

# Chantilly CONNECTION

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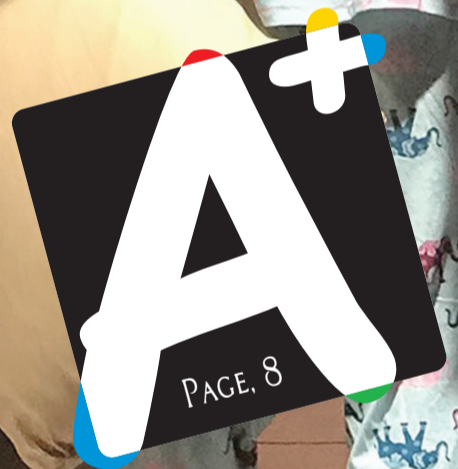
From left: Aaron Aldridge, Claire Yang and Micaela O'Rourke portray siblings having a pillow fight in Chantilly High's upcoming children's play.

## A Play for Children — and Adults

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Magical Adventure  
In a Distant Land

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# Children's Play This Week at Chantilly

BY BONNIE HOBBS

**T**he children's play, "Bedtime Stories (As Told by our Dad, Who Messed Them Up)," takes the stage this week at Chantilly High. Written by the school's former theater director, Ed Monk, it'll be performed Thursday-Saturday, July 19, 20 and 21, at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$5 at the door or via [www.chantillyhsdrama.com](http://www.chantillyhsdrama.com).

In the show, a father reads bedtime stories to his three children, but mixes up the plot points and characters — with hilarious results. And the cast and crew of around 30 hail not just from Chantilly, but also from Oakton High and Rocky Run and Franklin middle schools.

"We've got talented kids and things are going great," said Tech Director Andy Shaw. "The show was cast before the end of the school year, so they had their scripts all memorized when rehearsals started."

He said both he and Director Shannon Khatchersian like seeing the rising eighth- and ninth-graders coming into Chantilly's theater program for both tech work and acting. "We get a preview of them and they get a taste of our program," said Shaw. "And it's exciting and encouraging to see all the new talent on the way." For this play, he said, "They really created big, fun characters and brought a lot of great energy to them. They aren't afraid to take risks."

The dad tells three, bedtime stories, in response to each child's request. In "The Kid who Cried, 'Dinosaur,'" his son wanted a story about a dinosaur, so he makes one up, similar to the "Boy who Cried, 'Wolf,'" tale. In "The Princess and the Pea," he alters the details and a can of peas, not just one pea, is placed under the princesses' mattress. And in "Rumpelstiltskin," nobody wants to take care of the baby.

"Audiences will love these over-the-top characters and seeing a different, irreverent, 'Ed Monk-ian' twist on stories they know," said Shaw. "There are lots of jokes



Rehearsing a scene from Chantilly's children's play are (from left) Samantha York, Lauren Lagasse, Trevor Belsky, Claire Yang, Aaron Aldridge, Micaela O'Rourke and Jared Belsky (as the dad).

about parenting, taking care of kids and growing up, and the stories are told in that perspective. So people will see these silly families, but all with parents trying to do what's best for their children."

The three-level set will have elements highlighting each story. The bedroom where the dad tells the stories is on the second level, and the action will take place on the stage level. "We'll change the focus with eye-catching colors, lights and movable set pieces," said Shaw.

Students designed all the technical aspects — the set, sound and lighting — and the costumes will be colorful and wacky. For example, said Shaw, "Rumpelstiltskin will look creepy and mysterious, and the princess will wear elegant attire. And in the dinosaur story, we have a town militia dressed in bold, bright, cheerful and crazy costumes."

Chantilly senior Jared Belsky portrays the dad. "He's worked all day and is just exhausted, but his kids want him to tell them bedtime stories," said Belsky. "All he wants to do is go to sleep, and he doesn't know the stories as well as the mom does. But

she's pregnant and is already asleep, so he tells the stories, but mixes up the characters and plots."

Belsky enjoys showing the dad doing this while his children correct him. Said Belsky: "He's trying his best to entertain them, but he's clearly not getting things right. In this play, normal characters are thrown completely out the door, so you get to act like an idiot onstage and have a blast."

"It's fun for kids to see because of the big, goofy characters," continued Belsky. "But there are also jokes that only parents and older kids will get, so there's something for everyone."

Playing a young teen named Wilbur in the dinosaur story is Chantilly junior Amro Ibrahim. "Wilbur is very lazy," said Ibrahim. "He's forced to watch sheep all day, but he's bored. So he wishes something exciting would happen — and a dinosaur comes up. So he runs around yelling, 'Dinosaur!' but the dinosaur has hidden behind a tree when the townspeople come."

Ibrahim said Wilbur's friendly, but irritated by his parents and the other adults who don't believe him, so he's frustrated.

## Magical Adventure in a Distant Land

Summer SMASH-UP presents original musical, "The Hollow."

BY BONNIE HOBBS

**A** magical adventure in a distant land awaits all those who visit "The Hollow." That's the name of the original musical being presented this Friday, July 20, by the performing-arts camp, Summer SMASH-UP (Stage, Music, Acting, Singing Hamming it-UP).

This free show is at 2 p.m. at Centreville Baptist Church, 15100 Lee Highway (Route 29/Pleasant Valley Road intersection) in Centreville. The actors are from several schools, including Virginia Run, Cub Run and Bull Run elementaries; Rocky Run and Stone middle schools; and Westfield High.

The camp directors and play producers/creators are professional actor Toby Chieffo-

Reidway and Virginia Run music teacher Jeremiah Tyler. And both say their show is fun and exciting and will appeal to all ages.

"Four, school-aged friends are called upon by a mysterious stranger to save a troubled kingdom far from home," said Toby Chieffo-Reidway. "Along the way, they'll discover that, even in the fantasy lands they thought they knew, nothing is ever only what it seems to be. There's always more beneath the surface if they open themselves to the power of friendship and are willing to be the heroes that others see them as."

The main characters — Mouse, Cal, Sky and Soren, the heroes — are each "ordinary" schoolchildren struggling between who they think the world wants them to be and who they really are, at their most vul-

nerable. They're not yet close friends, but they'll be thrust together because of their affection for "The Hollow," a series of fantasy stories they've all been reading since they were young.

Stone seventh-grader Justin Pokrant portrays Mouse, an empathetic, generous and compassionate soul who doesn't always react well to real-world pressures. He's more comfortable living vicariously in the fantasy worlds of "The Hollow." He imagines himself as a hero of these far-off lands; however, he doesn't yet realize his capacity to be a hero of his own, real-life story.

Playing Cal is Carys Davenport, 13, of Maryland. Cal is smart and insightful, but she gets flustered when thrust into high-

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"I like his country accent and getting to be mad at everybody," said Ibrahim.

He said this show's multiple stories give it variety. And, he added, "They're all well-done, with jokes for all ages. It's fun being in a children's show because you get to be goofy and let it all out."

Chantilly sophomore Lila York portrays Mindy, a servant girl at the palace in "The Princess and the Pea." The queen wants her to pretend to be a princess to make the prince fall in love with her. Once he does, the queen can leave her throne and go to Las Vegas — which she can't do until he's married.

"Mindy's sweet and nice and has a Southern accent," said York. "She has to learn to act like a princess, so she's very determined. Yet she's also honest and hardworking and doesn't like lying, but she'll have to do it." York said doing a Southern accent is different for her, but "It's really fun and it's been a nice experience expanding my horizons." She said children's shows are entertaining because "Everyone's having such a good time onstage. We make big movements and exaggerated expressions. The audience will like the quirky twists to the classic stories they've heard, and the characters are all funny and unique in their own ways."

Playing Ashley, one of the children being read to, is Franklin Middle eighth-grader Micaela O'Rourke. "She's 7 and sassy, will backtalk her dad if she feels the need, will correct him and will get her siblings on her side," said O'Rourke. "I like playing someone younger than I am. You get to be more creative and have fun with it and be a little more quirky and loud." She said it's always "fun to hear children laughing, and the whole cast is super nice and supportive. And the costumes are really different; for example, some characters wear Converse shoes with buttons, feathers and sparkles all over them. This show's very creative — not something you'd usually see. And kids will enjoy seeing our bright set and colorful characters, too."



The heroes debate the future of their quest in Summer SMASH-UP's "The Hollow." From left are Zachary Vielbig, Carys Davenport, Justin Pokrant and Rachel Neil.

# OPINION

## Girls Learn about Fire and Rescue at Camp

To give girls confidence in their abilities, push them beyond their comfort zone.

BY TRACEY REED  
CAPTAIN II, STATION 15, CHANTILLY, C-SHIFT  
GIRLS FIRE AND RESCUE  
ACADEMY COORDINATOR



Participants in the the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Girls Fire and Rescue Academy used their newly acquired skills to respond to simulated emergencies.

PHOTO BY KENDALL WARNER,  
FCF&RD PIO INTERN

Eighteen girls are attending camp Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. for the second session of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Girls Fire and Rescue Academy. The purpose of the academy is to build the girls' confidence in their unique abilities, push them beyond their comfort zone, and to learn the value of supporting others rather than putting them down.

Monday began with team building exercises that continued all week to emphasize the importance of communication and working together. Then the girls learned how to put on firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE). They learned about the Fire Prevention Division and talked to a few of the Fire Marshals about what their job is like. In the afternoon they learned about medical skills including patient assessment, how to measure vital signs, intubation, splinting, patient moving devices, epi pens, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and 12 lead EKGs.

Tuesday began with physical fitness training which was a combination of body weight exercises and activities firefighters perform such as raising ladders and climbing stairs. Then they changed into their PPE and learned about ladder truck operations: searching, forcible entry, and riding in the tower bucket 100 feet in the air. During lunch they were treated to a visit by Belle, one of the department's therapy dogs. In the afternoon they learned about trauma; spinal immobilization, chest decompression, and how to stop bleeding using wound packing and tourniquets. Then they

used their newly acquired skills to respond to simulated emergencies including an auto accident with a pedestrian struck. The scenarios were similar to the basic emergency medical technician (EMT-B) certification test and the girls did great.

Wednesday's physical fitness training involved partner exercises — "you go, I go." One person completes repetition of a specific exercise and then they tag their partner who does the same amount of the same exercise while the first person rests. Working together to accomplish missions in many different ways is an important part of public safety. Afterwards they learned about the use of canines in arson investigations. Then they were back into their now familiar PPE for engine company operations; getting water from a hydrant, pulling hose lines and re-racking them for deployment, and flowing water.

They put these skills together and worked in small groups to extinguish car fires using a propane car fire simulator. After learning about master streams, which of course involved getting wet on a hot afternoon day, the girls came inside to learn how to tie knots with rope and webbing, mechanical advantages with pulley systems, and extrication tools.

Thursday the girls went to the department's Wellness and Fitness Center to learn the importance of fitness and proper body mechanics. The girls watched Technician Black complete the work performance evaluation that is

required for all Fairfax County firefighters on an annual basis. Then they participated in the Candidate Physical Abilities Test which is one step in the process to become a firefighter.

Later, they worked with Virginia Task Force One, one of only two internationally certified Urban Search and Rescue Departments in the United States. They learned about various search techniques using cameras, listening devices and canines.

Friday they visited the police helicopter unit to learn how they assist on medical calls as well as their police function. They also heard from the Explorers (the county volunteer fire and rescue program for high schoolers), the high school cadet program, and representatives from the Volunteer fire stations.

The afternoon involved hazardous materials training including working in hazmat suits and using meters. Graduation was in the evening with the families and station personnel to celebrate their accomplishments.

We appreciate all the support and donations we have received from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department members and leadership, Centreville Volunteer Fire Department, Dunn Loring Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, Franconia Volunteer Fire Department, Greater Springfield Fire Department, McLean Volunteer Fire Department, Fairfax County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, Battalion 7, B & B Associates, FireVMS.com, Chic-fil-A, and Mission BBQ.

## Partnership Enhances Community Safety

BY DANNY J. DANIELS II  
CAPTAIN II, STATION 38, WEST CENTREVILLE,  
A-SHIFT FAIRFAX COUNTY  
FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Over the last year, the Centreville area has experienced a couple of significant mulch fires at a local business. During one such fire a neighbor company, Luck Stone (the quarry), offered their large water supply to our crews to assist in extinguishing the fire. They had a pump and water tank that they use to provide water (from a large pit) for their water trucks and other applications around the plant.

Unfortunately, at the time we were unable to come up with a way to access it from their set up to our fire trucks. After the fires, I was able to meet with the Luck Stone management to see how we could partner with them for any



Luck Stone partners with the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department.

future fire events. Working together, both groups familiarized each other on their respective set-ups. Luck Stone then offered, at their own expense, to install additional piping and a four-inch connection that is compatible with our fire engines so we can easily access their water supply. This is very important for an area in which fire hydrants are not as plentiful. We tested the connection and water supply and found the fire engine was easily able to flow 1000 gallons a minute from the large master stream device (deck gun - see photo) mounted on the unit.

Thanks to Luck Stone, our units now have a reliable water supply site for anything farther west and along the Route 29 corridor where fire hydrants can be few and far between. Thank you Luck Stone for your willingness to partner up and assist us in trying to keep our community safe.

## Chantilly CONNECTION

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# Magical Adventure in a Distant Land

FROM PAGE 3

pressure situations where everyone's watching. Taking a little longer to get to the right answer makes Cal worried that others are looking down at her, so it's difficult for Cal to make the most of her gifts.

Sky is portrayed by Florida teen Zach Vielbig. Charming and affable, Sky is quick with a joke or a smile to break the tension. But behind that funny façade, Sky worries that he doesn't have much to offer, so he protects his feelings by not taking things too seriously. His impulsiveness can sometimes get him into trouble, but his friends can always count on his good heart.

Westfield sophomore Rachel Neal plays Soren. Because she's being raised by a single parent, Soren places a high premium on loyalty and family. She's extremely dedicated, yet afraid the losses in her life will continue piling up with more abandonment — and she has a hard time believing they're not her fault.

But things change dramatically for the heroes when they're invited to a special meeting with "The Hollow's" author, Zeb, portrayed by Rocky Run eighth-grader Kyle Roup. Zeb tells them the Hollow isn't just a fantasy world in books, but is actually real. He then recruits them for a special quest. Once the friends are committed to the journey, it becomes clear that things with Zeb are far different from what they seem.

Along the way, the heroes encounter The Hollow's residents, a mix of humans and animals struggling under the yoke of a tyrannical queen. Enthralled with

these visitors, they begin to feel hope for the first time in a long while. The heroes also meet others who, like themselves, are trying to find their way in a world that refuses to understand them the way they are.

This is the theater camp's third year, and participants learn a variety of music and theater skills, including scene study, set and costume design, plus choreography. The camp also emphasizes teamwork, creativity, respect and fun.

"It's a passion of ours to foster innovative, music and theater opportunities for kids in our area," said Chieffo-Reidway, who also offers an afterschool, acting, improvisation and script-writing class at Virginia Run. "We strive to write material that's uplifting and helps the campers find parts of themselves they didn't know were there."

"In my experience, theater and music are essential gateways to personal growth for students this age," she continued. "Nothing makes us happier than hearing from a parent whose child has grown in confidence or found a new passion as a result of participating in our program."

Additionally, Tyler's pleased to see students from different musical backgrounds embracing the challenge of "learning music they've never heard before and performing it in a way that not only meets our expectations, but also exceeds their own. As a music teacher and composer, it's rewarding and humbling to watch and listen as the children bring music that I created to life. It's encouraging to us as performers and professionals to see the campers embodying our vision; it's truly a dream come true."



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**-Werner Heisenberg**

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# SPORTS



**Aidan Bange swam for third in the breast-stroke.**



**Neha Srinivasan placed second in the backstroke.**

## Riptide Competes with Dolphins

BY SARAH BLANSETT

**T**he Virginia Run Riptide visited Lakevale Estates for their fifth "A" meet of the season. The meet was tied up going into the relays, but the Lakevale Dolphins prevailed with a final score of 220 to 200. The Riptide posted 38 new personal best scores, Tyler Harris (6), broke his own 6 and under 25 butterfly record with a time of 22.27, and Charis Roundtree (9) broke Didi Pace's 2010 9-10 girls freestyle record with a time of 32.34.

The 8 and Under boys kicked off the meet with a sweep of the freestyle by Nicholas Harris, Desmond McDonough and Aidan Bange. Nathan Tonthat, Tyler Harris and Brock McDonough followed suit with a 1-2-3 sweep of the backstroke. Ben Herndon took second in breaststroke with Bange in third and the boys swept the butterfly with Nicholas Harris, Tyler Harris and Desmond McDonough taking the top spots.

Quinn and Kiera McCrea placed first and second in freestyle, with Caitlin Do and Mia Turner doing the same in backstroke; Quinn McCrea and Anna Kim took second and third in breaststroke and Kim also placed second in butterfly with Mia Turner placing first, dropping 3.65 seconds for a new personal best time.

In the 9-10 group, Jacks Jeffries took third in backstroke, Mason Conlon was third in breaststroke and Christopher Thompson placed third in fly. Charis Roundtree placed first in freestyle (with a new Riptide record) and backstroke, Ann Kelliher placed second in freestyle and Lauren Fitch placed third in backstroke. Jenn Van Buren and Caroline Friess both took third in breaststroke and butterfly respectively.

The 11-12's put up points with William Whitton taking third in freestyle and first in backstroke while Davis Collingsworth swam for third in backstroke and third in breaststroke. Griffin Osterhout and Sam Roundtree took second and third in butterfly. Neha Srinivasan and Megan Marco placed second and third in freestyle with Srinivasan also placing second in backstroke. Angela Thompson and Allison Nguyen brought home a one-two finish in the breaststroke and Marco took third in the fly.

The 13-14 group had wins in two strokes: Michael Hart and Nathan Ryman at first and second in breast-



**Charis Roundtree broke Didi Pace's 2010 9-10 girls freestyle record.**

stroke, and Jackson Blansett at first in butterfly with Hart at second. Caleb Roundtree took third in freestyle and Blansett swam for second in backstroke, edged out by the Dolphin's Owen Dyson who broke his own father's Lakevale team record set back in 1980. Maddie Whitton and Emma Liskey brought home first and third in freestyle. Caitlin Kelliher and Isabelle Cogan took second and third in backstroke with Cogan also taking second in breaststroke; and Maddie Whitton, Caitlin Kelliher, and Valerie Tonnu swept the butterfly with a one-two-three finish.

In the 15-18 age group, Bobby Monroe delivered third in freestyle, with Anthony Tonthat and Harry Schlatter at second in breaststroke and butterfly respectively. Allie Hickey and Didi Pace took first and third in freestyle, Sarah Boyle and Chelsea Nguyen placed first and third in backstroke, Hickey and Lauren Stovall brought home first and third in the breaststroke, and Boyle and Pace earned first and second in the fly.

The Riptide won four relays, the Boys 8 and Under freestyle and the Girls 8 and Under freestyle. They also won the Girls 11-12 medley relay and the Boys 13-14 medley relay.

Next week the Riptide hosts its final meet at home against the division leader, the Crosspointe Cruisers.

# ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## SUNDAY/JULY 22

**Reading Circle.** 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will host two 45-minute Reading Circle sessions of the Caldecott Medal winning book, "Locomotive." One session will begin at 1:15, the second at 2:30. All craft supplies included with admission fees. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), or call 703-425-9225.

## TUESDAY/JULY 24

**Movie: Clean Energy Boom.** 6:30-9 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Film screening of Reinventing Power: America's Clean Energy Boom. This inspiring film takes us across the country to hear directly from the people making our clean energy future achievable. Free. Call 703-755-5069 or email [virginia2.sierraclub.org](mailto:virginia2.sierraclub.org) for more.

## SUNDAY/JULY 29

**WVMGRS G-Scale Trains.** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, Virginia & Maryland Garden Railway Society (WVMGRS) members will have a G-Scale train display running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), or call 703-425-9225.

## SATURDAY/AUG. 4

**Starlight Cinema: Little Mermaid.** Gates open at 6 p.m.; movie starts at dark at Trinity Centre, 5860 Trinity Parkway, Centreville. Starlight Drive-in Cinema brings the community together with features that appeal to both children and adults. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal. Bring your own lawn chairs, blankets and FM radio if you wish to sit outside. Children's games and rides. Free. To volunteer, call 703-814-7100.

## SUNDAY/AUG. 5

**Dairy Days.** 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Cost is \$7. Learn to churn butter, crank ice cream, milk a fake cow and play 18<sup>th</sup> century games at Sully Historic Site's celebration of "Dairy Days" in August. Call 703-437-1794 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site).

**History Challenge Day.** 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Choose from a selection of quizzes on a variety of topics for a chance to win a prize. Different versions will be available for all ages and groups and interests. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), or call 703-425-9225.

## AUG. 6-10

**Girls in STEM Camp.** Chantilly Academy offers a new Girls in STEM camp, providing girls with an opportunity to experience the world of STEM with plenty of hands-on activities. For girls new to STEM, summer programs provide a fun way to explore unfamiliar subjects, and for girls already interested in STEM, these camps build on existing interests or knowledge. The camp is open to rising 5th-8th graders. \$225 for the week. Visit [chantillyacademy.fcps.edu/announcements/summer-camps-chantilly-academy](http://chantillyacademy.fcps.edu/announcements/summer-camps-chantilly-academy).

## SATURDAY/AUG. 11

**Starlight Cinema: Early Man.** Gates open at 6 p.m.; movie starts at dark at Trinity Centre, 5860 Trinity Parkway, Centreville. Starlight Drive-in Cinema brings the community together with features that appeal to both children and adults. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal. Bring your own lawn chairs, blankets and FM radio if you wish to sit outside. Children's games and rides. Free. To volunteer, call 703-814-7100.

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## Comparatively Speaking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After writing such an emotional column last week ("A Relative Unknown"), I'm having a little trouble finding footing for my pen for this week's column.

It reminds me of thoughts I had about continuing to write my "Everything in general about nothing in particular"-themed columns – which I had published in The Connection from December 1997 through May 2009, after I received my terminal cancer diagnosis in late February, 2009. How could I continue to write such lightweight nonsense after being given a "13 month to two-year" prognosis?

Not that my intention writing forward was ever to immerse you regular readers in self-indulgent Kenny at his self-important worst. Hardly. It was more that I had a need and apparently, an ability, to write about my cancer experiences with a similarly light touch as I had previously done so discussing everyday topics dating back 12 years or so.

Those columns, as you incredibly regular readers may recall, ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous, including everything in between. However, they never mentioned politics, current events, personalities in the news or anything of substance, quite frankly.

To give you a few examples: "Armed and Dangerous," a column about drivers who drive with their left arms hanging out the driver's side window (one of my mother's favorites); "Sole Man," a column about seeing so many single shoes lying by the side of the road; "Registering a Complaint," a column about the new (at the time) self-checkout registers at supermarkets; and "Victim of 'Soycumstance,'" a column about why there are always so many packets of soy sauce in Chinese carry-out, and so many more, hundreds in fact, about "everything in general ...".

For me, they were – and continue to be, an amusing diversion/avocation which enabled me to pursue my passion and dream about writing a syndicated climate from a warm climate, preferably one with an ocean view, while maintaining my day job. A day job which I still maintain. And though the challenge for maintaining both may be greater now than ever, us true believers in the newspaper business will continue to read and write as best we can, in print and online.

Now, throw in a cancer diagnosis, which at the outset was extremely discouraging, and you might wonder how any of this makes sense. Well, perhaps it didn't. But perhaps having tasks and responsibilities was exactly the kind of regularity that a cancer patient given a rather grim prognosis needed, consciously, and maybe more importantly, subconsciously.

Somewhere in my head (or wherever one's subconscious exists) going on about life as if nothing was particularly life threatening (heck, more like life ending, at age 54 and a half, no less) perhaps was the kind of antidote my body needed. Though told then – and now, that there's no cure for what ails me: non-small lung cancer, stage IV, nevertheless, I am still alive nine-plus years later, "advocating" and "vocating."

However, maintaining my status quo; reading, writing and "rithmeticking" doesn't generally make me cry as writing last week's column did. And in living long enough to experience what I wrote about last week, I am always grateful to whomever/whatever power is responsible for yours truly being here, there and everywhere (also a reference to the name of the first song, by The Beatles, that Dina and I danced to as husband and wife).

Amazingly, life goes on, as does this column. But fortunately, for you irregular readers, not for much longer.

Have written this far, I think I've transitioned now from an extremely emotional experience: meeting my cousin from Argentina to an un-emotional/normal one: life in the mundane and boring Kenny lane. A lane I hope to continue to travel. At least I hope so, anyway.

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

# Best for Family Road Trips

Top audiobook picks for long drives with children.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**W**ith summer comes roadtrips. In fact, a study by New York University's School of Professional studies showed that 63 percent of American families will take a vacation by car this summer. Long stretches of interstate and backseat time call for loading up on audio books before hitting the road. "Audio books are great for long car rides and they're much better than video games," said Barbara Marshall, department chair for Education and Social Sciences at Montgomery College. "They don't take the place of actually reading a book, but there is a time and place for them.

One of those times, says Marshall, is long drives without scenic views. She and others who are familiar with children's literature suggest some of the best books for family vacations by car.

"Ghost" by Jason Reynolds and narrated by Guy Lockard is a recommendation by Jennifer Rothschild, Youth Services Collection Development Librarian for Arlington Public Libraries. This 3.5 hour audio books is about a gifted runner named Ghost who has a chance to run for a prestigious middle school track team, but is challenged to stay on track both literally and figuratively in order to reach his full potential. Fantasy buffs might appreciate "Dealing with Dragons" by Patricia C. Wrede, while fans of dystopian novels might enjoy "Leviathan," written by Scott Westerfeld and narrated by Alan Cumming, suggests Rothschild.

Set in an alternate version of WWI, Leviathan is the first in a trilogy. Primary characters include Prince Aleksander, the would-be heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and Deryn, a girl who disguises herself as a boy to serve in the British Air Service. The story takes off when the two cross paths.

History lovers might appreciate another Rothschild pick: "Notorious Benedict Arnold" which was written by Steve Sheinkin and narrated by Mark Bramhall. Running at 6.5 hours, this is a true story about an American war hero who loses his career and freedom for greater recognition.

Music lovers might enjoy "Solo" by Kwame Alexander, says Yunna Iqbal of Scrawl Books in Reston. The audio version of the New York Times best selling book by the same name, tells the tale of Blade, the son of a former rock star with a drug addiction. Intertwined with songs, the story follows Blade as he tries to escape his family's fame and fortune.

"Each chapter has a specific song and story follows and that makes it good for both young kids and older kids," said Iqbal.

"Artemis Fowl" by Eoin Colfer, narrated by

Nathaniel Parker could appeal to thrill-seekers. The main character, a 12-year-old named Artemis Fowl is the heir to a crime family who appears to be unusually skilled at masterminding crimes until greed threatens to ruin his most brilliant plan. This Rothschild suggestion runs 6.5 hours.

Timeless classics like "Charles and the Chocolate Factory" and "James and the Giant Peach," both by Roald Dahl, are also fail-safe choices for family road trips, says Iqbal.

"Ghost Boys" by Jewell Parker Rhodes is a recommendation from Lelia Nebeker, Book Buyer at One More Page Books in Arlington. "It's a very short book, so if you're only driving for three hours, you can probably finish it," she said. "It's from the per-

spective of a seventh-grade black boy who is shot and killed by the police, and his ghost is telling the story of seeing the world after his death, where he meets the ghost of Emmett Till. It's a heartbreaking book, but beautifully written, well performed on the audiobook."

Despite the mature sounding premise, Nebeker says that it's intended for readers ages 9 and up.

"Avalon High by Meg Cabot" is a fun contemporary take on the King Arthur myth by the prolific Meg Cabot," advised Nebeker. "This one does take place in a high school setting, but it's appropriate for ages 10 and up for sure. So cute and funny."

"Two of my coworkers read 'Love Sugar Magic: A Dash of Trouble' by Anna Meriano ... and raved about it," said Nebeker.

"Amal Unbound" by Aisha Saeed is about a 14-year-old girl in Pakistan who becomes a servant to pay off her family's debts," said Nebeker. "[This is] another book for young readers that has some mature content, but is good for ages 10 and up and will start good discussion between parents and young readers."

"Howl's Moving Castle" by Diana Wynne Jones and "A Wrinkle in Time" by Madeleine L'Engle are two additional suggestions from Nebeker.

For a wider selection of choices, Marshall suggests the American Library Association's website which offers reviews of audio books: [www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncr](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncr).



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL


**Audio books are helpful in passing time during a family vacation by car.**

**"Audiobooks are great for long car rides and much better than video games."**

— **Barbara Marshall, Montgomery College**

## Recommendations

For audio book reviews and suggestions: [www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncr](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncr)




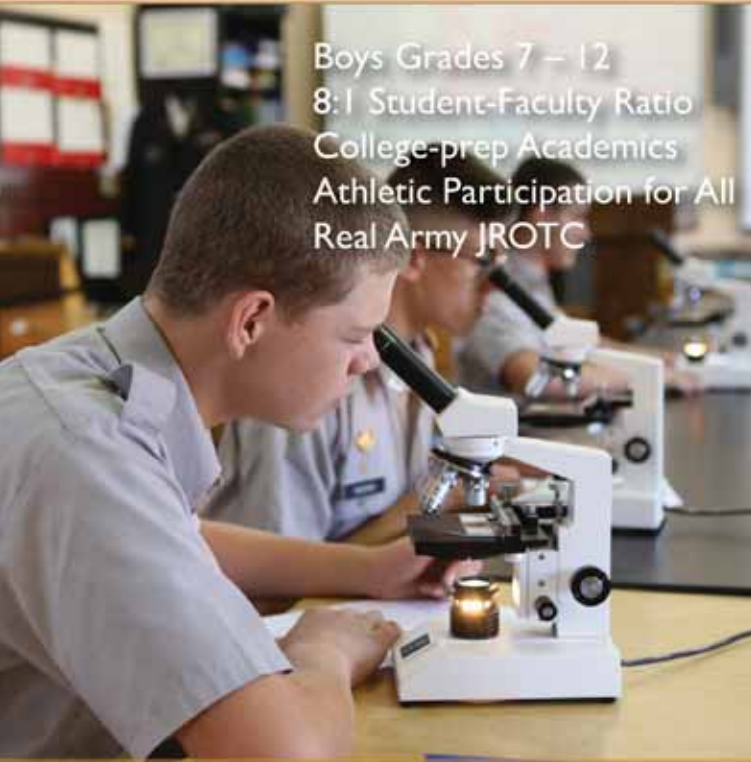
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