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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax Holds Fido Fest

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Max, a Cocker Spaniel, and Riley, a German Shepherd, enjoy a dip in a pool while Pamela Cristi and her dad Carlos Cristi watch.

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University Drive Extension Public Hearing Is June 13

VDOT weighs in on the road's revised design.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The proposed extension of University Drive from Fairfax Boulevard to Eaton Place has not been particularly popular with either the Fairfax City Council or local residents. But changes have now been made to the design, VDOT has weighed in and City residents will have their say at the Council's June 13 public hearing.

The City's Comprehensive Plan recommends the road extension as part of an expanded roadway grid to provide more travel routes and better connectivity within the Northfax area. The initial proposal included new sidewalks, on-road bike lanes, lighting, landscaping and reconstruction of the traffic signal at the intersection of University Drive and Fairfax Boulevard.

The extension would have turn lanes on each side leading to Eaton and Fairfax Boulevard. And the alignment would travel through part of the existing Fairfax Shopping Center and car dealership. Although many people would like to walk from their University Drive neighborhood to a revitalized Northfax east area, they're worried about increased and speeding traffic and, therefore, pedestrian and bike safety on University Drive south of Fairfax Boulevard.

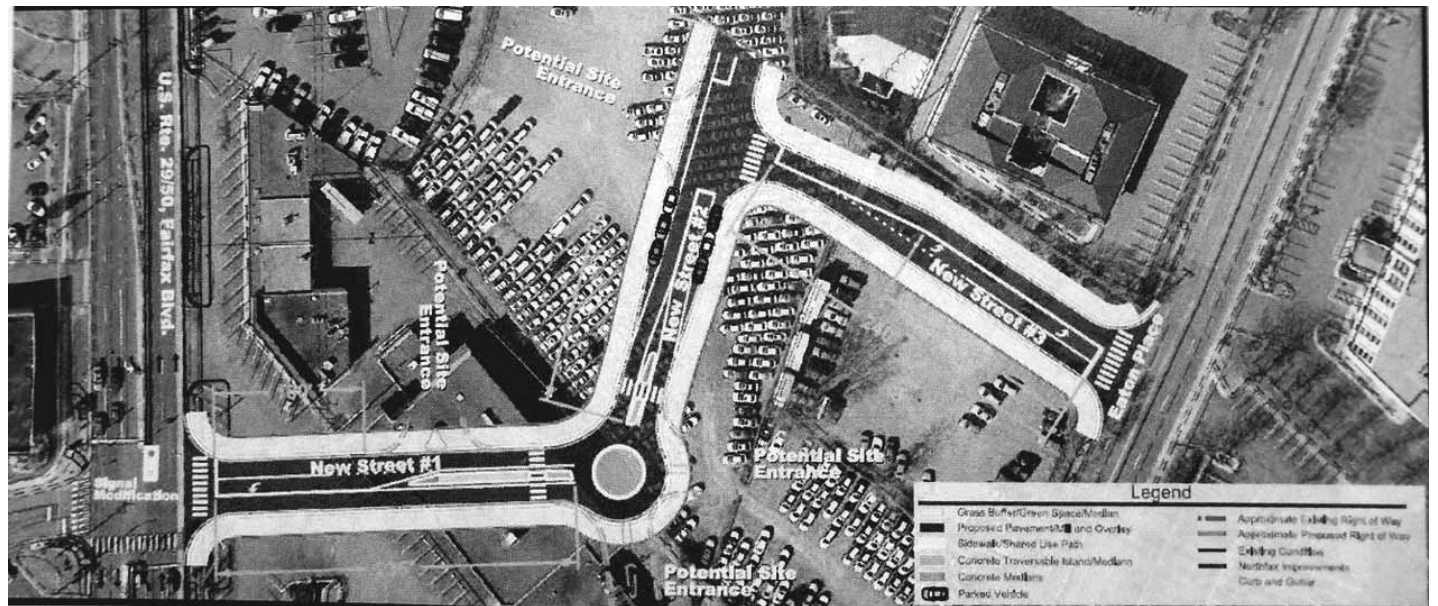
In January, Council members didn't approve the project, but voted to advance it to the 30-percent design stage. Doing so enabled them to receive more information before deciding whether to continue with the extension or cancel it.

As a result, VDOT evaluated five other design alternatives for the road. It then stated which alternatives fell within the guidelines under which the City received \$10 million in federal, Smart Scale funds for this project, and which didn't.

THESE ALTERNATIVES were:

- ❖ Adding a mid-block roundabout to provide traffic calming, mid-block;
- ❖ Offsetting the interchange to the west so it wouldn't be a through connection to University Drive south of Fairfax Boulevard;
- ❖ Including either full or half-channelized entrances on one or both ends of the extension to limit traffic going into and out of Northfax;
- ❖ Reducing the roadway to two lanes, removing the dedicated bike lanes and replacing them with on-street sharrows, and deleting the center two-way turn lane; and
- ❖ Adding a dog-leg bend in the road.

At City Council's May 23 work session on this issue, Transportation Director Wendy Block Sanford shared the results of VDOT's analysis of the design options. She said VDOT concluded that – because the new road must maintain connectivity with University Drive to the south – an offset inter-



Drawing showing the revised design of the proposed University Drive extension.

section or channelized entrances are not consistent with the City's stated intent on its original application for Smart Scale funding for this project. However, the other options – the roundabout, dog-leg or roadway reduction to two lanes – are acceptable.

"So we then worked on a revised design," she said. "We removed the on-street bike lanes and added a 10-foot-wide, shared-use, bike/pedestrian path. But we could change it; this is definitely a work in progress. We also added on-street parking in the center on what we're calling New Street No. 2." This configuration also removes the two-way center turn lane, provides mid-block traffic calming with a roundabout and offers access to adjacent parcels.

Brooke Hardin, director of Community Development and Planning, explained how this new design fits into the Comprehensive Plan. "The road could extend along the frontage of the Marriott Residence Inn and could turn at Fuddrucker's," he said. "And we have a Fairfax Shopping Center, 6-acre redevelopment proposal which, if approved, would fit in this area."

"The property central to Northfax would be bifurcated by this street, but it would leave enough of a parcel – roughly about 1.2 acres – to be developed," continued Hardin. "To the west, there are about 2.7 acres to develop; and if there were some [land] consolidation there, it could be a 4.5-acre site. There'd be about a 35-foot setback from Fairfax Boulevard for an easement."

In response, Councilman Jon Stehle said, "I think this is a great example of community engagement and the City and VDOT working together." And Councilman Dan Drummond asked what would happen to the \$10 million if the Council doesn't approve this project.

"It would go back into the Smart Scale project funding pool," replied Sanford. Jurisdictions must compete for Smart Scale money, and Sanford said Fairfax received most of its favorable scoring for this project "based on our land-use, environmental and economic-development issues."

Councilwoman Ellie Schmidt called the

redevelopment of Northfax "very important to the future of the City. But it will definitely increase traffic on the other end of University Drive, which still causes me concern."

"We forwarded this information to the property owners, and one responded, saying this is an improved design," said Sanford. "With a roundabout, people could enter the [Northfax] site without traffic backing up for someone turning left."

Schmidt asked if Fuddrucker's is going to rebuild and reopen, and Hardin answered, "As far as we know, they're proceeding with their application." A major road project is occurring nearby, but Public Works Director David Summers said, "We hope to have that part of Route 123 open for them by this winter."

MEANWHILE, Drummond asked for a new study of the potential traffic increase on University Drive south of Fairfax Boulevard, and Stehle agreed, as did Mayor David Meyer. Sanford said the roundabout should decrease it by making the connectivity less direct.

She also noted that, to take advantage of

the Smart Scale funds, the project must be awarded by Dec. 31, 2020. And Summers said the bid process would take about six months. Furthermore, he added, "It would take about one year to move the utilities and nine months to one year to acquire the necessary right of way."

"The public-hearing process could take four to six months, and six months from now would be the design public hearing," he continued. "This project would be done in 2021 and would take all that year to construct, and this road wouldn't be operational until 2022."

So, said Meyer, "We're talking almost five years before this road opens and would have any potential impact, positive or negative, on the traffic there."

In the immediate future, though, is the public hearing next Tuesday, June 13, during the Council's 7 p.m. meeting. Following the hearing, Council will consider approving or canceling the project. If approved, a design public hearing will be held at the 60-percent plan-development stage. The matter will then return to Council later on for awarding of the construction contract.

Fairfax Girl Scout Earns Pin

Molly McCracken doesn't sweat the small stuff these days as she prepares to graduate Fairfax High School June 15 then pursue a degree in education at Longwood University in Farmville, Va.

McCracken, 18, held a stress management workshop for 30 teenagers last year in the very room in which she received a new pin for her sash from Girl Scout Troop 4288 leader Andrea Loewenwarter on Sunday, May 21.

According to the Girl Scouts Nation's Capital council roster, Greater Washington boasts 59,425 Girl Scouts in grades K-12. Officials say more than 5,500 senior and ambassador Girl Scouts are eligible for scouting's top achievement —

the Gold Award — which few obtain due to an arduous seven-step process to meet strict guidelines of the GSCNC.

McCracken met the challenge, planned her project to design a mental health toolkit for stressed-out teens and joined an elite group of 159 ambitious students who worked last year to improve the lives of others. She received recognition from the Woman's Club of Fairfax, the Rotary Club of Fairfax, Daughters of the American Revolution, City of Fairfax Mayor David L. Meyer and U.S. Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-11). Read about her journey online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2016/mar/31/fairfax-teen-hold-stress-management-workshop/.

— MARTI MOORE

Three Republicans Running for Governor Offer Dueling Tax Plans

Cut taxes or raise taxes? GOP primary debate offers an unusual array of options.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

You know that old saying that nothing is certain in life but death and taxes? Here in Virginia, there's another certainty: Every year is an election year.

This year features a primary fight between three Republicans running for governor, each with his own separate and distinct tax plan.

"Well this is really more of a conversation than Republicans usually have about taxes," said Stephen Farnsworth is a professor at the University of Mary Washington. "You have a candidate willing to increase taxes, a candidate willing to abolish the income tax and then, I guess, the Goldilocks plan, which is in the middle."

The Goldilocks in this campaign is former Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie. Back in March, he outlined a proposal that would lower the state income tax rate on people who make more than \$17,000 a year from 5.75 percent to 5.15 percent. For someone making more than \$60,000 a year, that would mean about \$400 less in taxes a year. Gillespie's proposal relies on revenue growth rather than spending cuts to pay for the tax cuts.

"Our rates were set in 1972," said Gillespie during the one and only debate of the primary season. "They have not come down in 45 years, and other states around us have been moving."

The idea is classically Republican: cut taxes and predict that will turbo charge the economy, creating jobs in the process. It's the kind of trickle-down economics that fueled the rise of President Ronald Reagan back in the 1980s. Gillespie is selling the tax cut plan as a clean break from the last four years of Democratic leadership in the Executive Mansion, a move to the center right for a state that's sharply divided.

"It would also result in hard-working Virginians who have had stagnant wages but rising costs over the past three, four, five years when our economy has been stagnant having nearly \$1,300 more in our pockets to spend as we see fit."

ONE IDEA that's not classically Republican is raising taxes. But that's what state Sen. Frank Wagner (R-7) wants to do with the gas tax. He's proposing a plan that would raise the gas tax in an effort to raise money for building roads while avoiding high-cost tolls that have become prevalent in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads.

"I can't remember a Republican candidate for statewide office in Virginia running on a tax increase," said Quentin Kidd, a political science professor at Christopher Newport University. "And there probably aren't a dozen nationally in the last decade or two decades who have run on a tax increase like Frank Wagner is right now."

Meanwhile, Wagner is suspicious of Gillespie's tax proposal. Specifically he's critical of how it's been sold. For example,



Ed Gillespie

Age: 55
Experience: Chairman of the Republican National Committee and counselor to the President in the George W. Bush administration
Bachelor's Degree: The Catholic University of America
Place of birth: Mount Holly Township, New Jersey
Profession: lobbyist



Corey Stewart

Age: 48
Currently: Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Prince William County
Bachelor's Degree: Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service
Juris Doctorate: William Mitchell College of Law
Profession: attorney



Frank Wagner

Age: 61
Bachelor's Degree: U.S. Naval Academy
Military service: nine years in U.S. Navy
Place of birth: Ruislip, England
Profession: businessman

"Let me tell you something," Wagner said during the debate. "It's easy to say that when you're sitting here and you've never been in state government."

To solve the problem, Wagner is proposing raising the gas tax to pay for buildings roads. The proposal echoes an earlier era in Virginia politics, when Gov. Harry Byrd suggested using the gas tax as a way to finance building roads while avoiding debt. In Wagner's plan, raising the gas tax would avoid higher tolls on roads in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. Plus the proposal is built on a sliding scale, which would mean the tax would actually decrease when gas prices rise.

"We have an \$18 billion deficit in the Virginia Retirement System. We have a Rainy Day Fund for a recession that should be at \$2.4 billion. It's down to less than \$300 million right now."

REPUBLICANS USUALLY run on cutting taxes. And although Gillespie has a moderate plan for cutting taxes, another candidate in the race has an extreme proposal, one that some Republicans are calling unworkable. Prince William County Board of Supervisors Chairman Corey Stewart wants to eliminate the income tax.

"Virginia hasn't had a significant surplus in revenues, unanticipated unaccounted for revenues, in 10 years," said Stewart during the televised debate. "Ed's plan is completely dependent on that. It hasn't happened. It's a charade."

Stewart's solution? Ask state departments to identify how they would slash their budgets 30 percent, and then use those cuts as a menu to reduce spending.

"My tax plan is dependent on a cut in spending," he said. "We are going to reduce the rate from 5.75 percent to 4.75 percent in a single year."

Within a decade, Stewart says, the income tax would be eliminated altogether.

"That's wishful thinking," said Republican strategist Dan Scandling. "That's not going to happen because what are you going to replace it with? Are you going to do something on property taxes and push it all onto the localities? I don't think that's going to go over very well."

Top Gillespie Donors

- ◆ \$1.5 million from Let's Grow Virginia, a Henrico-based PAC, funded in part by Hilton Worldwide and Carly Fiorina's super PAC
- ◆ \$100,000 from Dwight Schar, a McLean-based homebuilder with NVR Homes
- ◆ \$50,000 from Florida-based private prison company GEO Group, which operates Lawrenceville Correctional Center, Virginia's only private prison
- ◆ \$50,000 from Edward St. John of the Maryland-based commercial real-estate agency St. John Properties Inc.
- ◆ \$40,000 from Richard DeVos of the Michigan-based investment management firm Windquest Group (husband of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos)

Top Wagner Donors

- ◆ \$205,000 from Wagner's Senate campaign committee, funded in part by the Virginia Senate Republican Caucus and the Republican Party of Virginia
- ◆ \$23,000 from William Magann of the Portsmouth-based concrete contractor W.F. Magann Corp
- ◆ \$10,000 from Stephen Ballard of the Virginia Beach-based general contractor S.B. Ballard Inc
- ◆ \$10,000 from Kenneth Allen Hall of the Virginia Beach-based Hall Pontiac GMC
- ◆ \$10,000 from Virginia Beach-based commercial real estate firm Pembroke Enterprises

Top Stewart Donors

- ◆ \$429,000 from Stewart's Prince William County committee, funded in part by the Republican Party of Virginia and the Republican Party of Prince William County
- ◆ \$35,000 from Christopher Ekstrom of the Texas-based private equity firm Ekstrom Properties LLC
- ◆ \$30,000 from Manassas-based information technology company Progeny Systems Corp
- ◆ \$20,500 from Charles Robbins of the Newington-based home health care company CR Associates
- ◆ \$10,000 from Ahmet Aksoylu, an Oakton-based Realtor with Aksoylu Properties

Gillespie's plan would save \$1,300 a year for families that make more than \$100,000 a year. But that's well under the median household income in Virginia, which is \$65,000. On the campaign trail, Wagner attacked Gillespie's plan as an irresponsible giveaway to the rich — one that isn't rooted in experience in government.

Board Names Superintendent Finalist

The Fairfax County School Board has selected Dr. Scott Brabrand as the finalist for the position of superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), pending final Board approval at its meeting June 8. Brabrand currently serves as the superintendent of the Lynchburg City Schools in Lynchburg. Brabrand previously worked at FCPS in several roles including assistant superintendent, principal of Fairfax High School, assistant principal, associate principal, and teacher.

Brabrand was selected as finalist following a nationwide search led by the firm of Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates. The board received input from parents, employees, and the community before candidates were brought forward. The board initially interviewed candidates in early February before nar-

rowing the field for second interviews. A committee of 19 staff and community members interviewed semi-finalists and provided feedback to the board prior to the finalist selection.

Brabrand earned his bachelor of science in foreign service degree in international economics from Georgetown University in 1990, and his master's degree in education from The George Washington University. In 2003, he completed his doctoral work in educational leadership and policy from Virginia Tech. Prior to joining FCPS as an employee, he served as volunteer at FCPS while working as assistant manager for Bell Atlantic.

Following Board approval, it is anticipated Brabrand will begin a four-year term on July 10.

Democratic Candidates for Governor Run to the Left

Two candidates try to ignore moderate records and repackage themselves as hardcore progressives.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Regrets? Candidates for the Democratic nomination for governor have probably got a few. But Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam has too few to mention. During a debate on NBC4 late last month, Julie Carey asked the lieutenant governor what kind of mistakes he's made that he regrets during a recent televised debate, Northam did not talk about his two votes for George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004. And he didn't talk about taking money from Dominion, the utility that wants to build controversial pipelines through the state.

"Well I tell you I don't really have any regrets, Julie," said Northam. "But what I did learn was when I started in Richmond in 2008 as a senator ..."

And then Northam told a story about his efforts to get a smoking ban passed in Richmond after initial opposition from Republicans. One of the old verities of political life in Virginia is that if you're explaining, you're losing. And the lieutenant governor was not about to start explaining his support for Republicans. And he wasn't about to start explaining the \$40,000 he's accepted from Dominion and its executives during his run for governor. So he changed the subject.

"Not sure that qualified as a mistake," responded Carey. "But let's try you Mr. Perriello on that."

That's when former U.S. Rep. Tom Perriello (D-5) talked about an issue that his critics have been focused on since the day he announced his candidacy earlier this year: a vote he made during his time in Congress to deny federal funding for abortions in taxpayer-subsidized health insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act. Supporters of Northam have been using Perriello's vote in favor of the Stupak-Pitts Amendment as a way highlight Northam's long history supporting women's reproductive rights.

"That amendment and the eventual compromise was highly restrictive, said Perriello during the NBC4 debate. "And in working with reproductive justice advocates since then understanding just how much of a step backwards it was in that space."

THAT EXCHANGE reveals a curious phenomenon in the race for the Democratic nomination this year. Both candidates are trying to run to the left, abandoning their previously moderate or even center-right positions on a number of issues. So which



Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam and former U.S. Rep. Tom Perriello (D-5) debate in Fairfax County.

Ralph Northam

Age: 57
Currently: Virginia's 40th Lieutenant Governor; previously served in the Virginia Senate
Bachelor's Degree: Virginia Military Institute
Medical Degree: Eastern Virginia Medical School
Place of birth: Nassawadox, Va.
Profession: pediatric neurologist

Tom Perriello

Age: 42
Served one term in U.S. Congress, Va. 5th district
Bachelor's Degree: Yale University
Juris Doctorate: Yale Law School
Place of birth: Ivy, Va.
Profession: attorney

Top Northam Donors

- ❖ \$200,000 from venture capitalist Michael Bills of Bluestem Asset Management LLC
- ❖ \$110,000 from Henrico-based Common Good VA, a committee set up by Gov. Terry McAuliffe in March 2014 to raise political donations during his time as governor
- ❖ \$77,000 from Thomas DePasquale of the software company Outtask LLC
- ❖ \$52,500 from Conrad Hall, retired president and CEO of Norfolk-based Dominion Enterprises
- ❖ \$50,000 from Washington-based DGA Action, a super PAC funded by Democratic Governor's Association

Top Perriello Donors

- ❖ \$500,000 from Sonjia Smith, Charlottesville philanthropist
- ❖ \$250,000 from George Soros of New York-based Soros Fund Management LLC
- ❖ \$230,000 from the New York-based activist network Avaaz Foundation
- ❖ \$125,000 from Alexander Soros, New York executive and philanthropist (son of George Soros)
- ❖ \$75,000 from Courtney Smith, financial advisor with New York-based East Rock Capital

candidate has a more difficult transformation? Opinions are divided. Virginia Tech political science professor Robert Denton says Perriello will have a more challenging time selling voters on his new progressive persona.

"He has to explain that at the time I wasn't countering my beliefs, attitudes or values related to abortion," said Denton. "But I was looking at my constituents in the Fifth Congressional District and therefore trying to represent them." Others aren't so sure. University of Mary Washington professor Stephen Farnsworth says Northam is in a more perilous position explaining his votes for Bush.

"The anger that you see among Democrats really I think is going to create a sense that the votes for Bush were more problem-

atic," said Farnsworth. "Perriello may be better able to explain away the very conservative nature of his old congressional district." Perhaps the more thorny issue for Northam is his position on the controversial pipelines Dominion wants to build in Virginia. Despite being asked multiple times on the campaign trail, the lieutenant governor has yet to take a stand one way or the other. Northam says the multibillion projects could create jobs and boost the economy. "Obviously we want the pipeline to be built with science and transparency," Northam said during the first debate in April. "We also need jobs in the commonwealth of Virginia."

Perriello has made his opposition to pipelines a centerpiece of his campaign, and he's pledged to reject campaign contributions from the utility. Perriello says all that money

Dominion plans to spend on the two pipelines in Virginia could be put to better use.

"I've opposed these two pipelines," he said during that first debate. "I believe for a fraction of that \$6.7 billion, we could put tens of thousands more people to work on clean energy, energy efficiency, localizing food production and other measures."

THE DEBATE over guns has also been a sticking point in the Democratic primary. On the campaign trail, Northam has criticized Perriello for changing his position on the National Rifle Association, a group that once endorsed his campaign for Congress. During one of the televised debates this year, Northam turned to Perriello and reminded voters that he has received support from the NRA during a time when concerns were mounting over gun control in America.

"That was since 2010," said Northam. "You served in Congress from 2008 to 2010. That was after the Virginia Tech tragedy. What has changed about the National Rifle Association between 2010 and 2017?"

Perriello responded that times have changed. "Well, you know, you and I have both have all done guns. You know that. You were a deciding vote after Virginia Tech on something that prevented Fairfax and other communities from being able to demand fingerprinting on concealed carry permits.

That was a deciding vote. There was never a moment where I was a deciding vote for the NRA." Both of the candidates support free community college for Virginia students, although they differ on how to finance it. Northam says no tax increase would be needed to finance his plan; students would engage in public service to pay for free community college in high-demand areas.

"If they become certified in one of these areas, then they will give one year back in public service at which time they will get paid," said Northam. "So it's not like they're out there working for free."

Perriello says a tax increase will be needed, especially for those making more than half a million dollars a year. He says that would allow people who attend free community college to have the dignity to come home at night and tuck their children into bed.

"We don't need people giving back in service," said Perriello. "We have a private sector with jobs ready to hire people if we help them just a little bit to get that certificate and have the dignity of the kind of job they can support a family with."

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Vote On or Before June 13

In-person absentee voting continues through June 10.

On June 13, every Virginia voter has the opportunity to vote in the Primary Election to choose the candidates for their chosen party for governor and lieutenant governor.

Ralph Northam and Tom Perriello are vying to be the Democratic nominee for governor.

EDITORIAL Ed Gillespie, Cory Stewart and Frank Wagner are seeking the Republican nomination for governor.

For lieutenant governor, Justin Fairfax, Gene Rossi and Susan Platt are seeking the Democratic nomination.

Bryce Reeves, Glenn Davis Jr. and Jill Vogel compete for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor.

In Fairfax County, there are primaries for

Democrats in two delegate seats as well, the 67th District and the 42nd.

In the 67th, three Democrats, John Carey, Karrie Delaney and Hannah Risheq face off for the right to run against incumbent Del. Jim LeMunyon (R).

In the 42nd, long-time Del. Dave Albo (R) is giving up his seat; two Democrats and three Republicans are seeking to be on the November ballot to replace him. The Democrats, Tilly Blanding and Kathy Tran, will appear on the primary ballot.

The Republican candidate for the 42nd District will be chosen by GOP party canvass on June 10 at South County Middle School, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Eligible voters of the 42nd district will choose between Steve Adragna, Michael Drobnis and Lolita Mancheno-Smoak.

The filing deadline for independent and non-primary party nominees is June 13 at 7 p.m. for the November general election.

For in person absentee voting, available through June 10, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/absentee.htm. For more information on voting in Fairfax County including sample

ballots, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/upcoming.htm

Send Father's Day Photos

Father's Day is Sunday, June 18, and once again the Connection will publish a gallery of Father's Day photos. Every year at this time, the Connection puts out the call for photographs of fathers and their children, grandfathers and their children and grandchildren.

Send in photos with the following information: the town where you live, the names of everyone in the picture, the approximate date the picture was taken, the ages of the children and a sentence or two about what is happening and where the photograph was taken. Be sure to tell us your town name and neighborhood. Photos are due by June 12.

You can submit your photos online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/fathersday. You can also email photos to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.



Zeynep Cakmak, a student from Clifton, welcomed attendees and gave a brief explanation of Ramadan and the Iftar meal.



Chairman Sharon Bulova enjoys the offerings at the Ramadan dinner with (left) Mustafa Akpinar, CEO with the Rumi Forum for Interfaith Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding and (right) Emre Celik, president with Rumi, organizers of the event.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

A Meal Among Neighbors

American Turkish Friendship Association and County dine together for Ramadan.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Traditionally speaking, the reporter wanders the perimeters of an event, then dashes in to get the scoop with a key subject, a quote or two and maybe a photo. Then it's back to the sidelines to scout out the next newsworthy moment.

UP CLOSE

There were certainly a lot of traditions being observed at the Ramadan Iftar dinner at Fairfax

County Government Center on May 31, organized by the American Turkish Friendship Association (ATFA) and hosted by Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova — but the reporter as pure observer was not one of them.

Instead, demonstrating the spirit of friendship that ATFA seeks to promote, this reporter was “adopted” for the event by the Kilic family of Vienna — father Erdal, mother Emine, daughter Yasemin, and son Cemal, who have been in the country since 2015. While the actual assignment was attended

to, with interviews, photographs and hasty scribbling of highlights from speeches, in between it all, however, Ermine kept urging “come, sit down with us, eat” as she pointed to the plate she had put together for the new “family member.”

THE EVENING marked the third time that Fairfax County officials have hosted the joint community outreach. The Iftar is the evening meal when Muslims end their daily fast at sundown during the holy month of Ramadan. After a brief introduction and some insight into the meaning of Ramadan by Zeynep Cakmak of Clifton, Bulova welcomed the hundred-or-so attendees, comprising all ages, ethnicities, and religious

beliefs.

Citing “our diversity as the greatest asset in Fairfax County and what truly makes us special,” Bulova said it was “appropriate” to host the dinner at the Government Center. “This is the gathering place for our community and we welcome all of our neighbors here.”

Iman Mehmet Ayaz of the Institute of Islamic-Turkish Studies in Fairfax, thanked Bulova and the county for “making us feel included. These days it is extra meaningful to be welcomed and made comfortable, here at the center of our government.” Ayaz added that having such a diverse group at the Iftar dinner reflected the “true spirit of Ramadan.”

SEE MEAL, PAGE 15





PHOTOS BY ELLEN BARKER/THE CONNECTION

Virginia grown produce from Three Way Farms.

Buying Fresh at Government Center

Government Center Farmers Market, Thursdays 3-7 p.m., attracts neighbors coming from work.

By ELLEN BARKER
THE CONNECTION



Chase Your Tail Bakery, selling homemade dog treats.

Located right in the parking lot of the Fairfax County Government Center, the Government Center Farmers Market — one of 11 farmers markets run by Fairfax County. It was first held in this location in 2014, making this year its fourth season.

Three Way Farms has been here since the beginning, Wayne Pierson says. He sees a lot of potential for the market. His stand sells fresh fruits and vegetables from Warsaw, Va.

Fairfax resident Alison Tagg comes by the market with her son about twice a month. “We got some really nice strawberries last week when we were here,” she said. She also recommends the salsa and breads.

The market meets on Thursdays 3-7 p.m. This unusual time frame is part of what separates the market from the typical 8 a.m.-noon markets.

Elizabeth Kennedy of PK’s Kitchen comments on the difference between this farmers market and most others.

“You get the people coming from work,” she said. “With my products it’s actually pretty good. You can get a salad and go home to eat it.” Her stand offers a variety of hummuses, chicken salads, and different vegetable salads.

The market is well-timed for people who wish to pick up fresh produce and home-

made goods for dinner on their way home from work. Unlike the majority of farmers markets, people working in the mornings do not need to miss out on the opportunity to shop. Of the 11 markets run by the county, this is one of three that occur in the afternoon and evening.

According to Sally Tomlin, one of several market managers, shoppers at this location can look forward to a variety of different vendors. From the classic stand of fresh fruits and vegetables to Chase Your Tail Bakery’s assortment of dog treats, this farmers market offers a great selection of homemade goods.

“It’s also very convenient to people in the Government Center and a lot of housing close by,” Tomlin said. She also notes that there is plenty of parking.

Shoppers can also look forward to Evenings on the Ellipse, a concert series running in July and August alongside the Farmers Market. Each concert is from 5:30-7 p.m., beginning July 6.

For a full list of vendors, visit Fairfax County’s Farmers Market page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/governmentctr-mrkt.htm

The season began May 4 and will extend until Oct. 26, with a closure on June 8 for Celebrate Fairfax.

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- Identifying resources to offer additional support



Vivek Sinha, MD, is the Co-Founder & Chief Medical Officer of Belleview Medical Partners. Dr. Sinha's "House-Call" practice provides care to patients in their homes or assisted living residences.



Mikki Firor is the president of Trovato, LLC, a dementia consulting company. Mikki provides education, support and guidance to help families and professionals navigate the diagnosis, prognosis and full experience of dementia.



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PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Pooches and their owners enjoy the pop-up dog park.

Fairfax Holds Fido Fest

The City of Fairfax held a doggone-good event – its second annual Fido Fest – last Saturday, June 3. It was hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department on the civic green

outside the Sherwood Community Center. Dogs enjoyed playing in small wading pools and a pop-up dog park, and their owners visited vendors offering products and services for their pets.



Liam Drummond, 10, with Morgan, a 1-year-old Beagle-German Shepherd mix.



Heidi Lacy, of Friends of Homeless Animals, watches Buckley, a 4-year-old English coonhound, take a cool drink.



Lizzie Dorsey, 12, holds Rosie, a shelter dog up for adoption.



Kristine Neuber's goldendoodle service dog, Grady, 5, helps her with balance issues.



Eric and Emily Mosso with Dixie and Molly, 9-month-old sisters, part Doberman and part coonhound.



Max, a Cocker Spaniel, and Riley, a German Shepherd, enjoy a dip in a pool while Pamela Cristi and her dad Carlos Cristi watch.

Martha Powers checks out South Paw Satchels, selling custom, hand-painted lunch bags, backpacks, purses and canvases of people's pets.



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Getting Hurt in the Gym

Prevent and treat workout injuries.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

While sustaining an injury isn't on anyone's list of fitness goals, a recent study by the Center for Injury Research and Policy shows an increase in gym-related injuries in recent years. Corrective exercise is among the strategies for recovering from workout-related injuries, but fitness experts are also emphasizing prevention.

"Generally speaking, at some point it's good following an injury to perform corrective exercises to rehab injured muscles," said Joel Martin, Ph.D., Exercise, Fitness and Health Promotion Graduate Program coordinator and assistant professor of Kinesiology at George Mason University.

"Depending on the stage of the healing process the exercises may focus on getting blood flowing to the injured area, regaining strength in injured muscle or correcting poor movement patterns that contributed to the injury."

One of the most common causes of sports or workout related injuries is performing an exercise incorrectly, says Martin. "You

should take the time to learn proper form and seek the help of an exercise professional for advice as to how to perform various exercises," said Martin. "Investing the time to learn how to move well at the beginning of an exercise program will pay off in the long run."

Failing to do warm-up exercises before a workout and increasing the intensity of the exercise too quickly — either within the exercise session or across multiple exercise sessions — are among the leading causes of workout injury, says Martin. Not following safety procedures is another.

"Some of the most serious exercise injuries happen from not using common sense," he said. "These can come in a variety of forms, but may be due to trying to show off, not wearing proper shoes or equipment for the exercise mode, exercising in unsafe environments, or not using a spotter for heavy lifts."

Even with safety measures in place, Parker Bryant, a personal trainer based in Bethesda, Md., tells his clients that injuries can happen, even to the most cautious athletes. "For many common injuries, especially a muscle that's sore because it's been over-used, I usually advise clients to apply ice for about 20 minutes several times a day to reduce any swelling and to rest the injured body part," he said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEOFF ROBISON

Geoff Robison of Custom Kinetics in McLean shows a client how to use corrective exercise.

For those dedicated to fitness, being told to rest can be hard to hear, says Geoff Robison of Custom Kinetics in McLean, but he says that it is possible to be active while recovering from an injury. "One of the hardest things for a runner with an injury to hear is that they have to stop running," Robison said. "But one of the worst things you can do when you have an injury is lay down and not move. Movement, when done properly, can be very healing. It can bring blood flow and realign your body."

Exercise can be used to help heal some workout or sports related injuries, says Robison. "Everyone who walks in our door gets taken through an assessment," he said. "Whether it's low back pain, a knee problem or shoulder pain, we find the root cause of the problem."

Once the problem is identified, Robison and his team of trainers work to create an exercise program that is designed to decrease pain and build fitness.

One example that he uses to explain his therapeutic strategy is knee pain, which he says is one of the injuries he sees most often in clients. He observes the client's movements to help determine the cause of the problem. "Maybe it's coming from the foot, because the foot is not strong enough, so your knees cave in when you squat," he said. "Maybe your glutes [gluteal muscles] are weak or maybe your quads [quadriceps] are weak. Strengthening these muscles can help stabilize the leg and help relieve knee pain."

Robison builds an exercise regimen that is designed to address a specific issue or injury. "One exercise that I might use is the clam shell where clients lie down on their side and open and close their knees," he said. "When it's a case of muscle overuse, I might use a foam roller or resistance bands to loosen and strengthen the muscles."

Bryant says that an injury can be an opportunity to try a new type of workout. "For example, if you're a runner, but your knees are bothering you, stop running for a while and try swimming to give your knees a rest," he said. "After you're been pain-free for more than a week, you're probably healed. When you do return to your normal exercise routine, don't dive in with the same intensity as before your injury. Gradually work your way back so that you don't reinjure yourself."

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF TARA RUSZKOWSKI

Celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Lamb Center's new building with a prayer circle in the parking lot before it opens for the day.

Lamb Center Celebrates One Year in New Home

Serving the poor and homeless for more than 20 years, the Lamb Center is a daytime, drop-in shelter offering hot meals, showers, laundry services, and recovery and employment counseling. And last Wednesday, May 31, was the one-year anniversary of its new facility at 3160

Campbell Drive in Fairfax. In honor of the occasion, the center's volunteers, guests, board members and staff gathered before the center opened for the day to thank God for the new building. They also prayed for His continued guidance, plus blessings upon all those associated with the center.



From left: Fairfax City Mayor David Meyer and Lamb Center Operations Director Dave Larrabee.



Attendees held a prayer circle inside the building, too.

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ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY ARIANNA DOMINGUEZ

Mozart in Havana

On Sunday, June 18, Simone Dinnerstein with the Havana Lyceum Orchestra will be playing at the George Mason University Harris Theatre, in Fairfax. Pictured here, pianist Simone Dinnerstein (center in white) is in Cuba with Havana Lyceum Orchestra members during the recording of "Mozart in Havana."

Send notes to the Connection at 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

- Storytime in the Park.** Tuesdays through May 30, 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Square, Fairfax. Visit fairfaxva.gov/parksrec or call 703-385-7858.
- 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. Email barbriba@hotmail.com or call 703-524-3739.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).** Wednesdays. 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na'ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will

- learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. RSVP Naama.Gold@jccnv.org.
- 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. 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
- Funday Monday** 10:30 a.m., every Monday at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There will be music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more. It is open to children of all ages, however especially for those who haven't yet started school. Programs are free and open to the public, donations are gratefully appreciated. There is ample free parking in the downtown area, and stroller access at the rear of Old Town Hall on Main St. 703-385-7858 www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts
- Kingstowne Farmers Market opens.** 4-7 p.m. every Friday through Oct. 27, at Kingstowne Giant Parking Lot, 5870 Kingstowne Center, Alexandria. Freshly picked, producer-only vegetables and fruit, from-scratch bread (including gluten free), baked goods, kettle corn, salsa, hummus, cake pops, fruit popsicles, and ice cream. Email Chelsea.roseberry@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-642-0128 for more.

CAMPS & CLASSES

- Art Camp.** Various times July 3-7, July 24-28, and July 31-Aug. 4 at the Woods Community Center, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke or the second location is Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Lessons by Carol Zeitlin. Call 703-250-6930 or visit www.czartlessons.com for more.

JUNE 8-10

Summer Book Sale. Various times at the Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road. Featuring books for adults and kids and other media for summer vacations. Call 703-249-1520.

FRIDAY/JUNE 9

Meet the Author. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Springfield Golf & Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Great Harvest Bread Company Jeff Connelly, will share how they may be a national company, but they have the spirit and heart of a locally owned small business. Also Keith Clemons, will be speaking about the book he authored. Call 703-922 6438/703-913-9844 or visit SpringWmConn@yahoo.com.

Music on the Plaza. 7 p.m. at the Old Town Plaza, 3955 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Music and dance performances. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov for more.

JUNE 9-11

Celebrate Fairfax. Various times at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy., Fairfax. Community-wide celebration with art, musical performances, and rides. Everclear is on the main stage on Saturday night. Visit celebratefairfax.com/ for more.

SATURDAY/JUNE 10

FootGolf National Qualifier. 1:30-9 p.m. at Pinecrest Golf Course, 6600 Little River Turnpike. Pinecrest Golf Course will host the U.S. National Qualifier for the American FootGolf League. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/pinecrestgc/ or call 703-324-8782.

SUNDAY/JUNE 11

Tiny Dancers Ballet Recital. 10:15 a.m. (Fairfax studio); 1:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. (Mosaic studio) at W.T. Woodson High School, 9525 Main

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 14



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Great Performances Continue at Mason

Center for the Arts announces upcoming season.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

“I’m more excited than ever about the new season at the Center for the Arts — it offers so many different ways to experience the performing arts and the quality of the artists is extraordinarily high throughout the lineup,” said Rick Davis, dean, George Mason University College of Visual and Performing Arts and Executive Director of Center for the Arts.

“I would encourage anyone who may be used to traveling downtown or ‘across the river’ to see top-level artistry to give us a try this year — the world’s best is just around the corner! The hall is comfortable and welcoming, parking is convenient, and you’ll be helping to sustain the artistic and



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo.

cultural life of Northern Virginia,” added Davis.

The 2017-18 Great Performances season at George Mason University’s Center for the Arts will showcase more than 50 performances by both new and returning artists. One highlight of the season includes an evening with Broadway star and Tony Award winner Kelli O’Hara as the headliner for the annual “ARTS By George!” Benefit event that helps

fund scholarships for students at George Mason University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA). Since 2006, the University’s dedicated arts patrons have contributed \$1.3 million toward student scholarships in the areas of dance, music, theater, visual arts, film and video studies, computer game design, and arts management. These donations have also supported the programs at the Center for the Arts, includ-



BY ZORAN JEJENIC/GMU CENTER FOR THE ARTS

PHOTO BY LAURIE MARIE DUNCA
GMU CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Kelli O’Hara: headliner at annual “ARTS by George!” gala benefit.

ing the “Great Performances at Mason” season.

The season gets into full swing with events such as a contemporary dance performance by the ever-popular Pilobolus; a mash-up of classical ballet and comedy by Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo; a new play by L.A. Theatre Works commemorating the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; a series of performances by pianist

Where & When

George Mason University presents “Great Performances at Mason,” Center for the Arts’ Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Detailed season information and season subscriptions on sale now at cfa.gmu.edu/preview or by phone at 703-993-2787. Tickets for individual performances go on sale soon. For individual tickets and information call 888-945-2468, or visit cfa.gmu.edu.

Jeffrey Siegel including one honoring Leonard Bernstein’s 100th birthday; and four full-scale productions by Virginia Opera, Northern Virginia’s own Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra and the annual Holiday performances to celebrate the season.

“I am so pleased that we are able to continue to bring the best of the performing arts to the Northern Virginia community through our ‘Great Performances at Mason,’” stated Thomas Reynolds, Director of Artistic Programming, Center for the Arts. “We strive to offer the gamut of genres appealing to the diverse tastes of our audiences. I believe that we have.”

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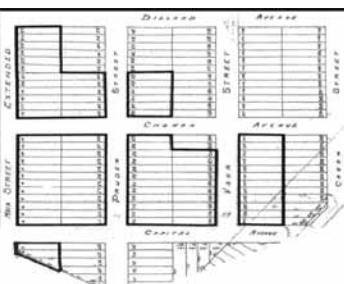
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Announcements

FROM PAGE 12

St., Fairfax. Call 703-785-5580 or visit www.tinydancers.com for more.

TUESDAY/JUNE 13

Women Only Golf Tournament. 9 a.m. at Greendale Golf Course, 6700 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. It's Captain's Choice on the front 9 and better ball on the back 9 for two-person teams. \$45. Call 703-971-6170 for more.

BHS Research Seminar. 7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road. "Using the Washington Library at Mount Vernon" is the topic. Staff from the Washington Library at Mount Vernon will describe the resources available and procedures for researchers at this archive. Visit www.burkehistorical.society.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 14

Alzheimer's Documentary. 2-4 p.m. at Harris Theater, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. "Alzheimer's: Every Minute Counts" documentary screening and discussion. Call 202-480-0706 or email rsvpva@arden-courts.com.

Tai Chi Class. 6:30-7:30 a.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Every Wednesday through August, weather permitting. Free. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov or call 703-385-7858 for more.

THURSDAY/JUNE 15

Historic Interpretation. 7-9:30 p.m. at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Event topic is "Nicholas Fairfax, 14th Lord Fairfax of Cameron." Email Fairfax275@gmail.com or visit Fairfax275.org for more.

Fairfax275@gmail.com or visit Fairfax275.org for more.

Havana Lyceum Woodwind Quintet.

7 p.m. at Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Fairfax Symphony presents Simone Dinnerstein with the Havana Lyceum Orchestra. \$35 or \$25. visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org or call 888-945-2468 for more.

FRIDAY/JUNE 16

Music on the Plaza. 7 p.m. at the Old Town Plaza, 3955 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Music and dance performances. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov for more.

THURSDAY/JUNE 17

Fairfax County's 275th Anniversary.

10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax. Family friendly activities, live entertainment, history exhibits, living history, historical organization booths and displays. Email Fairfax275@gmail.com or visit Fairfax275.org for more.

Father's Day Golf Tournament. 8 a.m. at Burke Lake Golf Course, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Compete in closest-to-the-pin-contests, and prizes will be awarded for the top three places in all three divisions. \$65 per team. Call 703-323-1641 for more.

Kidz Korner Children's Event.

10:30-11:30 a.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. A variety of children's activities and entertainment. Free. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov or call 703-385-7858 for more.

Navy Sea Chanters Concert. 6-7 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Performing

music from sea chanteys to Broadway tunes. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performance for more.

Father and Daughter Dance.

6-9 p.m. at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Girls celebrate Father's Day with dads, granddads, big brothers, godfathers and family members, dancing, games, prizes and food. \$30. Call 703-385-7978 or email parksrec@fairfaxva.gov for more.

SUNDAY/JUNE 18

Yoga on the Square. 10 a.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Bring a yoga mat, a water bottle, and yourself. Call 703-385-7858 for more.

Father's Day Jazz Brunch.

noon-1:30 p.m. at Hilton Garden Inn Fairfax, 3950 Fair Ridge Drive. By Fairfax NAACP. fairfaxnaacp.org.

Havana Lyceum Orchestra. 5 p.m. at George Mason University Harris Theatre, Fairfax. Fairfax Symphony presents Simone Dinnerstein with the Havana Lyceum Orchestra. \$45, \$38, \$30. visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org or call 888-945-2468 for more.

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Various times in Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. A celebration of Washington D.C.'s political style, dolls will feature presidential outfits. Visit www.shopfairoaksmall.com.

FRIDAY/JUNE 23

Rock the Block Concert. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/rocktheblock.

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PHILLIPS PROGRAMS

Notice of Request for Proposals for Food Service

PHILLIPS Programs invites contractors to submit sealed bids for providing food service for its sites that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Specifications and proposals may be obtained at the address below beginning on May 22, 2017 from 8:30 am until June 05, 2017 at 4:00 pm.

Proposals presented in duplicate will be received by **PHILLIPS Programs, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale VA 22003, Attn: Julie Lien** until June 23, 2017 at 4:00 pm for the period of August 15, 2017 through August 14, 2018 inclusive.

Proposals from those bidders meeting qualifications criteria will be opened on June 26, 2017 at 9:00 am with award to be made on or about July 3, 2017 at 9:00 am. PHILLIPS Programs reserves the right to check all outside references. PHILLIPS Programs reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities in proposals received. All awards are made pending Maryland State Department of Education review for USDA regulatory compliance.

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A Meal Among Neighbors

FROM PAGE 6

In addition to the chairman, representatives from all branches of county law enforcement and safety agencies and other departments were on hand to show their neighborly support. Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) was also in attendance, as were Del. Vivian Watts (D-39), Del. Mark Sickles (D-43), and deputy county executive for public safety, David Rohrer.

Watts, who was hosted by a local family during a 2008 visit to Turkey, said it was “so sad what is happening in that extraordinary place.” With the tensions and unrest in their native country, and the spike in anti-Muslim sentiment that many Turkish immigrants have faced in their new homeland, Watts is saddened that many “must feel like no place is home. That’s why it is all the more important to be here as part of the bridge to connect people.”

Mustafa Akpinar, CEO of the Rumi Forum and an organizer of the event, agreed that of late “it seems like we are all on double shifts on our mission to be part of the community, but we love diversity and we celebrate it.” Back to the Kilic table, where Emine carefully described each of the delicacies that she had picked out for my enjoyment, while still telling me that she, too, worries about the state of affairs in Turkey. “But we are so glad to be here, where things are so possible.”

Cemal, a smiling and anything-but-shy 11-year-old, was happy to talk about a wide range of subjects; why we are gathered here — “to better learn to communicate with each other” to cars — “Sorry, I am more for Lamborghini than Ferrari.”

Yasemin spent her first year here studying primarily in Turkish while she perfected her English — which seemed pretty perfect already. The 16-year-old student at Oakton High School is exploring the paths her future might hold. “I like math, for sure, but lately I am thinking about politics, or the law, something that I can do to help everyone have a better life.” She also loves to write — “I am working on a book” — so journalism is also a possibility.

ALL AROUND US, people were talking, laughing, and just getting to know each other a little better. The Imam’s call to prayers after the meal was the only pause. The gathering continued for many, once everyone had come back together.

Time to go and actually write the story, despite pleas from Emine, Yasemin and Cemal (dad Erdal was off meeting and mingling with other groups) to stay a bit longer and chat. Duty calls, but not before receiving an invitation to attend a Turkish cooking class with Emine and a class in Ebru, the traditional Turkish “marbling” art form with Yasemin. No regrets on breaking with journalistic tradition on this one occasion, and learning some new ones with a room full of neighbors.

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I Hope I'm Right



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having been a cancer “diagnosee” now for eight years and exactly three months — as I sit and type on May 27, 2017, a lifetime considering the original “13 month to two-year” prognosis I was given on February 27, 2009, I have learned much about cancer that I didn’t know. In fact, I’ve learned everything about cancer I know now because previously I knew nothing. Growing up I heard/experienced very little about cancer. My parents were healthy as was my immediate family (aunts, uncles, cousins).

And even though I spent many Sundays with my parents visiting my grandparents in nursing homes, the diseases/afflictions I remember hearing most about were diabetes, Parkinson’s, Leukemia and high cholesterol. Never cancer or any condition that I associated with cancer. I realize now how lucky we all were. I wouldn’t say I took good health for granted, but I might have taken it as a given. Not any more.

Everyday I wake up, as my father used to say, is a good day; and ever since I was diagnosed in early 2009, most days — all things considered, and I do consider all things, have been good days. I have been extraordinarily fortunate in how my body and mind has reacted to being diagnosed with a “terminal” disease: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. Rarely have I ever gone one step forward and then two steps backward.

Oh sure, the early hairless days of heavy-duty chemotherapy (infused for six hours every three weeks) were challenging, but it was a process I had to endure — so far as I knew (I know a bit more now and there are many more choices/protocols than ever before).

It reminds me of a long-ago M*A*S*H episode in which “Hawkeye” met a South Korean woman after she drove — a Cadillac — into the 4077th. She needed medical help for her family. Col. Potter ordered “Hawkeye” to return with the woman back to her home.

Begrudgingly he went along, mistakenly thinking she felt a sense of entitlement. After a short time treating her family he learned how wrong he had been. Later that day, “Hawkeye” saw the woman walking up a nearby trail carrying buckets of water on a pole. When he asked her why she was doing that (getting the water that way, from wherever); she replied: “Because that’s the water is.” It struck him — and apparently — it struck me, too. As a cancer patient/survivor, that has always been my approach/attitude. “Next man up,” a common sports refrain; no excuses, keep moving forward.

Over the years, I have met many cancer patients; at the Infusion Center, at conferences, at work and at play. And I may be biased (no ‘maybes’ about it), but I have to say, we’re a fairly hearty and resilient bunch. Getting diagnosed with a terminal disease — frequently out of the blue, is not exactly the stuff of which dreams are made. Quite the contrary.

Nevertheless, many of the cancer patients I’ve met seemed to have faced their demons and are standing tall against the worst kind of adversity. Bette Davis is often credited with the quote: “Old age is not for sissies.” Well, neither is cancer. It seems to be for everybody, everywhere. Unfortunately, cancer is an indiscriminate, equal opportunity destroyer; all ages, all races, all ethnic groups, all populations.

According to “Medical News Today,” “One in two people will develop cancer in their lifetimes.” So getting cancer is either a matter of time, inevitable or a random-type miracle if it doesn’t affect you. For many of us who’ve been affected already, we’ve come to learn that cancer isn’t the automatic death sentence it used to be, especially for us lung cancer patients. The research dollars and enthusiasm going into defeating this scourge are at their most significant in decades, perhaps ever.

Now is not the time to give up hope. It’s time to embrace it.

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



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