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Centreville ❖ Little Rocky Run
CENTRE VIEW



APRIL 18-24, 2018

25 CENTS NEWSSTAND PRICE

At far right, Andrew Dettmer, as Matthew Shepard's father, makes a statement to the jury trying his son's killers in Centreville High's production of "The Laramie Project."



'The Laramie Project'

NEWS, PAGE 2

Two Sides to Two and a Half Cents

NEWS, PAGE 3

CALENDAR, PAGE 8 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10
PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

‘A Powerful Show about Real People’

Centreville High presents “The Laramie Project.”

BY BONNIE HOBBS

Centreville High first performed “The Laramie Project” 11 years ago. But, said Director Mike Hudson, “With all the school shootings, bullying and bizarre things going on today, we’re doing it again.”

Show times are Friday, April 27, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 28, at 3 and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, April 29, at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$10 at the door or via www.theatrecentreville.com.

This PG-13 show is about the brutal death of Matthew Shepard, a gay young man in Laramie, Wyo., in October 1998. “This event changed the way America viewed the gay community,” said Hudson. “What we hope to accomplish with this play is to show the audience that hatred can cause people to think and act in reprehensible ways.”

The cast and crew of 35 has been rehearsing since February, and when the story begins, the violence has already happened. So although people will talk about Shepard’s death, it won’t be shown. Instead, they’ll see how a theater company interviewed community members afterward to create a play.

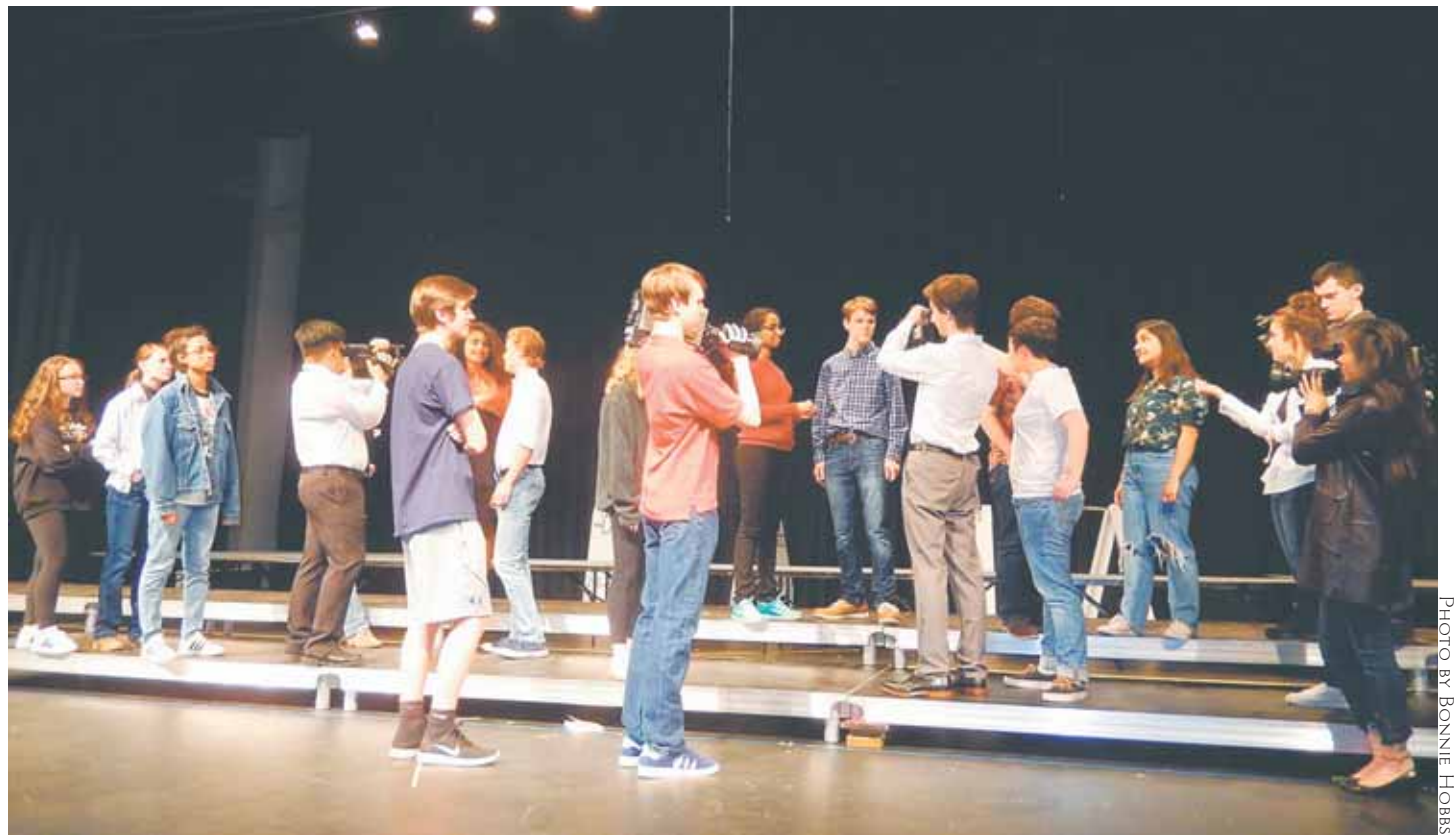
“Some seem to be upright people, but are actually closeted bigots who don’t acknowledge that,” said Hudson. “So we’ve gotten input from our school’s Human Rights Club [HRC]. And I contacted the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which supplied us with actual photos and videos from that time period and the incident.”

Furthermore, he said, “We’re planning to have a guided, talk-back session after the Saturday matinee, and we hope someone from the foundation will attend. We also invited the appropriate groups from our FCPS schools to attend. And we’re also working with the counselors here to turn this into a building-wide initiative, during the run of the play, to identify and fight hatred. The HRC will help organize and oversee both these things.”

Noting that this is an “extremely serious” show for young actors, Hudson said, “It’s been a sobering experience for them. But they’ve approached a very mature topic with intelligence and compassion, and I’m very proud of the choices they’ve made in creating their characters.”

The play will also have some creative and eye-catching special effects. “We’re using 300 gallons of water to make it rain, and there’ll be a full-out thunderstorm onstage,” said Hudson. “It’s also going to snow.”

The scenes will occur at various locations throughout the town. The front of the stage will be built out toward the audience to allow the actors to speak directly to attendees for more of a dramatic impact. And vid-



Cast members portray TV news crews interviewing the townspeople of Laramie.

eos and still projections will be shown behind the actors while they perform.

“It’s a heartbreaking play, but also inspiring,” said Hudson. “And hopefully, it will start discussions across the community about how hatred can manifest itself anywhere.”

LIKE MOST OF THE ACTORS, senior Andrew Dettmer plays multiple roles, including Matthew’s father, Dennis Shepard. “After his son’s death, he’s become a vocal advocate of LGBTQ rights,” said Dettmer. “He was an oil-industry safety manager, so his job kept him away from home a lot, and he regrets not having spent as much time with Matthew. It’s a hard time for him, so he gives a harsh statement about his son’s killers.”

Calling it “one of the more emotional moments of the whole play,” Dettmer said, he has to find the right balance between becoming too emotional and staying focused on what I’m saying. It’s interesting learning more about Matthew and his family and gives me a unique insight.”

“I was born after this happened and didn’t have any knowledge of it,” he continued. “So especially for my age group, I hope this play sparks a discussion about hate and how we, as a society, deal with it and its repercussions and how we move past it. And it’s clear that, in the 19 years since this happened, our culture’s ideas about this topic have changed, and we’re more open to discourse about it.”

Senior Jack Wood has two roles. As the Rev. Fred Phelps, he portrays an extremely homophobic pastor from the Westboro Baptist Church. “He protests at Matthew’s funeral and screams hateful, anti-gay rhetoric at the mourners,” said Wood. “It’s challenging and draining because I do this for

five minutes.”

But, he added, “It wakes people up to the reality that this hate still exists today toward people, just because of their sexuality. It’s also an important part because this helps the audience feel more sympathetic toward Matthew, and it enables the hatred to become manifest on stage.”

As Greg Pierotti, Wood plays a member of the theater company interviewing the town residents. “He’s a gay man, so what happened is personal to him,” said Wood. “In one scene, he touches the fence where Matthew was found, and he breaks down and cries. But this role is a lot easier to stomach than my other one.”

“It’s challenging because I’m not gay, but I have to put myself in his shoes to understand what he’s experiencing — knowing that someone like himself was brutally murdered because he was gay. It’s a very powerful show. And it’s about real people and events — and that’s not something you get to do a lot in theater, or experience as an audience member.”

Portraying Romaine Patterson, who was best friends with Matthew and knew him well, is sophomore Jules Hoffman. “She’s a lesbian and a powerhouse,” said Hoffman. “She’s headstrong, is a leader and isn’t afraid to speak her mind about her beliefs. I also think she might have gotten a little push-back about it.”

Hoffman said Patterson is now someone she looks up to. “Once I read her monologue, I wanted this part because she’s so powerful and bold and leads a group of people against another group of, arguably, the most hatred-filled people on the planet. This is my favorite role I’ve ever played because I relate to her on so many, different levels. And in a way, when I’m speaking for

Romaine, I’m speaking for myself — which makes it more authentic and, hopefully, will connect even more with the audience.”

In this play, said Hoffman, “You learn about this kid who’s come to Laramie to attend college and make a living and is then beaten to death. But what people will come to love about this show is how we’ve grown as a society since then. This incident is the reason why we have hate-crime laws and a more developed human-rights campaign. It’s also why people now feel safer to love who they want to, without their lives being in jeopardy.”

Sophomore Aswathi Menon plays Zubaida Ula, a Muslim college student in Wyoming. “She’s really fiery and opinionated about how the Laramie residents are acting as if this was the first act of injustice done there against minorities,” said Menon. “As a Muslim woman, she’s faced it, her whole life, and she’s calling the town out on it. Her parents are immigrants from Bangladesh, and she came here at 4 years old, so both cultures have influenced her personality.”

Menon enjoys her role because “Laramie thinks of itself as a place of acceptance and forgiveness, but Zubaida knows that’s not how it really is. People of the Islamic faith are often painted in a bad light and as closeminded, in the news, but she’s strong and is an example of how that’s not true.”

Menon says the audience will appreciate this play’s “rawness and authenticity. We’re portraying real people who’ve actually said these words and gone through these experiences. And I feel like we owe it to everyone who’s faced injustice — whether about their sexual orientation, skin color, faith or amount of money in their bank account — to give the best performance we possibly can.”

NEWS

Two Sides to Two and a Half Cents

Supervisors to vote on proposed budget, possible real estate tax increase on May 1.

BY KEN MOORE

James Parmelee was the seventh speaker before the Board of Supervisors on the proposed budget. Following school personnel, county employees and a speaker from the PTA, Parmelee was the first to oppose the proposed real estate tax increase.

"I figured somebody in the room should try to speak for the average taxpayer," said Parmelee, a perennial opponent of taxes, when he gave his opinion of the proposed budget on the first of three days of public comment.

More than 150 speakers testified, 158 signed up to speak, during the three days the Board of Supervisors allotted to hear from the public on the FY 2019 budget and proposed tax rate. The public comments lasted more than 11 hours and 20 minutes.

Advocates voiced passion on topics ranging from the environment, health and human services, people with disabilities and who are aging, early childhood education, fire and rescue services, pay for public safety personnel, the opioid epidemic, affordable housing, diversity, mental health treatment, school bonds and capital improvements, the triple A bond rating, the arts, libraries, competitive pay for teachers, and more.

But the issue for the board to decide on May 1 is whether to support County Executive Bryan Hill's proposed budget including a two and a half cent real estate tax increase. The board can accept the real estate tax increase or vote for a smaller amount but can not raise Hill's suggested increase.

"When the voters in Fairfax County have had an opportunity to vote on tax increases, you saw what happened last time," said Parmelee. "The voters of Fairfax County, on the very same day that they overwhelmingly voted for Hillary Clinton, they also overwhelmingly voted against the tax hike."

If the Board of Supervisors were to adopt the full two and a half cent tax rate increase, it would amount to an additional \$268 on the average homeowner's annual tax bill.

Only four speakers, and approximately 21 minutes, divided Parmelee from speaker No. 12, Kimberly Adams, of Clifton.

"As a mother, taxpayer and employee here in Fairfax County, my life and livelihood are

"We are Fairfax County and the people who live here want an inclusive and welcoming community for all."

— Kimberly Adams, Clifton



Enrique Carrero, Fairfax County employee standing with many union members, says that as a millennial, he cares very much about retirement benefits.



James Parmelee, Centreville



Arthur Purves, Vienna



Phil Niedzielski-Eichner, Oakton

impacted by every budget that this country adopts," said Adams.

"We have to remember that we are preparing the future for more than 185,000 students each year. I would encourage the school system to go under a similar lines of business review that the county has gone through," said Adams, who suggested that savings from collaboration between schools and the county could be identified.

"If at the end of that exercise, savings are not identified, then we must move forward in a responsible manner that may mean raising taxes once more or looking for possible alternatives to property taxes that we have found to be so elusive here in the county," said Adams.

THE PROPOSED \$4.29-BILLION budget would transfer 54 percent of the total to the school system to fully fund FCPS's budget request. It would also fund pay increases for teachers and county employees.

Adams spoke for many others when she addressed quality of life.

"Like so many here, I am happy to have amazing schools, fire and rescue profession-

als, human services, parks and libraries within my reach. It is why my family lives here," she said, in the three minutes given to each individual speaker.

"All residents deserve an equitable opportunity to succeed if they work hard, but families that cannot afford homes in this area are a growing group. Many families are working hard but there are not enough good-paying jobs, not enough affordable care options, and certainly not enough affordable homes in this area. ... I appreciate it when you spend my tax dollars to support many who live in need alongside those of us who are doing well. We are Fairfax County and the people who live here want an inclusive and welcoming community for all."

BECAUSE OF VIRGINIA LAW, Fairfax County depends almost entirely on real estate taxes for revenue, putting a burden on homeowners in particular, whose increasing property values don't always demonstrate an ability to pay more.

"For nearly 20 years, this board has been raising real estate taxes two or three times faster than household income," said Arthur Purves, of Vienna.

"This goes on year after year," said Charles McAndrew, of Oak Hill.

Phil Niedzielski-Eichner is the Providence
SEE VOTE ON BUDGET. PAGE 10

Their Own Words, A Glimpse

Kofi Annan, Fairfax County NAACP

"Fairfax County's demographics are rapidly changing as you know. It is becoming increasingly diverse, and with these changes often come a unique set of challenges.

"The county's revenue outlook is the most promising it's been in years. However the rate of revenue increase is not reflected in the rate of investment in the poor and working class communities. The low income Fairfax residents, a disproportionate amount of whom are minorities, will not automatically benefit from the improved economy. Thousands will remain reliant on low-wage service sector jobs and many will not receive pay increases. Many of them will not be able to provide for their kids with pre-K education or have access to affordable housing. Therefore, we request that the county direct greater attention and resources to serving the needs of the less fortunate among us."

Annan expressed concern that the county is underfunding Pre-K education for needy families. "This opportunity gap eventually turns into an achievement gap, and that widens over time.

"Fairfax County NAACP calls on the county to commit the resources to enroll at least 300 additional kids into Pre-K in 2019 budget and devise a long-term plan to fund at least 2,000 over the next five years.

"Expand access to affordable housing. Many low income residents will not be able to afford to live in Fairfax County. Many of these families will spend up to half or more of their annual budget" on housing.

"For the past few years, 40 percent of police use of force has been directed toward African Americans, who only make up about 10 percent of the county.

"And for the past few years, we have been asking the county to fund an outside organization to conduct a study to determine the causes of this disparity, so we can begin the process of reversing that trend."

Helen Kelly, Herndon, League of Women Voters

"We support the new property tax rate because we believe it gives you more flexibility in meeting unexpected challenges and we applaud your increased contributions to the reserve funds to satisfy the bond rating agencies. As taxpayers we appreciate your efforts to the county's triple A rating." Kelly supported Diversion First, gang prevention, the opioid task force, the South County police station and the Office of Elections.

Dale Stein, president, McLean Citizens Association

"MCA is concerned about the context of the increases in spending and the apparent lack of cost savings. MCA feels that each budget

SEE THEIR OWN WORDS. PAGE 10



Kofi Annan, Fairfax County NAACP



Helen Kelly, Herndon, League of Women Voters



Dale Stein, McLean Citizens Association

SYA Recognizes 2017 Volunteers of the Year

Thirty-eight Centerville and Clifton area residents were honored recently by the Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) for their efforts during 2017, on behalf of the organization's 13,000 registrants and their families in support of the 13 sports programs coordinated by SYA. The volunteer honorees were nominated by the commissioners of each sport.

"We couldn't achieve our level of success in the broad range of sports we provide our area youth without volunteers," said SYA President Gary Flather. "These volunteers have time and time again showed their commitment to our mission."

Also attending the reception were Pat Herrity, the Springfield district supervisor; and Kathy Smith, the Sully district supervisor. SYA awarded plaques to both recognizing their continued support of youth sports programs. Additionally, retired Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey, a long-time supporter and active SYA Sports Park advisor to SYA, was

honored for his commitment to the organization.

Flather presented his annual Presidents Award to Rob Hahne, who has been a volunteer with SYA since 1990. A special recognition was given to Ray Arduini of the Manassas-based Thurston Companies which has been providing support for the construction of the SYA Sports Park.

The 2017 honorees were: Patrick Thurston, Babe Ruth; Dave Miller, Babe Ruth; Steve Shaffer, Babe Ruth; Kristi Purdy, Basketball; Joe Mancuso, Basketball; Brandon Vickers, Basketball; Nadine Farrow, Cheerleading; Kira Mansfield, Cheerleading; Virginia Anderson, Cheerleading; Molly Gift, Field Hockey; Tracey Barrett, Field Hockey; Julia Samantar, Field Hockey; Ernest Deconti, Football; Jun Bang, Football; Jody Corbet, Lacrosse; Scott Stewart, Lacrosse; Jeff Marciano, Lacrosse; Chris Campbell, Little League; Tom Holmberg, Little League; Doug Howenstein, Little League; Michael "Woody" Slaymaker, Little

SEE SYA, PAGE 5



SYA Board of Directors, from left, Rob Lymburner, Rugby Commissioner; Susan Malkus, Field Hockey Commissioner; Damien LaRuffa, Lacrosse Commissioner; Jeff Stein, Vice President; Gary Flather, President; Bob Woodruff, Little League Commissioner; Dave Scanlon, Basketball Commissioner; and Brian Seeley, Babe Ruth Commissioner. (Not pictured Pete Cuomo, Secretary; Bryan Hunt, Treasurer; Tammy McCarron, Cheerleading Commissioner; Ted Diacoumis, Football Commissioner; Erich Wiemann, Soccer Commissioner; Shashana Courtney, Softball Commissioner; Alonzo Davis, Track & Field Commissioner; Pat Alexander, Volleyball Commissioner and Ken Brown, Wrestling Commissioner.)



Babe Ruth Commissioner Brian Seeley, SYA President Gary Flather, Award winners Steve Shaffer and Beth Thurston. (Not pictured Patrick Thurston.)



Football Award winners Jun Bang, Ernest "Boomer" DeConti, and SYA President Gary Flather.



Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith, SYA President Gary Flather, and Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity.



Field Hockey Commissioner Susan Malkus. (Not pictured Field Hockey Award winners Molly Gift, Tracey Barrett, and Julia Samantar.)



Little League Baseball Award Winner Chris Campbell, Little League Commissioner Bob Woodruff, SYA President Gary Flather, and Award Winner Tom Holmberg. (Not pictured Doug Howenstein and Michael "Woody" Slaymaker.)



Cheerleading Award winners Kira Mansfield, Nadine Farrow and Virginia Anderson; and SYA President Gary Flather.



Basketball Commissioner Dave Scanlon. (Not pictured Basketball Award winners Kristi Purdy, Joe Mancuso, Brandon Vickers.)



Lacrosse Award winners Jody Corbet, Jeff Marciano and Scott Stewart; SYA President Gary Flather and Lacrosse Commissioner Damien LaRuffa.

SYA

FROM PAGE 4
League; Richard Nordenbrook, Rugby; Jennifer Greenlief, Rugby; Susie Hoopes, Rugby; Jose Aunon, Soccer; Mary Beth Hazelgrove, Soccer; Cathy McCormick, Soccer; Darrell Furr, Softball; Graham Stinchcomb, Softball; Tim Neun, Track and Field; Patrick Morgan, Track and Field; Bill Fleming, Volleyball; Sue Newman, Volleyball; Dave Dowgiallo, Volleyball; Keith Sholders, Wrestling; Mark Weader, Wrestling; and Scott Brubaker, Wrestling.

Since 1973 SYA has provided the youth of Centreville and Clifton and the surrounding communities with the opportunity to participate in sports activities. Today, SYA serves over 13,000 children ages 4-19, and over 5,000 families. SYA is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to providing the children of Southwestern Fairfax County with a safe and positive environment through sports competition.



Rugby Award winners Jennifer Greenlief, Susie Hoopes, and Richard Nordenbrook; also pictured Rugby Commissioner Rob Lymburner and SYA President Gary Flather.



SYA Vice President Jeff Stein, Soccer Award winners Cathy McCormick and Mary Beth Hazelgrove, and President Gary Flather. (Not present Jose Aunon.)



Softball Award winner Graham Stinchcomb; SYA XplosionTravel Softball Coach Rob Estabrook and SYA President Gary Flather. (Not present Darrell Furr.)



Track and Field Award winner Patrick Morgan, Track and Field President Mike McLenigan, and SYA President Gary Flather. (Not present Tim Neun.)



Wrestling Award winners Keith Sholders and Mark Weader; SYA President Gary Flather. (Not present Scott Brubaker.)



Volleyball Award winners Bill Fleming, Sue Newman, and Dave Dowgiallo; SYA President Gary Flather

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OPINION

Send in Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 13 this year, and as every year at this time, This newspaper calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date taken, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and information directly to www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to smauren@connectionnewspapers.com.

Mother's Day is just one of many occasions throughout the year that we would love to receive photos from our readers. Send us photos and notes when anything of note is happening in your family, neighborhood, school, club ... Be sure to include basic information: Name everyone in the photo, the approximate date taken, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information. Send to editors@connectionnewspapers.com

Soon after we publish our Mother's Day

photo galleries, we will begin to ask for submissions for our Father's Day galleries. Father's Day is June 17 this year.

Each year we seem to receive many more photos for Father's Day. We're curious whether that is because it is the second of the set so readers are more aware or because mothers are more likely to send in images of the Dads.

Twice a year we ask you to send photos and tell us stories about your pets and how they have come into, touched and left your lives, publishing the last week in July and the last week in February.

In late summer, we invite readers to share what they know about their community for neighbors and newcomers alike.

And wrapping up the year, we gather writing and art from local students to fill our holiday edition. Each year, through an enormous effort by area teachers and school staff we receive an amazing display of student talent.

Regular contributions to our entertainment calendars, community bulletin boards, school notes, and business notes help us to share news in your community. We also always welcome photos and captions from community organizations (Scouts, sports teams, faith groups, school activities, etc.) and local businesses.

Please start by sending in photos for Mother's Day, preferably by May 4. www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/.

Virginia Press Association Winners

Connection writers and photographers garnered awards at the Virginia Press Association annual award banquet. Here is the list of our winners, with more details to come in the future:

First Place, Michael Lee Pope, Business and Financial Writing, Great Falls Connection
First Place, Bonnie Hobbs, Public Safety Writing, Chantilly Connection
First Place, Mark Mogle, Pictorial Photo, Great Falls Connection
First Place, Mark Mogle, General News Photo, Arlington Connection
First Place, Eden Brown, Public Safety Writing, Arlington Connection
Second Place, Dan Brendel, Government Writing, Alexandria Gazette Packet
Second Place, Vernon Miles, Feature Series or Continuing Story, Alexandria Gazette Packet
Second Place, Fallon Forbush, Breaking News Writing, McLean Connection
Second Place, Fallon Forbush, General News Writing, Reston Connection
Second Place, Bonnie Hobbs, General News Writing, Fairfax Connection
Second Place, Marilyn Campbell, Education Writing, Great Falls Connection
Third Place, Shirley Ruhe, Personality or Portrait Photo, Arlington Connection
Third Place, Fallon Forbush, Education Writing, Great Falls Connection
Third Place, Mary Kimm, Editorial Writing, Great Falls Connection



PHOTOS BY KIMBERLY POWERS

The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) Fairfax Chapter stand behind the Troop 893 Eagle Scouts who were presented certificates for their Eagle accomplishments. Troop 893 Eagles from left are Scott M., Taaren S., Ian L., Andrew A., and William S. The Sons of the American Revolution was present to provide the Color Guard for the opening and closing ceremony.



At Spring Court of Honor

Troop 893 gathers for a group shot at its spring 2018 Court of Honor held at the Centreville United Methodist Church on April 3.

CENTREVIEW

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A Connection Newspaper

Admissions to TJ Continue to Exclude Poor and Black Students

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has offered admission to 485 students for the Class of 2022 at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST).

A total of 3,160 students applied for admission.

❖ White students made up 870, or 27.5 percent of the applicants, and 111, or 22.9 percent of accepted students.

❖ Black students made up 220, or 7.0 percent of applicants, but only 10 black students were admitted, making up 2.1 percent of the incoming class.

❖ Latino students made up 276, or 8.7 percent of applicants; 23 Latino students were 4.7 percent of the incoming class.

❖ Poor students made up 336, 10.6 percent of applicants, with seven students who receive subsidized meals admitted, for 1.4 percent of the incoming class. About 28 percent of Fairfax County Public School students, or more than 51,000 students qualify for Free or Reduced Meals, a measure of significant poverty.

❖ Asian students made up 1,633, or 51.7 percent of the applicants and 316, or more than 65 percent of the incoming class.

Approximately 71.9 percent of the stu-

dents offered admission reside in Fairfax County and 28.1 percent are from Arlington, Loudoun, and Prince William counties and the City of Falls Church.

Approximately 94.8 percent of students offered admission are currently attending public schools.

Established in 1985, TJHSST is a governor's school offering a comprehensive college preparatory program emphasizing the sciences, mathematics, and technology, and is often cited in rankings as the top high school in the country.

Specialized technical laboratories, including a technological computational center, enhance the academic curriculum and provide students with experience in state-of-the-art technology, opportunities for independent research and experimentation, and interaction with professionals from the scientific, technological, engineering, and industrial communities.

The selection process for admittance to TJHSST involves a holistic review of each candidate's semifinalist essay, teacher recommendations, and student-authored information sheet, as well as consideration of grades and test scores on the admissions examination. A summer round of admis-

TJHSST Admissions Statistics for Class of 2022

	Applicants	Percent	Admitted	Percent
Reduced Fee or Waived Fee Paid	336	10.6%	7	1.4%
GENDER				
Male	1,683	53.3%	278	57.3%
Female	1,477	46.7%	207	42.7%
Total	3,160		485	
ETHNIC				
White	870	27.5%	111	22.9%
Black	220	7.0%	10	2.1%
Hispanic	276	8.7%	23	4.7%
Asian	1,633	51.7%	316	65.2%
Multiracial/Other*	161	5.0%	25	5.2%
Total	3,160		485	
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	2,996	94.8%	460	94.8%
Private/Home	164	5.2%	25	5.2%
Total	3,160		485	

* This category includes students who checked "Multiracial" on their application and/or students whose ethnic designation numbered ten or fewer.

sions for eighth graders newly moved to a participating district after Sept. 30 of the previous year will add to the 485 offers at

the end of June. For more information, contact the TJHSST Admissions Office at 571-423-3770.



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Centreville Branch 13890 Braddock Rd., #102, Centreville, VA 20121, Tel. (571) 321-6272

*Regular Certificate of Deposit: The Promotional APY (Annual Percentage Yield) of 2.00% for a term of 12 months is accurate as of 03/05/2018 and is offered for Regular Certificate of Deposit (CD) accounts opened during the promotional period. A minimum opening deposit of \$1,000 is required to earn interest and to obtain the promotional APY. The rate will not be changed for the term of the account. Interest will not be compounded. A penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal before maturity. The promotion begins on 03/05/2018 and may end at any time at Bank's sole discretion without prior notice. Terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. Contact your local branch for additional information.

**New Money is defined as funds not currently on deposit with Bank of Hope or withdrawn at any time during the promotional period. The promotional APY will not be applied to funds transferred from an existing Bank of Hope account.

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Fitness for 50+. Daytime hours, Monday-Friday at Sully Senior Center, 14426 Albemarle Point Place, Chantilly. Jazzercise Lite, Zumba Gold, Hot Hula Fitness (dancing Polynesian style), Strength Training, Qi Gong, Tai Chi and more. Membership is \$48 a year, and waivers are available. Email lynne.lott@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-322-4475 for more.

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 for more.

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

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

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 for a full schedule.

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

LIBRARY FUN

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



Centreville International Showcase

The 8th Annual Centreville International Showcase will feature food, song and dance reflecting the cultural heritage of Centreville residents including Guatemala, Ireland, India, Ghana, Peru and Korea. Admission is free. The showcase raises money for CIF through the Showcase Silent Auction, 50/50 Raffle, food sales, and donations during the evening. Saturday, April 21, 5:30-9 p.m. at Korean Central Presbyterian Church, 8514 Forrester Blvd. Springfield. Contact the Centreville Labor Resource Center at contact@CentrevilleLRC.org, 703-543-6272 or centrevilleimmigrationforum.org/.

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 to reserve a space.

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 to reserve a spot.

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

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.

SATURDAY/APRIL 21

SpringFest Fairfax. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Participate in a day full of free, environmental, and health-focused family-friendly activities and games at this year's SpringFest Fairfax—a celebration of Earth and Arbor Days. Admission is free and parking is \$5 per car. Call 703-324-5470 or 571-338-6710 or visit www.springfestfairfax.org.

Student Poetry: Celebrate the Senses. 10:30 a.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. To honor National Poetry Month in April, the Park Authority asked young people in grades K-8 to submit poems inspired by what they see, hear, touch, smell or taste in Fairfax County parks. The two winners in each grade category (K-2, 3-5 and 6-8) will share their works at the Springfest Poetry Showcase. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks.

Nutrition Information. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at all Wegman's Food Markets. Learn about Wegman's *Food You Feel Good About* products, and in celebration of Earth Day, learn about sustainability at Wegmans and participate in the company's plastic bag exchange. Samples will be offered in a variety of departments. Visit www.wegmans.com.

Centreville International Showcase. 5:30-9 p.m. at Korean Central Presbyterian Church, 8514

Forrester Blvd. Springfield. The 8th Annual Centreville International Showcase will feature food, song and dance reflecting the cultural heritage of Centreville residents including Guatemala, Ireland, India, Ghana, Peru and Korea. Admission is free. The showcase raises money for CIF through the Showcase Silent Auction, 50/50 Raffle, food sales, and donations during the evening. Contact the Centreville Labor Resource Center at contact@CentrevilleLRC.org, 703-543-6272 or centrevilleimmigrationforum.org/.

SUNDAY/APRIL 22

NTRAK Scale Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold an N gauge model train show. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

Earth Day Celebration. 1-4 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join the free community celebration, "What on Earth Are We Doing for Earth Day?" Learn how plastics affect the environment and the park. Explore ways to reduce, reuse, restore and recycle. Ongoing activities that include games, bird walks, trash

hikes and a chance to make soda bottle bird-feeders. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 25

Adventures in Art. 7-8 p.m. at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Explore the world of art through stories and art projects. Come dressed to get messy. Ages 4-7 with a caregiver. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/chantilly-regional for more.

FRIDAY/APRIL 27

Erin Peterson Fund Gala. 6:30 p.m. at Foxchase Manor, 8310 Chatsworth Drive, Manassas. It has been 11 years since the college shooting that took the life of Erin Peterson. To honor her legacy, the Erin Peterson Fund was established in 2007. Since its inception the fund has awarded more than \$184,000 in grants and scholarships. The fund will hold its Inaugural Scholarship Gala with an evening of great food, fellowship and entertainment featuring musical artist Clarence T. Brown, III. Visit www.erinpeterfund.org/gala-sponsors for sponsorship and ticket information.

SATURDAY/APRIL 28

Fairfax Run for the Children. 8 a.m. at Fairfax County Courthouse Complex, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Join Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for the 8th Annual 8K and 3K races. The superhero-themed race attracts nearly 1,000 runners and walkers, 250 volunteers, and raises almost \$85,000 each year to support Fairfax CASA's advocacy work with abused and neglected children in the community. Participants can enjoy the after race celebration, including superhero meet and greets, a DJ, free food, face painting, kids' crafts, photo booth, and more. Visit www.fairfaxrunforthechildren.com/.

SUNDAY/APRIL 29

Railroad Communications Event. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Take part in demonstrations of the many means by which railroads communicated vital information through their networks. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

ROUNDUPS

Car Show this Saturday

Casey's Automotive, at 4260-A Entre Court, (off Willard Road) in Chantilly, will hold a car show Saturday, April 21, from 12:30-3:30 p.m. The fun also includes face-painting and food trucks. Owners Mary and Bryan Jewett are donating 100 percent of the proceeds to Ellie's Hats, which donates hats to children with cancer who've lost their hair due to chemotherapy.

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, April 26, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed. Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way,

inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

Erin Peterson Fund Plans Gala

It has been 11 years since the Virginia Tech shooting that took the life of Erin Peterson. To honor Erin's legacy of academic excellence, her kindness, and empathy for those in need, the Erin Peterson Fund was established. Since its inception the fund has awarded more than \$184,000 in grants and scholarships. On Friday, April 27, the fund will hold its Inaugural Scholarship Gala at Foxchase Manor in Manassas. Participants will hit the



red carpet at 6:30 p.m. for an evening of food, fellowship and entertainment featuring musical artist Clarence T. Brown, III. The Erin Peterson Fund (EPF) was established May 9, 2007 as a result of gifts and monetary donations from all over the United States. The Fund, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, continues Erin's legacy to work to change the lives of young people. Visit <http://www.erinpeterfund.org/gala-sponsors> for sponsorship and ticket information.

Clean Out Medicine Cabinets

Take advantage of a free, convenient, confidential, and safe disposal of unused or expired medications during Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout on Saturday, April 28. Drop off medications (pills or liquids only, no pressurized canisters or needles) at the Fair Oaks District Station, 12300 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax, or the Sully District Station, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Teaching Money Management

April is Financial Literacy Month.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

In an era when consumers can purchase merchandise and deposit money into a bank account using a smartphone, teaching money smarts to children can be fraught with complications. April is Financial Literacy Month and local financial advisors say teaching children how to manage their money responsibly is a necessary part of becoming a financially responsible adult.

“How a parent treats cash is the way their kids will treat cash; lead by example,” said Andrea Foster, professor and department chair of Business, Economics, Accounting, Computer Applications and Paralegal Studies (BEACAPS) at Montgomery College. “If your kid sees you cutting coupons and budgeting, when they grow up they will do the same. They will see the benefits and the value of your thriftiness.”

One of the most important financial lessons that a parent can teach is how to save, advises Foster. “Teach them how to budget so that they can learn how to save for what they want,” she said.

Children pay attention to and learn from the ways in which their parents manage money and it’s critical that they learn financial literacy at home, suggests Victoria G. Henry, assistant vice president at West Financial Services, Inc. in McLean.

“Explaining the concept of savings early to children is key,” added “It is natural to want to spend everything right away, so it may be hard to understand why it is important to set a little aside for future expenses. Perhaps it could be explained by saying the savings will come in handy if a favorite toy breaks or is lost.”

An ideal time to offer a lesson in saving is when a child receives money as a present for a birthday or other occasion, says Henry. “It is a good practice to have them save even 10 or 20 percent of the gift, and let them have the rest to spend how they want,” she said. “If they decide to spend their fun money on something and then quickly return asking

for money for something else, it is a good to remind them that maybe they should think more carefully about how they want to spend their money in the future. This will help them get into the practice of making wise choices with spending and saving down the road when they start earning money as well.”

Foster also suggests helping children develop savings goals. “[Whether] by piggy bank, envelope, can, or jar, a vessel is an important tool for teaching kids how to save for major milestones,” said Foster. “Identify a goal for the saving and have them save towards that goal.”

Transparency builds enthusiasm, adds Foster. “Using a clear jar for saving creates enthusiasm and motivation as the kids see it fill up with the coins,” she said. “[Saving] also teaches then self-reliance and not counting on their parents to help them for everything. By giving a reward, kids can learn the value of money and how to spend money.”

Foster also suggests encouraging children to keep a spending diary and limiting the amount of money they can spend or the number of items they can purchase when shopping for themselves. “Show them that stuff costs money,” she said. “Have them keep track of all the money that mom and dad spend on them in one month, from food to clothing and other things. They will realize

how much it costs to maintain them and how much all the stuff that they want costs.”

Involve children in a family’s charitable donations, advises Henry. “Ask your children to think about what kinds of charitable efforts the family should support,” she said. “Have them research and pick a charity and then make a small contribution to that organization on their behalf.”

“Have children earn their allowance and let children experience the pain of not having enough money if they don’t budget correctly,” said Dr. Brian Hollar assistant professor of Accounting, Economics & Finance at Marymount University. “Experience is a good teacher and learning when the stakes are low is invaluable.”

Hollar underscores the importance of teaching solid math skills. “It’s hard to develop strong financial literacy without understanding exponential growth,” he said.



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Teaching young children about the concept of saving money is a critical part of financial literacy.

“Explaining the concept of savings early to children is key. It is natural to want to spend everything right away, so it may be hard to understand why it is important to set a little aside for future expenses.”

**— Victoria G. Henry,
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The Virginia Run Community

Spring Yard Sale!

Saturday April 28

8:00 AM- 2:00 PM




Rain or Shine

"ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE"

Numerous Individual Resident Yard Sales in Addition to Multi-Family Sales!

Helaine Newman and Paula Ferrara-Garcia are the official organizers and will be compiling the treasure map of all of the families participating in this community event with a listing of items that they plan to sell. They will be distributing maps at the corner of Wetherburn Drive and Pleasant Valley Road the morning of the sale.

Questions? Contact Paula or Helaine

 <p>PAULA FERRARA-GARCIA C: (703) 216-6730 pfgarcia@weichert.com</p>	 <p>Helaine Newman C: (703) 402-3134 helainesells@gmail.com</p>	
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†If your property is currently listed for sale with a broker, this is not intended as a solicitation of that listing.

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NEWS

Vote on Budget on May 1

FROM PAGE 3
District Planning Commissioner and former school board member. But last week, Niedzielski-Eichner spoke as an individual from Oakton and was the 23rd speaker.

"The key, of course, is attracting and retaining high-quality personnel to both [schools and county]. This budget begins to recover our competitiveness in relation to compensation offered by other governmental jurisdictions. I also support the \$25 million annual increase in FCPS bonding authority to expedite its school renovation and support new construction that will alleviate severe overcrowding in some of the county's fast developing areas," said Niedzielski-Eichner.

"As one who was on the front lines advocating for passage of the Meals Tax, I find this reality ironic in light of the significant voices arguing against the meals tax due to its regressivity. Since each one percent of the property tax rate is projected to generate approximately \$25 million in revenue, the proposed 2.5 cent increase in the real estate tax rate will generate about \$62.5 million. The meals tax was projected to generate a \$100 million per annum, with

almost a third of this revenue, \$28 million, to be paid by tourists and visitors to Fairfax."

Kofi Annan, president of the Fairfax County NAACP expressed concern that the county is underfunding services to low income families, including housing and Pre-K education for needy families.

"This opportunity gap [of not having access to PreK education] eventually turns into an achievement gap, and that widens over time.

"Fairfax County NAACP calls on the county to commit the resources to enroll at least 300 additional kids into Pre-K in 2019 budget and devise a long-term plan to fund at least 2,000 over the next five years." Annan asked the supervisors to fund an outside study of racial disparities in police use of force.

"For the past few years, 40 percent of police use of force has been directed toward African Americans, who only make up about 10 percent of the county," Annan said.

"And for the past few years, we have been asking the county to fund an outside organization to conduct a study to determine the causes of this disparity, so we can begin the process of reversing that trend."

Their Own Words, A Glimpse

FROM PAGE 3
should include new efficiency, in operations particularly in budgets of \$4.3 billion. ... "

Louise Epstein, chair, McLean Citizens Association's budget and taxation committee

"We really support teacher raises" while also expressing concern about allotting millions for raises for administrators in the school system.



Louise Epstein, McLean Citizens Association

Kay Larmer, McLean, Commission on Aging

"We applaud your commitment to making Fairfax a livable community for people of all ages.

"Currently in Fairfax County, about one in seven residents are older than 65. By 2020, the proportion will nearly be one in five. "We will need more affordable and accessible housing, improved and more creative transportation services, increased home based and community based services, new communications technology, programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity."

Leann Alberts, Springfield, Disability Services Board

"Working age people with disabilities make up nearly 15 percent of the Virginia's population and are far more likely

to be unemployed and to live in poverty than people without disabilities. Supports for people with disabilities are vital to the fabric of our community. They are every bit as essential to Fairfax County as our roads, emergency first responders, schools and environmental services. They are value added services that empower people with disabilities to live and prosper in the community."



Kay Larmer, McLean, Commission on Aging

Enrique Carrero, Fairfax County employee

"I am proud to be the first one in my family to graduate from college, and I feel it's important to give back to the community through my job as a public employee. I help families in need get heating in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. I've heard some people say millennial workers don't care about retirement. So, let me clear that up. As a 23-year-old millennial, I care deeply about my future and believe that we all deserve to live comfortably when we're too old to work."



Leann Alberts, Springfield, Disability Services Board

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

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Child turning 5 years old by Sept. 30? If so, contact your child's school to make arrangements for kindergarten enrollment. Most schools begin getting information together now for parents of incoming kindergartners, and many host an orientation or open house. All kindergarten programs are full-day and located in FCPS elementary schools. Check your school's webpage or contact the school directly for specific enrollment information and dates of orientation or visit www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration.

Centre Ridge Elementary School in Centreville is open for kindergarten registration for the school year 2018-19. Forms and other information are available on line at <https://www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration>. They are also available in the front office. Call 703-227-2600 with questions.

Greenbriar West Elementary School is now accepting information for next year's Kindergarten classes. Families who live within the school's boundaries and have a child who will turn 5 years of age by Sept. 30, 2018, call the school office at 703-633-6700.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 20-21

Westfield Mulch Delivery. Mulch delivery was postponed due to inclement weather. Delivery will take place Friday, April 20 and Saturday, April 21.

SATURDAY/APRIL 21

Special Education Conference. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at Hayfield Secondary School, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. Dr. Pamela Mims, the keynote speaker, will present Using Evidence to Guide Practice: Justifying Inclusion for All. Choose from over 60 workshops. Register online at www.fcps.edu/spedconference2018 or call 703-204-3941.

Volunteers Needed: 2018 Springfest Earth Day Festival. Sully Historic Site, 1350 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Springfest is Fairfax County's premier Earth Day festival held on April 21 at Sully Historic property. The theme of this year's event is "Healthy Planet-Healthy People." Volunteers (14 and older) are needed to assist throughout the day in a variety of capacities. To volunteer, call Wanda Lohr at 703-324-8569 or email wanda.lohr@fairfaxcounty.gov.

MONDAY/APRIL 23

Senior Volunteer Orientation. 3:30 p.m. at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. RSVP Northern Virginia will hold a volunteer orientation. The hour-long event is free and open to anyone 55-years-young or better. RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) is the region's largest volunteer network for people 55 and older and provides individualized support to seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria. To sign up, email RSVP Volunteer Specialist Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call the RSVP Hotline at 703-403-5360. Visit www.rsvpnova.org.

TUESDAY/APRIL 24

Sully District Council Membership Meeting. 7 p.m. at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly. Meeting topic: Fairfax County Park Authority, with presentations by Maggie Godbold, Sully District Park Authority Board member and Park Authority staff. Visit www.sullydistrict.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 28

A Community Conversation about the Opioid Crisis. 1-5 p.m. at Epiphany Episcopal Church, 3301 Hidden Meadow Drive, Herndon. For students in 7th-12th grades and their parents. Register online at epiphanyes.org/occc. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/news/2018/battling-opioid-crisis.

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If Only It Were That Simple



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though I immerse you regular readers in the excruciating details of my cancer-affected life, rarely do I bombard unsuspecting conversationalists who unknowingly yet sincerely wander into territory with which many of you are intimately detailed. Not that I don't have stories to tell, and/or perhaps even unsolicited advice to offer; generally speaking, if I can avoid it, I don't want to drag the conversation into a cancer-centric black hole.

It's not because I'm uncomfortable talking about cancer, or that I would feel it an inappropriate invasion of my privacy, or that I would feel the need to blather on non-stop. Hardly. But I would see it as the end of an innocent inquiry undone that then takes on a more empathetic, sympathetic and possibly even pathetic tone, some of which might make me uncomfortable.

The reason being: part of what feeds my self-preservation and sense of well-being is reading and reacting to the feedback I receive from others when the subject matter turns to cancer, however well-meaning their intentions may have been.

Sometimes the reactions I get aren't helpful ("Tell me Ken, how's it feel to know you're going to die?"). Sometimes, I find myself rationalizing, explaining and revisiting issues and experiences more helpful and of interest to the party that asked the question rather than to yours truly who's now having to answer the question. Not that I don't want to be helpful or have difficulty empathizing; nothing could be further from the truth.

It's more that I don't want to see their expressions/hear their apologies when their innocent question ("So what do you do?") elicits an extremely unexpected answer. "Not too much. I have stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer."

Then I have to decide how I involved I want to get them in my life. Since I'd just as soon not get them involved for all the reasons I've outlined, usually I deflect their questions and/or redirect them away from me and back to them. I don't exactly shut them down. It's more like a gentle closing. I'm not rude or the least bit off-putting. I'm more like a traffic cop re-routing emotions to avoid any accidents – for all parties engaged.

My experience has been that responding to an innocent question with a "I have terminal-cancer"-type bombshell tends to take the conversation in an entirely different direction than likely intended. The seriousness of my response/situation and the emotions – maybe even memories it stirs in the person who asked the question, can hijack an evening and cause at least for a few minutes anyway, a rather dreary dynamic. All of which I don't want to happen and more so, don't need to happen. As a cancer patient, I don't need dreary. I don't need pity. I don't need negativity. I need humor. I need encouragement and compliments. I need to be made to feel, as Tony the Tiger might say: "Not just good, but GREAT!"

When I assess my nine-plus years post-diagnosis; having lived now years beyond my original "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I can't quite attribute my amazing good fortune to anything in particular. However, I will admit to this: trying not think about my diagnosis/prognosis too much, trying to remain positive, trying to be funny and self-effacing, and trying to avoid people and situations where I might feel bad, are all components. Are they working to keep me alive more than the medicine, my pills and my miscellaneous non-Western alternatives are?

Yet another question or two I'd rather not answer.

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

'Breathtaking Music and Complex Characters'

Westfield High presents "The Phantom of the Opera."

BY BONNIE HOBBS

Featuring a cast and crew of nearly 60, "The Phantom of the Opera" — one of the most revered Broadway musicals of all time — will soon grace the Westfield High stage. It's the school's Cappies show, and Director Rachel Harrington says it's something that "will mesmerize the whole family."

"Phantom' has been performed for 30 years now and has only recently been allowed to be performed by high-school students," she said. "Its intriguing characters and beautiful orchestration make it stand out. We have a lot of really talented kids in our theater, band and choral programs, and I thought, 'If not now, when?'"

The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, April 27-28, and May 4-5, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 29, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 at the door and \$10 via www.westfieldtheatre.com

Westfield band and orchestra students comprise the 27-piece pit orchestra. "The music is complex, but they and the actors are doing a really good job of taking on something advanced beyond their years," said Harrington. "We transformed our space into a French opera house with baroque styling and intricate design. The scenes take place in and around the opera house or in the phantom's lair — which is dark and scary, with a rocky terrain."

"The audience will love the beauty of the music and the heartwarming story of an unrequited love," she continued. "They'll also appreciate all the technical prowess the students have brought to the stage. And we have amazing voices — some of the best in Fairfax County. The students are highly trained and have worked on this show a long time to get it where it needs to be."

Portraying the phantom is sophomore John Henry Stamper. "People think he's an insane sociopath, but all he wants is affection because he's never had it in his life," said Stamper. "He's had a facial deformity from birth, which has always made him an outcast. He doesn't understand social cues, so he can come off as creepy."

The story takes place in late 1800s France, where the phantom is obsessed and infatuated with Christine, a ballet dancer in the theater company. He lives under the opera house and has given her voice lessons through the walls. "But he doesn't know how to show her what she means to him, so he comes off as smooth, seductive and predatory," said Stamper. "To others, he's coarse and mean and they're scared of him. And to the opera company, a whole mystery surrounds him."

Saying he's both excited and nervous about it, Stamper enjoys his role because "The phantom is such a complex and dy-



Rehearsing a scene are (from left) Braeden Anderson, Lauren Levine, John Henry Stamper, Molly Van Trees, Lilly Whitman and Colin Brown.

namic character. The music is complicated, but also phenomenal. And I like how he's the protagonist, but also the bad guy — an antihero, and something I've never done before. But once I put on the facial deformity, I really get into character. Our head of makeup, senior Kaili Fox, made a mold of my face and created the prosthetic from there. And the mask I wear — which is iconic in musical theater — is awesome, too."

Stamper's favorite song is "Down Once More" because it's when the love triangle between the phantom, Christine and her childhood friend Raoul comes to a head. And they're all singing about their feelings at the same time.

He said the audience will be impressed with the set design and the music performed by the pit orchestra. "It's breathtaking because the songs are full, orchestra pieces, complete with violas, cellos and horns," said Stamper. "And the set has a grand staircase and golden box seats. The entrance to the phantom's lair is through a mirror in Christine's dressing room, and the phantom sings to her through it and also emerges through it when he first comes onstage."

Senior Molly Van Trees plays Christine Daae. "She's tentative, reserved and scared because she's had to deal with the loss of her father," said Van Trees. "In the beginning, she's nervous; but in the second act, she's more courageous and sure of herself. The phantom takes notice of her, but she doesn't know who he is. She thinks he's the angel of music, sent by her dead father so she can learn more about music."

Van Trees says it's the most challenging role she's ever played because "vocally, it's so demanding, and my character is a little odd. But 'Phantom' has always been my favorite play, and Christine, my dream role,

so I'm very honored, excited and privileged to get to do it."

She especially likes the number, "Notes Part II," sung by an ensemble with the main characters. "It's the second time that everyone has received letters from the phantom," she said. "And what's cool is that you get to see a different side of Christine — it's the first time she stands up for herself."

"It's such a classic show; and because we're a younger cast, we're bringing a different energy to it," continued Van Trees. "We have a very talented ensemble, everyone's working hard to make this a great show and all that work has paid off."

Portraying Piangi, the opera house's lead tenor and sidekick of the lead soprano, Carlotta, is sophomore Alan Gutierrez-Urista. (He's also Stamper's understudy). "Piangi's a male diva who thinks everything's about him," said Gutierrez-Urista. "He puts himself first, except around Carlotta. He's an Italian tenor, so he struggles with the lyrics' dialect in their show and is hard to work with."

Gutierrez-Urista loves his part because "Piangi is kooky, funny and conceited." And it also makes him stretch because he sings really high notes, including high C — which, he says, is "tough for a male. It's a hard show vocally because of the difficult music. But once our cast puts it all together, it sounds glorious, as if we were an actual opera company. This is my dream show because it was the first show I saw that made me want to do musical theater for the rest of my life."

His favorite song is the overture at the start. "It's powerful and its theme comes out of nowhere," he said. "And it lets the audience know this is a dramatic show. At the end, they'll be in tears because of the way it intensifies and pulls at their heartstrings. They'll like every aspect — the costumes,

set, dances, songs and story. Every part is special, and it's going to be jaw-dropping."

Gutierrez-Urista also designed the costumes and is hand-beading the phantom's cape. In keeping with the period, women wear long, extravagant gowns, and the men wear suits and tailcoats. In addition, the opera members wear Greek-soldier costumes for the show they're performing. The phantom wears a suit, cape, feathered hat and iconic half-mask; and during a masquerade ball, the guests are in elaborate costumes and masks.

"I started designing in early December and like seeing my drawings on paper come to life," said Gutierrez-Urista. "I was named designer after winning second place in the VTA [Virginia Theater Association] costume-design competition in October." Junior Annabelle Lassiter helped organize the execution of all the costumes.

Senior Gene Kim plays the opera's rich patron and Christine's childhood friend, Raoul. "When he sees her onstage and meets with her again, he falls in love with her," said Kim. "He doesn't believe the phantom is real, but sees that Christine's disturbed by him, so he provides comfort and support for her. He's caring, confident and bold."

Calling Raoul "a big character in a big show," Kim said it's new for him to portray a love interest and someone giving strength to the main character, but he likes expanding his acting abilities. He also enjoys singing "Prima Donna" because of its "beautiful harmonies plus conflicting melodies" while the opera members coax Carlotta to perform. Overall, he said, "This production explores the whole range of emotions — joy, laughter, rage, sadness and love. And lots of intense moments will keep the audience at the edge of their seats."

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIE LASSITER