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Chantilly

CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

Violet Lister is excited to be starting kindergarten at Greenbriar East Elementary School.

Smiling Start To New School Year

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Veteran-Owned
Business Honored

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Meet FCPS Ombudsman

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PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE CONNECTION

WiSC Enterprises founder and president Bill Craig, center, poses with some of his employees Aug. 21 at the 10th anniversary celebration of the founding of the company. The Chantilly-based company was recently named the recipient of the 2018 Public Sector Pro Patria Award, the highest award given to a civilian employer by the Virginia Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee. With Craig at Mike's American Grill are: Greg Creech, Mark Mogle, Betty Musa and Cary McConnell.

Bill Craig, founder of WiSC Enterprises, holds an engraved crystal globe presented to him by employees Aug. 21st at the 10th anniversary celebration of the founding of the company.

Veteran-Owned Business Honored

WiSC celebrates 10 years, ESGR award.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

WiSC Enterprises, a veteran-owned small business based in Chantilly, celebrated two milestones on Aug. 21: the 10th anniversary of the company's founding and the recent naming of the company as the recipient of the 2018 Public Sector Pro Patria Award, the highest award given to a civilian employer by the Virginia Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee.

"I was pleased to see that we had a nice blend of new and old employees attend our 10th anniversary celebration," said founder and president Bill Craig of the gathering held at Mike's American Grill. "Everyone embraced the opportunity to better know other members of their WiSC family, which I feel is important to the success of the company."

The Latin phrase "Pro Patria" translates to "for the country." The award is earned by only one employer each year and symbolizes uncommon patriotism by

an employer. It is presented to an employer who demonstrates exceptional support for national defense by adopting personnel policies that make it easier for their employees to participate in the National Guard and Reserve.

"It was an honor to represent WiSC and hear story after story of companies and their policies in support of employees that serve in the Guard and Reserves," said Gary Ayers, who accepted the award on behalf of WiSC at the ESGR ceremony in April.

"It's encouraging to hear how companies from across the state are taking care of the families of deployed service members."

Craig founded WiSC Enterprises in August of 2008 with nearly 30 years of experience in the intelligence community — 20 in the U.S. Air Force and another 10 in the private sector. The company specializes in worldwide interoperability of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data. "WiSC is a small business that, despite its growth, has main-

tained a family atmosphere," said Craig, a Centreville resident who missed the ESGR ceremony due to his son Kyle's wedding. "That was evident this evening and recognized in the Pro Patria Award."

See www.wiscenterprises.com

"WiSC is a small business that, despite its growth, has maintained a family atmosphere."

**Founder and President
Bill Craig**

House Fire Causes \$93,750 in Damages

On Aug. 7, at approximately 2:38 a.m., Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department units were dispatched for a reported house fire in the 13100 block of Rover Glen Court.

Units arrived on scene and reported smoke showing from the front door of a two-story, single family home.

Crews located a fire on the first floor and brought the fire under control. There were no firefighter or civilian injuries reported.

No occupants were home at the time of the fire.

The fire was discovered by a neighbor who called 9-1-1. Smoke alarms were present but it is unknown if they sounded.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the first-floor kitchen area. The cause of the fire involved a surge protector supplying power to various personal electronic devices.

One adult was displaced because of the fire. Red Cross services were offered and declined. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$93,750.

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NEWS



Haylee Shah (1st grade) and Aarin Shah (2nd grade) with their parents on the first day of school at Greenbriar East Elementary.



PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

Kindergartner Amy Ramos is happy to receive a badge sticker from Fairfax County Police officers.

Smiling Start to New School Year



Talon Abarquez is ready to start kindergarten at Greenbriar East Elementary School.



Derek Goodell (3rd grade) and his sister Anna Goodell (kindergarten) in front of Greenbriar East Elementary School on the first day of school.

From left: Kekoa Spain (6th grade), Eke Spain (4th grade), and Misha Spain (3rd grade) arrived early at Greenbriar East Elementary School for the first day of school.



From left: Lisa Huff and her mom Joanne Perry with Alexis Huff (6th grade) and Emily Huff (5th grade) in front of Greenbriar East Elementary School on the first day of school.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Buses drop students off and parents walk their children to school on the first day of school, Aug. 28, at Greenbriar East Elementary School.

OPINION

America Needs Unions

BY DAVID BRODER
PRESIDENT, SEIU VIRGINIA 512

This Labor Day, while some of us attend barbecues or spend quality time with our families, millions of Americans will go to work.

Americans are now working longer hours for lower wages. Despite an increase in our educational attainment, fewer of us have paid sick days, parental leave or employer-based healthcare. Even fewer of us have retirements we can count on.

Unions are a solution to our broken economy.

Working people who form unions with their co-workers earn higher wages, have better health care, have more secure retirements, and are safer on the job.

COMMENTARY The statistics are overwhelming. Working people in unions earn 30 percent more than their non-union counterparts, and are nearly five times more likely to have a guaranteed pension. Women workers who are union members earn nearly \$9,000 a year more than their non-union counterparts. For African-American workers, the union differential is also about \$9,000, and for Latino workers the

yearly advantage is more than \$11,000.

Unions have made all the difference in my family's life.

I'm the great-grandson of eastern European Jewish immigrants, who fled anti-Semitic violence, and came to this country with nothing. Thanks to my grandparents' union, my father was able to go to college. Thanks to my mother's teachers union (in which she was a powerful leader), our family never had to choose between seeing a doctor and putting food on the table, and my parents can now retire and live with dignity.

It's no wonder that more people are speaking out, organizing and voting for the rights to form a union.

Across the country, in deeply-conservative states like Oklahoma and West Virginia, union teachers and community allies have successfully mobilized for improvements to our education system, teacher pay and workers' rights.

Here in Virginia in 2016, a bipartisan majority of voters rejected the anti-worker constitutional amendment known as "right to work," while last month, voters in Missouri rejected the state's right-to-work law by a 2:1 margin.

Across the country, 61 percent of Americans support unions, according to a recent Gallup

Poll. Young workers are even more supportive, and are joining unions in record numbers, in order to fix a broken economy.

When workers join together to form unions, we all benefit.

Strong unions raise wages, improve health care, and expand retirement security for all workers, union and non-union. Unions have played important roles in the civil rights movement and women's rights movement, and continue today to fight for racial, immigrant and environmental justice.

Here in Northern Virginia, unions have helped lead fights to raise wages, increase mental health funding, create jobs, and ensure health care for up to 400,000 people through Medicaid Expansion.

So, this Labor Day, whether you're enjoying a burger with family and friends or you're hard at work at your job (or maybe your second or third job), I invite you to join us.

Let us all unite together on our jobs, in our communities, and at the polls this November, to demand a better economic future for all people!

Learn more at AmericaNeedsUnions.org

David Broder is the president of SEIU Virginia 512, a union of home care providers, and county employees in Fairfax and Loudoun.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Need Practical Solutions

To the Editor:

In late July, a tragic shooting took place in Toronto, killing two people and injuring 13 others. The shooter was identified as a man named Faisal Hussain, who later committed suicide. According to CBC news, the city has had 228 shootings in 2018 thus far, a 17

percent increase from this time in 2017. And 29 of the shootings in 2018 have been fatal.

It is not just the United States with a festering gun control problem, but Canada and other countries as well. In fact, Canada has the fourth highest gun homicide rate. Needless to say, the most recent tragic incident has reignited the debate on gun violence and stirred the opinions of gun owners and gun control activists. And

that's actually a good thing, because discussing this issue can help bring awareness about the dangerous realities of gun violence, and the staggering amount of people, children especially, who are subjected to it. And only through frank discussion can we find practical solutions.

I agree with Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders who said, "There are some huge benefits that can happen as a result of this if we re-

ally are brave enough to have a full-some discussion and not just say, 'Police fix this.'"

I hope the aftermath of these shootings can open doors for citizens and law enforcement officials to come together and create preventive measures to tackle gun violence, before someone can pick up a gun and strike again.

Sabiha Basit
Centreville

BULLETIN BOARD

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

SYA Notice of Annual Board Meeting.

7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St Germain Dr., Centreville. The Southwestern Youth Association will be holding its annual Executive Board of Directors Election Meeting. The SYA Executive Board of Directors positions are for a one-year term and include the following positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Nominations are currently being accepted and may be submitted to the SYA Office at admin@syayouthsports.org. Applicants must be in good standing with SYA and at least 21 years of age. This meeting is open to the community. Contact the SYA Office at 703-815-3362 or admin@syayouthsports.org with any questions.

ESL Class Registration. 7 p.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church's two campuses: Fairfax Campus, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax; or Clifton Campus, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Clifton. Registration fee \$15; Text book \$25. Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-9 p.m.; start date is on Sept. 11 and ends Nov. 15, 2018. Call 703-323-9500 or visit www.lordoflifeva.org.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Canoe Journey

In late-July, four Troop 30 Scouts from Centreville and Westfield High School and Stone Middle School spent five days canoeing 53 miles in Adirondack State Park in upstate New York. The Scouts and four adults paddled the 50-plus miles along the historic Racquette River, Upper Lake, and Tupper Lake. Much of the trip was in a wildlife preserve with few signs of civilization and the Scouts planned, packed, paddled and navigated the entire trip through diverse weather conditions from cool pleasant days on flat water to windy lake crossing dealing with waves. The Scouts also had to carry their canoe and gear 1.3 miles around Raquette Falls. Scouts included Marcus Wear, John Simmons, William Torres, and James Torres. Adult advisors were Mike Wear, Sergio Torres, Jeff Paschetag, and Mark Paschetag. Troop 30 is a mid-sized troop chartered by Centreville Presbyterian Church. Visit www.troopwebhost.org/Troop30Centreville/Index.htm

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NEWS

Meet FCPS Ombudsman

FCPS Office of the Family and Student Ombudsman up and running.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The Family and Student Ombudsman is a new position in the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) system. Last May, announcing the establishment of the office and the selection of then-principal of Pine Spring Elementary School Armando Peri Jr. as the first ombudsman, FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand said, "We are committed to providing an unbiased point of contact for all student issues."

We believe the creation of this new position will provide families another resource to assist in positive outcomes and resolutions of concerns."

"Armando will bring a wealth of invaluable experience as both principal and counselor to this role," Brabrand said.

In addition to a bachelor of arts from Saint Charles Seminary, a Psy.S. in school psychology, and a master of arts in developmental psychology, Peri also brings more than 23 years of experience as an FCPS employee.

Peri has worked as a school psychologist at all levels with the FCPS, and as an educational specialist in the former Office of Minority Student Achievement before his appointment as assistant principal at Parklawn Elementary School, then Irving Middle School, and most recently as principal at Pine Spring before accepting the ombudsman position.

"Actually, I applied for the role," Peri said. "I truly see how valuable this office can be."

As an FCPS parent for 16 years, if I am still learning and have to do some research for resources on occasion, I'm sure there are parents out there who could use our help in navigating the system from time to time."

So what will the ombudsman bring to FCPS parents, students, teachers and faculty and staff?

"It's important that people understand just what an ombudsman is, and what an ombudsman can and cannot do. In our first encounter with anyone who contacts us, we will first listen carefully and respectfully to their issues, and then make clear what the strengths and the limitations of our office are. In any case, we will always seek to provide information, resources and options," he

said.

The International Ombudsman Association lists four key elements in its Standards of Practice: independence, neutrality and impartiality, confidentiality, and informality.

As applied to the new FCPS office, Peri says those four principles mean that his office is a safe place to bring concerns, complaints or issues that will remain as confidential as the parent or student wish them to be.

Unless failure to disclose information could pose an imminent risk or danger to students or others, "we will only share information with the permission of those who ask for our assistance," Peri said. "And no topic is off the table."

The ombudsman does want to make clear that his office does not have the power to make appeal decisions, change policies or take specific actions on behalf of families or students.

"We can't do those things or directly advise, but we can help both navigate the system and connect them with the right people. Our goal is to educate and help people find options and make decisions being well-informed."

The office will analyse trends to assist the FCPS in developing future strategies and improve systems and communications, But Peri is adamant that nothing about the Ombudsman's Office is to be a "blame game," but to work in tandem with all involved to secure the best, most positive outcomes.

Of course, Peri added, "If we recognize problems through our work, we will help address them, but our number one priority is really to give parents the knowledge to be confidently active in their kids' education."

PERI'S OFFICE is prepared to help with whatever parents or students need. "It doesn't have to be a major issue. Sometimes parents just need help with a form, or information about resources for their children."

We are here to help with things like that, as well."

Peri will be assisted by administrative assistant Carla Dallas, who also brings years of FCPS experience to the new venture, including a tenure in the Superintendent's Office.

To get better acquainted with the ombudsman and learn more about the Office of the Family and

Student, check out Peri's "Meet the Ombudsman" YouTube video and visit the website at www.fcps.edu/ombudsman. Recah Peri Dallas at 571-423-4014.



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ENTERTAINMENT

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

SUNDAY/AUG. 26

Big Band Performance. 4:15-5 p.m. at Steven F. Udvar Hazy Center, 14390 Air and Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. The Loudoun Jazz Ensemble returns to the Udvar-Hazy Center to perform a big band concert by the space shuttle. Parking is free after 4 p.m. Free. Call 703-801-5866 or visit ljemanager.wixsite.com/ljewebsite for more.

THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Swift Action to Protect Migratory Birds. Sully Historic Site is home to a new family: chimney swifts. These small, migratory birds recently moved into the chimney of the original 18th century kitchen and made a temporary home. It is illegal to disturb the birds, their nests or eggs. To protect the birds for the next six to eight weeks, Sully will do its part with some minor programming changes. To learn more about swifts, visit any of Fairfax County Park Authority's five nature centers. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully or call 703-437-1794.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 1

Help Feed the Animals. 10-11 a.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park is located at 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join a naturalist for "Feeding Day" and search for worms and insects to feed to the nature center's animals. Make a birdfeeder to continue feeding animals at home. \$8 per child. Designed for participants age 4-13. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 2

Lego/Potomac Module Crew HO Model Train Display. Noon-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Lego/Potomac Module Crew HO Model Train Display. 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.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Life on the Farm. 4-5 p.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Play an active role in helping care for Frying Pan Farm Park in the monthly "Junior Farmer Fun" program. Family members age 5 to adult explore topics such as caring for farm animals, tinkering with farm machinery, and learning the importance of Frying Pan's crops and gardens. There's a new topic each session as participants go behind-the-scenes to help farmers with their work. \$8 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-437-9101 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

Wine Tasting. 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) will be hosting an exclusive wine tasting in celebration of a critical effort made to conserve historic property adjacent to The Winery at Bull Run. The Stonebridge Property, located next to the winery and the Manassas National Battlefield, is officially conserved in perpetuity.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN JAFFEE

The Bull Run Park venue offers plenty of room for Bichons and their families.

2018 Bichon Bash

The Bichon Bash is a family friendly event where Bichons can play together in a safe outdoor area, and experts can provide advice on the breed. This is an annual fundraiser for the Bichon Frise Club of America rescue group, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Bichons only. Sunday, Sept. 16, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Bull Run Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. \$15 pre-register online; \$20 at gate; \$5 children under 12. Call 703-401-9551 or www.bichonbash.org.

Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com.

One-hour Tours. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum volunteers will conduct one-hour tours (beginning at 1:15 and 2:45 p.m.) of the area immediately around the Museum in the historic Fairfax Station village to help visitors learn what life was like when it was an active depot. 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.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 15

Ride to Thrive Polo Classic. 1 p.m. at Chetwood Park in The Plains, Va. The Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) will hold the 12th Annual Ride to Thrive Polo Classic. Participants will enjoy an afternoon of polo, live and silent auctions, music, drinks and dining on a private estate. This event will benefit NVTRP's mission to provide equine-assisted activities to children and adults with disabilities, youth-at-risk, military service personnel and their families. \$85. Visit www.nvtrp.org/polo-classic.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 16

ASHA-JYOTHI 5K Run. 8 a.m. at Fairfax Corner, 4100 Monument Corner Drive, Fairfax. After months of research and planning, Asha-Jyothi has donated over \$106,000 to Chantilly High School towards the construction of a state of the art innovation lab so that all students at CHS will have the opportunity to explore STEAM skills. Asha-Jyothi sponsors an annual 5K Run/Walk in locations throughout the United States. A discounted price of \$10 (regular price \$25) will be given to participants from Chantilly High School. To sign up, participating students and/or their families may visit www.asha-jyothi.org/5K-registration-form/?event_id=8135.

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 a

N gauge model train show. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Wedgwood Society Meeting. 2-3:30 p.m. at Total Wine & More, 13055-C Lee Jackson Highway, Chantilly. Wedgwood's Portrait Medallions: Famous (and some not so famous) Faces. Jeffrey Hoffman, a longtime Wedgwood collector and researcher, will speak about the Portrait medallions produced by the Wedgwood Company from the 1770s until the present. Light refreshments are served after the meeting. Open to the public. Free. Email 19pan78@gmail.com or visit www.WedgwoodDC.org for more.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 21

OLGC Golf Classic. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. at Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens Ave., Clifton. A fun-filled day with contests, food, and company. All proceeds benefit Tuition Assistance at OLGC School. Registration deadline is Sept. 7. \$200 Visit www.olgcva.org/fellowship/golf-classic for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 21-23

Capital Home Show. Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. More than 250 companies will be on hand to showcase the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor and redesign. Headlining will be Vern Yip, star of "Trading Spaces." \$3-\$10. Visit capitalhomeshow.com.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 23

Memories of the Orange and Alexandria RR. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. A special exhibit in cooperation with the Burke Historical Society will highlight the legacy of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad - the railroad the Fairfax Station was constructed to service. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Pouncey Honored As Officer of Month.

By BONNIE HOBBS

APO Ed Pouncey was selected as the Sully District Police Station's Officer of the Month for April. He was honored at a recent meeting of the station's Citizens Advisory Committee.



Pouncey

Writing the letter nominating Pouncey for this award was retired 2nd Lt. Boyd Thompson, currently a logistics technician with the station. He said he chose Pouncey because of his "outstanding and dedicated service to the maintenance of the Sully District Station cruiser fleet, over the past three years."

According to Thompson, Pouncey has "faithfully reported to duty every Monday since his retirement — and then comes in additionally every Tuesday and Wednesday, if needed," to assist him on a variety of tasks that are critical to maintaining the police station's vehicle fleet.

"Ed ensures that cars requiring routine service, or in need of repair, make it to Jermantown Garage," wrote Thompson. "And he stays around throughout the day to ensure that any cruiser that has its service completed is returned to service immediately."

Thompson also noted that, in addition to that task, Pouncey performs several other duties. These include tending to camera- and radio-repair issues, traveling throughout the county to do tasks such as trail-bike maintenance at the Newington Facility, and waiting for job repairs which ensure that cruisers do not have to be placed out of service.

"Ed is also counted on by others at Sully to retrieve items, whether at OSB [the Police Department's Operations Support Bureau] Headquarters or even at the airport," wrote Thompson.

"He also is very active in training and routinely signs up for classes at the Criminal Justice Academy. And he even finds time to volunteer for Police Auxiliary-related training [and handle] volunteer requests, on occasion."

"Without hesitation, Ed's commitment leads to excellent cruiser-fleet readiness, on a day-in, day-out basis," continued Thompson. "And this is key to our station maintaining a fleet of ready cruisers with little or no down time."

His assistance allows me to focus on other critical issues, knowing that our fleet is always in good hands."

Counting Pouncey's Auxiliary time prior to becoming a sworn officer, he was recognized in 2017 as having volunteered more than 5,000 hours.

So, wrote Thompson, "It is an honor and a privilege to recognize APO Ed Pouncey for his commitment as the Officer of the Month for April 2018."

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Present and Future Danger



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having recently been infused three weeks after my last treatment, no guarantee given certain lab results, I am now on track to have one more infusion before my Sept. 26 CT scan. The plan is, per my "Progressing But So Am I" column (8/15/18), to triple the amount of medicine I will have received before my next scan. This will compare quite favorably to the one infusion I received prior to my July 25 scan.

Moreover, as I've considered the previous quarter's infusion schedule trying to understand possible reasons for the 10-percent-ish tumor growth which occurred, I've come up with a hopefully plausible explanation. Other than that's what cancer so often does, that is.

As my previous years of scans continued to show "stable," my oncologist and I kept increasing the interval between infusions trying to strike a balance between treating the cause and me living with the effect. Over these years, we've gradually extended those infusion intervals from every three weeks, to every four, to five, to six and most recently to seven-week intervals, all the while maintaining my quarterly CT schedule.

Apparently, we've now struck out, so to speak and for the moment at least, we're in sort of a limbo. (Hopefully the bar isn't set so incredibly low that we can't slide under it.)

As for minimizing the growth, could the solution be as simple as more medicine?

As to what my oncologist thinks of this assessment, I've not mentioned to him as I've only recently theorized it (maybe he knew already and that's what contributed to his suggestion that we follow this course of treatment/action).

We did discuss changing medicines, but he was afraid of the side effects it might cause. We also discussed if he'd had other patients who had experienced tumor growth after a period of stability — like me, who after increasing the frequency of the previously stabilizing drug showed stable once again. He said he had — so, rather than presume all is lost, we've agreed to go forward into the great semi unknown. An "unknown" that will likely end in late September when my next scan's results will be reported.

Now that you know the foundation for this column, let me address the substance behind it. There is a scenario which worries me. It's premature I grant you, but it's difficult to play dumb all the time, especially when it involves cancer/your life.

Still, if I've learned anything from my oncologist, it is that discussing scenarios before the evidence is confirmed is a bit of a fool's errand, so waiting until the actual results are in is better. More accurate anyway.

Despite what I've been told, this patient might not be able to be so patient. Ergo: What if my late September scan shows growth — again? What if, even after tripling the amount of medicine I infuse, the tumors grow, maybe even grow more significantly than ever before?

I'd have to say that development would be a problem and a bit more disappointing than July's scan results. If that result in fact occurs, would that square me at a crossroads? I would think. Would that result obliterate the false sense of security I may have had? Hardly. Cancer patients don't have a sense of security, false or otherwise. We have a sense of inevitability.

Somehow, over the next month, I must find a path forward through this cycle of potentially impending gloom. Right now, nothing has happened. Right now, nothing has been determined. I don't feel any different than before and I don't believe I have any of the symptoms my oncologist has advised me about. I still have an appetite and I'm certainly not losing any weight.

I expect to have one more infusion before this next scan, and to feel the usual post-chemotherapy side effects that I do and then recover and feel as I do today: pretty well. One month, exactly, from the date I'm writing this column, to the date of my next scan and hopefully just a few days later for the results.

What worries me most is, sometimes the human body has a mind of its own, and despite the best of intentions and treatment, it is, to quote my late mother, "Enough already."

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

Teen Sex Trafficking Hits Close to Home

How vulnerable teens are targeted.

BY WALLICIA GILL
AND BRAD SWANSON

*This article first appeared in The Blue View
www.blueview.org. It has been slightly edited.*

Local experts say that Northern Virginia is a teen sex trafficking hotspot, but most people know very little about this growing crime. A better understanding among the public will help to combat the problem, agree both police and victims advocates

MORE THAN 100 LOCAL VICTIMS A YEAR

According to law enforcement records compiled by the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, approximately 500 sex trafficking victims were “identified” – brought to the attention of law enforcement – in northern Virginia in the 4-year period from January 2013 to February 2017. That averages to about 125 sex trafficking victims identified in the area per year. Experts believe that only a small minority of trafficking victims are brought to light, but they don’t have good insight into what the fraction really is. The trend in identifying victims in the region is upward, and experts believe the practice is growing, but some part of the increase may also come from more awareness and better discovery. Of the approximately 140 sex trafficking victims identified in the year from January 2016 to February 2017, the latest data available, most were female, but a significant minority were not. Experts say boys and young men, especially from the LGBTQ community, are as vulnerable to trafficker recruiting as girls and young women – and less likely to come forward. The average age of sex trafficking victims in the USA is 12-to-15 years, but in this area the average appears to be somewhat higher, 15-18. Consequently, only about a third of



Kay Duffield



Teresa Hartnett

the total identified last year were technically juveniles, but the average age of the “adult” victims is not available. The ethnic backgrounds of sex trafficked women typically mirror that of the region, and this appears to be the case for this area as well. In broad socioeconomic terms, girls in poverty, dysfunctional families and neighborhoods with more crime appear more susceptible to becoming trafficking victims, although high income and stable family life are no barrier.

“Any victim I have personally met from Northern Virginia is upper income demographic,” said Teresa Hartnett, coordinator of the Trafficking Task Force, which brings together law enforcement agencies, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the fight against trafficking. Vulnerability is the key to understanding why girls and young women get trapped into sex trafficking, according to Kay Duffield, who serves both as co-chair of the Victims’ Services Committee of the Trafficking Task Force and executive director of the non-profit Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative. Girls are not kidnapped off the street and bound in chains. The typical pattern is for a girl who is lonely, unhappy, rebellious, adventurous, or some combination, to meet a trafficker, who poses as a friend and over time gains influence through empathy, attention and acceptance. The initial meetings typically happen online or in shopping malls or other public places. The trafficker is patient, waiting for the payoff from a successful recruitment. After winning a girl’s trust, a typical tactic is for the trafficker to break her will by rap-

ing her, or staging a gang rape, sometimes filming the episode for blackmail, according to Hartnett. Drugs are another method of control. Also common is threatening harm to family members if the victim comes forward. But some victims are ensnared by emotional dependence, or fear, without strong-arm tactics being necessary. Often the victim keeps up a show of normality — going to school, spending time with her family — while she is being subjected in her unsupervised time to involuntary sex. The average period of being trafficked, is difficult to determine. In some cases, after a few instances, the victim is deemed unsuitable, or the trafficker is caught, or moves on. But in other cases trafficking is a one-way journey and its victims are unable to return.

FORTY PERCENT OF VICTIMS RETURN TO TRAFFICKING

Of the approximately 500 northern Virginia victims identified by police in 2013-17, only about 300 were “recovered” — removed from the trade, reunited with families, or sent to live elsewhere. In other words, this data shows that 40 percent of those identified slipped back into sex trafficking.

The reasons differ in each case, but are often tied to the same factors that led to vulnerability in the first place. Being returned to live in a dysfunctional family and neighborhood doesn’t strengthen a girl’s will to resist the false affection and security of an experienced trafficker. The experience of being trafficked can destroy a young woman or teen’s self-esteem and dignity and skew her ability to function.

“Starting over is very hard,” said Hartnett. “It can get overwhelming, and some survivors lose hope. If they lose momentum going forward, they slip backwards into what’s familiar — and what they have come to think they deserve.” Trafficking victims who are able to recover often take many months or years of counseling and emotional support to regain their autonomy and self-confidence. Traffickers typically are not solo operators but rather are linked and have specialized functions, similar to street level drug distribution, according to Hartnett. Some are adept at recruiting, and then passing the victims to pimps who control one or two victims at a time. But not all trafficking is low-level. Networks operate across state lines moving victims both to take advantage of high demand in a different area and to isolate the victims from potential sources of help.

Gang-led trafficking varies in intensity across the country. In northern Virginia, gangs typically do not practice trafficking as an organized activity although some gang members traffick as individuals, says Duffield.

Not all trafficking is done by third parties. Family members, including drug-addicted parents, sometimes sell their own children to traffickers.

Recent Cases

❖ A Washington, D.C. man was sentenced on Aug. 17, 2018 to 18 years in prison for forcibly sex trafficking a minor.

According to court documents from Eastern District of Virginia, Justin Shayne Robinson, 27, lured the 16-year-old victim to a motel in northern Virginia. Once the minor victim arrived, Robinson directed sexualized photos to be taken of her, and created and posted online advertisements for commercial sex acts with the minor. Robinson and his co-conspirator, Markus Jakeem Plummer, 27, of Woodbridge, then trafficked the minor over a period of roughly a week. Robinson and Plummer took all the proceeds of the minor’s commercial sex acts for their own benefit. Robinson and Plummer used force and surveillance to ensure that the minor continued to see clients and was unable to escape the motel. Robinson used violence to force the victim to continue working for him, including choking her and leaving medically documented bruising on her leg and neck. Co-Conspirator Markus Plummer is scheduled for sentencing on Sept. 28.

❖ On July 20, 2018, a Virginia man was sentenced to 186 months in prison and 10 years of supervised release for multiple crimes related to the prostitution and exploitation of a 15-year-old minor. Abdul Karim Bangura Jr. aka “AJ”, 22, of Triangle, Va. pleaded guilty in August 2017 to all counts of an indictment charging him with sex trafficking of a minor, conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of a minor, interstate transportation of a minor for the purposes of prostitution, and production of child pornography.

According to admissions made in connection with his plea in the Eastern District of Virginia, Bangura and his co-defendant Christian Hood conspired to recruit a 15-year-old girl to work as a prostitute and to advertise her prostitution services on backpage.com. Bangura also transported the minor to hotels in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. for prostitution dates, and he took a portion of the money she made from commercial sex customers. Bangura also used a phone to record a video of himself having sex with the minor. In August 2017, a year ago, Hood was convicted at trial of sex trafficking and conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of this same minor.

These unrelated cases were brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

GROWING PROBLEM IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

From anecdotal evidence, sex trafficking appears to be growing in the region, say experts. They point to two factors. First, the typical buyer of teenaged sex is married, male, with children, and money to spend. That’s a common profile in affluent northern Virginia. Forced sex is sold in a market, and responds to buying pressure like any other. “We need to do something on the demand side,” said Duffield. “Traffickers are going to create that product until demand is gone.”

The second factor explains why areas like Springfield, Dumfries and Tysons are trafficking hotspots: trafficking follows the highways. Traffickers, whether local or interstate, like mobility and the anonymity of travel nodes, as do buyers. Converging highways make for easy contact, fast access to motels, and quick exits. The tangle of major roads in northern Virginia draws in sex trafficking like a neon sign. If someone knows a victim of trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373 7888. If danger is imminent, call 911.

New Law To Keep Traffickers in Jail

On June 25, 2018, Gov. Ralph Northam signed human trafficking legislation that adds offenses related to human trafficking to the list of crimes for which bail can be denied, keeping traffickers in jail and better protecting trafficking victims. Locally, Kathleen Murphy (D-34) and Kathy Tran (D-42) were cosponsors.

“Human trafficking is a threat to public safety here in Virginia and across the United States,” said Northam. “This legislation will help us prevent these crimes by making it more difficult for human traffickers to post bail and leave jail to intimidate witnesses or continue their criminal activity.”

“Human trafficking is a dehumanizing crime that robs its victims of their dignity, their identity, and their freedom,” said Attorney General Mark Herring.

While prosecuting traffickers, local law enforcement found that traffickers would pay their own bail and bail out their victims continuing the cycle of abuse and trafficking. This legislation will keep traffickers in jail.

This legislation adds the following offenses that are attributable to human trafficking to the list of crimes for which there is a rebuttable presumption against admission to bail: Taking or detaining a person for the purposes of prostitution or unlawful sexual intercourse; receiving money from procuring or placing a person in a house of prostitution or forced labor; receiving money from the earnings of a prostitute, and commercial sex trafficking, where the alleged victim is a family or household member.