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WELLBEING
PAGE 8

Melaney Mackin, Ed.D., Principal Silverbrook Elementary looks forward to the beginning of the school renovation next year. In today's Connection, area principals reflect on the most exciting developments in a new school year.



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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 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



Kay Duffield



Teresa Hartnett

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 raping 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

“Any victim I have personally met from Northern Virginia is upper income demographic.”

— Teresa Hartnett, coordinator,
Northern Virginia Human Trafficking
Task Force

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 special-

ized 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 traffic 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.

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.

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.

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NEWS

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.

Melaney Mackin, Ed.D. , Principal Silverbrook Elementary:

1. Renovation of our building will begin in February 2019. The trailers to house staff and students as renovation takes place have already arrived on school grounds. We look forward to having a beautiful "new" school within the next few years.

We are excited about staff training this fall to implement new initiatives: Responsive Classroom and Project Based Learning. These programs will support the maintenance of a positive environment in our classrooms and school, as well as provide an additional approach to develop engaging lessons for students.

2. As your children progress through school encourage their efforts to persevere when they encounter a challenging assignment or activity, for the ability to problem solve and work through new and sometimes difficult tasks will not only be of help to them as students, but will benefit them throughout their lives.

3. Upcoming events/activities: Back to School Nights – Sept. 4 and 5; Annual Silverbrook PTO Seahawk Stomp – Friday, Oct. 19.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Melaney Mackin

Michael Mukai, Principal, West Springfield High School

1 — West Springfield High School is excited to be in the final phases of the renovation. We have opened 65 new classrooms and the temporary trailer classrooms will no longer be used. We want to thank all the students, teachers, parents, and community for making West Springfield High School a top 10 school in Virginia in US News and for the Virginia Department of Education.



Michael Mukai

2 — At West Springfield we continue to Dream Big, Work Hard, and Be Proud É Spartan Strong!

3 — Our Homecoming and Hall of Fame Week will be Sept. 24 – 29, 2018. It will culminate with the Football game on Friday, Sept. 28, and the Hall of Fame Inductions on Saturday, Sept. 29.

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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-

suues 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.prsinc.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)

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-



COMMENTARY

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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VOTER REGISTRATION AND ID EVENTS

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(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.

- ❖ Tuesday/Sept. 11, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., The Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Ct, Fairfax.
- ❖ Monday/Sept. 17, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Heatherwood Retirement Community, 9642 Burke Lake Road, Burke.

- ❖ Wednesday/Sept. 19, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Greenspring Retirement Community, 7410 Spring Village Drive, Springfield.
- ❖ Tuesday/Sept. 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Burke Health and Rehab Center, 9640 Burke Lake Road, Burke.
- ❖ Thursday/Oct. 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Leewood Healthcare Center, 7120 Braddock Road, Annandale.

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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—Chief Seattle
(1788-1866)
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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

"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."

— Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D.

"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."

NEWS

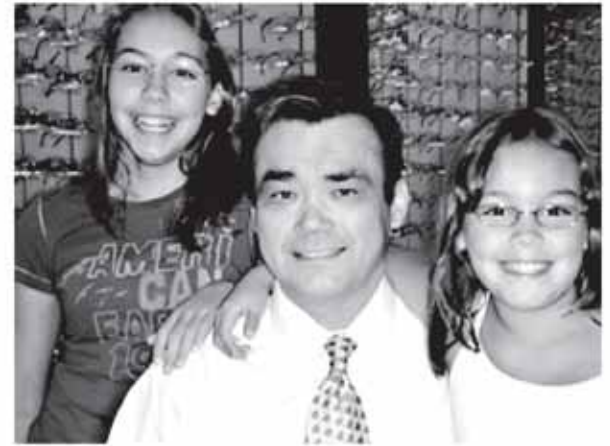
Helping Fill the Boot in Oakton

Fairfax County firefighter Joel Kobersteen and a motorist show how a dollar bill stuffed into one boot can yield positive results for survivors of muscular dystrophy. High school senior Joshua Jurack — whose bright smile shines in the rearview mirror — looks forward to a cure within his lifetime. The 17-year-old has survived Duchenne muscular dystrophy since age 5. Labor Day weekend 2018 marks Jurack's 10th consecutive campaign as Goodwill Ambassador for the annual Fairfax County Fill the Boot fundraiser. He made his rounds throughout the county Saturday, including this stop by Oakton Fire Station 34 at 10511 Rosehaven St. in Fairfax. Kobersteen, a master technician at Fire Station 40 in Fairfax Center, has coordinated this effort for 11 straight years and enjoys working with Jurack. His goal is to raise \$575,000 for Reston-based non-profit MDA Greater Washington, D.C.

PHOTO BY MARTI MOORE/
THE CONNECTION



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NEWS



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Cheese ambassadors Jo Sable Courtney and Cassie Sutton, on their last stop at Wegman's in Kingstowne.

Random Acts of Cheddar Supports Volunteerism and Community

BY MIKE SALMON
 THE CONNECTION

When Cassie Sutton graduated from the University of Vermont last May, she didn't picture herself driving around the northeast United States giving out cheese. But in August, she was in Northern Virginia, stopping at a fire station in Herndon, and Cornerstones, in Reston to spread the word as part of "Random Acts of Cheddar," for Cabot Creamery.

"I've had a lot of positive interactions," Sutton said, "lots of cheese jokes."

From her home in upstate New York, Sutton has been through Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the northern part of Virginia, talking about cheese, supporting non-profits and the importance of volunteering. On Saturday, Aug. 25, she was at her final stop in Wegman's in the Kingstowne area.

"It's a really rewarding feeling," Sutton said from her table in the store.

The Random Acts of Cheddar followed a plan as described on their website: "Starting in June, Cabot's Traveling Ambassadors visited volunteer organizations, non-profits, and service groups as well police and fire stations across the country, to thank them for all they do to make the world – and their cities and towns – better. We can't think of a more heartfelt way to say thank you than with Cabot's award-winning cheddar, made with love from our farm family owners to you."

Mount Vernon resident Linse Wood stopped at the table and ate a chunk of their "Vermont Seriously Sharp White Cheddar."



Cassie Sutton in Kingstowne, spreading the good word about cheese, volunteering and the sense of community.

She's a cheese connoisseur and liked that they were promoting community.

"Got a little stink to it, and that's good," Wood said of the cheese.

Cabot Creamery is a farmer co-op of about 1,000 farmers producing everything that's dairy. Cabot Creamery Cooperative has been in continuous operation in Vermont since 1919, and makes a full line of cheeses, Greek yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese and butter.

Sutton studied food science in school, and knows that cheese gets a bad rap from the vegans and cholesterol watchers, but it does have its highpoints.

"It's a healthy snack, a source of calcium," Sutton said, "we have no lactose in our cheddars," she said. Fellow Cabot marketing ambassador, Jo Sable Courtney, was with Sutton spreading the word in Kingstowne, and both are in the Department of Gratitude at Cabot.

"We're serious about this 'thank you' thing," Courtney said.

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NEWS



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Some of the GirlsTooCode Program attendees with program leader Riya Dabbi. From left, back row: Kyndall Johnson, Gianna Park, Vera Mensah, Isabella Nazari, Mia Martin-Escandarani, Izzy Meyers; Front row: Ana Mensah, Sol Martin-Escandarani, Savannah Phipps

'GirlsTooCode' Program Held at Richard Byrd Library

The meeting room in Richard Byrd Library was abuzz with girls waving their hands to answer Riya's question, "What are the 4 lobes in the human brain?" Riya Dabbi, program leader for the GirlsTooCode Program, was testing the girls to check their progress.

Girls from grades 4 to 12 had enrolled in the early part of summer when it was announced on the library calendar. The program was a huge success even before it started with enrollment spilling way beyond the planned program size of 15 girls. Many girls had to be put on a waitlist for the next session of GirlsTooCode.

Earlier in the spring, National Council for Women in Technology honored Riya Dabbi, class of 2019, from Thomas Jefferson HS with National Runner up Award and a Virginia State Winner Award in the Aspirations in Computing program. Riya was then encouraged by NCWIT, to apply for a grant under their AspireIT K-12 Outreach program.

Riya approached Richard Byrd Library in Springfield with a plan for the GirlsTooCode Program. The then-branch manager Lorraine Culhane liked the idea and ap-

proved it to be run from mid-July to mid-August for five Saturdays. Isha Bhangui and Ankita Vadiala, rising seniors, from the Academy of Science in Loudoun joined Riya and helped plan and execute the program.

Girls learned Scratch programming with fun and interactive stories, games, and animation. They learned about the nervous system, how computers can be made to simulate the brain, Artificial Intelligence, and neural networks.

They were introduced to a variety of careers open to women with coding skills. In the last session, girls showcased their community challenge projects culminating with an award ceremony. Branch Manager Sandy Freund distributed the awards and participation certificates and congratulated the girls for successful completion.

Riya Dabbi said, "I love seeing the wonder in girls' faces after learning something new and interesting."

Girls came from diverse backgrounds and formed new friendships. Izzy Myers, a fifth grader, asked Riya, while leaving, "Are you going to do the program again next summer? I want to come again!"



Community Project Award Winners with Library Branch Manager. From left: Sandy Freund, Ana Mensah, Mia Martin-Escandarani, Riya Dabbi, Izzy Meyers.

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Lorton - 7756 Gunston Plaza Dr - 703-550-2345

Springfield - 6228 Rolling Rd - 703-913-7272

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Pop-Up Art show. Through Dec. 16 at Gallery 57, 11899 Grand Commons Ave., Fairfax. Emerging Artists Initiative and the Peterson Companies are partnering to bring an artistic and creative facet to the Fairfax community. A new pop-up art gallery at Fairfax Corner Center will be exhibiting paintings and sculptors by four resident artists in the vacant retail space. Free. Email director@eaiinc.org or visit eaiinc.org.

Second Saturdays. 6-9 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. The Second Saturday Art Walk is the perfect time to meet nearly 85 Resident and Associate Artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in our galleries. Experience performances of dance, cabaret, comedy, big band, jazz, and theater. Indulge in classes in the art of mixology or cuisines from around the globe. Enjoy art exhibitions in nine galleries of the region's finest sculpture, painting, glass, ceramics, and fiber art works. Visit www.workhousearts.org/.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

History of Belvoir Manor. 7-8:30 p.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Learn about the fascinating history of Belvoir Manor with Patrick O'Neil from the Burke Historical Society. Discover the mansion's past from its Fairfax family ties to its role in the War of 1812 and creation of Fort Belvoir. Adults and teens. Free. Call 703-978-5600 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4454036.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 7

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 8

Marketing for Writers. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at Jubilee Christian Center, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. Join Capital Christian Writers for a one-day writers marketing conference. Aspiring writers have their own track to learn the nuts and bolts of getting published. \$75-\$115. Email ccwriters@gmail.com or visit capitalchristianwriters.org/index.php/2018-conference-marketing-for-writers/.

Annual Crab Feast Dinner. 3:30-6 p.m. at Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton, in the Common Room. The 26th Annual Crab Feast, sponsored by the Brotherhood of St Andrew, will include crabs, fried fish, steamed shrimp, potato salad, pork and chicken barbecue sandwiches, and hot dogs for children. \$30 per adult (ages 18 and older), \$15 for children ages 12-17, and children under the age of 12 are free. Contact Rodger Jones, rodgerjns125@gmail.com, or Fred Crawford, frccrawford205@comcast.net, or call the church office at 703-339-6572.

SEPT. 8-16

Workhouse 10th Anniversary. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center invites the residents of Fairfax County and guests from throughout the region to visit for a week of free



“Mason and his Legacy,” performed inside the mansion as part of a naturalization ceremony.

Citizen Naturalization Ceremony

George Mason's Gunston Hall will partner with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Washington Office, in naturalizing candidates. Before the ceremony, guests may enjoy activities and crafts and explore Gunston Hall's grounds. The ceremony is followed by a reception, an opportunity to register to vote, and Gunston Hall's exclusive theater performance, “Mason and his Legacy,” performed inside the mansion. Saturday, Sept. 15, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Admission is free until 1 p.m. to all visitors. Call 703-550-9220 ext. 240 or visit gunstonhall.org.

and low-cost events and activities in celebration of its 10th anniversary. Experiences include classes and presentations, films and music, special tours, and more. Visit www.workhousearts.org/events/category/10th-anniversary/.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

Craft Show-Bazaar. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Springfield Masonic Temple, 7001 Backlick Road, Springfield. Various vendors inside and outside to showcase beautiful handmade craft. Shop for friends and family before the holiday season rush. There are vendor spaces available. Food and drinks available for sale. Free admission. Call 703-780-6519 or visit www.nelliecustis.org.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 11

Farm to Fairfax Market. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Old Town Square, 10415 North St., Fairfax. The market, will be producers-only – meaning that all vendors at the market may only sell what they raise on their farms or make from scratch using local ingredients as much as possible. May-September, weather permitting. Call 703-385-7893.

Cub Scout Registration. 6-7 p.m. at Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. Cub Scout Pack 1347 invites boys, girls and family to “Hooked on Scouting Ice Cream Social and Sign up Night.” Includes free raffle giveaway and fun. Hosted by Troop 1347. Free. Email Pack1347@bumc.gmail.com or visit www.burke1347.mytroop.us.

Singers Wanted. 7:15 p.m. at the United Baptist Church, 7100 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Wakefield Chorale is looking for men and women who like to sing. The chorale welcomes singers of all voice ranges. No audition is required. Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays at 7:15 p.m. beginning Sept. 11. Call Johanna

Droel at 703-569-0214 or email jodroel@gmail.com.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 14

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

Movies Under the Moon: Matilda. 8 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Enjoy a night under the stars in Van Dyck Park with family and friends with a movie for all ages to enjoy. Free admission, bring chairs and blankets.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 15

Pet Adoption Event. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Pet Supplies Plus, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Find a new forever animal friend with the help of the City of Fairfax Animal Control and Animal Shelter. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/police/programs/animal-control/adopt-a-pet.

14th Annual Merrifield Fall Festival. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Mosaic District. Presented by the Greater Merrifield Business Association (GMBBA), in conjunction with URBNmarket and Mosaic, and held will be in the heart of the Mosaic District with food vendors, a beer garden, music and entertainment, as well as a pre-holiday handmade and vintage market. Children's activities including: Vienna Singing Princesses, pumpkin painting, face painting, hair braiding, sack races, karate, peace mural painting, carnival games and more. Visit greatermerrifield.org/merrifield-fall-festival.

Citizen Naturalization Ceremony.

10 a.m.-1 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. George Mason's Gunston Hall will partner with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Washington Office, in naturalizing candidates. Before the

ceremony, guests may enjoy activities and crafts and explore Gunston Hall's grounds. The ceremony is followed by a reception, an opportunity to register to vote, and Gunston Hall's exclusive theater performance, “Mason and his Legacy,” performed inside the mansion. Admission is free until 1 p.m. to all visitors. Call 703-550-9220 ext. 240 or visit gunstonhall.org.

CommUnity FunFest. 1-4:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Fun for the whole family with food, games, music, children's activities, and an auction is open to everyone. Free, open to all. Call 703-281-1767 or visit www.unityoffairfax.org/funfest.

Harry Ponder. 2-3:30 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. While the wizards head to Hogwarts, the muggles can celebrate the start of a new school year at Hidden Pond. Learn about our magical beasts, make your own wand, have your fortune told by Professor Treefroggie, and defend against the dark arts of pollution. \$7. Email casey.riley@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-451-9588.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 16

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, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 18

Farm to Fairfax Market. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Old Town Square, 10415 North St., Fairfax. The market, will be producers-only – meaning that all vendors at the market may only sell what they raise on their farms or make from scratch using local

ingredients as much as possible. May-September, weather permitting. Call 703-385-7893.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 20

Hometown Thursdays: Sudden M-Pac. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Old Town Square, 10415 North St., Fairfax. Third Thursdays in May-September. The new series will host local bands from the Fairfax area. Meet up with friends, grab dinner at one of the many restaurants in downtown, and listen to great music. A free, family-friendly event for all ages. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/hometown-thursdays.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 21

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 22

Mosby Civil War Bus Tour. 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Stuart - Mosby Historical Society; tour leader will be Don Hakenson, Eric Buckland with special guest Tom Evans. The bus will leave Truro Parish (10520 Main St., Fairfax City). Will be visiting Mosby's Grave, Clover Hill (supposedly a safe house for Nick Carter), Wolf's Craig (the home of General Turner Ashby), The Mountain Home in Front Royal. Cost for Stuart-Mosby Historical Society members is \$65; non members is \$75. Reserve a seat by sending contact info to Don Hakenson at dhakenson@verizon.net.

Treasures Revealed. 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Army Navy Country Club, 3315 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. The Salvation Army Ladies Auxiliary of Fairfax County hosts “Treasures Revealed,” an art and antiques valuation event. Everyone has something they own that they are curious about, whether it is something inherited, received as a gift, built in a collection over decades, or acquired yesterday in a garage sale. Register and reserve a valuation time slot at Give.virginiasalvationarmy.org/Fairfax-Treasuresrevealed.

Pig Roast. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 176, 6520 Amherst Ave., Springfield. The Springfield American Legion is hosting the 2nd Annual Pig Roast in support of the 8th Annual Virginia, State-Wide Motorcycle Rally for the Legion Riders. Tickets are \$20 until Aug. 22 and \$25 afterwards. Tickets are available at www.facebook.com/Squadron176 (“Events” tab), at the Post lounge, or at the time of the event. All are welcome and there is ample parking. Call 703-440-0336 or visit www.facebook.com/Squadron176.

Twilight Rock-n-Run 5K, Glow Walk, Kids' Fun Run. 5:30 p.m. Runners and walkers from across Fairfax County will converge in Lorton for the South County High School Band's 4th Annual Twilight Rock -n- Run 5K. This yearly family-oriented event also features a 1-mile Glow Walk and a Kids' Fun Run. The evening event benefits the South County High School Band program. Visit www.schsbands.org.

SATURDAY-TUESDAY/SEPT. 22-25

Lord Fairfax Motorcycle Ride Fundraiser. Multiple options to join Lord Fairfax and trace the boundaries of the original Lord Fairfax Land Grant with one-, two- and four-day options. Participants will cover their own expenses. Details and registration at lordfairfaxride.org.

SPORTS



Lake Braddock quarterback Billy Edwards threw five touchdown passes against West Potomac last weekend.

PHOTOS BY RICHARD MAPLE



Lake Braddock receiver Quentin James catches a touchdown pass between three West Potomac defenders on Sept. 1 in Burke.

‘Savvy’ Sophomore Edwards Leads Bruins to Victory

Lake Braddock quarterback throws five touchdown passes.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

After lightning in the third quarter suspended its Aug. 31 matchup with West Potomac, the Lake Braddock football team returned to its home field the following morning with a chance to bury the Wolverines.

The Bruins led by 15 points and faced fourth-and-goal at the West Potomac 18-yard line with 4:11 remaining in the third quarter when the contest resumed just after 11 a.m. on Saturday. After ample time to consider his options, Lake Braddock head coach Mike Dougherty sent his offense onto the field.

Quarterback Billy Edwards took a shotgun snap, looked to his right and didn't like his first two reads. He then stepped up in the pocket, looked to his left and found his third option, running back Ben Dizon, who hauled in Edwards' pass and fell into the end zone for a back-breaking touchdown.

Not bad for a 15-year-old.

EDWARDS, a sophomore making his second varsity start, completed 17 of 23 pass attempts for 348 yards and five touchdowns and Lake Braddock bounced back from a season-opening loss to three-time defending state champion Westfield with a 50-28 victory over West Potomac on Sept. 1 in Burke.

The 6-foot-2, 175-pound Edwards threw a pair of fourth-down touchdown passes during Saturday's final 16 minutes and 11 seconds of a contest that started the night before but was suspended due to weather.

With Lake Braddock leading 43-28 and facing fourth-and-19 at the West Potomac 29 with less than 5 minutes remaining, Edwards rolled to his left, spotted a receiver running across the field and heaved the ball into the end zone. While the pass was intended for Joe Weidinger, Edwards said after the game, it was fellow Bruin receiver



Lake Braddock running back Ben Dizon scored a rushing touchdown, caught a touchdown pass and returned a kickoff for a touchdown against West Potomac last weekend.

“Getting this big win, especially versus a great program like West Potomac ... it's a big confidence booster.”

—Lake Braddock Quarterback Billy Edwards

Quentin James who made a leaping touchdown catch between a trio of Wolverine defenders.

“[James] went up and made a play,” Edwards said, “and made me look good.”

Lake Braddock's offensive explosion came one week after the Bruins lost to Westfield, 42-21. West Potomac stayed within shouting distance for most of the contest, but Edwards and the Bruins continuously made plays and pulled away late.

Dougherty, who is in his second season with Lake Braddock after three years at Woodson and six at Stonewall Jackson, praised his young quarterback's demeanor.

“I think they had a swagger about them today when they got out on the field, they knew they could put points up every time,” Dougherty said about the Lake Braddock



Linebacker Josh Ahern and the Lake Braddock football team defeated West Potomac 50-28 on Sept. 1.

offense. “[With the Bruins leading] 22-21, Billy wasn't worried. When a 15-year-old looks at you and is like, ‘We've got this,’ that's pretty cool.”

Edwards played for the Lake Braddock freshman team in 2017 and saw brief action for the varsity during a playoff victory against T.C. Williams. His brother, Kyle Edwards, a 2016 Lake Braddock graduate, was a two-year starter at quarterback for the Bruins and is now a junior on the University of Alabama football team. Billy said Kyle stressed watching film and being prepared to face the opponent's defense, which has helped Billy's development.

“His presence is what surprised me the most,” Dougherty said. “The kid is 15 years old, and most 15-year-olds are throwing their Xbox control on the ground because they died in ‘Fortnite.’ This kid, he's savvy. He comes from a football family. [His] dad is a coach, his brother plays at Alabama, it's just in his blood. To see him develop from ... freshman football to now, I've never seen growth like that. I've [coached] guys that are in the NFL and I've never seen a one-year jump like that.”

Edwards has plenty of weapons at his disposal when operating the Lake Braddock offense.

DIZON, along with catching an 18-yard touchdown pass on Saturday's first play,

carried 18 times for 189 yards and a score. He also showed off his return skills, taking a kickoff back for a touchdown with 4:05 remaining in the second quarter after West Potomac had cut the Lake Braddock lead to 22-21.

“My whole kickoff return [team] literally blocked perfectly,” Dizon said. “It was a clear straight away and all I had to do was beat the kicker. It worked out perfectly.”

Dizon suffered an ACL injury last season and was cleared to play during the summer.

“If we can keep him healthy and continue to have a performance like that out of him, it just makes Billy's job that much easier,” Dougherty said. “... He's a problem for defenses.”

James caught five passes for 148 yards and two touchdowns for Lake Braddock. Weidinger had six receptions for 137 yards and two touchdowns.

Weidinger, James and Riley Schulte each intercepted passes for the Bruin defense.

Next up for Lake Braddock is a trip to Ashburn to face Stone Bridge at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 7.

“[Beating the Wolverines is] huge, especially because last year we started off the season 0-3,” Edwards said. “Getting this big win, especially versus a great program like West Potomac ... it's a big confidence booster.”

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NEWS

'La Boheme' for Season Opening

**Fairfax
Symphony to
kick-off new
season Sept. 22.**

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

The powerhouse professional Fairfax Symphony Orchestra opens its 2018-2019 season with a special performance of "La Bohème" in concert. This is the first time the orchestra will present an entire concert-opera endeavor. The concert will feature renowned opera stars performing Puccini's beloved masterwork about a tragic love affair that has enthralled audiences for over a century.

The concert also celebrates music director and conductor Christopher Zimmerman's 10th anniversary season with the Fairfax Symphony (FSO).

"La Bohème" tells a story of love and death within a bohemian circle of friends in 19th century Paris. The opera is cherished for its arias enfolded a love affair between a poor poet and a poor seamstress. Soprano Danielle Talamantes will perform the role of Mimi, the down-on-her heels seamstress. Tenor Rolando Sanz will perform the role of Rodolfo, the broke poet. Colleen Daly is Musetta, as a seemingly carefree singer.

The FSO performance of "La Bohème" will also feature singers from the Potomac Vocal Institute lead by the celebrated opera performer Elizabeth Bishop.

"The arts are an essential source of creativity, education, and economic impact in Fairfax County," said Jonathan Kerr, Executive Director, FSO.

"We're honored to dedicate this season to Maestro Zimmerman's 10th Anniversary. Under his leadership the Fairfax Symphony is increasingly recognized as one of the leading regional orchestras in the country."

Zimmerman has scheduled a broad repertoire for the coming FSO season with a varied and emotional musical experience for patrons. Zimmerman has a vision that the FSO "must continue to build its programs and reputation in Northern Virginia and the D.C. region, to represent Fairfax County as fully and relevantly as possible, and to provide meaningful and high-quality artistry."

Under Zimmerman's baton, the



PHOTO BY NESHAN NALICHAYAN/COURTESY FSO

Music director and conductor Christopher Zimmerman leading the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra.



PHOTOS COURTESY FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Danielle Talamantes performs the role of Mimi in the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra concert of "La Boheme."



Rolando Sanz, performs the role of Rodolfo in the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra concert of "La Boheme."

Where and When

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra presents "La Bohème" in concert at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performance Sept. 22 at 8 p.m. Tickets \$25, \$39, \$50, \$53, and \$65. Student tickets \$15. For tickets visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org or by phone at 703-993-2787. **Note:** Pre-Performance discussions at 7 p.m. with Fairfax Symphony Orchestra conductor Christopher Zimmerman and special guests for insights into the performance.

FSO has also engaged the Northern Virginia community by performing D.C. area premieres such as Philip Glass's "Piano Concerto No. 3" written for pianist Simone Dinnerstein, who is an FSO audience favorite.

The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra also provides a wide spectrum of educational and community outreach programs. The FSO has partnered with Fairfax County Public Schools for more than 50

years. The FSO performs before about 10,000 listeners each year.

The upcoming FSO season includes programs with composers including Tchaikovsky & Beethoven; Mozart, Gershwin and Eryilmaz; Mendelssohn and Schumann, as well as Verdi. There will also be special performances of "The Nutcracker" with the Fairfax Ballet, and Holst's "The Planet" with the Fairfax County All-Stars Youth Orchestra.

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BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

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).

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and the its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

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. 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).

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/dmrbizforum for more.

Gentle Yoga. 12:30-2 p.m. at Sentara Surgery Specialists Comprehensive Breast Center, 8988 Lorton Station Blvd., Suite 103, Lorton. This yoga protocol is facilitated by Pat Fitzsimmons RN, C-IAYT, E-RYT 500, an instructor specifically trained to work with cancer patients who will adapt traditional yoga practices to meet the physiological and psychological needs of cancer patients. No registration required. It is recommended that participants dress comfortably and bring a yoga mat, towel(s), and water. Visit www.sentara.com for more.

Public Hearing. 7 p.m. in the Oaks Room at Twin Lakes Golf Course, 6201 Union Mill Road, Clifton. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FPCA) and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) will hold a joint public hearing on the proposed adoption of an amendment to Park Regulation Section 1.17, Remote-Control Devices and Powered Models or Toys. The full text of the proposed amendment is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/model-aircrafts-drones. Anyone wishing to speak on this subject may call Judy Pedersen, FPCA Public Information Officer, at 703-324-8662 or email parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov, to be placed on the Speakers' List.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

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.

THROUGH SEPT. 9

Pool Closure: South Run RECenter. Four Fairfax County Park Authority RECenter pools will be closing for regular, periodic cleaning and maintenance next month. Consider trying out another county pool during the temporary shutdown. RECenter passes are valid at all nine Park Authority RECenters. Dates are subject to change. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter 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 its 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.



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