaware received Green scores.

In Virginia, 753 people died in traffic crashes in 2015, seven percent higher than the 703 fatalities in 2014. The annual economic cost of crashes is nearly \$5 billion in Virginia.

Sausville's stepdaughter Lauren, at age 16, died in a crash in Fairfax County in 2004 after drinking underage. She had only obtained her driver's license three weeks earlier. Over the past decade, Sausville has volunteered with MADD to speak out for greater teen driving safety. She welcomed the new report for "putting a bright spotlight on dangerous loopholes in our laws through which children and adults are suffering needlessly," and called for "our state lawmakers to embrace these lifesaving laws to help keep families safe and whole."

Sausville praised Virginia for having already adopting two of MADD's priorities laws — an ignition interlock requirement for all drunk driving offenders and child en-

Report Card

Virginia's 2017 Highway Safety Laws Report Card (Black = credit; Red** = missing law)

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

- ** Primary Enforcement Seat Belt Law for all front seat occupants
- ** Primary Enforcement Seat Belt Law for rear seat occupants
- * All-Rider Motorcycle Helmet Law

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

- ** Child Booster Seats: Children who have outgrown the height and weight limit of a forward-facing car safety seat should be placed in a booster seat until at least age eight and 57 inches tall.

GRADUATED DRIVER'S LICENSING FOR TEENS

- ** Minimum Age 16 for Learner's Permit
- * 6-Month Holding Period: A beginning teen driver must be supervised by an adult licensed driver at all times during the learner's stage. If the learner is citation-free for six months, he or she may progress to the intermediate stage.
- ** Supervised Driving Requirement: At least 50 hours of behind-the-wheel training, including 10 hours at night, with an adult licensed driver.
- ** Nighttime Driving Restriction: No unsupervised driving from at least 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. seven days a week.
- ** Passenger Restriction: No more than one non-familial passenger under age 21.
- ** Cell Phone Restriction: No use of cellular devices (hand-held, hands-free, text messaging) by beginning teen drivers, except in the case of an emergency.
- ** Age 18 Unrestricted License: A teen driver is prohibited from obtaining an unrestricted license until age 18, and either the nighttime or passenger restrictions must last until age 18.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

- * Ignition interlocks for all drunk driving offenders
- * Child Endangerment Law: Penalties for people who drive while impaired with children in the vehicle.
- ** Open Container Law

DISTRACTED DRIVING

- * All-Driver Text Messaging Restriction
- SOURCE: ADVOCATES FOR HIGHWAY AND AUTO SAFETY

dangerment penalties for those who drive drunk with children in the car.

"It is now time to finally ban the possession and consumption of alcohol beverages in motor vehicles in Virginia, which is already the law in 40 states and D.C.," Sausville said.

Chase pointed out that Virginia's seat belt law loophole allows back seat passengers to ride unbuckled and front seat belt use is still a secondary offense in the state, meaning that police cannot stop a vehicle just because an occupant is not buckled up. Front seat occupants can be ticketed for not wearing a seat belt only if the driver is stopped for another offense.

In 2014, Virginia's seat belt use rate lagged 10 points behind the national average of 87 percent.

An estimated 287 lives were saved by seat belt use in Virginia in 2015, but an additional 113 deaths could have been prevented if all vehicle occupants had been buckled up, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT).

For more information, see <http://saferoads.org/roadmaps/>.



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SUMMER SESSION – JUNE 24 - JULY 29

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Ending Gerrymandering Important to Region

Efforts appear dead for this session, but elections later this year provide new opportunities.

While three bills that could have reined in the runaway gerrymandering in Virginia made it through the Virginia Senate to crossover, they died on Tuesday morning in a House subcommittee, despite some vocal Republican support.

In Virginia, Democrats have won every statewide election since 2010, and notably Barack Obama won the state in 2008 by more than 52 percent of the vote. Many of these victories have been narrow. In 2009, Republicans won Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General by strong margins.

It is reasonable, given these results, to expect that representation at the state level would be approximately even, with either Republicans or Democrats holding a small advantage. Instead, Republicans control the House of Delegates 66 to 34, and the Virginia Senate 21 to 19.

There is little competition for these seats as a result.

According to OneVirginia2021, an advocacy group for ending gerrymandering, 56 candi-

dates in the House of Delegates faced no real competition in the last general election in 2013, with 22 Democrats and 34 Republicans facing no major-party challenger. In the end, only two seats changed parties.

These same lawmakers are set to redraw the the boundaries for state legislative and congressional districts after the 2020 census, and the just-killed proposed constitutional amendments would have required that these not be motivated by partisan politics. By far the best approach would be to turn the process over to a non-partisan commission to draw boundaries in the best interests of Virginia citizens.

One of the proposals, cosponsored by Sen. Jill Vogel (R) and Sen. Janet Howell (D), passed the Senate 31-9, but died in the House subcommittee on a 5-2 vote.

It matters more here in Northern Virginia. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that localities have only the power specifically given to them by the General Assembly. It means that the economic engines of the state in Northern Virginia provide most of the financial wherewithal but citizens in Alexandria,

Arlington and Fairfax County are often unable to govern themselves as they wish because of control by a far more conservative General Assembly.

Real change starts locally. Anyone seeking change should tune in for this year's elections in Virginia, including all the seats in the General Assembly, plus Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. Every voter will choose one Virginia Senator and one member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

Nonpartisan redistricting could support the best interests of the population, not the politicians.

In 2016

Hillary Clinton (D) 1,981,473 (49.75%); Donald Trump (R) 1,769,443 (44.43%)

In 2013:

McAuliffe (D) 1,069,789; Cuccinelli (R) 1,013,389 Northam (D) 1,213,155; Jackson (R) 980,257 Herring (D) 1,103,777; Obenshain (R) 1,103,612

In 2012:

Obama (D) 1,971,820; Romney (R) 1,822,522 Kaine (D) 2,010,067; Allen (R) 1,785,542

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

EDITORIAL

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.

MULCH ORDERS

Westfield Mulch Delivery. Have your mulch delivered right to your driveway. Your order will raise the funds needed to provide a safe and sober All Night Grad Party for Westfield Seniors and support other vital PTSA programs. Order early, there is a limit on the total number of bags that can be delivered. \$5 per bag. \$2 per bag, for students to spread mulch, also limited number of slots. Order today at bit.ly/2kAh4fb.

p.m. is also available. Visit www.cliftonpc.org or call 703-830-3175.

FRIDAY/FEB. 17

Scholarship Application. Deadline for Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority scholarship applications. The application is available at www.fcacdst.org/applications.htm. The completed application must be postmarked by Feb. 17, 2017.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Celebrating 25 Years of Service. 11:02 a.m. in the recreation and outreach center (Contemporary Worship & Praise with communion every Sunday); 8:15, 9:30 and 11 a.m. (traditional services) at Centreville United Methodist Church, 6400 Old Centreville Road. Guest speaker and former pastor the Rev. Dr. Albert Sikkelee will be preaching. Visit www.centreville-umc.org or call 703-830-2684 for more.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 22

Sully District Community Meeting. 7 p.m. at Sully Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. Agenda includes Transform I-66 — developments inside and outside the beltway. 703-814-7100

THURSDAY/FEB. 23

Police Recruiting. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Mason University, Spring Career Fair. Fairfax County Police Department is currently hiring Police Officers, Animal Protection Police Officers and Crossing Guards. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/jobs.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Umpires Needed for Youth Leagues. Northern Virginia Baseball Umpires Association is in need of umpires for youth leagues, high schools, and collegiate-level baseball and volleyball games. Experience is helpful, but not required. Contact NVBUA at 703-978-3601 or assignor@umpires.org.

ADULT SOFTBALL

Over-40 Softball League will be starting its 27th year this season and is looking to add one more team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. The season runs from late April to early October and usually guarantees 26-30 games. Email at skeduman@aol.com.

2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR

Preschool Registration. Clifton Presbyterian Church Preschool, 12748 Richards Lane. Offers classes for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (9 a.m.-noon). "Extended care" until 3:30



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Learning Self Defense

The National Charity League Bluebell Chapter recently participated in a self-defense seminar developed specifically for young women. The class focused on safety and self defense on college campuses — as well as other situations geared toward young women — and is developed and taught by Dan Mikeska at Fairfax Fitness and Self Defense in Chantilly. Fairfax Fitness and Self Defense specializes in personal fitness, medical exercise as well as self-defense and tactical training. The National Charity League Bluebell Chapter is a Mother Daughter philanthropic organization serving the local community.



Patrols pull their sleds as fast as they can in the Sled Race Competition at the Annual Sully District Klondike Derby.



Members of Centaurs & Spartans Patrols of Troop 893 prepare to pull their sled across the "Yukon Gulch" using a suspension rope.

Sully District Scouts Compete in Klondike Derby

The National Capitol Area Council (NCAC) Sully District annual Klondike Derby was held on Jan. 20-22 with a "Yeti's in the Yukon" theme. Troops arrived Friday evening to set up camp at NCAC's Camp Snyder near Haymarket. On Saturday, seven Troops, three Venturing Crews and one Varsity Team participated in the Klondike competition.

Klondike Trail Stations included Sled Inspection, Cooking Lunch on the Trail, First Aid, Tomahawk Throwing, Ladder Lashing, Yukon Gulch Crossing, Yeti Fishing Hole, Compass Competition, Two-man Log Sawing, Fire Building, Blind Leading the Blind, and a "Glacier" Traverse. Additional competitions included the annual sled race on Saturday afternoon and a Chili Cook-Off Saturday evening. Competition winners

were announced at the Saturday evening campfire, which included a campfire show led by the Order of the Arrow Chapter. On Sunday morning the Scouts attended the Scouts Own Service at the Camp Snyder Chapel. Overall, there were 17 Patrols, 135 Scouts, and 42 Scouters participating in the Derby. Winners of the competitions were as follows:

Klondike Trail

- 1st: Troop 7369, Invisibles Patrol (5th year in a row)
- 2nd: Troop 1826, Das Fensters Patrol
- 3rd: Troop 7369, Flaming Ice Cubes Patrol
- Sled Race
- 1st: Troop 7369, Roadrunners Patrol
- 2nd: Troop 1826, Das Fensters Patrol
- 3rd: Troop 682, British Patrol
- Chili Cook-off
- 1st: Troop 7369, High Voltage Patrol
- 2nd: Troop 7369, Flaming Ice Cubes Patrol
- 3rd: Troop 1995, Train Hopping Hobo Raccoons Patrol

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ENTERTAINMENT

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.

ONGOING

Black History Month Events. Through Feb. 28, 2-4 p.m. at Terminal on the ticketing level at Dulles International Airport, 1 Saarinen Circle. A month-long event series for airport employees and passengers in celebration of Black History Month. Visit www.metwashairports.com for more.

Art Guild of Clifton Exhibit. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St., Clifton. Includes oil paintings of European settings; doors, windows, and flower shops. Free. Call 703-409-0919 for more.

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

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



Swing Dance

On Friday, Feb. 17, the band "Bad Influence" is highlighting a night of swing dancing from 8:30-midnight, at the Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road. Beginner swing lessons with Sue and Gary 8:30. \$15. Visit <http://www.gottaswing.com/> for more.

English Conversation Group. Selected 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 a list of dates.

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.fairfaxjubilaires.org for more.

Mondays are Family Night. 5-7 p.m. at Villagio, 7145 Main St. \$45 for a family of four. Call 703-543-2030 for more.

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

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

Over-40 Softball League. A Fairfax-based league is looking for enough players to form another team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. If interested, email skeduman@aol.com 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.

FRIDAY/FEB. 17

Swing Dance. 8:30-midnight, at the Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road. Beginner swing lesson with Sue and Gary 8:30. \$15. Visit www.gottaswing.com/ for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

Mind Body and Spirit Open House. 5-7 p.m. at WheelHouse Mind Body and Spirit, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton. Refreshments and open house specials. Call 703-401-2627 for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Celebrating 25 Years of Service. During services at 8:15, 9:30 and 11:00 and 11:02 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 19, Centreville United Methodist Church, 6400 Old Centreville Rd. The community is invited to celebrate this milestone. Special guest speaker and former pastor the Rev. Dr. Albert Sikkelee will be preaching. Fellowship and refreshments following each service.

NTRAK Model Train Show at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum 1 - 4 p.m. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station, VA. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225. www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, Twitter@FFXSTNRR.

African American Walking Tour. 2 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road. Historian Alli Hartley will lead tour through over 200 years of African-American history in Fairfax County. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence/ or call 703-631-0013 for more.

MONDAY/FEB. 20

Centreville Garden Club. 7 p.m. at the Sully Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. "Designing with the Elements" presentation by landscape designer, Margaret Miley. Visit centrevillegardenclub.blogspot.com, email centrevillegardenclub@gmail.com or call 703-830-3271 for more.

BEGINNING FEB. 22

Art at the Library. 7-8:30 p.m. and continuing every fourth Wednesday each month at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice for beginners to expert artists. February theme: Sketching. Bring sketchbook and drawing materials. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ce/ or call 703-830-2223 to register.

FRIDAY/FEB. 24

Hot Dogs Over the Campfire. 5:30-7 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road. Enjoy a wagon ride through the Rocky Run stream valley and a hot dog dinner cooked over the campfire. Learn who Ellanor C. Lawrence was and hear about the area's local history. Hot dogs, buns, condiments and s'mores for dessert are provided, bring drinks and sides. \$10, and children must be accompanied by an adult registered for the program. Meet at Cabell's Mill. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

Planting a Four Season Garden. 10 a.m. at Fair Oaks Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway. With Peg Bier, Merrifield Plant Specialist. Call 703-560-6222 for more.

Sully District Fundraiser. 7-9 p.m. at Supervisor Kathy Smith's, 4639 Star Flower Drive. Call 703-814-7100 for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 26

Rose Products Seminar. 2-4 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway. Learn about benefits of proven products that award-winning rose growers use to save time and money. Free. Visit www.merrifieldgardencentre.com for more.

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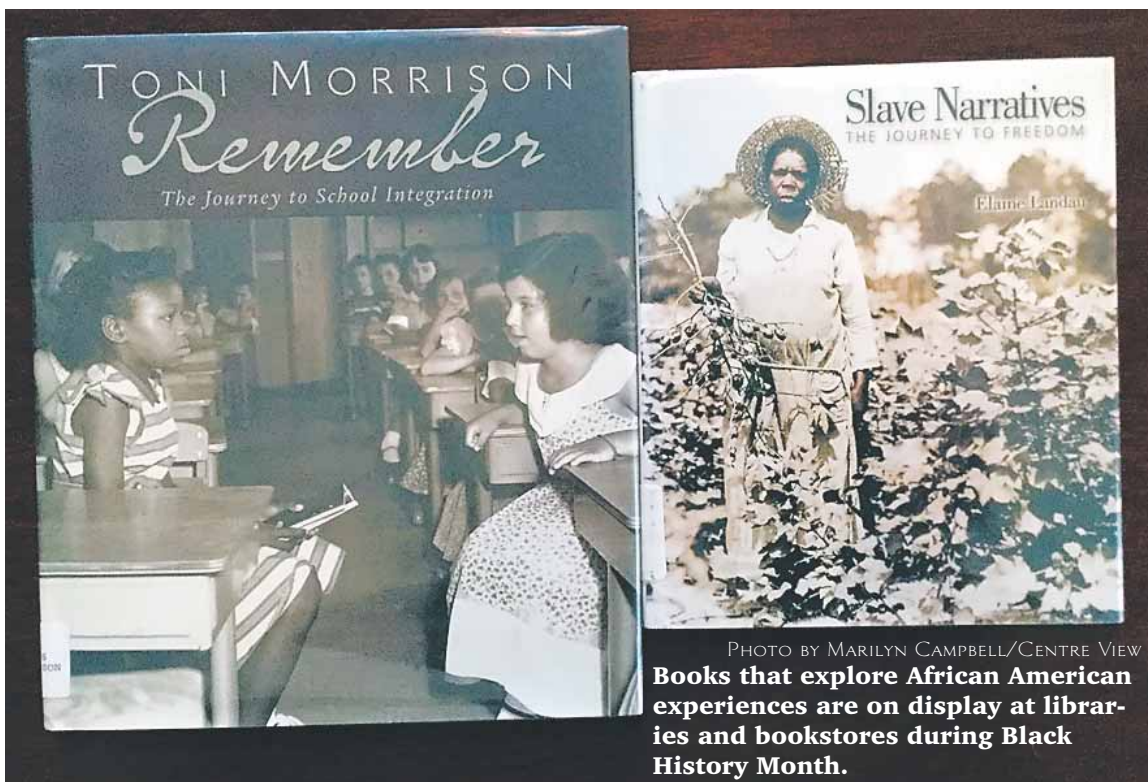
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Celebrating Black History Month

Educators say lessons are urgently needed in current racial climate.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Even though Elavie Ndura knows that it is a daunting challenge to help children grasp the entirety of the African American experience in the shortest month of the year, each February she and other educators give it their best effort. This year, they feel it's more important than ever.

"With all of the racial experiences we're having these days, it's critical that children know their history and are not basing their knowledge on only what they see on television or what they hear from their friends," said Elavie Ndura, Ed.D., professor of education at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Research shows that children who understand their histories do better in school and in society, so it's critical that families teach their children about their history."

Ndura believes that the current racial climate in the U.S. gives this year's Black History Month additional significance. A study released last month by the Pew Research Center shows that among Americans, 61 percent of blacks, 58 percent of Hispanics and 45 percent of whites say that race relations in the United States are generally bad. Local educators say Black History Month offers opportunities to address issues of race by allowing the past to inform the present.

"Teaching the history of Black or African-heritage peoples this month ... is necessary to starting difficult conversations about ... current race relations ... and social inequalities."

— Mika'il A. Petin, Ph.D.,
George Mason University

"We have seen for more than a year how people from different political viewpoints, but also races, sexes, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses related to each other in the present political climate, and it was troublesome," said Mika'il A. Petin, Ph.D., associate director of African and African American Studies at George Mason University. "Teaching the history of Black or African-heritage peoples in this month ... is necessary to starting difficult conversations about... current race relations ... and social inequalities."

Race relations in our society have been deeply strained during the election and as America adjusts to a new presidential administration. These divisions make African American history lessons critical for all children, but particularly for black children, says Ndura. "As African American parents we have a serious duty to educate our own youth," she said. "Knowing your history grounds and anchors you firmly so that you are not wavered in the wrong direction because of whatever feelings might be caused by what you're seeing on the news."

Black history lessons work best when they're intentional and creative, advises Jessica Lewis, Ed.D., assistant professor of education and human services at Marymount University in Arlington. "Children benefit when they are exposed to a variety of perspectives, ideas and stories because it helps expand their view of the world and people living in it," she said. "The ability to understand and identify with others and their experiences is a powerful, life-long lesson."

Lewis advises making a trip to a local bookstore or library to find books that offer a glimpse of African American history and suggests that parents begin

SEE CELEBRATING, PAGE 11

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"Idiot" No More; Well, Sort Of



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For over two and a half years now, since June '14 — according to my most recent invoice, "idiot" lights on the dashboard of my model year 2000, Honda Accord have warned me that all was not right with our back-up car. But due to intermittent use, amazing self-discipline on my part and little new evidence to the contrary, the Honda has maintained its performance, if you can even call it that. Soon after this last visit to my local mechanic had cleared the pre-2014 dashboard indicators, the "SRS" (seat belt restraint system) came on suggesting that something was once again rotten in Denmark, and Burtonsville, too. Nevertheless, with the ink barely dry on my credit card receipt, and with our second car not being a priority, I decided to let it live and let live and hope for the best. Approximately 32 months later, my hope has been realized. No repairs have been required in the interim. However, over that same time, multiple additional "warning" lights have come on: "brake lamp," "maintenance due," and just recently, the infamous/scourge "check-engine" light to where four lights are now illuminated. And though, to my credit, I have been able to endure and ignore their constant reminders; but when that fourth light, the "check-engine" light came on, I feared my benign neglect had finally come home to roost. So I bucked up, called my local mechanic, and made the arrangements to drop off the Honda. Then I waited for a more detailed assessment of the damage done. A few days later, I got the call. I'll spare you the details since I can't explain them anyway; but the repairs were going to cost around \$1000, as good as could be expected for a 17 year-old car with 95,000 miles on the odometer.

However, what I am most excited about concerning this outcome is — yes 'excited' is the right word — that for the first time in years I won't have to face down warning lights in my car and alarm bells in my head about what potential car trouble and expense I've been putting off and likely making worse. And most importantly, no longer having to exercise the inordinate self-control required to ignore these warning lights and not to be corrupted by their relentless — literally and figuratively — reminders. It's almost as if I can face reality again, breathe normally and not feel under siege.

Having only driven the car barely two miles home since I picked it up from "Tony's," I can't yet say driving is fun. However, I can admit that driving will be less irritating, will require less mental discipline and when I look down at my car's dashboard, I will not long for a bygone era of dashboard neutrality. Once again, as if the Honda is under dealer warranty, I will not see any indicators/lights of something I've neglected to do or of repairs I'm unable to afford.

As much as I'd like to think I'm fairly well-adjusted and know how to process and prioritize things in my life, having cancer does seem to alter these processes and priorities. And when something simple and/or unexpected happens in your life which allows you to regain your composure and equilibrium, it helps that much more to assimilate the cancer-related conditions, effects and challenges you've come to expect. Not that I thought much about this eventuality when I dropped off the car at "Tony's," but now, having not seen any lights, I feel unburdened, as if a weight has been taken off my shoulders and out of my head. Moreover, when you're living in the cancer bubble, burdens expected — and otherwise — tend to pile up — and on — and when one is able to catch a break/brake along the way, the positive effect is disproportionate to reality. It means so much even though it may seem like so little. Whether it's regaining some control, solving a non-cancer-related problem or crossing an item off a to-do list; living one's life with as few distractions as possible, generally speaking, will likely result in some comfort and joy; not the movie, but the peace of mind.

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

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21 Announcements

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PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

Gavin Kiley #14 drives against two Herndon defenders.

Hornets Sting Bulldogs

BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Westfield Bulldogs, fresh off a win over crosstown rival Chantilly in their regular season finale, faced a Herndon team they beat twice in the regular season. However, this was the first round of the Concord District tournament, a match-up where the stakes were higher with the victor advancing to play in the quarterfinals on Feb. 14 and the other's season would come to a close.

In the 1st quarter, the home team Bulldogs jumped to a 14-10 advantage, in large part to Jordan Hairston's 8 points.

In the 2nd quarter the Hornets would outscore the Bulldogs 16-9 to take a 26-23 halftime advantage. Herndon's Liam Harrington's 9 points paced the Hornets

while teammate Joel Varone added 7.

In the 3rd quarter, Herndon would add to their 3 point advantage outscoring Westfield 13-11, to give the Hornets a 39-34 going into the 4th quarter.

The 4th quarter saw Westfield pull to within two, 52-50 with 36.5 seconds to play but Liam Harrington's three pointer with 21.5 seconds to play sealed the Herndon win and Herndon avoided a third loss to the Bulldogs this season.

With the 58-50 loss, Westfield concludes their season at (6-15) (3-6) and Herndon advanced to the quarterfinals to face top seed Centreville (15-7) (8-2) who defeated Oakton 61-48. Westfield was led by Jordan Hairston's 14 points and Gavin Kiley's 11. Herndon's Liam Harrington led all scorers with 18 and Joel Varone added 16.



Nick Albert #11 scored 8 points against Herndon.



Taevon Chapman Green #5 goes underneath to avoid a defensive block.

Celebrating Black History Month

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with books on subjects that interest their children. "[Parents] may start with readings on sports, or science, or biographies of the accomplishments and hardships of individuals who persisted throughout history to make a difference," she said. "Parents can ... select books by black authors and illustrators and then take the time to read the story together, discuss the pictures, and ask questions about what the characters are feeling and experiencing."

Other ideas include exploring music with roots in African American history such as ragtime, jazz, gospel and blues, making a timeline of major events that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement, and reading speeches from civil rights leaders and then helping children write their own speech about what they are inspired to change in the world. Such activities can open a natural discussion and need not be complicated to be effective, says Lewis.

"Parents are their children's first educators," said Lewis. "It is important for parents to help their children understand the experiences of other children who are not like them because it builds empathy and a deeper sense of community."

One roadblock to such honest conversations, cautions Petin, is a discomfort with discussions of racial differences. "Let's be frank, some white Americans who are politically and socially conservative become noticeably uncomfortable with the topic of race, and therefore find difficulty with Black History Month," he said. "Yet, Black History Month — similar to the Black Lives Matter movement — does not express superiority over others. Both the month of celebration and socio-political movement are forms of resistance to deliberate attempts to conceal

the worthiness of Black or African-heritage people in this country."

Some people "may attack Black History Month and Black Lives Matter as political correctness and identity politics, but I would argue that they are not seeing the humanity in both efforts," continued Petin. He emphasized the importance of taking a purposeful approach to teaching children about black history. "I think that all parents must intentionally search for, study, and celebrate those who are on the margins, living in the shadows, perceived as voiceless, and regarded as invisible. Too often, black Americans were those marginal, shadowed, voiceless, and invisible people. All parents should be honest about that, and should have confidence in the U.S. only being great when they and their children educate themselves on this country's history in more inclusive terms."

Schools often play a significant role in the month's activities. Students at the Bullis School in Potomac, Md., for example, attend a Black History Month assembly each February.

This year's event was led by several students who shared their thoughts, essays and other projects on a variety of topics. "Diverse literature is always a great idea," added Allison Ewing, chair of the social studies department at Bullis.

"Twenty-eight days of teachable moments" is one way that Petin characterizes Black History Month. "It is never too early to start preparing your kids for a world that is increasingly more connected and shrinking," he said. "When all parents teach their children how to develop skill sets to understand, value, empathize, and celebrate those who may be different than them, the children are better prepared to function in the world."

Sharing His Story

Sam Massa, a former student at Rocky Run Middle School, returned to speak with current students on "Appreciating Learning Differences and Going After Your Dreams." Massa, a former special education student who sees all text in classic mirror image and writes everything backwards, shared some stories about the passion and drive that kept him on track with

students in Michelle Henry's health class. His credits include becoming a U.S. Ski Team member, a DJ, an inventor, a digital age wizard, a ski instructor for special needs students, a businessman, a lights system expert, and a volunteer fireman as an adult. Massa was the subject of a CNN story when he was 17 and running a business that retrofitted overhauled diesel trucks to run on used vegetable oil. Now 27, he is married and works all over the world. Henry says Massa's visit is particularly well-received by special needs students and many students tell her his stories are the best life lesson in their nine-week health unit.



FCPS PHOTO

Longtime Members Remember Era of Democratic Rule

Democrats assigned Republicans to committees that never met, separated them.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Bills killed without consideration in committee. Members in the minority dismissed as irrelevant. Members in the majority lumping dozens of bills into a block vote to dispatch them in one sweeping vote. Those are some of the complaints from Democrats in the minority this year about the Republican majority. But when questioned about those complaints, longtime members in both parties say the same thing.

Democrats were in many ways worse when they were in power, although Republicans have created new tricks of their own.

Until the time Republicans seized power of the House of Delegates after the election of 1999, Democrats had a rock solid lock on control of the oldest continuous legislative bodies in the New World. And the century of unfettered control did not have a positive influence on their leadership style. Sometimes they would kill bills without ever hearing them. Other times, they would lump bills together in a block vote and kill dozens or more in a single vote.

Unlike Republicans, they had a practice of sending bills to committees that never met. Democrats also had a practice of seating Republicans at opposite ends of committee rooms so they were unable to communicate and coordinate during committee meetings. One of the more infamous



Democrats in the minority raise their hands to support a bill the Republican majority wants to kill.

PHOTO BY
MICHAEL LEE POPE

“Just because the Democrats ruled with an iron fist, that’s no reason for us to do the same. I’m sure we both have room for improvement.”

— Speaker Bill Howell

practices was killing bills that came to the House floor as a matter of revenge, even memorial resolutions.

“Just because the Democrats ruled with an iron fist, that’s no reason for us to do the same,” said House Speaker Bill Howell. “I’m sure we both have room for improvement.”

Democrats say Republicans are no saints. Since taking power almost 20 years ago, they created a system of killing bills in unrecorded subcommittee votes. As a result, a handful of Republicans can kill bills introduced by Democrats without being on the record. And the subcommittee meetings are often scheduled for 7 a.m., when members of the public are not around to object or testify. The longest serving member in the House, Del. Ken Plum (D-36), acknowledges that Democrats would kill bills without ever considering them.

“We heard a lot of complaints about that for a lot of years about how bad Democrats were when they were doing that,” said Plum. “Now we find that is happening in many committees across the Capitol, for example most recently the P&E Committee where they dispensed with the redistrict-

ing bills in one motion.”

LAST MONTH, the Privileges and Elections Committee dispatched more than two dozen constitutional amendments in a block vote despite objection from Democrats who wanted a recorded vote on each proposal. A few days later, freshman Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86) called a press conference to complain that Courts of Justice Chairman Dave Albo (R-42) killed her abortion rights bill without ever scheduling it for a hearing. Longtime members recall that Democrats did the same thing when they were in power. Majority Leader Kirk Cox recalls an experience he had as a freshman Republican in 1990, when he had his first bill before the Courts of Justice.

“I literally waited until 1 o’clock in the morning, then the chairman told me that my bill was going to subcommittee number five,” said Cox. “Everyone is chucking in the audience, and I ask why everyone was chuckling, and they tell me there is no subcommittee five.”

Perhaps the most infamous use of power was by longtime Democratic Leader Dickie Cranwell. Longtime Republicans say when Cranwell heard somebody on the other side of the aisle say something he did not like, he would hold up three fingers. When that happened, according to Republicans, the next three Republican bills would die — regardless of what they were about. This would include things like memorial resolutions honoring the lives of people who had

recently died.

“That’s a fairy tale,” said Cranwell, who has now retired from politics. “Now I could be difficult to deal with sometimes, but that three-finger thing never happened.”

Speaker Howell and Leader Cox say they saw it happen, and Cranwell’s three-finger salute is legend in the halls of the Capitol. But it may also be a myth, depending on who is telling the story. One feature of Democratic rule that everyone agrees on, though, is the late-night meetings. Democrats would often hold committee meetings that would stretch on well past midnight on many occasions. Republicans say they believe that was a trick to wear people down, allowing them to kill bills simply because people wanted to go home and sleep. When they took power, they moved those committee meetings to early in the morning.

“In the early years, the only real difference between the Republicans being in control and the Democrats being in control is that when you had a 7 o’clock meeting it was at a civilized hour of 7 p.m. not 7 a.m.,” said Del. Vivian Watts (D-39). “While it may be just a matter of just a different lifestyle approach to things it does freeze out the public.”

Watts says nighttime committee meetings allow members of the public to travel to Richmond and testify, and she saw that happen regularly when Democrats were in power. Now that Republicans consider bills in early morning hours and kill bills in unrecorded votes, the public has been excluded from process because it’s much more difficult for people to come to Richmond at that hour. But timing is not the only change. Longtime members say there are larger changes in the political culture of both parties.

“On most issues, there was somewhat of a coalition of Republicans and conservative rural Democrats that would basically determine the outcome,” said Sen. Emmett Hanger (R-24), who served in the House from 1983 to 1992. “So I think it was not a liberal body at that time. It was actually a more congenial body.”

Ghost of Carter Glass

Meet state Sen. **Carter Glass** of Lynchburg. No, he’s not currently serving in the General Assembly. He was there more than 100 years ago. And is now infamous for creating the poll tax, an addition to the Virginia Constitution specifically designed to prevent blacks from voting. Fast forward more than a century, and Senate Democratic Leader **Dick Saslaw** says a modern-day constitutional amendment on voting rights essentially reinstates the poll tax by preventing people who haven’t paid court costs from voting.

“It’s kind of hard to deal with this topic without thinking about Carter Glass because he did this to keep the blacks from voting,” said Saslaw. “No other reason. That was it.

And he stated that.”

Saslaw was not alone. A handful of Democrats invoked the long-gone senator during a debate on rights restoration. They say Republican-led efforts to prevent former felons from voting has a racial undertone because most former felons are black.

“Don’t invoke what happened in 1902 to try to stir up some emotions on this thing,” responded Republican Leader **Tommy Norment**.

The nod to Virginia history didn’t work. Senators narrowly approved a constitutional amendment that would remove the ability of the governor to restore voting rights for people who have not yet paid court costs. Lawmakers say they should be able to make that decision, not the governor.

Abortifacient Debate

Before the General Assembly session started in January, Democratic Lt. Gov. **Ralph Northam** staged a press conference in Old Town Alexandria to announce a \$6 million pilot program that would use untapped federal funds to buy IUDs for low-income women. Democratic Gov. **Terry McAuliffe** included the funding in his proposed budget.

But then it hit a wall.

House Republicans did not include money for it in their budget, and the Senate’s budget includes \$3 million for an implantable contraceptive device but not IUDs. Some of the opposition say IUDs essentially cause abortions.

That’s not how IUDs work, says Northam, a pediatric neurologist.

“I think they don’t understand the sci-

ence,” said Northam. “They essentially prevent the sperm from ever meeting up with the egg. And so the egg is never fertilized because of the IUD.”

“Some have an abortifacient effect,” said **Jeff Caruso** with the Virginia Catholic Conference. “What that means is that they would work after fertilization to stop a newly conceived embryo from implanting in the uterus.”

Caruso said the abortifacient effect was only one reason for opposition to Northam’s proposal. He said critics are also concerned that the pilot program might make the contraception available to people under the age of 18. He also said free contraception for low-income people is already available at other locations, so he sees no need to increase availability.

— MICHAEL LEE POPE