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Reston Connection

It is 8:40 a.m. on Aug. 28, the first day of school for Fairfax County Public School students. At Terraset Elementary School, Anastasia Klimenko, a kindergartener, arrives with her mother. "I don't know anyone yet, but I'd like to play on the playground," said Klimenko.

8:45 - 9:15AM
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WELLBEING

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NEWS

Teachers and administrators at South Lakes High School in Reston form a greeting line welcoming students back to school on the first day of classes for the school year 2018-2019.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL



It's Back to the Books in Reston

Fairfax County Public Schools open doors for the 2018-2019 school year.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) system began the 2018-2019 school year on Tuesday, Aug. 28, as more than 190,000 preschool through grade 12 students arrived at the county's 198 schools including those in Reston. FCPS is the largest school division in Virginia and the 10th largest in the nation.

Local Reston traffic appeared heavier than usual that morning. Many working parents stayed home later than usual to drive their children to school, and hundreds of high school-aged students drove themselves and their friends to school rather than taking an FCPS bus. On Aug. 28, FCPS posted on that they'd be transporting more than 141,000 students on 1,630 buses each day. That adds up to 26 million student bus rides each year.

According to FCPS, the fiscal year 2019 Approved Operating Revenue is \$2.9 billion at a cost per pupil of \$15,318.

"It is our honor to serve the families and continue to provide one of the community's most valued resources – education for all



CONTRIBUTED BY SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL
A student gets a big South Lakes High School high-five hug from one of the teachers as he returns to school on the first day of classes for the 2018-2019 school year.

children," wrote Scott S. Brabrand, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools in the FCPS fiscal year 2019 Approved Budget.

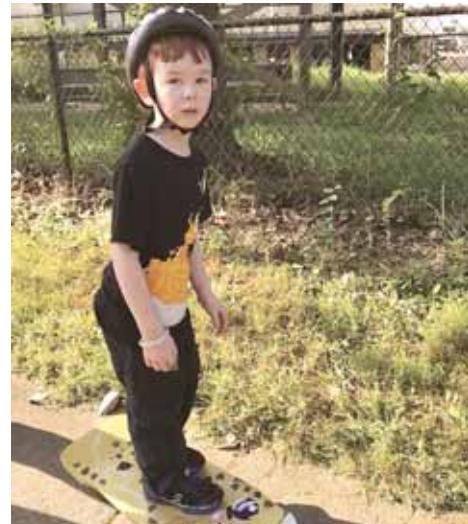


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
On the first day of school, Caleb Wilson, "almost 8," of Reston skateboards to Terraset Elementary with his dad who is skateboarding close behind him. Wilson made his board himself and painted an impressive cheetah on its deck.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
Ricardo Flood, 11, arrives at Langston Hughes Middle School in Reston on the first day of school. "This is my first year here," said Flood.

RESTON CONNECTION EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHIC
703-778-9414 OR RESTON@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

What's New, Exciting in Area Schools

Principal's Back-to-School Report.

In the first week of the new school year, The Connection has asked the area school principals to respond to three questions:

1 - What are the most exciting developments in your school in the new school year?

2 - What would be your, one-sentence, message to parents, community?

3 - Any upcoming events, activities?

Here are their responses.

Aimee Monticchio, Principal, Langston Hughes Middle School

1 - Langston Hughes had a strong start communicating to the students our core beliefs: You belong here; We believe you can be successful; and We are here to support you. All staff are focused on students being their best as learners and community members.



2 - We could not achieve greatness without you and count it a privilege to partner with our parents and community to support students to reach their full potential.

3 - We enjoyed a full house at Back to School Night on Thursday, Aug. 30. There are some upcoming field trips that parents can chaperone. Contact your student's Science teacher if you have a seventh grader and your student's Civics teacher if you have an eighth grader.

Kim Retzer, Principal, South Lakes High School:

1. We are super excited to expand our student leadership program this year with a second section. The new section will be focusing on school climate through enhanced visuals around the building, more engaging morning announcements and giving an increased student voice to our SOAR (Scholarship, Ownership, Awareness and Respect) program.



2. I encourage parents and community members to stay connected through News You Choose, Twitter and other social media and get involved!

3. We have a Parent Orientation on Monday, Sept. 17, Back to School Night on Wednesday, Sept. 26 and lots of athletic events that can be found at <https://southlakesathletics.org>

Liz Noto, Ed.D., Principal, Herndon High School

1 - Our full-scale renovation is well underway. A new parking lot and bus lane was created over the summer and work is now beginning on the new main entrance and main office. The new wing in the back of the building looks amazing! It will hold our new and improved science labs as well as several additional classrooms. We will have access to these new additions in the next school year.



2 - Thank you to our Herndon Community for their continued support! We hope to see all of our Herndon parents for Back to School Night on Sept. 5. Be sure to join the PTSA while you're there! For those who want a glimpse into school life, the Hornet Highlights have been revived by popular demand this year. Be sure you enroll in the system so you receive our News You Choose messages. This can be done on the FCPS homepage (www.fcps.edu). Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on the "Sign Up Now" button in the yellow banner that states "Stay updated with what's happening at FCPS with News You Choose."

3 - Our Homecoming celebration is scheduled for Sept. 22. It all starts with the Town of Herndon Parade at 9 a.m. For those who haven't taken part in the past, this is an fantastic community-wide event! Come out and see!

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WELLBEING

Aiming for Long-Term Fitness

Study shows physical declines can be detected as early as age 50.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL

I've been doing it since before I retired," said Rich White, a former accountant who lives in Alexandria. "It's easier to get up and get it out of the way so I don't miss it. Both of my parents died prematurely of heart attacks. That's when I decided to start running to get in shape. Eventually that turned into a habit of daily strength and aerobic exercise."

White's assumptions about preserving his physical health are underscored by a report from the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development at Duke University School of Medicine which found that physical decline begins when people are in their 50s, much earlier than people might notice or expect.

The study looked at 775 adults ranging in age from 30 to 90 to assess changes in fitness abilities like endurance, balance, speed and strength. Researchers found that exercise efforts must begin before the age of 50 in order to help halt the decline and maintain mobility and independence longer in life.

"Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don't wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair," said lead author Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D. in releasing the study.

By having participants stand on one leg for 60 seconds to measure balance and sit and rise from a chair for 30 seconds to measure lower body strength, researchers were able to detect a decline beginning in

Emma Warner, 72, meets her trainer at a Montgomery County Recreation Center gym twice a week. Together they perform a combination of exercises aimed at improving her strength, balance, endurance and flexibility.

"We stretch and do yoga poses, sometimes we speed walk outside and I also do exercises with two or three pound dumbbells," she said. "But my mother is 98 and is in pretty good health, so I figure I have good genes. I just need to work on fitness to maintain."

As people age, change and decline is inevitable, but the rate and severity can vary based on genetics and the level of activity in one's lifestyle. Regular exercise can have a profound effect on the way in which one ages.

"People have their actual age, which they can't do anything about, and their biological age," said Martin. "Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well,

which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s."

Fitness instructor Amy Traum has clients who run the age gamut from college students to retirees, but her overarching advice to getting in shape is similar. "Everyone needs a well-rounded exercise program that includes stretching, balance exercises,

strength and cardio," she said. "I always begin and end classes with stretching and I try to add strength and balance elements like a weighted deadlift."

Those new or newly returning to exercise should start slowly and gradually, says Traum. "It sounds like common sense, but I can't tell you the number of people who come to my classes with no experience and try to work way above their fitness level

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"Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s."

— Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology, George Mason University

one's 50s. The findings show the need to understand and preserve muscle strength.

"Most tissues in the body respond to stress placed on them by becoming stronger or adapting to handle the stimulus you place on them," said Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology at George Mason University. "If you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and stronger. If you don't do any sort of physical activity to stimulate your muscles then they get smaller and become weaker. Use it or lose it."

and either get injured or discouraged," she said. "There's nothing wrong with starting out slow, sticking with it and making gradual progress. Also make it fun, like walk or jog with a friends or take a dance or Zumba classes."

"Eating a healthy and nutritious diet is also important," added Martin. "The antioxidants in foods, especially fruits and vegetables, can help to preserve and protect tissues from damage that occurs as part of the natural aging process."

ENTERTAINMENT

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

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 5

Dog Days of Summer. 4-7 p.m. in the Pavilion at Reston Town Center. Dogs and owners can frolic in the Pavilion when it is transformed into an off-leash play area each week. Treats, toys, areas to cool off, pet-friendly giveaways, and more. Free. Visit restontowncenter.com.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Trip to Paradise Springs and The Winery at Bull Run. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Bus pick up at RA Headquarters, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Paradise Springs Winery is a relaxing winery with a large tasting room with seating indoors and on the outdoor patio. The Winery at Bull Run has an authentic style 19th century setting. Wine tastings not included. Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy. 55+. \$25/RA members, \$32/non-members. Program 307221604. Visit www.reston.org.

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.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 7

Dog Paddle. 4-7 p.m. at Dogwood Pool, 2460 Green Range Road, Reston. Bring dogs for a final dip this season. Current Dog License required. Dogs must remain under control and sociable at all times or will be asked to leave without refund. Female dogs in heat are not permitted. Fees are per dog. Register online at www.restonwebtrac.org (\$8) or walk up (\$10) on the day.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 8

Back-to-School Bilingual Storytime. 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Join author and Spanish teacher Tracey Kyle for a bilingual story time featuring her books, "Gazpacho for Nacho," "Food Fight Fiesta" and "A Paintbrush for Paco" with a chance to toss "tomatoes," and hear stories. Visit www.scrawlbooks.com or call 703-966-2111.

Fundamentals of Drawing. 1:30-3:30 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Basic Fundamentals of drawing will be taught and demonstrated, to include the principal application of contour line, gesture and shade while performing exercises in drawing from live nude models. \$150 for the eight-week session. Call 703-956-6590 or visit artspaceherndon.com.

TUESDAYS/SEPT. 11-OCT. 30

Feldenkrais Method. 4-5 p.m. at Herndon Senior Center Council, 873 Grace Street, Herndon. The Feldenkrais Method is a gentle system of sensory-motor re-education. Participants report increased mobility, improved flexibility, coordination and balance. Series of eight classes: free for members; \$25 for non-members. Call 703-464-6200.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 12

Hike and Lunch Outing. 9:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. bus pick up at RA Headquarters, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Join for a guided hike in Great Falls. Travel by bus to the starting point near Colvin Mill and follow Difficult Run to Great Falls. This moderately strenuous hike will move at about 3 mph over natural trails and take between 90 and 120 minutes. Enjoy the hike and then lunch at Great Falls with others who share this interest. Lunch will be provided. 55+. \$25/RA members, \$32/non-members. Program 307220703. Visit www.reston.org.

Dog Days of Summer. 4-7 p.m. in the Pavilion at Reston Town Center. Dogs and owners can frolic in the Pavilion when it is transformed into

an off-leash play area each week. Treats, toys, areas to cool off, pet-friendly giveaways, and more. Free. Visit restontowncenter.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/SEPT. 14-15

ChalkFest. Friday, noon-11 p.m. (professional artists/sponsors); Saturday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (open to all) at Reston Town Center, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. ChalkFest At Reston Town Center is presented by Public Art Reston and Reston Town Center. All are invited to create chalk drawings on Market Street. The event is open to professional artists, amateur artists, businesses, families, and kids of all ages. There will be prizes for professional artists, amateur artists, families and kids, in addition to the "Audience Choice Awards." Registration fee for Saturday participation includes supplies. Call 703-880-1177 or visit publicartreston.org.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 15

Digital Photography Essentials Workshop. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. This introductory class is for people with a digital SLR (DSLR) or mirror-less camera who are interested in learning how to successfully use their camera beyond automatic/program modes. Contact the instructor to confirm camera is appropriate. \$125; \$99 before Sept. 1. Call 703-956-6590 or visit artspaceherndon.com.

Native Plant Sale. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Runnymede Park, 195 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. Pre-orders accepted. Visit each vendor's website (www.watermarkwoods.com or www.nature-by-design.com) for inventory and availability, email them individually and pick up and pay at Runnymede Park. Visit www.frpweb.org.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 16

Apple Picking at Stribling Orchard. Noon-4:30 p.m. bus pick up at RA Headquarters, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Spend the afternoon picking apples in Markham, Va. Plan a family day: pack a picnic, pick pumpkins and shop at the Harvest House. RA members: \$10 / non-members: \$12 (adult 13+); RA members: \$8 / non-members: \$10 (child 3-12); free (ages 0-2). Program 307011617. Visit www.reston.org.

Intermediate Digital Photography One-Day Workshop.

1:30-5:30 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. This "beyond the basics" class is for alumni of the Digital Photography Essentials class or those who currently use Aperture and Shutter Priority shooting modes and want to learn how to successfully shoot in full manual shooting mode for complete control of image exposure. Contact the instructor to confirm camera is appropriate. Class size limited to 8. \$125; \$99 before Sept. 1. Call 703-956-6590 or visit artspaceherndon.com.

MONDAY/SEPT. 17

Hidden Treasures of Reston Bus Tour. 9:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bus pick up: The Lake House, 11450 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston. Join a guided tour of the hidden treasures throughout Reston. Even for those who have lived here for a long time: see the trolls under the bridge near the Reston police station, the significant monarch trees, the Lake House or the Nature House. Participants will be getting off and on the bus to check out these treasures up close. Program: 307221005. \$22/RA members; \$28/non-members. Visit www.reston.org.

Reston Photographic Society. 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Room 6 at the Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Reston Photographic Society invites photography enthusiasts of all skill levels to attend meetings. RPS is a special-interest group of the League of Reston Artists. Share information and enjoy guest speakers, workshops and group critiques. Nonmembers are welcome. Visit leagueofrestonartists.org.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 19

Dog Days of Summer. 4-7 p.m. in the Pavilion at Reston Town Center. Dogs and owners can frolic in the Pavilion when it is transformed into an off-leash play area each week. Treats, toys, areas to cool off, pet-friendly giveaways, and more. Free. Visit restontowncenter.com.

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OPINION

Budgeting Issues for Both RA and RCC

BY JOHN LOVAAS
RESTON IMPACT PRODUCER/HOST

Budget issues have surfaced at both Reston Association (RA) and the Reston Community Center (RCC). At RA, issues arose as the Board began consideration of the 2019 portion of its biennial budget. In RCC, budget issues were raised by a candidate for RCC's Board of Governors.

Unlike RA, RCC is part of the Fairfax County government.

I attended the special RA Board meeting convened Aug. 20 to receive the 2019 budget proposal from the RA CEO (Acting) and staff. Normally, the RA Board triggers budget preparation by giving the CEO and staff its guidance for a new biennial budget, i.e., goals and principles set by the Board. The 2019 budget was prepared for the review and ultimate approval by a Board with different leadership than the one that gave staff guidance for the two-year (2018-19) budget a year ago.

As someone familiar with 2018 budget process and now observing the 2019 process begin, I noticed obvious disconnects between the reviews of the two. The 2018 budget review was chaired by Sherri Hebert along with Treasurer Sridhar Ganesan. The Fiscal Committee (community volunteers of longstanding) played a minor role only. This year there is a new President, Andy Sigle, elected by the new Board in a hard-fought vote. However, the Fiscal Committee which advises the Board is a new team appointed by the former Board.

Last year, the Board's guidance to staff for budget preparation set a new direction indeed, calling for greater budget discipline and tightening. As a result, the 2018 budget process resulted in the first reduction in homeowner assessments in RA history. Further, that Board planned continued trimming for years following 2018 as well. They used a surplus to pay off the mortgage on the scandal-plagued Tetra



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

building. They also called for reduction in the employee health plan subsidy from 100 percent paid by assessment dollars to 95 percent in 2018, and 90 percent in 2019; and they foresaw future reductions in legal expenses, *inter alia*.

The staff, realizing that there was a new sheriff chairing this Board, proposed budget increases and an assessment increase initially of \$37! President Sigle seemed to waiver. He asked that staff take a closer look, but did not press for reduction.

Interestingly, the new Fiscal Committee took a stand for real trimming of the proposal. The Committee's Board Liaison, who is getting known as somewhat of a Dr. No, backed them. In my view, the RA budget had gotten too plush. The discipline initiated by the prior leadership was needed, overdue even. Let's hope their principles prevail. We shall see.

The case of the Community Center is quite different. The preponderance of Community Center funds come from a surcharge on all Reston Fairfax County property taxes. The RCC budget has a tidy surplus at present. And, there is the prospect of substantial growth in future revenues as several major residential and commercial developments come on line with new taxpaying owners in tax district # 5 chipping in to the RCC budget. At the same time, RCC will be expected to provide services to new arrivals, mostly in the rail corridor, as they do for the rest of us. That will likely mean adding modest service facilities in the Wiehle station area, for example.

Dick Stillson a candidate for the RCC Board of Governors with exceptional foresight has analyzed the likely new growth. He believes that RCC can extend the necessary services and still have a surplus sufficient to suggest it is time to examine the possibility of reducing the District #5 tax rate. His judgment is based on long experience, including 20 years with the International Monetary Fund. He would be a great addition to the RCC Board.

**Reston Association
is holding a Com-
munity Yard Sale on
Saturday, Sept. 15.
Space is available.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF
RESTON ASSOCIATION



Reston Association to Hold Community Yard Sale

Reston Association announced 85 families will be selling a variety of items at their Community Yard Sale in the parking lot behind 1900 Campus Commons Drive, Reston on Saturday, Sept. 15 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The location is at the corner of Sunrise Valley Drive and Wiehle Avenue. Rain Date is Sunday, Sept. 16.

Vendors must pre-register with payment to secure a space. The 85 booth spaces are limited to two parking spaces each and tables are not pro-

vided. The cost is \$39 for RA members and \$49 for non-members. There are no refunds unless the sale is canceled due to rain.

Contact Ashleigh@reston.org or 703-435-6577 with any questions. Vendors can register for booth space online with WebTrac at www.RestonWebTrac.org. The WebTrac activity number is 307201304.

—MERCIA HOBSON

BULLETIN

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

THROUGH DECEMBER

White House Ornaments. Assistance League of Northern Virginia has begun its annual fundraising sale of White House Ornaments. The 2018 ornament honors Harry S. Truman, highlighting changes made to the White House during his administration. One side features the Truman Balcony and the reverse features the Blue Room. Assistance League is an all volunteer, non-profit organization. Proceeds benefit our community-based programs that support local low income children. \$22 (+ shipping if mail delivery required). Email burgessgl@verizon.net or visit www.alnv.org.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND ID EVENTS

The Fairfax County Office of Elections (12000 Government Center Parkway Suite 323, Fairfax) is open daily during normal business hours to provide county residents the opportunity to register to vote or obtain a free voter photo ID if needed. Applicants will need to complete a photo voter ID application, have a photo taken and sign a digital signature pad. Call 703-222-0776.

The following special events will also provide opportunity to register to vote and/or get a photo Virginia Voter card.

❖ Wednesday/Sept. 26, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace St #1, Herndon.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is looking to expand its team of volunteers for the upcoming tax season. Tax-Aide, now in its 51st year, offers free in-person preparation and assistance to anyone, especially those 50 and older, who can't afford a tax preparation service. Volunteers make a difference in their communities by assisting many older, lower-income taxpayers, and their families, who might otherwise miss out on the tax credits and deductions they've earned. To learn about volunteer opportunities, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxaide or call 1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277).

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's Merrifield Center offers a new stand-up information kiosk. Part of a pilot project, the new feature aims to improve the customer service experience and decrease wait times for individuals who are seeking mental (behavioral) health services. To check in, individuals respond to five simple questions, then the CSB's Patient Track software alerts staff. Based on clinicians' schedules and availability, as well as the needs of the client, individuals are triaged and seen by the next available staff member. For more information on available services, call the CSB at 703-383-8500 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). In an emergency 24/7, call CSB Emergency Services at 703-573-5679 or the Fairfax Detox Center at 703-502-7000 (TTY 703-322-9080).

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 5

State of the Environment: Reston. 7 p.m. at Reston Community Center Lake Anne Jo Ann Rose Gallery. Hosted by the Reston Historic Trust & Museum the talk, "Assessing the Environmental Quality of a Place Called Reston," will be presented by Doug Britt, Virginia Master Naturalist, Reston Association Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) member, and Project Director for the 1st Reston Annual State of the Environment Report – RASER. Visit www.reston.org/Parks_RecreationEvents/NatureEnvironmentalResources/NatureOverview/tabid/959/Default.aspx for the full report.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Capital Region Business Forum. 7:30-9:30 a.m. at Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser will discuss their plans to work cooperatively to bolster the regional economy. Visit www.bot.org/upcomingevents/dmvbizforum for more.

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Poise Under Pressure – Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't want to self-indulge too much, but given the potentially life-changing seriousness of my upcoming Sept. 26 CT scan, I'm having a little trouble getting myself started in the morning – and throughout the day also, if you must know the truth? (I realize you all have your own lives to lead so that last sentence-ending question was more rhetorical than actual.)

Nevertheless, if you're still reading, you're still interested so I'll try to string together some "insightful commentary and thoughtful humor," (an original characterization of my columns) to keep you on the page. Although, given the subject of this week's column, it might be hard to tiptoe through the tulips.

The difficulty I'm having is being unable to ignore, "totally," (my mother loved to mimic the generation that popularized that word) the reality of my situation.

Typically, I've been able to maintain a relative calm and detached disposition as I go from one cancer-related thing to another. None of the tasks I must perform or the responsibilities I've assimilated into a routine (24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, chemotherapy, quarterly CT scans, annual brain MRI, quarterly appointments with my oncologist, have changed who I like to think I am compared to who I was pre-cancer diagnosis, 2/27/09; despite having the weight of a "terminal" diagnosis/original "13 month to two year" prognosis on my shoulders/literally in my lungs.

To quote Popeye the Sailor Man: "I y'am who I y'am." (And I still don't like spinach, certainly not out of a can.)

And though I've done a pretty good job of flicking these flakes of pressure and anxiety off my shoulders like unwanted dandruff, the fact is – as with dandruff shampoo or any other personal hygiene product for that matter – unless one is diligent, vigilant and cognizant of its likely recurrence, nothing will change.

Unfortunately, cancer doesn't quite react that way. It will change and it can overwhelm even your best efforts and can cause harm not only internally but externally as well (emotionally). Fending off these emotional pressures is challenging and dare I say, presents as many problems as the growth and movement of one's tumors and the side effects of one's treatment does.

What makes my present situation feel different and a bit off-putting is that what has happened has happened after nearly five years of relative peace and quiet (I was never characterized as in "remission," by the way). It seems the possibility of having to go back, so to speak, and return to the scene of the crime – against my body/life expectancy; and moreover, having to restart the process, ratchets up the stress to previously unknown heights.

And part of me is wondering (worrying actually) if I'm up to the challenge again, emotionally and of course, physically as well; whether my body can sustain the damage it's likely to experience if we have to reload.

I use the word 'reload' for a reason. Without invoking too many war metaphors, being diagnosed with cancer is like being drafted into the Army, except you have little training for the battles you're about to fight. And as much as fighting against cancer is a battle, it's more a war against attrition in which the bad guys (cancer) regularly defeat the good guys (people diagnosed with cancer). In general, the cancer experience is no picnic.

It reminds me of a long-ago M*A*S*H episode in which the doctors operated through a particularly difficult surgical session after which Henry (Lt. Col. Blake) and "Hawkeye" (Capt. Pierce) went outside the operating room/tent for some relief. "Hawkeye" clearly agitated over a patient he couldn't save; Henry tried to offer him some comfort with the following words: "There are certain rules about war. And rule number one is young men die. And rule number two is, doctors can't change rule number one."

What scares me about cancer is, it follows no rules and like war, leaves devastation in its wake. I just hope I'm not about to be another casualty.

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

OPINION

Do Something

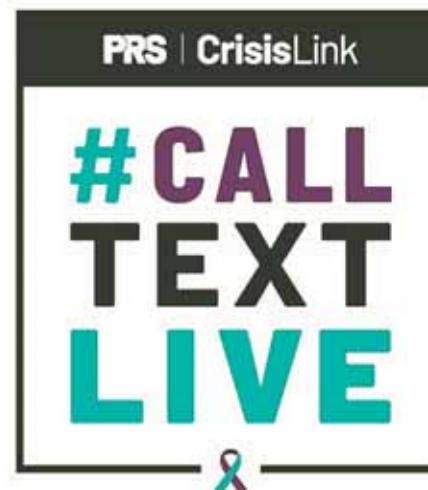
BY WENDY GRADISON
CEO PRS

The news of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade as well as a number of our own community members whose lives were stopped short due to suicide underscores the challenges that exist in preventing suicide. These stories created considerable grief, and in fact, we saw a significant increase in calls and texts to our PRS CrisisLink hotline.

When losses like these occur, we have an opportunity to change the conversation about suicide from one of loss to one of empowerment and hope. To keep people talking, we are launching the #CallTextLive Campaign during September, Suicide Prevention Month.

Suicide is a serious issue locally and nationally, claiming the lives of nearly 45,000 people annually and is the 10th leading cause of death nationwide and the second leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24. But for every death, 278 people manage to move past thoughts of suicide and survive.

At PRS, a nonprofit running PRS CrisisLink, Northern Virginia's crisis hotline and textline, we know there is more we can do to bring awareness and tools to prevent future suicides. We are inviting the community to get involved in our 4th annual #CallTextLive Campaign.



Using the hashtag #CallTextLive, the campaign works to educate members of the community about resources available and actions they can take to bring awareness to suicide prevention and intervention. Campaign highlights include: an easy to use web-based interactive event calendar; great tips and resources to share via social media; a Facebook Live Q&A with experts; community training and tour of the PRS CrisisLink call center; a Selfie Day; a crowdsourcing fundraiser; t-shirts for purchase; and walk events. We will also explore special suicide prevention topics related to gun safety, veterans, older adults, LGBTQ, youth, and survivors.

It's time to challenge the stigma around is-

sues contributing to suicide and provide each other the tools to get help. #CallTextLive uses social media, activities and events to drive community conversation. We want people to visit our website—www.prssinc.org—to find simple ways to spark change through the #CallTextLive Campaign. Do one or do them all...but we definitely want everyone to do something.

If we are successful, even more people will find their way to community resources, including the PRS CrisisLink program, which handled nearly 80,000 crisis calls and text messages from the Northern Virginia region last year. In fact, a simple call or text to the crisis hotline or textline — (800) 273-TALK [8255] and text "CONNECT" to 85511 — provides the empathetic, trained voice that someone in crisis needs to reduce their pain and provide connections to care. Most of these voices are volunteers from our community — neighbors and friends — who share the gift of listening to those who hope to be heard.

Help us make it okay for more people to seek help. Join the #CallTextLive Campaign to broaden the conversation. Small or big ... do something ... we are listening and others will too.

Wendy Gradison is CEO of PRS, a mental health nonprofit in Northern Virginia.

De-Gerrymandering Continued

BY KENNETH R.
"KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-
36)



COMMENTARY

Sorry, but this is yet another column on the continuing effort to de-gerrymander House of Delegates districts in Virginia as directed by the federal courts. In this instance it was the Republican Party who in the majority after the 2010 census drew district lines that were designed to keep them in the majority until the next census in 2020 when lines must be drawn again. They ran into trouble when to dilute the votes of African Americans who traditionally vote Democratic they packed them into eleven districts in the Richmond and Hampton Roads regions. A panel of federal judges found the practice violated the constitutional rights of the individuals involved and ordered the districts to be redrawn.

The Governor called the General Assembly into special session last week to carry out the court's di-

rective. The legislature went home without success after one day of effort.

Why is the Republican majority failing to do as the court directed? The reason is quite simple. If it took an unconstitutional drawing of district lines to maintain their majority in the House of Delegates, an undoing of those lines would likely take away their majority. Is the court favoring Democrats in what they are doing? No, the court is protecting the constitutional rights of individuals. The court does not take into account partisan outcomes. You simply cannot deny equal representation in the legislature of a class of people without running afoul of their constitutional protections.

When the court found Virginia's Congressional districts to be unconstitutional several years ago, the remedy of that situation was new districts that resulted in the election of an additional African

American congressman from the state that up to that point had only one. Both happen also to be Democrats.

The court has denied an appeal from the Republicans of their directive to resolve the unconstitutional districts. If the General Assembly fails to carry out the court's mandate, the court will redraw the districts themselves. Presumably there would be special elections held right away in the new districts.

In the meantime, House Democrats have proposed a redrawing of the legislative lines to make the districts constitutional which unsurprisingly could result in the election of as many as five new Democrats. The authors of the new maps insist that they did what needed to be done to follow the court's directive and not what would give them more seats. The day of the special session was spent with the Republicans picking apart the proposed map in an attempt to show that it was too partisan.

Republicans called the map hypocritical, and one of my Democratic colleagues, Del. Steve

Heretick, called it a "self-serving political power grab."

I draw two conclusions from the last several months: The court needs to take immediate remedial action to correct the constitutional problems with the current districts, and the General Assembly at its next legislative session must pass a constitutional amendment establishing a truly independent commission to do redistricting. The amendment would need to pass a second session of the General Assembly and a referendum of the people. Legislative bodies simply cannot rise above their own self-interests to do the job fairly.

Write The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers.

Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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