



# Burke CONNECTION

The Rumi forum brought together Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin (right), co-pastor of Burke Presbyterian Church; Riham Osman, communications coordinator for the Muslim Public Affairs Council (left); and Temple B'nai Shalom's Rabbi Laura Rappaport (center).



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PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

The Rumi forum brought together Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin (right), co-pastor of Burke Presbyterian Church; Riham Osman, communications coordinator for the Muslim Public Affairs Council (left); and Temple B'nai Shalom's Rabbi Laura Rappaport (center).



Before a full room of mostly women, representatives of a variety of religions, Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin spoke first. The pastor used the anecdote of Jo Ann Robinson, the much lesser-known social activist who she said sat behind Rosa Parks at that fateful time when Parks demanded to sit in the front of the bus.

## 'Seeking That Which Unites Us'

Rumi Forum presents three religions' takes on women in faith and society.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**A**cross faiths and spanning generations, women have contributed to societies in different ways. But on May 3 at a panel discussion held at Temple B'nai Shalom synagogue in Fairfax Station, one of the goals was finding common threads.

Senior Rabbi Amy Perlin offered an introductory thought to the evening encouraging participants to "seek out in our hearts that which unites us."

The forum brought together Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin, co-pastor of Burke Presbyterian Church; Riham Osman, communications coordinator for the Muslim Public Affairs Council; and Temple B'nai Shalom's Rabbi Laura Rappaport.

**RUMI FORUM** for Interfaith Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding put on the event. Rumi's president Emre Çelik said they wanted to "bring everyone together and discover our concern."

Before a full room of mostly women, representatives of a variety of religions, Peery McLaughlin spoke first.

The pastor used the anecdote of Jo Ann Robinson, the much lesser-known social activist who she said sat behind Rosa Parks at that fateful time when Parks demanded to sit in the front of the bus.

Robinson's work to draft and distribute a letter of protest and set up a women's bus boycott was an example of "God quietly working." But working nonetheless.

Referencing examples from Islam, Peery McLaughlin said, "we can all tell stories of how women were relegated to silent work.

"God is not tied up into specific ways of working," she said. Christian women, she

said, have shaped history, playing within the rules of silence.

Riham Osman explained a little about her work, how she was not a religious leader like the other two panelists, but someone who spent most of her day on social media tracking and countering negative stereotypes about Muslims, as well as highlighting positive ones.

But Osman said she, like most Muslims, grew up with stories of strong women in the faith including Asiya the Pharaoh's wife during the time of Moses, who hid her monotheistic beliefs from her husband, and Khadijah, first wife of the prophet Muhammad, who Osman said was an impressive businesswoman hiring men to work along trade routes.

"Today we can see more Muslim women going into corporate America," Osman said, which can still be linked back to the example set by Khadijah.

Learning from original Quran text, though, is an ongoing challenge and controversy, Osman said, due to translations that are both numerous and vary in content.

Rabbi Rappaport's anecdotes largely followed the previous pair's in terms of women in the faith leading in different ways than men.

Esther, the Jewish queen of the King of Persia Ahasuerus, also hid her religion from her husband, Rappaport said. The rabbi explained how Esther had a plan to save the Jewish Persians, but not like a "big, splashy military hero."

**FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATIONS** was a question-and-answer session with the audience. Burke resident and B'nai Shalom member Jim Sturim brought up some of the gender pronoun updates being made as part



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of reform Judaism, and asked what similar changes might be ongoing in Christianity and Islam.

Peery McLaughlin said she had previously used the "she" pronoun when preaching for Pentecost and many people loved it, but added (somewhat jokingly) that the real controversy comes out when it comes to modifying the song hymnals.

Osman said there haven't been sex-based changes to prayer services, but that in the Muslim community there is a movement of believers out of the mosques because they're not finding the relevance in practice and teaching that they're looking for. Osman called the movement "un-mosquing."

But rather than abandon practicing the faith, Osman said these people are finding "third spaces," gathering places where people feel they can be themselves and feel connections.



Esther, the Jewish queen of the King of Persia Ahasuerus, also hid her religion from her husband, Temple B'nai Shalom Rabbi Laura Rappaport said. She explained how Esther had a plan to save the Jewish Persians, but not like a "big, splashy military hero."

The conversation moved beyond gender to questions about the three faiths themselves. One participant asked how the different communities are counseling people around elections, and another about the violence and threats of violence currently being experienced in faith communities.

"It's hard to get it right," Peery McLaughlin said. "But it's a vulnerable and rich time to being doing this work. If we stick to traditions, there's truth in them. We have something to say."

Rabbi Rappaport added, "When the ground beneath us is shaking, faith communities are a great place to go. Judaism's core values... we'll continue to teach, the dignity of every human being."

Those we'll get people through whatever may come, she said.

For more information, visit [www.tbs-online.org](http://www.tbs-online.org) and [www.rumiformum.org](http://www.rumiformum.org).



# SPORTS



The West End boys rugby team plays Gonzaga in the Jesuit Classic.



The West End girls rugby team during Virginia Senior Night.

## SYC West End Rugby Going to Nationals

Both the Springfield boys' and girls' teams will be competing May 18-20.

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

The boys and girls high school rugby teams from Springfield have accomplished something pretty amazing — the Springfield South County Youth Club (SYC) West End Rugby teams will both be competing in the national championships next week. The boys will be going to Kansas City, Mo., May 18-20; and the girls to Elkhart, Ind., May 19-20. Last year, the boys won the National Tier 2 High School National Rugby Championship and they hope to do the same this year.

Jeff Rupp, who is Commissioner of the SYC and head coach of the boys high school team, said they will be trying to defend their title. "I'm really proud of these guys. We went last year and did really well and we're going to go back and defend our title," said Rupp. "These kids work hard and they're very coachable. We will be good representatives of Mid-Atlantic Rugby and Virginia Rugby. We're all excited about going. We just look forward to the opportunity."

He added, "We're one of the only clubs in the entire country where the boys and girls teams are going to nationals. So that's pretty remarkable."

The West End boys team consists of 45 players from about 15 high schools, but primarily West Springfield and Robinson Secondary. There are about 125 boys and girls on the high school and middle school teams combined. Some of the players have been playing together since elementary school and now they're high school seniors, so there are a handful of players ages 16 to 18 who have been playing for 10 years or more.

Rupp started the program in 2000; the boys high school rugby started in 2008, and the girls started in 2012. This season, the



The West End boys rugby team takes on Fort Hunt.



The West End girls rugby team plays in the Exiles Tournament.

boys beat Loyola Blakefield from Baltimore and West Shore United from Pennsylvania, losing to Fort Hunt in Alexandria. Across the state, they are ranked No. 3 overall; their national ranking is 25 or 30.

The boys team has won state titles three times — in 2010, 2011, and 2015. The girls team has won state titles four years in a

row — in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

**ON MAY 6**, the girls team, which is coached by Matt Estes, won their fourth consecutive state championship by a score of 117-0, by playing a combined Rugby Virginia mixed team consisting of other rugby teams from the state. Estes, of West Spring-

field, coaches the high school and middle school girls teams. When he started five years ago, he had eight players; now there are more than 50.

"I'm very proud of how hard they work and it shows, especially compared to other teams in Virginia and Maryland," said Estes. "To take a team from not even being in existence five years ago to going to three national championship tournaments is pretty awesome. I think it's a testament to how hard the girls work in the season and during the off season."

Estes added, "I think what makes me the most proud is the community they've made for themselves and how they literally welcome girls from different schools and different backgrounds," he said. "And this team has worked to create a place where everybody feels welcome on and off the field."

"Our girls are pretty good; they are the best team in Rugby Virginia and nobody else can come close," said Rupp. "They've been to nationals twice and are going back a third time. They haven't won a (national) championship. The best they finished in previous trips was third. They're going back this year and will be very competitive."

Joseph Adase of Springfield has played boys rugby for 15 seasons, since he was 8. He played during the spring and summers for the SYC middle school and high school teams. In just the last three weeks, he's gone to the Exiles and Jesuits tournaments.

"By going to those tournaments, the kids get great competition," said his father Jim Adase. "It gives them great preparation to play at the national level competition." The West Springfield High senior was recently accepted to play rugby for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, where he'll be reporting to on June 26.

Bret Stevenson, 15, of Burke has been playing lock for one year with West End. The Robinson Secondary student says he is excited to be going to nationals. "We've put in a lot of work this season. I feel like we've got something to prove since we've lost states. We won nationals last year and we need to defend that title."

Head Captain Joshua Thorne, 18, of West

SEE RUGBY, PAGE 10



## NEWS

# Walking and Aware

Event urges more communication on sexual violence.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**F**our-hundred ninety-seven. That's the number of sexual assaults estimated to have occurred but that went unreported in Fairfax County last year. According to FCPD, police received 276 actual reports of sexual assault in 2016, almost 17 percent more than the previous year.

Police say a little more than half the reported assault cases have been closed successfully; but the unreported cases remain a challenge, and an opportunity.

Awareness and community engagement have been stressed again and again by FCPD and its chief Edwin Roessler. To raise community awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault, vehicles in the FCPD, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue, and Sheriff's Office will all be adorned with teal ribbon magnets to support and remember victims of sexual assault.

And on Saturday April 29, Fairfax County first responders joined the county's Office

For Women and Domestic Violence Services at their third annual "Stop the Silence, Walk to End Sexual Violence" event, held at the Government Center in Fairfax.

"We want to stop the silence, stop the shame," said Yolanda Thompson, a program manager for the Office for Women. Speaking on the stigma that often keeps people from discussing sexual assault or domestic violence with each other, or reporting it to police, she said, "We don't do this to other victims of crime."

Sexual assault happens to people regardless of their age, sex or gender, Thompson said. That's why a theme for the walk was "Engaging New Voices," bringing in men to the discussion as well as women, seniors, teenagers.

Capt. David Smith, commander of FCPD Major Crimes division, said when he first came in as an officer and heard a tape of a sexual assault taking place, he wanted nothing to do with such a "horrific" crime.

But 15 years later, Smith found himself working with the sex crimes unit. The passion and love his colleagues had for their work, Smith said, helped make the job the "best ever."

"[Sexual assault] is not supposed to be talked about," Smith said. "That's been the problem."

**BEFORE THE WALK** kicked off that Sat-



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

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urday morning, the roughly one-hundred attendees visited information tables containing health resources from crisis counselors to mosquito-fighting.

To get everyone warmed up for the am-bulating, Maricarmen Smith led a brief Zumba dance class. Smith's mother Gretchen Soto, another Office for Women program manager, kicked off the walk with Thompson.

The walkers followed a route around the back side of the government center and



**Capt. David Smith, commander of FCPD Major Crimes division, said when he first came in as an officer and heard a tape of a sexual assault taking place, he wanted nothing to do with such a "horrific" crime.**

lasted about half an hour. Finishing back near the front of the complex, they walked past 497 small flags pushed into the ground: one for each of the estimated unreported sexual assault cases from 2016.

For more information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofw/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofw/). FCPD encourages anyone who may be experiencing abuse of any type to "Make the Call." There is a 24-hour hotline for domestic violence and sexual assault victims available at 703-360-7273.

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## Troubled History of Voter Disenfranchisement

BY DAVE MARSDEN  
STATE SENATOR (D-37)



### COMMENTARY

Virginia has a troubling history of disenfranchising voters based on criminal convictions and failing to restore those rights when disenfranchised citizens have completed their sentences. In the recently completed 2017 session of the General Assembly, Republican Sen. Tommy Norment introduced a constitutional amendment (SJ 223) that would have allowed for the restoration of voting rights for violent felons (which includes burglary and certain drug offenses) after release from prison, a five-year waiting period, and the payment of all fines, fees, and restitution. Democratic opposition argued that these unpaid monies constituted a modern version of the poll tax. Though poll tax laws are no longer on the books, Virginia has one of the nation's most extreme policies restricting the voting rights of criminal offenders and one of the most racially disproportionate, with more than one in five black adults barred from voting due to a criminal conviction.

As Sen. Norment presented this amendment on the floor of the Senate, an interesting debate broke out in the chamber recalling the 1901-02 Virginia Constitution. GOP lawmakers argued, accurately, that the 1901-02 Constitution had the same felony disenfranchisement requirements that existed before the Civil War. What escaped Republican notice was that in 1876 petit larceny — minor property theft — was added to the constitution as a disenfranchising offense. The purpose was to entrap landless and impoverished African Americans who were caught stealing small items such as farm animals, including chickens. The 1876

amendment mirrored the notorious “pig laws” passed in Mississippi that same year. Virginia justified its new law under the generally held concept that “chicken stealers were so poor that they could not support their families, lacked moral character, and as they lacked economic citizenship they were underserving of political citizenship.” Though felony disenfranchisement had been the tradition, petit larceny was slipped into the constitution in 1876 as a means to specifically disenfranchise African Americans. That some whites would be caught up in this disenfranchisement was an acceptable tradeoff, as African Americans were already in prison at five times the number of whites. Anyway, whites with criminal convictions could apply for gubernatorial restorations of voting rights; governors generally refused such restorations for African American applicants.

The Republican argument had been that felony disenfranchisement in the 1838 Constitution, which predated the Civil War, proved that it was a race-neutral concept because this constitutional provision was included when only whites were allowed to vote. However, the clear attempt at disenfranchisement by petit larceny made clear that their assertion was inadvertently disingenuous. In the 1889 gubernatorial race, lists of police records were sent to precinct polling officials to be used in excluding black voters.

The following is excerpted from the *Washington Bee*, a newspaper at the time (1889):

[I]t is enlightening that in the 3rd Precinct over 600 blacks waited in a “blacks only” voting line and 900 blacks waited in line in the

4th Precinct. Voter intimidation ensued as men who were self-identified Republicans and blacks were met with challenges such as “I believe you have been convicted of stealing.” Even when denied, the charge led to being taken out of line and arrested for “impudence” if an argument ensued. Black voters were queried on the constitution for 20-25 minutes to slow the lines. Lists of black voter police records were on hand to deny voting. They were mailed to registrars. Voters were delayed for hours as they inched forward in the lines and many could no longer wait and went home.

The “whites only” line, it was reported, moved smoothly.

Virginia has a long pattern of using criminal conviction as a means of disenfranchising African Americans. Petit larceny was in our constitution in 1876, continued in the 1902 constitution, until removed in the 1971 version. It was added to exclude African Americans from voting. There are undoubtedly Virginians alive today who had lost the right to vote because of a conviction for petit larceny. Our prison system still has five times as many African Americans incarcerated as whites. We do not need a constitutional amendment that complicates who can and cannot vote in our commonwealth. The rule should be simple: regardless of your offense, if you are in prison you cannot vote; if you are out of prison you are entitled to vote. This standard would be consistent with the majority of other states. Virginia's history with voting rights is simply too troubling to put forth a new constitutional amendment that will continue to disadvantage African Americans.

*Special thanks to Professor Pippa Holloway of Middle Tennessee State University, and Helen Gibson of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service whose source material was used for this article.*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Taking Exception on Medicaid Expansion

To the Editor:

Col. Krisinger's dismissal of the proposal to approve the Medicaid expansion proposed by state Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) is exceedingly short sighted (Connection, May 4-10, 2017). His position is typical of some who have a fully funded “government assisted” health care plan.

The proposed Medicaid expansion is a program by which the citizens of Virginia can gain a benefit from the taxes that they have already paid. There is no added cost to the taxpayer. This is Federal tax revenue that is returned to the state for the use of the citizens. The State's earlier refusal to accept

this money allowed it to go to other recipients in other states. It did not reduce the tax burden for Virginia citizens' one iota.

What better use of tax revenue is there than to provide a direct benefit back to the citizens in need? This is a better use of my tax dollars than the extravagant “federal assistance” for bombs and bullets dumped in desert wastelands or the building of a border wall that will never accomplish its intent.

**E. Tracy Schonrock**  
Fairfax Station

## Unnecessary Alarm

To the Editor:

Recent rhetoric and editorials dealing with health care policy in the United States lead to confusion and unnecessary alarm by bringing together two topics: health in-

surance coverage; and pre-existing conditions. Health insurance does two things: reduces cost for the policy holder by means of the discounts insurance companies achieve through volume buying; and, (like insurance in general) assists the policyholder deal with the financial consequences of something very bad which might, or might not, happen. A pre-existing condition, however, is something bad that has already happened.

For pre-existing conditions the health care policy question should be, how to pay for treatment rather than how to coerce insurance companies to pay. Health insurance policies covering pre-existing conditions (e.g. diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure) are widely available. Paying for pre-existing catastrophic conditions (e.g. organ transplant; cancer; multiple sclerosis) is another matter. Forcing insurance compa-

nies to take on the cost of treatment for all afflictions, regardless of scope, and spreading these costs through the premiums paid by healthier people, plus tucking in a few government subsidies, is one way (as in Obamacare). There are other ways to pay for treating these catastrophic conditions. The recent healthcare bill passed by the House of Representatives offers an alternative way.

Most people in the United States do not suffer from catastrophic health conditions. Those of us whom God made more fortunate in our health have a responsibility to help those less fortunate. I hope your newspaper will avoid partisan rhetoric and instead foster informed discussion leading to a national policy on how to help the minority who can not pay for the treatment of a catastrophic health condition.

**Allan Ruppard**  
Reston

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## NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The candidates spoke of their personal backgrounds, the issues most important to them, and why they are running for office.

### Democratic Women of Clifton Host Forum

More than 200 Democrats came together at the Town Hall in Clifton for the Annual Democratic Forum on April 30. Attendees got to meet and greet, listen, and ask questions of gubernatorial candidates Ralph Northam and Tom Perriello; Lieutenant Governor candidates Justin Fairfax, Susan Platt, and Gene Rossi; and seven Northern Virginia Democratic candidates for the House of Delegates: Donte Tanner (40th District), Tilly Blanding and Kathy Tran (42nd District), Hala Ayala and Ken Boddye (51st District) and Hannah Risheq and Latifa Lyles for John Carey ( 67th District).

The candidates spoke of their personal backgrounds, the issues most important to them, and why they are running for office.

Audience members spoke of the challenge of picking the best candidates among those they heard. Chair Jane Barker urged attendees to work for their candidates and to rally behind those who win the primaries.

All Democratic women in Northern Virginia are invited to join Democratic Women of Clifton. For more information about activities, meetings, or membership, write [cliftonwomendems@aol.com](mailto:cliftonwomendems@aol.com) or visit [www.democraticwomenofclifton.org](http://www.democraticwomenofclifton.org).

### Party at Main Street

Main Street Child Development Centers' Family Game Night and Volunteer & Donor Appreciation Night was held April 27. More than 150 family members, donors and volunteers enjoyed an evening of pizza and game playing. The



center, located in the City of Fairfax, provides comprehensive early childhood education programs and support services to empower children between the age of 2-5, and their families, regardless of their financial circumstances.



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PHOTO BY BECKHA DRAKE PHOTOGRAPHY

From left: Gabriel Kim of Fairfax, and his brothers Sam and Jonah help Ben and Bree Drake of Burke hold the Salamander Savers 4-H banner May 6 in a pavilion at the Hidden Pond Nature Center in Springfield, as they cleaned up after their Salamander Saturday 2017 exhibit.



PHOTO BY BECKHA DRAKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Virginia Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) expresses pride May 6 in her constituents who advocate for causes in which they believe at the Salamander Saturday 2017 public awareness event in Springfield at the Hidden Pond Nature Center. She said she was impressed by Salamander Savers 4-H when they visited her office in Richmond last winter.

## ME & MY MOM

Noah, Selah and mom Margo, of Burke, enjoy the cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin.



Burke Centre resident Erin Morrissey-Lauer and daughter Anna, 11, take in the sights at Zoo Lights at the National Zoo last December.



Mommy (Cat Sethian) and son (Mason Parker) snuggled up in the gorgeous weather this past Thanksgiving 2016. Film photograph taken by cousin, Sara Kubida.



BECKHA DRAKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Bree Drake of Burke examines a macro invertebrate as Ethan Talbot of Fairfax waits to take a peek of the specimen they found in a stream monitoring demonstration Saturday morning at the Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield.



BECKHA DRAKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Ben Drake of Burke studies a critter he found May 6 in Pohick Creek at Salamander Saturday 2017.



Burke Centre resident Erin Morrissey-Lauer and daughter Sadie, 7, enjoy breakfast out during a snow day from school this winter.

# Fairfax Teens to Virginia Assembly: Protect Salamanders

Goal is to name the Shenandoah Salamander as state amphibian for the Commonwealth.

BY MARTI MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

Rain did not dampen the spirits of three Fairfax youth and their friends Saturday morning as they showed visitors of a county nature preserve how a small amphibian helped the environment.

Brothers Gabriel, Jonah and Samuel Kim — plus members of their conservation club Salamander Savers 4-H — held their second consecutive Salamander Saturday event in Springfield May 6 as an annual public awareness initiative about these small lizard-like creatures.

Participants gathered in a pavilion overlooking Hidden Pond and looked at information boards designed by club members. A Spotted Salamander and Marbled Salamander, rescued in the larval stage and raised by Hidden Pond Nature Center site manager Mike McCaffrey, were guests of honor.

Kids also gloved-up and gained hands-on experience of how naturalists and soil scientists conduct stream monitoring efforts in the Pohick Creek.

Jonah Kim, 13, has been interested in salamanders since early childhood. Two years ago, he witnessed a fish relocation at a neighborhood lake in need of dredging and rehabilitation. He noticed

county parks officials saved the fish but no one did anything about the amphibians left behind.

“What about the salamanders,” is the question he asked, then formed a new environmental cause. He leads the group as president of Salamander Savers 4-H.

**THE BROTHERS KIM** did their homework and built a website at [www.savethesalamanders.weebly.com](http://www.savethesalamanders.weebly.com) to show pictures and share papers they wrote to explain the purpose of this amphibian and why its habitat should be protected.

Their journey as Salamander Savers 4-H is part of their home school education. So far, they have learned community activism is hard work and a long process of creating public awareness.

And meetings.

Their club — chartered last year by the 4-H youth development organization — welcomes children ages 8-18 and meets each month at various locations. The group traveled recently to Richmond to meet with lawmakers about their organization. They also meet in the field to clean up local lakes and conduct stream monitoring of Sideburn Run in Fairfax — a dirty stream they cleaned up and helped maintain for the county.

Besides working with his older brothers, Sam enjoys his job as treasurer.

“I like doing the funds,” the 11-year-old said at Salamander Saturday 2017. His duties include filling out forms and processing paperwork, including a \$100 donation they received last winter from the Woman’s Club of Fairfax.

“It’s just math,” he simply states. Sam also is the graphic designer behind the annual Salamander Day event poster and the club T-shirts that sport a spotted salamander logo he illustrated.

His older brother, Gabriel, 15, is club secretary and prefers to run the education program of Salamander Savers 4-H.

“Just basically teaching people about it” is his favorite part. He says the club will lobby Virginia General Assembly again next year. Their objective is simple: Name the Shenandoah Salamander as the state amphibian.

**THIS EFFORT** has helped club members learn the nature of politics in that all decision makers do not agree on one particular species to call state amphibian.

“Everyone we go to has a separate choice for salamander,” ex

SEE SALAMANDERS. PAGE 15

## PHOTO GALLERY!

“Me and My Dad”

To honor dad on Father’s Day, send us your favorite snapshots of you with your dad and The Connection will publish them in our Father’s Day issue. Be sure to include some information about what’s going on in the photo, plus your name and phone number and town of residence. To e-mail photos, send to:

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## SPORTS

# Rugby Boys, Girls Go National

FROM PAGE 4

Springfield plays the scrum half position. The senior at West Springfield High has been playing West End rugby for six years and is a little nervous about going to nationals. "If everybody works together and does the simple things we were taught, it shouldn't be too difficult," he said. He has a rugby scholarship to play at Mount St. Mary's University next fall and will be traveling to New Zealand to train for more experience.

Andrew Pata, 18, of Springfield has been playing on West End rugby for four years. The West Springfield High senior is excited about going to nationals, where he'll be playing wing and inside center. "It's an amazing opportunity to go back and defend our title. I've been working on this for three months," he said.

**ON THE GIRLS SIDE,** Elizabeth Wilson, 17, of Springfield has been playing tackle rugby since seventh grade. The West Springfield High student said she is thrilled to be going to nationals. "I'm nervous but I'm also excited to see the high level of play there, and see how our team competes against such high level teams," she said.

Andrea Garcia, 18, of Springfield attends West Springfield High and plays the second row. "There's going to be a lot of teams competing against us. Hopefully we'll be prepared for what we're training for and the outcome will be in our favor," she said.

Joshua's sister Lindsey Thorne, 16, plays wing and scrum half and attends West Springfield High School.

"Honestly, I just think the whole team's been working really hard this year. Going to so many tournaments has helped prepare us for nationals. I think we've come far as a team this year," she said.

Lindsey's dad Richard Thorne, whose other child Joshua is the boys' team captain, said, "Rugby is a unique sport where everybody plays regardless of what team you're on; you're a brotherhood or a sisterhood. The closeness that the kids build is amazing. They love each other as brothers and sisters."

He said Joshua has changed since he began playing, and rugby took him to a different place. "When Joshua started off, he wasn't a confident kid. Within six years, he gained leadership skills and unbelievable self-confidence. He's developed the love for rugby because of the team and the atmosphere," he said.

Some of the Virginia All-Star boys include Logan Emery, Joseph Adase, and Joseph Brody. The All-Star girls include Elizabeth Wilson and Abby Tobias, who are also U.S. All-Americans and will be competing on the international level, playing teams from Canada.

**THE WEST END RUGBY** held a fundraiser at the Fair Winds Brewery in Lorton on Sunday, May 7, for their trip to the nationals. In order to attend, the SYC is trying to raise \$35,000 for the cost of airfare, hotels, rental vans, and meals. The players have contributed \$700 each thus far. If you would like to help with the cause, make contributions to: [www.youthleaguesusa.com/syc/16-17/Donation.html](http://www.youthleaguesusa.com/syc/16-17/Donation.html)



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**The ropes course Go Ape opened in the area of Springfield behind South Run RECenter on May 4. It features ziplines, suspended obstacles and Tarzan swings as part of the treetop adventure.**

## Go Ape Ropes Course Opens at South Run

Twenty to 40 feet in the air, people are traversing the trees in South Run Park.

The ropes course Go Ape opened in the area of Springfield behind South Run RECenter on May 4. It features ziplines, suspended obstacles and Tarzan swings as part of the treetop adventure.

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) was on-hand for the park's ribbon-cutting, and even harnessed up and took to the trees himself.

Cost for a two-to-three-hour session ranges from \$38 for children aged 10 to 15, and \$58 for ages 16 and up.

For more information, visit [www.goape.com](http://www.goape.com).

— TIM PETERSON

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## Walk-In Closet Design Ideas

From chandeliers to luxury seating, the options are plentiful.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

When an Old Town Alexandria couple decided to remodel their master bedroom suite, they wanted to pay particular attention to the room's two walk-in closets. Designer Gene Delgado of Hopkins & Porter Construction, Inc., in Potomac, Md. was tasked with overhauling the spaces to give the couple the maximum amount of storage for their clothing and accessories.

"We ordered a storage system from Poliform, an Italian luxury modern furniture brand, that does exquisite closet systems," said Delgado. "The closet spaces are very modern with lots of built-in lighting. Because of the angled ceilings ... we are designing a cabinet for shoe storage and some shelving for purses and luggage. I'm doing a chandelier for the wife's closet to make it warmer and more feminine."

With available accessories ranging from elaborate lighting to luxury seating areas, there's no need to settle for a closet that

looks like a cross between a laundry room and a landfill. When it comes to walk-in closets, the options for creating a dream space are plentiful say designers.

"Closets are no longer utilitarian spaces for your clothes. People want their closets to be beautiful," said Delgado. "The trend is that they are bigger, more beautiful and more luxurious. Those with large spaces can have everything from coffee makers to seating areas."

When beginning the design of a closet space, Julia Walter, showroom manager at Italian design firm Boffi, advises clients to make an inventory list of items that will go inside such as long-hanging clothing foldable clothing and shoes.

"What plays into the inventory list is how the client prefers to use their closets," she said. "For example, do they mostly hang or do they fold clothes. It's helpful to see what the client's closet looks like currently [and] works and what doesn't."

A combination of small and large drawers is important for the different items to store, says Walter. For example, small drawers can hold items like jewelry, underwear and socks while larger drawers can hold items like scarves or exercise clothes."

"I like to use the upper most shelves in closets for bulky storage like luggage, hat

cases [and] for items that are either not used too much or are seasonal," said Walter. "Open shelves are great for display of shoes and handbags."

Invest in a full-length mirror and install it behind the door or on an open space that won't take away from storage, advises Allie Mann, designer, senior interiors specialist with Case Design/Remodeling, Inc.

"Use every inch of a closet space for storage. There may be small niches that are perfect for scarves, handbags [and] belts," she said. "Build in shoe shelving if possible. Keeping shoes off the floor gives a more organized look to the space. If you want to keep shoe boxes, be sure to label them with photos of the shoes inside so you don't have to open every box to find the pair you're looking for."

For those with a generous budget, Interior Designer Todd Martz, co-owner of Home on Cameron in Old Town Alexandria advises investing in a lighting system for viewing clothing and distinguishing colors.

"Add pullout shelves and rods to organize outfits. [Add] drawers with glass inserts to see contents," he said. "Group accessories [like] belts and purses by color for easy access."

Accessories that Walter recommends adding to a walk-in closet include belt hang-



PHOTO ANGIE SECKINGER/BOFFI GEORGETOWN

**Open shelving for storing shoes and handbags are among the features that designer Julia Walter recommends for walk-in closets.**

ers, tie hangers, jewelry drawers and safes. "If space allows, a center island is a great feature for getting dressed and showcasing certain items," she said. "Before a night out, [for example] a gown and shoes can be displayed."

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# Celebrating Beethoven

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

One of the most celebrated of Beethoven's symphonies, Symphony No. 9 with its famous "Ode to Joy" choral will be performed by the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) in a special evening. The FSO is observing its 60<sup>th</sup> year as a leading Fairfax County arts institution.

Why will it be special evening? The "Ode to Joy" performance will include a collaboration with other major Fairfax County-based performing arts gems – the Fairfax Choral Society and the Music & Arts Chorus combining for the "Ode to Joy."

Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> has "a clear message of a common humanity in his 'Ode to Joy,'" said Christopher Zimmerman, music director, FSO. The symphony was written as Beethoven grappled with deafness, adding "an extra dimension to appreciating his extraordinary achievements and the nature of his musical expression."

"It is a good thing for enriching the artistic life of a community if its arts organizations are able to work together and collaborate on projects," added Zimmerman. "It will bring out the best in each organization. It can produce something new, and it helps bring all arts to a wider audience."

The full evening of Beethoven will also include the FSO performing Beethoven's Symphony No. 1. By performing both Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 and No. 9 in one concert an audience "will be able to hear the extraordinary artistic evolution of this com-

## Where & When

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra with the Fairfax Choral Society and the Music & Arts Chorus in performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 at George Mason University, Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performance: Saturday, May 13 at 8 p.m. Tickets \$24, \$39, \$53. Call 888-945-2468 or visit [www.fairfaxsymphony.org](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org). Pre-Performance discussion at 7 p.m. with David Ginder of WETA 90.9-FM with FSO Conductor Christopher Zimmerman and special guests.

poser," said Zimmerman.

For the Fairfax Choral Society, now in its 55th year, "performing masterworks for chorus and orchestra" is always a high on the list of performances," said Doug Mears, artistic director. Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" is "one of the greatest in this genre and it is a privilege for our choruses to be able to perform it with the FSO. I hope our audience will experience ecstatic and exhilarating emotion."

Terry Stoneberg, director of music, Music and Arts Chorus described "Ode to Joy" as one of the most difficult works for chorus ever written. "Too often choruses are buried by the sheer volume of sound that an orchestra produces."

At the Center for the Arts performance, "the audience will not only be able to hear the combined choruses, they will feel the chorus singing through the orchestra and get a sense of the excitement and power that Beethoven wrote into this piece."

This is a rare evening with some of Fairfax County's finest performing artists working together for a stirring connection with Beethoven's greatness.

Send notes to the Connection at [connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/) or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication at noon. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

## ONGOING

**Adventures in Learning.** Each Wednesday through May 10, 9:15 a.m.-1 p.m. at United Baptist Church, 7100 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Each Wednesday starts with gentle seated yoga at 9:15. Lectures from healthcare experts from 10:45-11:45. Discussion group 12-1 p.m. \$35 for all six weeks or \$10 each. Call SCAS 703-941-1419 or visit at [shepherdcenter-annandale.org](http://shepherdcenter-annandale.org) for more.

**Senior Line Dancing** 1-2 p.m. Little River Glen Senior Center 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8 week session. [barbriba@hotmail.com](mailto:barbriba@hotmail.com) 703-524-3739

**Fairfax Pets on Wheels New Volunteer Orientation** First Wednesday of each month. 7:30-9 p.m. 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. An orientation for new volunteers interested in visiting residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities with their approved pets through the Fairfax Pets On Wheels program is held the first Wednesday of every month starting at 7:30 p.m. Visit [www.fpow.org](http://www.fpow.org) for each month's location. Prior to attending, please complete the online application found at [www.fpow.org/volunteer](http://www.fpow.org/volunteer). Please do NOT bring pets to this

orientation. Also, see weather policy for possible cancellations. [www.fpow.org](http://www.fpow.org), 703-324-5424 or [dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov).  
**Carolina Shag.** Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. [nvshag.org](http://nvshag.org).

**FUN-Exercise** Thursdays, noon-12:50 p.m. Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. [moorefitt@yahoo.com](mailto:moorefitt@yahoo.com) or 703-499-6133.

**Exercise Program** Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m. year-round at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Rd. Fairfax. The exercises are for strength, balance and maintaining limberness. Contact SCFB office at 703-426-2824 for more information.

**Smoke Free Bingo.** 7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot (with breaks for smoking friends). [www.fairfaxvd.com](http://www.fairfaxvd.com). 703-273-3638.

**English Conversation Groups** weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries Practice and improve your English. Day and start times vary. Visit: [va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp](http://va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp)

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## MAY 5-13

**“The Music Man.”** Various times at Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. \$15 for adults, \$10 for children. Visit goodshepherdplayers.com or call 703-505-7434.

## FRIDAY/MAY 12

**Spring Concert.** 7:30 p.m. at St. Stephens United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road. The Maranatha Singers will present “Bon Voyage.” Free. Call 703-250-5013 for more.

## SATURDAY/MAY 13

**Burke Lake Golf Center Ribbon Cutting.** 10 a.m. at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Park Authority Board will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the \$6.6 million renovation of the Burke Lake Golf Center driving range. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/blgc/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/blgc/) or call 703-323-1641.

**BBQ and Car Wash.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at St George's United Methodist Church, 4910 Ox Road, Fairfax. 13th Annual Community BBQ and Car Wash. All proceeds go to fund missions-children at risk, feeding the hungry,

and family housing. BBQ meal \$10, family meal \$34, car wash by donations. Visit [stgumc.org/index.html](http://stgumc.org/index.html) for more.

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 17

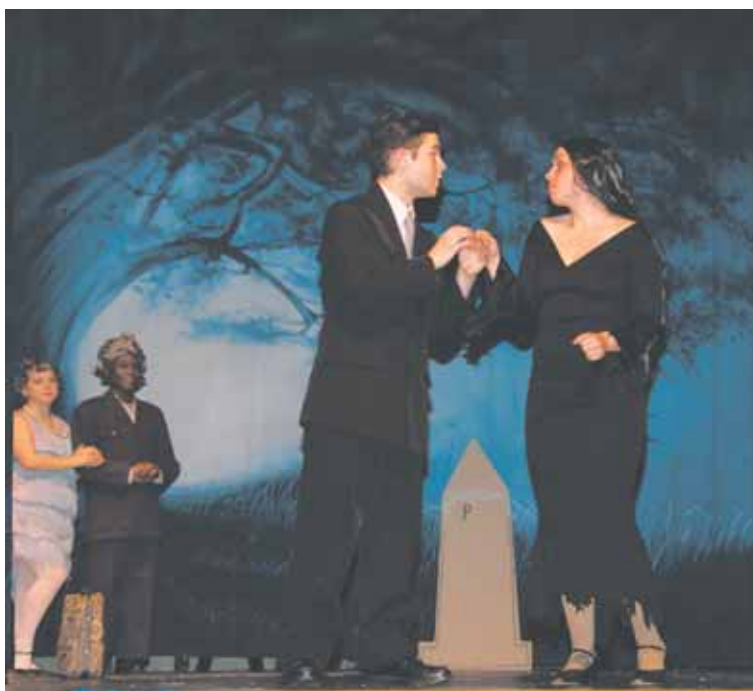
**Chamber Golf Classic.** 1 p.m. at Laurel Hill Golf Club, 8701 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton. Event is the main fundraiser for the Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund and will be capped at 120 golfers. Email [Info@MtVernon-LeeChamber.org](mailto:Info@MtVernon-LeeChamber.org) for more.

## THURSDAY/MAY 18

**Clifton Homes Tour.** 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane. Clifton Community Woman's Club presents annual tour of homes in Clifton and Fairfax Station. Silent Auction and Marketplace at Clifton Presbyterian Church. Proceeds donated to local scholarships and charities. \$25 in advance, \$30 day of tour, free to silent auction. Visit [www.cliftoncwc.org](http://www.cliftoncwc.org) for more.

**Fashion Show and Luncheon.** noon-2 p.m. at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. Proceeds to support support the Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke. \$30. Visit [www.scfbva.org](http://www.scfbva.org) for more.

**Burke Historical Society.** 7 p.m. at the Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax. The evening will feature Cindy Bennett speaking on “Camp Alger and a Local Epidemic.” In 1898, Camp Alger's poor sanitation led to typhoid and a disastrous relocation march. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events/) or call 703-256-3800.



## ‘The Addams Family’

Gomez, Morticia and the whole crew will be taking the stage for the South County production of “The Addams Family,” May 12-13 at 7 p.m. each night at at South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Visit [www.southcountytheatre.org](http://www.southcountytheatre.org) for more.

## FRIDAY/MAY 19

**Bike to Work Day 2017.** Registration — now open — is free and open to anyone who commutes in the region, from first timers to daily cyclists. All

registrants will be entered in a regional bicycle raffle, and the first 16,000 to register and attend will receive a free t-shirt at one of more than 85 pit-stops throughout Northern Virginia. Register online at [www.biketoworkmetrodc.org](http://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org). Email

Megan Goodman at [mgoodman@mwcog.org](mailto:mgoodman@mwcog.org), or call 202-962-3209.

**Family Movie and Dinner Night.** 6-8 p.m. at the Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. Hawaiian luau and watch the Disney film “Moana.” Free. Call 703-451-8223 or visit [sydenstrickerumc.org/movienight](http://sydenstrickerumc.org/movienight).

## SATURDAY/MAY 20

**Antique Car Show.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St. The show is presented by Northern Virginia Regional Group of the Early Ford V-8 Club and the city. Call 703-273-6097 or visit [nvr.org](http://nvr.org) for more.

**Hope and Health Festival.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Lorton Park, 9518 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Free health screenings, food, inflatables, children's games and activities will be available to all in attendance. Visit [www.lortonaction.org](http://www.lortonaction.org) for more.

**Map and Compass Reading.** 11 a.m.-noon at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Mark Chapin, the founder of the Mountaineer Wilderness outdoor program, an Air Force veteran and graduate of the Wilderness Survival School and Sea Survival School will be sharing his knowledge with teens and adults. \$10. Call 703-323-6600 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burkelakepark/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burkelakepark/) for more.

## SUNDAY/MAY 21

**Ensemble Gaudior Concert.** 4-5 p.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Chamber music from the classical era on period instruments including a reproduction of Mozart's piano. Free. Email [foma@standrews.net](mailto:foma@standrews.net) for more.

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## Announcements

## COMMUNITY



PHOTO COURTESY OF FRED ZAMON

On April 30, a group of L4 Swimming masters swimmers joined blind teammate Michelle Duquette at Burke Racquet & Swim Club for the third annual "Swim Like Michelle" fundraiser to benefit the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

## 'Swim Like Michelle'

### Fundraiser supporting Foundation Fighting Blindness held in Burke.

It can be hard enough just to swim in a straight line. Michelle Duquette does it blind. On April 30, a group of L4 Swimming masters teammates joined her in the experience as part of the third annual "Swim Like Michelle" fundraiser. Proceeds go to the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Duquette had sight until she was 13, when she

began losing her vision. Less than 10 years later, she was completely blind.

Now more than a decade after that, she continues to train in the pool at Burke Racquet & Swim Club, with her mother Bobbe tapping her softly with a tennis ball-capped cane to let her know she's come to the end of a length.

To experience something akin to blindness while swimming, Duquette's teammates put on blacked-out goggles and attempted to swim a relay race with two teams competing.

For more information, visit [www.blindness.org](http://www.blindness.org).

— TIM PETERSON



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Bobbe Duquette (right) taps a swimmer wearing blacked-out goggles during the third annual "Swim Like Michelle" fundraiser to benefit the Foundation Fighting Blindness.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FRED ZAMON

Bobbe Duquette (left) taps a swimmer wearing blacked-out goggles during the third annual "Swim Like Michelle" fundraiser to benefit the Foundation Fighting Blindness.



# Saving Salamanders

FROM PAGE 8

plained Anna Kim, of Fairfax, Feb. 15 at her sons' club meeting. She says state wildlife officials want to name the Marbled Salamander as the state amphibian and a lawmaker prefers the Eastern Hellbender of southwest Virginia.

The Virginia Herpetological Society posts a "Shenandoah Salamander for Virginia State Amphibian" logo on their website. The group lists 56 species that call the commonwealth home.

Two of them are state endangered species: Mabey's Salamander of Southeast Virginia and the Eastern Tiger, found in only three counties.

The Shenandoah Salamander is the only species endangered at both state and federal levels. Anna notes the natural habitat of this species is protected land at the Shenandoah National Park in Luray.

The fact this species is unique to Virginia is what appeals most to Salamander Savers 4-H, she admits. Another fact is this popular national park is visited by thousands of people each year.

Anna reports Salamander Savers 4-H has 135 supporters, who signed their online petition at change.org to name the Shenandoah Salamander as the state amphibian of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sign their petition online at [www.change.org/p/virginia-state-house-nominate-the-shenandoah-salamander-as-a-s-state-amphibian](http://www.change.org/p/virginia-state-house-nominate-the-shenandoah-salamander-as-a-s-state-amphibian) or simply type goo.gl/pQrf2V to get there faster.



PHOTO BY MARTI MOORE/THE CONNECTION

**Jonah Kim of Fairfax, president of Salamander Savers 4-H, demonstrates a photo prop at his club's annual public awareness event May 6 at the Hidden Pond pavilion.**

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## "Bulky Boy"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Is the nickname I gave Andrew, one of our male cats. It's because he's a bit portly, like his father, yours truly. However, Andrew's nickname is not the impetus for this particular column. The impetus for this column is my tendency, as the primary (almost exclusive) buyer of miscellaneous household goods and to a lesser extent, services, to buy in bulk/quantity, not necessarily quality; although that's a subject of a long-ago column and perhaps a future one as well — dare I cross that Rubicon again, and one that has earned me this identical nickname to Andrew.

As a cancer patient originally diagnosed as "terminal" — at age 54 and a half, eight-plus years ago, time becomes an integral/essential part of your life; what there is of it presently, what you have been told you have left of it and what you — in your wildest dreams, every day and every night, hope you actually get to do: live a relatively "normal" life expectancy.

Even though life has gone on years past my original "13-month to two-year" prognosis, I still struggle with the emotional yin and yang of whether I'm closer to the end or further from the beginning (date of diagnosis). And is so struggling, everyday decisions that might have a time element/time-sensitivity to them are complicated. Is it necessary to do it/buy it/obligate myself to it now when the benefit might be later? A later I might never see? If I'm trying to enjoy life in the present as much as possible to fend off the inevitable and relentless stress that a "terminal" cancer diagnosis imposes, then how does a future benefit help me now?

As a few examples and finally to the point of this column: buying in bulk. 240 dryer sheets — for two adults, one of whom works at home and doesn't exactly get dressed for it; 90 tall kitchen trash bags — we use one bag a week, and that includes bagging the cat litter for five indoor cats; paper towels — enough quantity that we could likely wrap them around our entire house if we had to; toilet paper — is sacrosanct, one can never have enough in stock; and tissues/Kleenex — given how frequently my eight-years-of-post-chemotherapy nose runs — constantly, is also sacrosanct (although I can always use toilet paper, paper napkins or paper towels in the pinch; not exactly the same pinch as if the toilet paper inventory runs out, however). Naturally, these items are all non-perishable so their life expectancy is not a consideration. But since mine is, sometimes I think I need to buy them or else, because when I do need them it will be too late.

As for perishables, obviously it makes little sense to overbuy (expiration dates notwithstanding, except mine). I can't eat all the food quickly enough anyway (another point of contention from a previous column), although I may try. But even I know, in my cancer-induced haze, that spending money now on an unpredictable future though penny-wise and beneficial in some emotional ways, might be pound-foolish. I need to feel good today - period, not feel good today about something I might benefit from tomorrow. I mean, how else am I even going to get to tomorrow? Don't I need to filter out potentially harmful/debilitating mental and physical images/impacts and try to live as unencumbered as possible (to invoke one of my deceased father's favorite words)? Cancer is already an uphill battle. If I don't want to live the legendary life of Sisyphus, pushing a figurative rock up a hill, only to have it fall back down time and again, I need to find a way/strategy to both manage my budget and control my mind. Obviously, I want to live like I have a future, but not at the expense of my present. You can call me "Bulky Boy" all you want, but "crazy-kookie" not so much.

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





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