

Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

WELLBEING
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Del. Karrie Delaney
(D-67) co-hosted
the Transportation
Town Hall meeting
in the Sully Dis-
trict Governmental
Center.

Roundup of Local Road Projects

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Winning His Second Turkey Trot

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Fatal Hit and Run Yields 40 Years in Prison

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Johnny Pace Wins Second Turkey Trot

Race is annual tradition for this Virginia Run family.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

For the second time, Johnny Pace, 21, of Centreville won the Virginia Run Turkey Trot this year with a time of 15:12, beating out nearly 3,000 people. He also won the 5K race in 2015 with a time of 16:10. The four-year distance runner at the University of Virginia has been doing the race for 15 years, starting at age 5.

“Well, it really feels nice to win a race that’s so close to my heart and it’s always something I look forward to year after year. To win it after so many years of having run it, it feels great,” he said. “This year my strategy was to go out really hard from the start because as I’ve gotten older, I learned the pace that I can maintain over the distance. I tried to hit that and not look back.”

To Johnny Pace, the race is very much a family tradition for his dad John, mom Maria, and sister Didi, 19, who runs track for Washington and Lee. Even his extended family — from uncles, aunts and cousins as

well as close family friends who have come from out of town — have run the race that courses through Pleasant Valley Road.

“It’s kind of been something I’ve grown up with ... to me it’s what got me into running. I remember the first time I ever ran — I was training with my dad when I was 5 years old. Throughout the years, it’s been an opportunity to run with family and run with friends and to have a great time. It’s definitely something that has raised me in a way.”

He added: “Running has always been a way that I have fun, and to me there’s nothing better than getting up on Thanksgiving, for being away at school for so long, to just get out there — that’s my way of having a great time.”

He said Thanksgiving wouldn’t be the same without the Turkey Trot. “It’s always the one thing that’s always been constant is doing the Virginia Run Turkey Trot. A lot of times our family will come together at our house, it’s changed throughout the years, but we’ve always put the Turkey Trot



The Pace family at this year’s Virginia Run Turkey Trot (from left): Maria, Didi, Johnny, and John.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

ner at the University of Virginia; he is studying finance and plans to graduate in the spring. “The University of Virginia has always been a second home for me and I’ve enjoyed running for four years and getting a great education. It’s been such an amazing experience and has taught me so much about myself as a person and a runner and I’m grateful for my great experiences I’ve gotten here and looking forward to where life takes me after.”

At UVA, he does three sports — cross country in the fall; indoor track in the winter; and

outdoor track in the spring. He runs every day, sometimes twice a day, and averages about 80-100 miles per week. He said he never really has time off. “That’s a good and a bad thing. You’re always training; the training translates over the season; you still have to do the same type of training more or less, so we’re always building up. The training is more or less the same throughout the year.”

With his finance and management degree, after he graduates he would like to go into investment banking, private equity or financial wealth management.

as something that we like to do.”

He also appreciates that the race supports the charity Life With Cancer, having donated more than \$1.3 million to it over the years.

“I’ve always appreciated how that serves to commemorate people in our community who have battled cancer. My aunt and grandmother are both survivors. I think it affects so many people in our community and the fact that they try to commemorate somebody each year is really noble and makes it bigger than the race itself,” he said.

Johnny Pace is a four-year distance run-

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Roundup of Several, Local Road Projects

Details presented about Routes 28, 50 and I-66,

BY BONNIE HOBBS

With so many road projects happening at once in the local area, Centreville and Chantilly residents got an update recently about the ones affecting them most. Hosting this Transportation Town Hall were Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully), Del. Karrie Delaney (D-67) and the Sully District Council.

It was held in the Sully District Governmental Center, and both Fairfax County and Virginia transportation officials presented details of the various projects. They also displayed several maps and answered residents' questions.

"I serve on the Transportation Committee in the General Assembly, so transportation issues are part of my focus as your delegate," Delaney told the meeting attendees. "One thing all Northern Virginians have in common is transportation problems. And this event lets you ask specific questions of the staff that deals with these issues every day."

"We have a lot of projects going on, and it'll be painful for a while," said Smith. "But in the end, it'll be to our benefit."

Tom Biesiadny, director of the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, discussed Route 28 improvements. "We're working on the Route 28 widening between Route 29 at the Bull Run bridge in Prince William County and Route 29 in Centreville," he said. "It's planned for eight lanes with an HOV lane, ultimately. But we're currently working on a six-lane roadway, plus various options at the Route 28/Ordway Road intersection."

He said a noise analysis is being done to determine where noise walls will go. Then, said Biesiadny, "It must be both feasible to be built and able to be built for a reasonable amount of money for the number of people it benefits. We're also working on the 2040 traffic analysis."

Improvements are planned at all signalized intersections by adding turn lanes and/or one or more additional lanes on side streets. Doing so would eliminate split-phase, signal operations and improve overall intersection operations. Being considered are:

- ❖ Dual left-turn lanes on northbound Route 28 at New Braddock Road;
- ❖ Dual left-turn lanes on northbound Route 28 at Machen Road;
- ❖ Triple left turns from westbound New Braddock to southbound Route 28;
- ❖ Adding one lane on both westbound and eastbound Compton Road, eastbound Old Mill Road and westbound Old Centreville Road (at the north end of the project).

"A portion of southbound Route 28 has



Diagram of the Route 28/I-66 Interchange project.



Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith



Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT



Keith Jasper, NVTA



Susan Shaw, VDOT

already been widened to New Braddock," said Biesiadny. "And we're considering the triple left lanes from westbound New Braddock to southbound Route 28 because traffic is very heavy there." Overall, it's a \$76 million project, and the NVTA (Northern Virginia Transportation Authority) has provided \$26 million. The rest will come from other state and federal sources.

"We're putting together a design-build contract that we hope to have done sometime this fall," said Biesiadny. Construction isn't anticipated to start until summer 2020, with substantial completion expected in spring 2023.

He said the county is also working on finishing the widening of Route 50 northbound to McLearen Road. It's currently six lanes to McLearen and eight lanes north of there

to the Loudoun County line. Estimated cost is \$20 million, but the funding has yet to be approved.

Speaking next was the NVTA's Keith Jasper, talking about NVTA-funded projects and future plans. "We deal with traffic congestion in Northern Virginia," he said. "Our process is comprised of planning, programming and funding, and we have both long-range and six-year transportation plans. If nothing is built but what's being built or is already funded now, growth in population and employment will lead to worsening travel conditions. So that's something we need to work on."

Noting that the NVTA is "more interested in regional corridors than in individual jurisdictions," Jasper said that, "Starting in June 2020, we'll have \$400 million [in fund-

ing] every two years" to allocate to projects. He said NVTA money went toward the Route 28 widening because that highway contains some of Northern Virginia's "worst bottlenecks."

Susan Shaw, VDOT's Northern Virginia megaprojects director, discussed the I-66 Outside the Beltway project. "Future Metro stations are envisioned for Monument Drive, Stringfellow Road and somewhere in Centreville," she said. "We're continuing to work on traffic and noise analyses, and we'll be removing the traffic signals on Route 28 from mid-2019 to the end of 2020."

She also noted that, during the I-66 widening, VDOT is "committed to keeping four lanes of traffic open during peak periods." In addition, Route 28 improvements being

SEE ROAD PROJECTS, PAGE 7

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS

‘Nothing Redeeming about You’

Ozcan sentenced to 40 years prison for killing pedestrian.

BY BONNIE HOBBS

Fairfax resident Kenan Ozcan was sentenced last week to 40 years in prison for murdering an elderly, Fair Oaks woman. But first, Judge Thomas Mann addressed Ozcan directly.

“Maria Ascencio lived 77 years, only to be assassinated by you,” said Mann. “She leaves behind a family suffering her absence in a way you could never understand. There are good people in this world who do bad things, there are people who are just bad, and there are people who exist in darkness — and you are one of them.”

The tragedy happened April 14, 2017, shortly before 10:15 a.m., near the intersection of Route 50 and Rugby Road in Fair Oaks. Maria Amaya de Ascencio was crossing Rugby Road when Ozcan, then 31, struck her with a 2016 Dodge Dart. Then, for good measure, he turned the vehicle around and ran over her again.

Ascencio died at the scene and Ozcan fled, but police captured him, a few hours later. On July 31, in Fairfax County Circuit Court, he pleaded guilty to her murder. At that time, Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Brandon Sloane noted that several witnesses saw the incident.

“They said the impact threw [Ascencio] in the air, 10-15 feet,” he said. “Then the vehicle made a U-turn and accelerated through the intersection to hit her again before fleeing north on Rugby.”

A couple hours later, police were called to a Fair Oaks gym in response to a robbery. “A customer there saw the defendant behind the counter and told him he didn’t belong there,” said Sloane. “She tried to photograph him with her phone, and he assaulted her, took her phone and ripped her shirt.”

Police arrested Ozcan there with keys to a rental car with front-end damage. Ascencio’s DNA was found on its windshield wipers and undercarriage. The coroner said she died of blunt-force trauma to the head, torso and extremities.

While in jail, said Sloane, Ozcan “told his cell mate the victim’s head hit his vehicle and he ran over her again to make sure she was dead. He said he just wanted to kill someone because he was upset about things in his life.”

“He said he’d planned it for two days and that, initially, he wanted to kill a family — maybe a van full of children,” continued

Sloane. “Then he saw [Ascencio] and thought she’d be a perfect victim. He said, after he hit her, he saw her still moving, so he struck her again.”

Sloane said Ozcan told his cell mate he’d “robbed people before and wanted to know what it was like to kill someone. He also said he was going to pretend he was crazy to try to beat the charge.”

Before his sentencing, last Friday, Nov. 30, Sandra Chavez — the eldest of Ascencio’s three daughters — explained how her mother’s death affected the family. She also said her parents were married 49 years and had five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; her father died, three years before her mother.

“It’s been very difficult losing my mother,” said Chavez. “Every day, my kids and grandchildren ask, ‘Where is my grandmother?’ She was dedicated to her family; she came to the U.S., 20 years ago, and was a model citizen. She loved to take walks every morning, and this was a sad loss for everyone — especially the way it happened.”

Ascencio was a professor, and Chavez said her death has also been hard on her students, as well as her brother and three sisters. “She dreamed of living at least 20 more years,” said Chavez. “It’s been difficult not having her here on Thanksgiving, Mother’s Day and Christmas.” Crying, she added, “Not one minute has gone by without me thinking of her.”

Testifying next was Alcira Ascencio, Chavez’s younger sister, speaking on behalf of herself and her twin sister in El Salvador. She said her mother always loved and protected her children and taught her grandchildren to respect education and be honest.

“She had so much heart and was a great mother,” said Alcira. She also said she didn’t get to see her mother after the incident. “Her face had been disfigured, and they said it was better to remember her the way she was when she was alive,” she said. Then, as other relatives in the courtroom sobbed, Alcira showed the last family photo of her mother before she died and said, “We miss her very much, every day.”

Afterward, defense attorney Charles Swedish called county Deputy Public Defender Andy



Kenan Ozcan

Elders to the stand. Elders and public defender Brad Lindsay were initially assigned Ozcan’s case. And when they first spoke with him, April 18, 2017, said Elders, “Everything about him was bizarre and unusual.”

“His version of what happened at the gym didn’t comport with reality,” continued Elders. “He said he owned the gym and other buildings that his father had left him, but [it] wasn’t true. He said he’d recently taken a trip to Vicksburg, Miss., and found a book that controlled what all other books say. He said one million people in China had participated in a fundraiser for his law-school education. And he repeatedly looked over his shoulder and asked us if we ‘heard that’ and if we were alone.” Ozcan’s competency was then evaluated in Central State Hospital and he was determined stable enough to stand trial. And in jail, Dr. William Stejskal, a forensic psychologist, spoke with him three times. He said Ozcan’s statements weren’t linked together and bounced from topic to topic.

“He was unresponsive and would trail off and go inward — consistent with someone having auditory hallucinations,” said Stejskal. “He seemed severely psychotic. He exhibited behavior consistent with a schizophrenia-affective disorder.” The doctor said those types of behaviors are “difficult to fake.” But since he only spent about 90 minutes total with Ozcan, Stejskal called his diagnosis “provisional.”

Sloane then asked Judge Mann to give Ozcan a lengthy prison term. “We tried rehabilitation and restoration for [him] before, for two robberies, but failed. And it had catastrophic consequences for the Ascencio and Chavez families. This case is about wanton and senseless violence. It’s as vicious, brutal and callous as anything I’ve seen.”

Swedish said Ozcan’s mental health began deteriorating while working on his doctorate in biology. “A mere eight months before this tragic event, he was diagnosed, for the first time, as suffering from schizophrenia. But he took his medication, on and off, because of the side effects. And while this happened, he was in the throngs of a schizophrenic event ... that affected his judgment.”

Then, addressing the judge as “honorable man,” Ozcan stood and apologized for his crime, saying, “I never meant to harm anyone. Please forgive me and allow me to go home.”

But Mann wasn’t buying it and sentenced him to 40 years behind bars. “You’ve been committing crimes since 2003, and before, as a juvenile,” he told Ozcan. “The court believes this was not an accident. You planned and even rehearsed this and wanted to know what it was like to take someone’s life. I’ve researched and looked everywhere to find something commendatory in you. But I find there’s nothing redeeming about you, and I have to protect the community.”



The victim, Maria Ascencio

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How to Help Our Neighbor’s Child

Centreville-based nonprofit Our Neighbor’s Child is providing new toys and clothes for the upcoming holiday to 610 local families with a total of 1,646 children. But with such a big undertaking, it needs as much help as possible from the community. Below are several ways to lend a hand:

❖ Saturday, Dec. 8, from (9 a.m.-11 a.m.): General gifts are being collected outside door 1 at Rocky Run Middle School. (Ourisman Chantilly Toyota, 4135 Auto Park Circle in Chantilly, is also an ONC gift drop-off location from now through Dec. 13).

❖ Sunday, Dec. 9: Set-Up Day - from noon-2 p.m.;

❖ Thursday, Dec. 14, Packaging Day - in shifts starting at 9 a.m. and lasting all day); and

❖ Sunday, Dec. 16, Delivery Day - from 1-4 p.m. More details are available on the ONC website (www.ourneighborschild.org).

Families wishing to support a local child’s wish can find them on ONC ornaments on giving trees inside the Chantilly and Fair Lakes Wal-Mart stores.

Besides gifts, each family also receives two dozen, homemade cookies; and this year, some 15,000 cookies will be needed. They should be dropped off at the Virginia Run Community Center (at Route 29 and Pleasant Valley Road in Centreville) on Thursday, Dec. 13, before 4 p.m.

Habits that Stick

Key to making
changing old habits
and making new ones.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Standing outside the glass doors of the studio, lit harshly by fluorescent bulbs, Annabelle VanLandingham admits that she is intimidated by a group of women standing in front of her — all model-thin and wearing cropped tank tops that reveal finely toned abs.

"I always feel like I don't fit it and everybody is staring at me, but this time, I'm really going to stick with it," she said, acknowledging her failed attempts to make regular exercise part of her daily life.

Vows to change habits are easy to make, but keeping them can seem nearly impossible. Commitments to cooking healthy weeknight dinners give way to the reality of packed schedules, while a morning meditation practice is overtaken by an inability to resist checking email right after getting out of bed. Local human behaviorists say that when it comes to creating habits, understanding how they develop is a first step.

"Essentially, a habit is turning a new behavior into something that is done automatically," said Lauren Puglisi, LCSW. "For example, grabbing a cigarette after dinner or putting on your seatbelt when you get in the car are automatic. You don't have to talk yourself into doing those things, you do them without even thinking."

For those who want to make activities like exercising or meditating life-long habits, the key is to begin with realistic and attainable steps. "New habits are best formed in small, manageable increments," said Jessica McLaughlin, Ph.D. assistant professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "For instance, if you want to develop the habit of exercising, start by taking 10-minute walks instead of promising to exercise for an hour every day. It is easier to form habits if the changes are similar to what you are already doing, as opposed to something that drastically alters your current day-to-day schedule."

Develop a list specific actions to take, advises Puglisi. "For example, swapping out potato chips and a soda for hummus and whole wheat pita bread for an afternoon snack or taking a 30-minute walk three days each week can be attainable ways to get started," she said. "Otherwise, you might get overwhelmed

and give up."

"Research supports that it can take approximately two months of daily repetition to develop a habit, but keep in mind that some habits aren't as easy to make automatic, and may require more time," added Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "For instance, developing a habit of walking 15 minutes every day may take eight to 10 weeks to become an automatic behavior, but running five miles every day could take much longer."

Find ways to increase accountability. "Write down your goals and keep [the list] in a visible place where you have a constant reminder and can check off your accomplishments each day," said McLaughlin. "Tell someone else what you are doing or, better yet, make the change with someone else, such as practicing mindfulness together or eliminating sugary drinks as a team."

Setting up reminders can help one avoid backsliding, especially when habit formation is in its early stages," said Puglisi. "If you want develop a meditation practice to relieve stress at work, set an alert on your phone for a time that know you'll definitely be free," she said. "Set a realistic amount of time to spend meditating, and select a specific meditation. This will make it easy to do quickly and easily, so you'll have fewer excuses not to do it."

The company one keeps also plays a role in habit formation. "You're likely to boost your willpower if you choose to spend time with someone who has strong willpower," said Bagshaw. "Plan on creating your daily walk or running habit with a friend, or coach, or group who will be a role model for self-control."

Assess your progress regularly. "Self-monitoring adds to success," said psychologist Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D. "Writing down what you've eaten each day can help you stay honest with yourself. That said, be realistic with your time frames and don't cause yourself extra stress. If thinking about how you ate during the week on a Friday is less stressful than writing it every day, do that. But do choose a regular time to consider progress and impediments or you'll be at 2020 without your new habit."

Don't forget rewards, says McLaughlin. "Change won't happen unless you are motivated to make the change," she said. "This means you have to find what is rewarding for you. You might find that what you are doing is intrinsically rewarding, such as increasing your energy levels or seeing your scale number go down. Other times, you might need to create your own reward, such as getting a manicure when you've gone a week without biting your nails."



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SPORTS



Westfield Noah Kim gives a thumbs up to teammates and Bulldog fans as he is taken off the field by medics after suffering a broken femur.

Eagles End Westfield's Win Streak

BY WILL PALENSCAR

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Westfield Bulldogs (13-0) lost to the Freedom-Woodbridge Eagles (12-1), on Dec. 1 in the Virginia 6A State semifinal game.

The 2 p.m. game was delayed approximately 20 minutes, because of Freedom-Woodbridge's late arrival, which resulted in a penalty before the start of the game given by the officiating crew.

Early in the contest, Westfield QB Noah Kim connected with Taylor Morin on a 78-yard pass. Morin looked back over his right shoulder and pulled the reception to his body as he used his speed to go untouched into the end zone.

In the second quarter, Freedom-Woodbridge got on the board when Omari Hatcher pulled in a reception and the Eagles first score with 9:27 to play before half. On Westfield's next possession Noah Kim was brought down by the defense and was seriously injured on the play with 7:53 to play in the quarter. After a long delay for trainers and medics to attend to Kim, Kim was taken by ambulance to a local hospital. Kim did not return. After a Bulldog punt the Eagles would capitalize just less than two minutes later when Hatcher scored again on a short touchdown reception. The ensuing extra point was blocked by Saadiq Hinton and the score had Freedom leading 13-7. Freedom would add another touchdown with only 8 ticks left in the first half. Freedom was then successful on a 2-point conversion giving them 21-7 advantage at half.

With 8:03 in the third quarter after Freedom scored another touchdown and led 28-7, Taylor Morin struck again with a 75-yard touchdown after taking a direct snap. Westfield was then within two scores, 28-14.

Freedom again responded with another touchdown with 9:59 to play in the game and increased the lead to 35-14. Again, Morin struck for the Bulldogs, this time he took the direct snap and found Bizzet Woodley for a Bulldog 8-yard touchdown reception, again pulling the Bulldogs to within two scores, 35-14 with 7:07 to play in the game. Israel McClain then hit an Eagle receiver who fumbled the ball and Morin would take it to the house for a 62-yard Westfield TD and pull the Bulldogs to within a touchdown 35-28. Eugene Asante then blocked his second punt of the game, which gave a chance to knot things up in the closing minute however Westfield



Westfield RB Eugene Asante #8 takes to the air to avoid a Freedom-Woodbridge defender.

would be stopped on 4th and 1, ending the hopes of the previous three-time state champions.

The Bulldogs accumulated 212 yards for the game including 105 passing and 107 yards rushing. Noah Kim completed both of his passes for 100 yards and 1 TD. Taylor Morin completed 1 of his 5 passes for 8 yards and a TD. Taylor Morin had 1 catch for 78 yards and a TD. Bizzet Woodley had one reception for 8 yards and a TD, and Gavin Kiley had 1 reception for 22 yards. Eugene Asante carried the ball 16 times for 53 yards, Isaiah Daniel carried the ball 5 times for 8 yards. Taylor Morin ran for 73 yards and a TD on five carries and Noah Kim rushed for 10 yards. Westfield also had a strong special teams' performance with Eugene Asante blocking two punts and Saadiq Hinton blocking and extra point. Westfield's win streak was halted at 37 games and stopped a possible fourth consecutive state championship.

Freedom will play Manchester (14-0) for the 6A Championship. Manchester defeated Ocean Lakes (13-1) 42-3.

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News

Road Projects

FROM PAGE 3

made as part of the I-66 project are as follows:

- ❖The addition of a fourth lane from the I-66 interchange to Westfields Boulevard,
- ❖The extension of Poplar Tree Road to connect with Stonecroft Boulevard,
- ❖Construction of a new access road into E.C. Lawrence Park, and
- ❖The reconnection of Braddock and Walney roads.

Shaw said the E.C. Lawrence access road will be by the ballfields there. "Poplar Tree Road will have a four-lane bridge going over Route 28, but the road will stay one lane in each direction," she said. "Construction will tentatively begin in 2020. And we're opening up the I-66 median at the Route 29 interchange."

For years, local residents have wanted Braddock and Walney reconnected across Route 28, and Shaw said that project will also include a trail along both roads. As for the Poplar Tree Road extension, it will go from Newbrook Drive to Stonecroft, and the work will be done around the same time as the bridge is built.

For more information about the I-66 project, go to Transform66.org.

ROUNDUPS

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Tuesday, Dec. 11, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed.

Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

Coffee with a Cop

Local residents are invited to share coffee and conversation with Sully District police during a Coffee with a Cop event. The next one is slated for Tuesday, Dec. 18, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the Chantilly Place Starbucks, 4412 Chantilly Shopping Center Road in Chantilly. It's a chance to ask questions, voice concerns and get to know the officers in the neighborhood in a relaxed, informal setting.

Meals on Wheels Drivers Sought

Meals on Wheels Drivers pick up meals and deliver them to individuals on a specific route. Email volunteersolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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Scared to ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And that's what worries me. There's a part of me (too big a part, I'll admit), that rationalizes not going to the doctor as a means of preventing an untimely death.

Oh, don't get me wrong. I go to the doctor as often as needed. In fact, I've been commended as being a very "compliant" patient, meaning I show up for my appointments (apparently some patients don't). And I will continue to do so.

However, this column is not about the appointments I do make, it's about the ones I don't make.

Huh?

Let me clarify. I am referring to the voluntary-type appointments that I schedule myself – at my discretion, when some symptom or other, relating to cancer or not, manifests itself. The symptom which forces me to consider my own mortality because it's "presenting" at a time and place at which my oncologist is unaware.

The kind of symptom which, were I not a cancer patient, I wouldn't give a second thought (let alone a first thought). But since I am a cancer patient, whatever the symptom is – and I mean any and all symptoms: small, medium or large, it must be "the cancer" as "Forrest, Forrest Gump" characterized his mother's cause of death, and therefore, can't be minimized. In point of alternative fact, it must be maximized, and in that maximization comes anxiety and fear and every other stress-related emotion you can imagine.

Nevertheless, just as George advised Jerry in a long-ago "Seinfeld" episode on how to beat a lie detector test: "It's not a lie if you believe it," so too do I employ a similar strategy: if I don't go to the doctor and get evaluated then the symptoms I'm experiencing can't be confirmed as cancer. And if my symptoms can't be confirmed as cancer then I have much to less to worry about than if they were. The symptoms are simply the same kind and frequency as non-cancer patients experience and do not represent a slippery slope for yours truly.

I suppose there's a part of me (the irrational, unreasonable and illogical part) that believes if I don't make any extra-curricular-type visits to any of my doctors then my cancer can't get worse and I can continue to go on living as if I've not been diagnosed with a terminal disease: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV.

It reminds me of my late father's philosophy concerning automobile maintenance. If he never takes the car in for service, the mechanics will never find anything wrong with it. It's a version of what you don't know can't hurt you.

Well, in the cancer world in which I live 24/7, it all can hurt you and it can do so on its own timetable; when you least expect it and when you most fear it.

As yet another attempt to explain why this column has been written. For the past three weeks I've had persistent cold symptoms.

Since the symptoms never got any worse (though my fear did), I went along, tissue in hand, until my voice got so hoarse and weak that my wife, Dina – to her credit – insisted that I visit my internal medicine doctor and email my status as well to my oncologist. All of which I've done.

So far, nothing conclusive to report.

I've been prescribed some pre-pneumonia pills, have had a CT scan of the neck (per my oncologist's direction), results for which have not YET been received, am seeing an ENT doctor next week and am puffing Flonase into each nostril twice a day. My symptoms have not totally subsided but neither have they gotten worse – unlike my anxiety.

I really don't think there's anything wrong with me medically; mentally however, is another matter.

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

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

History Volunteers Needed. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum needs history buffs. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 to explore opportunities. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station.

Art Guild of Clifton Exhibit. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St., Clifton. Includes oil paintings of European settings; doors, windows, and flower shops. Free. Call 703-409-0919 for more.

PET ADOPTIONS

Adopt a Dog. Saturdays, 12-3 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Highway. Visit hart90.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Sundays, 1-4 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit aforeverhome.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit www.lostdogrescue.org for more.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 6-9

"The Diary of Anne Frank."

Thursday, 3 p.m.; Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 3 p.m. at Ormond Stone Middle School, 5500 Sully Park Drive, Centreville. The Stone Players present "The Diary of Anne Frank." \$7. See www.itickets.com/events/408118.html.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 7-9

"An Invitation to Christmas."

Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, noon, 4 and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, noon and 4 p.m. at Richard Ernst Theater, NOVA campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The dancers of Encore Theatrical Arts Project are getting ready for their holiday extravaganza, "An Invitation to Christmas." The elves at the North Pole are super-busy and need extra help, so they send out invitations for children picked by Santa to attend Elf-Training School. However, one of the new recruits is a full-grown man, and his classmates wonder why he's there. He does, too, since he thought he was going on a job interview. \$19-\$26 via www.encoretap.org or 703-222-5511.

SATURDAY/DEC. 8

Holidays at Walney Farm. 1-2:30 p.m. at the Walney Visitor Center in



Sugar Plum and Angels from the 2017 performance by the Mia Saunders School of Ballet

'The Nutcracker' by the Mia Saunders School of Ballet

Enjoy this holiday classic and support local dancers and CVHS students. Proceeds for this annual tradition will benefit CVHS Drama Scholarships and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 8-9, 3 p.m. in the Centreville High School Theater, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Tickets are \$12. Tickets available at the door and presale at msb.nutcracker.tickets@gmail.com. Visit www.miasaundersballet.com/ for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 8-9

"The Nutcracker" by the Mia Saunders School of Ballet.

3 p.m. in the Centreville High School Theater, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Proceeds for this annual tradition will benefit CVHS Drama Scholarships and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Tickets are \$12. Enjoy this holiday classic and support local dancers and CVHS students. Tickets available at the door and presale at msb.nutcracker.tickets@gmail.com. Visit www.miasaundersballet.com.

winter season. Be transformed by a puppet show based on Charles Dicken's "A Christmas Carol" with a Sully twist. See the Christmas tree, decorated just how a young girl named Minnie Middleton described it during her 1885 visit to Sully and meet a character from her past, who was dressed as Santa to surprise the children with gifts. Roast marshmallows outside and make a holiday ornament. Prepaid reservations may be made online for \$10 at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully.

SUNDAY/DEC. 9

Holiday Craft Day. Noon-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Holiday crafts, some featuring train related themes, will be on the agenda. Craft supplies are included with admission. 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.

Sully Holidays. 4-8 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Enjoy a holiday celebration at Sully Historic Site – the gracefully decorated 1794 Lee home. Tour the historic house lit by natural candlelight, as it comes alive with recipes and stories of Sully's

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 14-16

"An Invitation to Christmas."

Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, noon, 4 and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, noon and 4 p.m. at Richard Ernst Theater, NOVA campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The dancers of Encore Theatrical Arts Project are getting ready for their holiday extravaganza, "An Invitation to Christmas." The elves at the North Pole are super-busy and need extra help, so they send out invitations for children picked by Santa to attend Elf-Training School. However, one of the new recruits is a full-grown man, and his classmates wonder why he's there. He does, too, since he thought he was going on a job interview. \$19-\$26 via www.encoretap.org or 703-222-5511.

SATURDAY/DEC. 15

Sully Holidays. 4-8 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Enjoy a holiday celebration at Sully Historic Site – the gracefully decorated 1794 Lee home. Tour the historic house lit by natural candlelight, as it comes alive with recipes and stories of Sully's winter season. Be transformed by a puppet show based on Charles Dicken's "A Christmas Carol" with a Sully twist. See the Christmas tree, decorated just how a young girl named Minnie Middleton described it during her 1885 visit to Sully and meet a character from her past, who was dressed as Santa to surprise the children with gifts. Roast marshmallows outside and make a holiday ornament. Prepaid reservations may be made online for \$10 at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully.

SUNDAY/DEC. 16

Victorian Tea. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will host a Victorian Tea to savor memories of bygone days. Enjoy exhibits and artifacts while sampling different teas and small sweets with friends and family. Reservations are not necessary. The tea is included in the regular admission price. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

SATURDAY/DEC. 22

Caroling Wagon Ride & Campfire.

4-5:30 p.m. at the Walney Visitor Center in Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join in song and exploration on a wagon ride, and then warm up with s'mores around the campfire. For participants age 4-adult. \$8 per person. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/JAN. 18-20

Home + Remodeling Show. Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. More than 300 companies will be on hand to showcase the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor and redesign. TLC's Trading Spaces' John Gidding and HGTV Design Star's Tyler Wisler will headline the event. \$12 at box office; \$9 online, \$3 children 6-12, free for 5 and younger. Purchase tickets at homeandremodelingshow.com/show-features.

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