

Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

WELLBEING

PAGE 5

D.J. Gregory of Westfield drives past South Lakes defender Emmanuel Aghayere #50 in Westfield's 73-68 victory over South Lakes on Dec. 19. The Westfield Bulldogs defeated the South Lakes Seahawks 73-68 on 12-19 in a non-conference game. Westfield was led by Jordan Hairston's 31 points. South Lakes was led by Damon Johnson's 24.

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NEWS

Local Filmmaker Awarded

Recognized for
“The Hermit.”

BY MIKE SALMON

In “The Hermit,” a hermit was doing what hermits do until a band of kidnapping drug dealers came to his abandoned farm, resulting in gore and violence that slasher movies are famous for. This locally filmed movie earned Nate Schrader and the crew a Bronze Award in the “2017 Spotlight Horror Film Awards” contest.

Schrader, a Chantilly resident, just graduated from film school, and the award is an early step into the world of filmmaking that began with theater classes at Westfield High School, followed by a television production course at Fairfax High School during his senior year. “I’ve always been into horror films,” Schrader said.

The original “Halloween,” film with Jamie Lee Curtis made an impact on Schrader, and “The Hermit,” has an element of that film in the form of the heroine fighting back instead of just becoming a victim, as Jamie Lee Curtis did in the 1978 thriller. “That dynamic really inspired ‘The Hermit,’” he said. Victoria Caldwell, a fellow student at Stevenson University in Elkton, Md., played the part of the rebellious heroine, Jamie Barthol was the producer, Ben Block the director of photography, and Alex Korty a co-writer. All but Block had ties to film school at Stevenson University.

The fight scenes were a high point to Caldwell, and filming them in the dark at Cox Farms in Centreville added more drama. “It was fun because we got to take these fights beyond the stage and do them at an abandoned farm which was a little creepy in the dark,” she said. “I’d like to think that if I ever find myself in the situation that Alex (her character) did, I would react in the same the way.”

QUIET ON THE SET

Cox Farms is right around the corner from the Schrader’s house and a few members of his family were employed at the farm through the years so it wasn’t hard to get their permission. Instead of using the Cox Farm main areas or their “Fields of Fear” section that is popular around Halloween, “we used a lot of the employee areas,” he said. His house was the place where they all gathered every Saturday evening, ate a home cooked meal courtesy of his mother, and then headed out to the farm to film. They finished at the farm between 2-5 a.m. and slept at the Schrader’s house.

His father, Steve Schrader, has experience with acting and stunts in professional theater, and ended up being the hermit in the film. Since he has a burlap shroud on his head, and doesn’t say anything throughout, “it was real easy to remember my lines,” Steve Schrader



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON

Nate Schrader with a bloodied meat cleaver was one of the creators behind “The Hermit,” an award-winning slasher movie that was filmed in the Centreville-Chantilly area.

said.

In one scene, Steve Schrader was at Cox Farms getting set up and found a spot near the greenhouses by chance and recommended it for the next scene. That type of collaboration was present throughout the production. Things evolve on the set, a common happening in filmmaking, Schrader learned. “You make a film three times — when you write it, when you film it, and post-production when you edit it,” he said.

Fellow film student Jamie Barthol was involved with the fundraising and casting calls on “The Hermit,” but also read the scripts and provided comments when she had an idea. Although she’s not a big fan of the blood and gore part, she is writing and producing a psychological horror film for her senior project that Schrader is helping out with producing when the time comes. Barthol was homeschooled in high school, so film school was an opportunity for her. “I think my favorite part of film school is being able to meet so many like-minded people,” she said. She also did an internship with the Austin Film Festival Screenplay Contest across one summer so the script writing is an area she’s pursuing after graduation.

Student film projects are nothing new to Cox Farms according to Aaron Cox, one of the owners. They’ve hosted other film students projects and even full-length films. “We’re always happy to support local artists, and we recognize that we have a lot of unique backgrounds, spaces, settings and props,” he said.

The Spotlight Horror Film Awards commemorates and promotes talented filmmakers of all experience levels through a global horror film competition, according to information on its website. “The Hermit” was in competition with other horror films of the December 2017 such as “The Moose Head Over The Mantel,” “She Came from the Woods,” “Rotten Love,” and “Nudist of the Living Dead,” which earned a Spotlight Gold Award. Schrader will continue to look for opportunities to submit the film in festivals while looking for the break that up and coming film producers sometimes rely on.



Nate Schrader displays a filming device and props used such as a noose and the hermit’s shroud.

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Session Brings Sea Change

Wave election swamps Richmond with freshman members eager to make their mark.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE

This year's General Assembly will be like no other. For starters, the members walking the halls of the Capitol will not look the same. The crop of freshman includes the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian, the first Asian-American woman and the first two Latinas. Gone are the 12 Republican members who were unseated, all white males. Also gone are the three members who got out before the bloodbath that flipped their seats from red to blue, also all white males. In their place is a diverse and young group of new members who are eager to make their mark on the commonwealth.

At the top of the agenda for the Democratic freshmen is expanding Medicaid to 400,000 people who would be eligible under the Affordable Care Act.

"I think what's really important for us, as Democrats, is to identify on the other side who we could have come over and join us," said Kathy Tran, who flipped a formerly Republican seat held by Del. Dave Albo (D-42) for more than 20 years. "We're going to have to reach out and basically identify who's really vulnerable and who's going to be in a position where they're going to have to be supporting the progressive values that were voted in as a wave across the commonwealth."

Even if they're successful navigating the diminished House Republican caucus, House Democrats will still have to deal with a Republican-controlled Senate. But the culture in the Senate is more moderate, and Republican senators have a history of supporting bills that have been routinely blocked in the House.

For example, Senate Republicans have a history of supporting the effort raising the threshold for grand larceny. That's an issue that Democrats have been pushing unsuccessfully for years that may now finally have a chance in 2018.

"We heard during the gubernatorial campaign, Ed Gillespie was supporting an increase so this is one of those issues that — especially with the outcome of the election — I think you can see some support behind," said Del. Patrick Hope (D-47), who is introducing a bill that raises the

"I think what's really important for us, as Democrats, is to identify on the other side who we could have come over and join us. ... Who's going to be in a position where they're going to have to be supporting the progressive values that were voted in as a wave across the commonwealth."

— Delegate-elect Kathy Tran (D-42)



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Republicans were unseated in 12 House districts, and Democrats flipped three seats where GOP incumbents decided against running in a year that ended up being a Democratic wave.

threshold from \$200 to \$500. "If someone makes a dumb mistake and walks out of a store with something small we shouldn't make a felon out of them."

THE WAVE ELECTION of 2017 was widely seen as a reacting to the Trump administration, and some of the bills that are now being crafted are also a reaction to the Republican agenda in Washington. State Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) is putting together a tax reform plan as a Virginia answer to federal tax reform that gives tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. Marsden wants to eliminate the food tax, reinstitute the inheritance tax and increase the gas tax. His tax-reform plan also taxes some services for the first time. For example lawn care and dry cleaning would be taxed but lawyers and doctors would not.

"Ever since I've been in the legislature I've heard complaints that we have a 19th century agriculture and manufacturing tax base but we're now a service economy. So this will start to tax some of those services," said Marsden. "We're trying to draw a distinction and get the discussion going

around which services are optional for people and which ones are really necessary that we shouldn't burden them with taxes on."

Democrats are also eager to finally get some traction on gun control, which House Republicans have blocked for years. Back in 2015, Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe was able to forge a deal with Republicans to make state police available for voluntary background checks at gun shows. Now Democrats are hoping that newly reconstituted House committees and subcommittees might give them a chance to at least get gun control legislation on the floor rather than having it killed in subcommittee, a strategy Republicans used that allowed them to avoid being on the record voting against banning assault weapons, for example. State Sen. George Barker (D-39) is introducing a bill that would allow judges to confiscate firearms from individuals they consider dangerous.

"It would have to go to court, and a judge would have to issue a ruling that there's probable cause and it's a serious situation and the gun should be temporarily removed," said Barker. "In some states, it allows police officers to confiscate it. But the bills that we are putting in do not. You would have to go to court."

MANY OF THE BILLS lawmakers are working on involve unfinished business from previous sessions. State Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) is working on a bill that would force Dominion to clean up decades of pollution at several coal ash ponds throughout Virginia. Dominion Energy plans to seal the pollution in place and put a cap on the ponds, which is significantly cheaper than cleaning up the pollution. But Surovell wants to require that the utility

recycle the coal ash into concrete or ceramics. And, Surovell adds, it won't actually be more expensive for Dominion at all because the utility will end up passing along the cost to people who are paying for electricity.

"You eliminate the possibility that this toxic gunk will continue to leak arsenic, lead and other chemicals into our groundwater forever," said Surovell. "Landfilling is the short-term cheap solution. But long-term it has the worst potential effects because the stuff continues to leach out chemicals and give people cancer and poison fish and birds and ruin our groundwater."

State Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30) is also returning to a familiar theme: decriminalizing marijuana. Several states across the country have already done this, and now that California has legalized pot for recreational use many feel that the tide may be turning on this issue. According to a recent report by the Virginia State Crime Commission, law enforcement officers have arrested more than 130,000 people for possession of marijuana in the last decade — 84 percent of them first-time offenders.

"I think people are realizing how inappropriate it is to give people a criminal penalty for a drug that so many people have tried and used and is arguably less significant and harmful than alcohol," said Ebbin. "It's still a tough fight. But we've got Senate Majority Leader Tommy Norment supporting it generally. And we've got Governor-elect Ralph Northam supporting it, generally."

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL last year, Republicans and Democrats both supported several key agenda items — an indication that members from both sides of the aisle may end up working together this year on certain issues. One of those is ethics reform, a hot topic in Virginia since former Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell was convicted of corruption then cleared of wrongdoing by the U.S. Supreme Court. During the campaign last year, Republican candidate for governor Ed Gillespie and Republican candidate for lieutenant governor Jill Vogel both talked about closing a loophole that allows candidates to use campaign money for personal use. That's an issue that already has support among Democrats, although drawing a distinction between official use and personal use can be a gray area.

"I think we've got a consensus that we need to do something," said Del. Marcus Simon (D-53). "Whether we make it a weak ban or a strong ban — a civil violation or a criminal act — I think we're going to outlaw it one way or another."

Another issue where Republicans and Democrats are in agreement is expanding broadband to rural areas. Of course the details of how to make that happen and who

SEE NEW FACES, ISSUES, PAGE 7

OPINION

2018 A Happy New Year? At least some cause for hope

Virginia's election last November, just two months ago, was the first in the nation since the current administration took over in Washington.

Here in Virginia there was some anxiety and uncertainty rolling into Election Day. First, at least one race will not be decided until later this week. Second, the Democrats swept the statewide races, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General.

EDITORIAL

Democrats hoped to make gains in the House of Delegates. It's fair to say no one anticipated the Democrats taking the House. After all, Republicans held a 66-34 majority, a nearly insurmountable advantage.

Democrats gained at least 15 seats in a turnabout that could leave the House split 50-50.

New members include the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian delegate, the first Asian-American woman delegate and the first two Latina delegates.

Virginia's success has generated buzz about pursuing sweeping change in other state legislatures around the country.

Del. Marcus Simon said it well recently (on Facebook): "If someone had told me on Jan. 1, 2017 that one year later Democrats would have picked up no fewer than 15 and probably as many as 17 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates I would have said, 'Love your optimism, but don't get carried away.'"

"My advice to anyone running for office or thinking about running for office, or working for people running for office in 2018: Get carried away."

The new look and balance in the General Assembly could provide progress on some long stalled issues. (More Democrats in office do not equate to progress in all of these areas, it's important to note.)

❖ Expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act to cover hundreds of thousands of poor people without coverage

❖ Nonpartisan redistricting and use of national best practices when it comes to drawing

political district boundaries after the next census.

❖ Progress in transparency, and making public information public. This includes lawmakers killing most proposed legislation with unrecorded voice votes in subcommittee, with no accountability or record of how members voted. It should also include rolling back some of the many exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act passed by the General Assembly.

❖ Ethics reform, campaign finance reform.

❖ Making it easier, not harder, to vote.

❖ More control over utility rates and pollution.

❖ Criminal justice reform, including raising the threshold for a felony from \$200 to \$500.

❖ Tax reform.

A "wish list" could go on at some length. The 2018 session of the Virginia General Assembly begins Jan. 10.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Not Smart, Not Right, and Not Fair

BY DON BEYER
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (D-8)

On the day the House passed the Republican tax bill, I took to the Floor to oppose the bill.

My colleagues from both parties who opposed this bill did a thorough job illustrating the compelling reasons to oppose it: the regressive nature of the tax cuts, which will mostly flow to the very wealthy, the attacks on the Affordable Care Act which will lead to 13 million more uninsured Americans, the trillions of dollars it will add to the national debt.

I share this opinion, but also had another perspective to offer.

I worked for four decades to build a successful small business in Northern Virginia. So I'll be honest with you: this bill cuts my taxes.

I still voted against it.

I voted no in part for my constituents, who overwhelmingly opposed this immoral bill, but I also voted no for my employees.

The people we've employed over the years are the business. I've always tried to treat the women and men who work for me well and pay a living wage. It's rewarding to see them get married, start families, and chase their dreams.

My employees simply will not benefit from this bill the way that I do.

They will get small cuts that expire, and many will eventually see tax increases. They'll get a tiny child tax credit, much smaller than the one millionaires get. The cuts for businesses, raising the estate tax threshold to protect families that worth \$11 million, and other benefits billionaires will remain after the meager cuts for the middle class expire. Eighty-three percent will go to the wealthiest 1 per-

cent of the country by 2027.

Their kids will be stuck with the tab for the trillions of dollars this bill will add to the national debt, debt which itself may be used to attack Social Security and Medicare soon.

As a member of the Joint Economic Committee I also know that U.S. companies are sitting on \$17 trillion in capital. Yet, for some reason, Republicans claim against all evidence and advice from economists that giving these same companies more is going to spur magical levels of growth that will somehow trickle down to working people.

We all want a healthy, vibrant economy, but we'd do better by focusing on workforce development, human capital, building skills, and repairing infrastructure.

Unfortunately, Republicans rejected that path in favor of pursuing tax cuts for people like me at the expense of the middle class.

It isn't smart, it isn't right, and it isn't fair.



PHOTO COURTESY OF G.C. 'GARY' BLACK, III

New Eagle Scout

Eagle Scout Board of Review members: Mark Blanchard, former and, as of Jan. 1, new Scoutmaster, Troop 1131, Burke; Ed Baird; Phil Sternberg, T-1131 Committee chair and past 20-year Scoutmaster; Skylar Peppler, Eagle Scout #204 in T-1131; and Rick Priest, Patriot District Eagle Scout Committee. Not in picture: G.C. "Gary" Black, III, T-1131 Committee member and Patriot District Committee member. Skylar lives in Centreville and attends Chantilly High School.



Know This Dog's Owner?

On Dec. 21, Animal Protection Police Officers discovered an emaciated, tan and gray brindle Cane Corso-type dog tied to a picnic table in front of the Animal Shelter. In addition

to being underweight, the male dog had severe nose and eye discharge, skin issues, and a foul odor. The dog is estimated to be approximately 3 or 4 years old. Officers from our Animal Services Division are working to find its owner. The dog is expected to survive. Anyone who recognizes this dog or knows where its owner lives is asked to contact the Animal Services Division at 703-691-2131. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by visiting <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org>, or calling 1-866-411-TIPS. They can also be sent in via text by texting "TIP187" plus the message to CRIMES (274637). Text STOP to 274637 to cancel, or HELP to 274637 for help. Message and data rates may apply. Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1000 if their information leads to an arrest.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com

Steven Mauren
Editor, 703-778-9415
smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Assistant Editor
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Worker
Reporter
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Special Assistant to the Publisher
Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper

WELLBEING

Ready for the Cold

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Frigid temperatures and the chill of winter can usher in dangerous health conditions, particularly for those most vulnerable: the elderly and young children. Two of the most prevalent cold-weather ills are hypothermia and frostbite. For those who have to be outside when it is dangerously cold, knowing the warning signs and prevention techniques for these conditions are the keys to keeping them at bay, say health care providers.

"Even a typical winter in this area can be dangerous," said Amy Talbot, Ph.D. of George Mason University. "But extreme conditions can make it even worse for those most vulnerable."

Hypothermia, which occurs when one's body core temperature drops, can develop more quickly than many people realize, says Talbot. "Obviously feeling very cold is a warning sign, but also shivering and experiencing signs that the cold is affecting your brain, so feeling disoriented, stumbling or losing balance easily, unusual speech pattern or changes in personality."

Frostbite is when the skin and underlying tissue are damaged by cold temperatures, says Beth Lowe, RN, a private-duty nurse in Arlington. "During the beginning



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Record cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia.

stages of frostbite, you might see your skin turn red and you'll feel numb or tingling or stinging," she said. "The main thing to remember is not to try to re-warm your own skin, because you can do more damage. It's best to seek emergency medical treatment."

Preventing, recognizing and treating hypothermia and frostbite.

Dressing in layers and wearing shoes that are appropriate for extreme cold are keys to preventing hypothermia and frostbite, advises Carolyn Johnson, Ph.D. of Montgomery College. "When it's extremely cold you want to wear clothing that traps your body temperature and protects you from cold air and wind," she said. "A basic formula to keep in mind: a base layer that should be made from a fabric that wicks away moisture. The second layer should trap heat so it should be made of a polyester fleece over something similar. The top layer should be waterproof and windproof."

Lowe recommends avoiding cotton clothing during the extreme cold because if it gets wet, it can make you cold. "Many of these preventative measure are things that most people already know, but may not think about until it's too late," she said.

Another preventative component, says Talbot, is nutrition. Both food and liquids can help keep one's body warm. "Skipping a meal can make you more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite," she said. "It's important to eat carbs and protein for energy when you're going to be outside for a prolonged period of time, like if you're hiking or playing sports."

If you believe that you are beginning to develop frostbite or hypothermia, Lowe says

LOCAL SHELTERS

For those who are not able to seek shelter, social service providers in Virginia and Maryland are ramping up efforts to provide shelter to those who need to get out of the cold. For more information:

Fairfax County
703-691-2131 or fairfaxcounty.gov

City of Alexandria
703-548-7500 or alexandriava.gov

Montgomery County
240-777-3289 or
montgomerycountymd.gov

Arlington County
703-228-1300 or 703-228-1010
publicassistance.arlingtoncounty.gov

in order to avoid advancing the seriousness of the condition, move your body by doing jumping jacks or some other vigorous movement and get out of the frigid elements. "There's no set amount of time that it takes for [hypothermia or frostbite] to develop, so it's important to keep an eye on those who are most vulnerable. But once you notice the warning signs you can try to stop the conditions before they advance, by drinking plenty of fluids, eating carbs and getting inside to a warmer temperature."

CALENDAR

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SPORTS



PHOTO BY WILL PALENSCAR

Jake Latta #10 rejects the shot of Marshall's Joseph Lampman #21.

Battling at Bulldog Bash

BY WILL PALENSCAR
THE CONNECTION

Eight teams laced it up for the annual Bulldog Bash Tournament hosted by Westfield High School in Chantilly from Dec. 27-29.

First round results were Stone Bridge 70, Herndon 52, South County 58, Green Run 49, Marshall 46, Robinson 28, Westfield 85, and Liberty 51.

In the second round, South County defeated Stone Bridge 56-52, and Marshall defeated Westfield 54-52.

For the Bulldog Bash Final, Marshall defeated South County 71-59 behind Tournament MVP Daniel Deavers 29 points. Joseph Lampman added 19 and Demetri Gamble added 14. Marshall jumped out to an early 1st quarter lead 11-10. In the 2nd quarter, Marshall again outscored South County 19-15. In the

3rd quarter, Marshall outscored South County 16-12 and in the 4th, 25-22. South County was led by Seth Dunn's 14 points.

Eight players for South County scored 4 or more points for the game.

In the consolation game, Westfield defeated Stone Bridge 71-61. Westfield was led by Jordan Hairston with 17 points, and DJ Gregory's 11. Eleven Bulldogs scored at least two points. Westfield went 26 of 34 from the charity stripe. Stone Bridge scored 33 of its 61 points from behind the arch, making 11, 3-pointers.

Five players from the eight teams were selected as the all-tournament team: Daniel Deaver #31, Marshall; Ryan Robinson #10, Marshall; William Wilson #25, South County; Quentin Millora-Brown #42, South County; and D.J. Gregory #10, Westfield.



Defeating Lake Braddock

Jordan Hairston #2 pushes the ball down court for Westfield against Lake Braddock. Westfield defeated Lake Braddock 102-70 in a non-conference game on Dec. 21. Westfield was led by Hairston's 35 points, and Marshall Reeds 16. Lake Braddock was led by Quentin James' 26 points.



Aaron Opoku #3 soars to the hoop against Lake Braddock.

PHOTOS BY
WILL PALENSCAR

News

New Faces, New Issues

FROM PAGE 3

benefits are where lawmakers get divided, although this is one of those issues where party ideology is less important than regional ties. Last year, for example, Republicans were divided about whether to create new hurdles for local governments to set up broadband networks in places where that might create competition for private providers. This year, the issue of broadband will once again be an important topic of conversation.

"I'm looking at ways to reduce regulatory burdens," said Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86). "So I'm talking about including broadband in your municipal comprehensive plan, setting up a dig-once policy and creating a data governance board for smart communities."

IT MAY SEEM like the elections never cease in Virginia, where voters go to the polls multiple times every year. And although Washington is already focused on the 2018 campaign, Richmond is already preparing for an epic election in 2019. Not only will that election include all members of the House and the Senate, it will also set the scene for who controls the redistricting process. Both parties are eager to control as much of the process as possible, and Democrats have already won a major victory by electing a governor who will have veto power over the maps drawn by lawmakers.

"The one piece of this that I'm interested in doing is having a factor of competitiveness and competition being part of the equation," said Del. Mark Keam (D-35). "Right now all the standards that they use for redistricting are things like partisanship, demographics and minority status. But there's nothing that talks about whether a district is competitive or not."

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

PARK REGULATIONS

Drones are growing in popularity, but are not allowed to take off or land in most FCPA parks. Park regulations and Federal Aviation Administration directives ban the use of hobby rockets, remote-control gliders or powered remote-control or tethered planes, boats, cars or other similar devices in most parks. Drone pilots may take off and land at Poplar Ford Park (6704 Bull Run Post Office Road, Chantilly) under a partnership with Northern Virginia Radio Control. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/model-aircrafts-drones.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Pollution Workshop. 1-4 p.m. at the Centreville Library Meeting Room 1&2, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Clean Fairfax Council will be leading a two-hour workshop to help communities surrounding Cub Run Stream Valley Park identify sources of pollution flowing into the stream and lead them in group exercises designed to mitigate those effects. Visit www.cleanfairfax.org for more.

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I'm Very Seldom Wrong, But This Time I'm Write



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Since I don't have to write for a deadline this week (12/27/17 papers have already gone to press), maybe I'll write for pleasure. Not that writing this column is ever not my pleasure, but it is time-sensitive, at least on a weekly basis. And though that "weekliness" can occasionally induce some pressure, mostly I can manage it. Besides, it contributes to what you read and my feelings about having written. As such, my columns are rarely about the past, well, only in so far as it gives the present and future concerns some context. Generally speaking however, I am writing about extremely-current events. It's not exactly real time, but the timing is exceptionally real.

This sort of holiday break occurs at The Connection every year as we condense our publication schedule and finish/publish three weeks of newspapers in nine business days. And even though this "condensation" is nothing new for any of us long-sitting employees, it does present its own unique set of challenges, yet it is a schedule which has stood the test of time. Time which eventually leads to pleasure.

And time off is part of what drives this mid-to-late December rush. Because in the newspaper business, especially considering the 24/7 news cycle, with which we are all familiar, even for a weekly publication - for both editorial and sales, you are mostly on. So getting a chance to publish and then pause, gives us all an opportunity to refresh and recharge. And since I'm honeymooning, so to speak, (see column dated 12/13/17 titled "As Good As It Gets"), I have nothing particularly cancer-centric to write about and/or worry about, well, top of mind anyway. There's plenty of cancer stuff bottom of mind though. The difficulty is keeping it there.

The problem/reality is, even when you're meandering around in your head, in order to write, there is a cancer section which inevitably fights its way to the top. It's not as if I have a multiple personality disorder: Kenny-without-cancer and Kenny-with-cancer (my website, by the way: www.KennyWithCancer.com), but sometimes I think I must. Thinking one could totally compartmentalize the facts and fissures that a "terminal" lung cancer diagnosis/"13 month to two year" prognosis imposes is an admirable, much talked about goal but in truth, it's probably unrealistic and likely leads to that dual personality. But who's kidding whom? It's hard/IMPOSSIBLE to know.

So for the moment, I can pretend/presume that Kenny-without-cancer is front and center, top of mind and in control, free to wander aimlessly in print and ponder his fate as if nothing much - other than one's own mortality, is effecting his judgment. Ah, one can dream. And oddly enough, I have been dreaming more, and sleeping longer and deeper, too. I'm sure it's simply a coincidence that having five weeks off from any cancer-related activities/obligations, and likewise having nine days off from any newspaper-related activities has contributed to this semi peace and quiet. A quiet which will soon end when we leave for two days in Pennsylvania to spend Christmas with my wife Dina's cousins, which, along with the cheesesteak I plan on eating, provides it's own sort of comfort and joy.

Still, any port in the cancer storm provides a welcome respite from the - with apologies to Shakespeare - slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune (Shakespeare's quote was "fortune"), however real or imagined. To be sure, cancer is no joke, neither is being diagnosed with a "terminal" form of it: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV, at age 54 and a half. But making fun of it and the circumstances surrounding it, has been my stock and trade since I first went public - in print, in June 2009. The means I've justified to prevent my premature end. So far, so good.

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

ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Bull Run Festival of Lights. Through Jan. 7, Monday-Thursday, 5:30-9:30 p.m., \$15 per car; Fridays-Sundays and holidays, 5:30-10 p.m., \$20 per car. Bull Run Regional Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. The Bull Run Festival of Lights is more than just a light show. After enjoying two and a half miles of light displays, stop at the Holiday Village, complete with bonfires, s'mores, holiday merchandise and free activities, the Holiday Village is fun for the whole family. Call 703-631-0550 or visit www.novaparks.com/events/bull-run-festival-of-lights.

History Volunteers Needed. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum needs history buffs. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 to explore opportunities. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. It is open every Sunday, except holidays, from 1-4 p.m. www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225.

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

Carolina Shag Dance. Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m.; no partners needed; dinner menu at



This Way, Mr. Vader

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

Darth Vader is screened by Officer Pena with the Office of Protection Services at the Smithsonian Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum in Chantilly. The museum premiered the latest Star Wars movie: "The Last Jedi" on Dec. 14 at its Airbus Imax theatre. The Airbus IMAX boasts one of the world's first dual laser 4K projection systems.

6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.nvshag.org.

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

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

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

Lego Block Party. Every other Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Legos will be provided for an afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 for a spot.

Duplo Storytime. Every other



"The Last Jedi" will play through Jan. 17 at the Smithsonian Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum in Chantilly. In addition to the movie, guests were treated to visits from some of the 501st Legion.

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

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

Mondays are Family Night. 5-7 p.m. at Villaggio, 7145 Main St. \$45 for a

family of four. Call 703-543-2030.
Legos Kids Club. Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Thousands of Legos for children to play with. Ages 6-12. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.
Starlight Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Stories under the stars for ages 4-8. Wear pajamas and bring stuffed friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

PET ADOPTIONS

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

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

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

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

SATURDAY/JAN. 6

National Bird Day Trip. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. at Delaware Bay. The van for this trip will depart from the Packard Center located at 4022 Hummer Road in Annandale, and stops may include Bombay Hook Wildlife Refuge, Woodland Beach, Little Creek Wildlife area and Cape Henlopen State Park. Join Ellanor C. Lawrence Park's expert birders. Sightings may include waterfowl, shorebirds and eagles. The program costs \$84 in-county and \$99 for out-of-county residents. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence or call 703-631-0013.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

HGTV Stars at Home Show. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. at the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Headlining the Jan. 19-21 Home and Remodeling Show at the Dulles Expo Center will be HGTV's Kitchen Cousins, Anthony Carrino and John Colaneri, and Mapcap Cottage's John Loecke and Jason Oliver Nixon. Visit www.homeandremodelingshow.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20

HGTV Stars at Home Show. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. at the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Headlining the Jan. 19-21 Home and Remodeling Show at the Dulles Expo Center will be HGTV's Kitchen Cousins, Anthony Carrino and John Colaneri, and Mapcap Cottage's John Loecke and Jason Oliver Nixon. Visit www.homeandremodelingshow.com.

SUNDAY/JAN. 21

G Gauge Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road. Sponsored by the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Garden Railway Society Admission, Museum members and age 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225.

SATURDAY/FEB. 10

Ping Pong Tournament. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Clifton Town Hall, 12641 Chapel Road. In-door activity in the middle of winter that includes cookies from Clifton's own Sweet Annaline's. Free. Visit clifton-va.com.

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