

Fairfax High 2017 grad Emily Dillard sells her book, "The Golden Gift," during the Twins Ace holiday party, Dec. 1, celebrating Fairfax's City's annual Festival of Lights and Carols.

# Fairfax's Festival Of Lights And Carols

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## 'I Find There's Nothing Redeeming about You'

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# 'I Find There's Nothing Redeeming about You'

**Ozcan sentenced to 40 years prison for killing pedestrian.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**F**airfax resident Kenan Ozcan was sentenced recently to 40 years in prison for murdering an elderly, Fair Oaks woman. But first, Judge Thomas Mann – clearly moved by the callousness of the crime against an innocent victim – 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.



**Sentenced:**  
**Kenan Ozcan**



**The victim,**  
**Maria Ascencio**

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."

**"There are people who exist in darkness – and you are one of them."**

**—Judge Thomas Mann, Fairfax County Circuit Court**

**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 cellmate 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 cellmate 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, on 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

SEE OZCAN, PAGE 7

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Sharon Bulova with the Board of Supervisors.

COURTESY PHOTOS

## Sharon Bulova Announces She Will Not Seek Re-election

**O**n Thursday, Dec. 6, Chairman Sharon Bulova of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors announced that she will not be seeking re-election in 2019.

"It has been an honor to serve the Fairfax County community," Chairman Bulova said. "During these past 30 years, I have been privileged to work alongside dedicated elected officials at every level of government, with talented, caring county staff and a county full of enthusiastic community volunteers. While I will not be running for re-election in 2019 I sure do have a lot to look back on with great satisfaction."

Bulova served as the Braddock District Supervisor on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors from 1988 - 2009, and was elected Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in a special election in 2009. She was re-elected Chairman in 2011 and again in 2015. The year 2019 will mark her 10th year as Chairman and her 31st year as a member of the Board of Supervisors.

During her career, Chairman Bulova is proud of her role in founding the VRE commuter rail system, piloting Metro's Silver Line Phase 1 over the finish line, navigating through the Great Recession and federal sequestration while retaining Fairfax County's

triple A Bond rating, founding Faith Communities in Action, initiating Communities of Trust, convening the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, helping launch Diversion First, facilitating the new vision and plan for Tysons, and spearheading numerous environmental, historical and cultural initiatives on behalf of the residents of Fairfax County.

"There is still much to do and contribute," Chairman Bulova said. "My term does not end until the end of next year. I look forward to working with you during these months ahead and thank you for your engagement, support and participation in your community."

The upcoming election for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will take place on Nov. 5, 2019, and the new Board will begin its work on Jan. 1, 2020.



Chairman Sharon Bulova

**IN OTHER NEWS**, more change is coming to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Supervisor John Cook

(R-Braddock) has announced he will not seek re-election in 2019. Supervisor Linda Smyth (D-Providence) has also announced that she will not seek re-election in 2019. Supervisor Jeff McKay (D) has announced that he will run for Chairman in 2019, vacating his Lee District seat.



Silver Line Phase 1 Opening Day.

## Bulova Reflects on Getting Started

**Chairman looks forward to 'more time with family and grandchildren, time for travel, to entertain, to smell the roses.'**  
**In her own words:**

**M**emory is funny. If you asked me what I did last Tuesday I would be hard pressed to fill in the details. Some things, however, remain frozen in time, down to seemingly insignificant details.

Lunch at Hunan West on Jan. 11, 1987 is one of those memories. I was working as an Aide to Annandale District Supervisor Audrey Moore. She had pretty much made up her mind to run for Chairman of the Board of Supervisors against incumbent Jack Herrity. My co-workers, Florence, Carolyn and Janet, and I had escaped the office for lunch in the Kings Park Shopping Center.

We began discussing Audrey's plans, then the subject shifted

to who would run for the open Annandale District seat. "Sharon Bulova," announced Florence Naeve. I looked up from my Sweet and Sour Pork laughing, thinking that she was joking. To my horror, my friends' expressions were electrified. They excitedly began listing all the reasons why this was a good idea. I countered with a list of my shortcomings, why I couldn't possibly run for office, starting with a phobia about speaking in public. Carolyn smiled broadly and exclaimed, "And see! You're so modest and organized!"

Sometimes routine events like lunch with friends can

SEE BULOVA, PAGE 10

### REACTIONS

#### Ensuring Prosperity, Quality of Life

U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA):

"As former mayor to a city of 200,000 people, I have enormous respect for Sharon Bulova's leadership of a county of 1.1 million. Over the past 30 years, Fairfax County's population has grown by nearly half, and Sharon's service during that time has played a major role in ensuring the prosperity and quality of life accompanying that growth. Congratulations, Sharon, on a job well done."

#### A True Community Treasure

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), former Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors:

"I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Sharon Bulova for more than 20 years and she is a true community treasure. Under her leadership, she turned the idea of the Virginia Railway Express into a reality. As Chairman, she guided the County through the worst of the Great Recession, while still maintaining the critical investments and services that Fairfax residents have come to expect. And over her years of public service, she has helped transform our community into one that is envied by all others."

"Sharon's time on the Board will be remembered for her decency and commitment to collegiality, her willingness to listen to her constituents and bring people together, and her drive to leave Fairfax a better place for future generations. I want to thank my dear friend for her lifetime of service and the undeniable mark she has left on our community."

#### Gold Standard

State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34)

"I first met Sharon Bulova in 1996 when I was a young

lawyer entering the political world. She was (and is) the gold standard by which local officials can be measured. Her retirement marks the end of an era in Fairfax County which history will remember as one of prosperity and good will."

#### A Strong Proponent of Economic Growth

Gerald L. Gordon, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority:

"Chairman Bulova has been a strong and effective proponent of economic growth and the Economic Development Authority and me personally for many years. The effects of her leadership will be felt throughout the county for generations to come. Her support of our global outreach marketing has been particularly forward-looking and effective over the years."

# OPINION

## Holidays Speed By

Every year is Election Year in Virginia; sometimes every month ...

Our last live newspapers of 2018 will come out next Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 18 and Dec. 19. Editors are already working on hundreds of submissions for our Children's Connections, which will come out in the days between Christmas and New Year's. Our first regular newspapers will come out in the first week of January, 2019.

Don't miss our holiday calendars in these weeks, with so many local things to do.

Among things to do is to watch for a Special Election Day on Tuesday, Jan. 8, to fill the unexpired term of the 33rd District seat in the

Virginia State Senate, as Jennifer Wexton vacates that seat to head to U.S. Congress in Virginia's 10th District.

On Election Day polls are open from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. Joe T. May (R) faces Jennifer B. Boysko (D). If Boysko should win, another Special Election will be scheduled to fill her seat in the Virginia House of Delegates. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/upcoming](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/upcoming)

And later in 2019, every seat on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, every seat on the School Board, every seat in the Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and more are

up for election. We already know that there will be significant turnover, with many new candidates to get to know. Primaries will likely be in June.

The 2019 session of Virginia's General Assembly begins Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2019.

For families, we can point you back to holiday happenings; breathe and enjoy some hot chocolate with your children and neighbors.

Letters to the editor go to <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/> or [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com)

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### EDITORIAL

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Welcoming Amazon

To the Editor:

*The following open letter was addressed to Amazon.*

Welcome to Northern Virginia! As the timeframe for your decision on HQ2 drew closer, those of us who already call this region home began to think about how we'd welcome you to our community.

Community foundations have a more than 100-year history as community conveners and conversation brokers who work tirelessly to preserve, enhance and protect the quality of life for our neighbors. This role often places us directly in the middle of our community's most important decisions, most pressing issues, and most promising opportunities. Many in our community believe that your decision to locate HQ2 in Northern Virginia is the most impactful event to happen in each of these categories in a generation.

Your arrival will bring jobs, critical advancements in the quality of our public transportation, investments in technology education, and opportunities for small businesses that will serve you and the workers you attract — among many other things. Like you, we want our neighborhoods to be diverse and vibrant places to live and work. We want our economic development to be a rising tide that lifts all boats. Companies and community foundations have worked in tandem to address local issues for over a century. It is therefore our deepest hope that in partnership, we can reimagine solutions to workforce development, affordable housing and other social problems, perhaps driven by imaginative technology-dependent solutions not yet seen that we invent together.

## 'It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year'

**Twins Ace Hardware employees, from left, Matt Puckett, Lauri Vargas and Audie Gonzalez, sport matching sweaters during the store's Christmas party for the community, celebrating Fairfax's City's annual Festival of Lights and Carols on Dec. 1.**

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/  
THE CONNECTION



Your arrival in Northern Virginia gives us all a chance to create a more regional, collaborative approach to local philanthropy that brings to bear the full capacity and weight of our nonprofit partners, our collective community knowledge, and our shared impulse to help build community through philanthropy. We look forward to working with you, problem solving with you, and advancing our community's best interests, together.

**Heather Peeler**  
President & CEO, ACT for Alexandria

**Jennifer Owens**  
President & CEO, Arlington Community Foundation

**Amy Owen**  
President, Community Foundation for Loudoun & Northern Fauquier Counties

**Eileen Ellsworth**  
President & CEO, Community Foundation for Northern Virginia

**Bruce McNamer**  
President & CEO, Northern Virginia Greater Washington Community Foundation

## Time is Running Out to Save the Farm

To the Editor:

With only days left, I am writing to urge you and your readers to help save The Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run in McLean. The National Park Service intends to "terminate" (their word) the Farm on Dec. 21, 2018. For over forty years, this special place has been a very important part of my life and so many others. Its loss would be huge for the community at large.

While it began as a National Park, the Farm was turned over to the Friends of Claude Moore Colonial Farm in 1981 and has been a successful, private endeavor ever since. The Farm portrays the life of a lower-class, homesteading Virginia family during the late Colonial period. It offers a unique historical perspective and opportunities to engage in colonial living experiences.

As a Fairfax County Public

School teacher, for years I took my fourth grade classes to the Farm to live three days and two nights in the year 1771. It truly was "living history." This program continues to this day as schools from Virginia, Maryland and D.C. bring students to participate in colonial encampments. As a mom, I was one of many who took their children there to learn about colonial life at Market Fairs and through many other farm events.

To date, more than 12,480 people have signed the Save the Farm petition. Information on how to help can be found on the Farm's website— <http://1771.org/savethefarm> While legislation has moved to the floor in the House of Representatives, no legislation has even been introduced in the Senate by the Virginia Senators. Legislation must pass the Senate by Dec. 14. Time is running out.

The historical learning experiences offered by the Farm are so worth saving.

**May Ohman**  
Arlington

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# BULLETIN

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

## SOBER-RIDE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Free Sober Rides.** 8 p.m.-4 a.m. daily, Dec. 14-Jan. 1. Area residents, 21 and older, may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a code in the app's "Promo" section to receive a no cost (up to \$15) safe ride home (limited quantities available). WRAP's Holiday SoberRide promo code will be posted at [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

## HOLIDAY DONATIONS

**Sponsor a Local Family.** Through Dec. 14, Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths (formerly Our Daily Bread) is seeking volunteers to sponsor families in need who live throughout the Fairfax County area. Sponsors are matched with an individual or family with demonstrated need, and may opt to provide a December holiday meal, and/or gifts for children under 18. Cash donations and gift cards are welcome to assist those who are not sponsored. A wonderful family, company or group holiday service project. Register and learn more at [britepaths.org](http://britepaths.org). Contact 703-273-8829 or [jwalton@britepaths.org](mailto:jwalton@britepaths.org).

**Toy Drive.** Through Friday, Dec. 14 at local Weichert, Realtors offices. Members of the community are invited to drop off new, unwrapped toys at the company's sales offices. The toys will be delivered throughout the holidays in conjunction with local charities that assist financially and

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



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We hope our patients will have the opportunity to meet and be treated by Dr. Levinson sometime soon. They can be certain their eyes are in excellent hands.



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PHOTO BY HOME ON CAMERON

**Todd Martz of Home on Cameron in Old Town Alexandria suggests adding a decorative mirrors for a quick bathroom update.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNE WALKER

**Potomac designer Anne Walker used Thibaut wallpaper to make the room a “fabulous, joyful place to visit,” she said.**

## Preparing for Holiday Guests

### Sprucing-up a bathroom without a renovation.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Amid the tree-trimming, wreath hanging and stocking stuffing in an effort to deck the halls in anticipation of holiday guests, there’s one space that can be forgotten: the humble bathroom. While not as festive as hanging garland, a few simple tweaks can transform a bathroom from glum to guest ready.

“Hands-down, the easiest way to spruce up a bathroom with little or no expense is to de-clutter,” said Anne M. Walker of Anne Walker Design. “You’ll be amazed how beautiful your bathroom looks if you clear away all of the items sitting on the countertop and around the room.”

To help with that effort, Walker suggests investing organizational items such as Lucite or bamboo trays and drawer inserts so that personal items can be kept out of sight.

For those with a budget and time to allow for it, Walker suggests a fresh coat of paint or new wallpaper. “That can make a huge visual impact in a bathroom,” she said. “Since the space is so small, and it’s a room where you don’t spend long periods of time, you can have fun with interesting colors and patterns.”

Also think about painting just one wall as an accent or the ceiling,” said Todd Martz of Home on Cameron in Alexandria. “[Add a new] mirror, such as a decorative or colorfully framed mirror or one that runs from floor to ceiling, for a fresh look.”

He also suggests updating a bathroom’s lighting to make the space feel bright and airy.

Another practical tip that Walker offers is a good, old-fashioned scrub-down. “Clean like you’ve never cleaned before, she said. “Use a surface cleaner with bleach, like Krud Kutter, which is my personal favorite, a strong brush, and your elbow grease to remove dust, grime and dirt from tile grout, caulk, and cor-

ners of the room.”

Among the more mundane tasks is to visually inspect the bathroom’s grout to check for cracks and stubborn, unsightly mold. Re-grouting might be necessary, says Chuck Khriel, vice president of Fred Home Improvement. “When making a repair, it is very important to remove all of the cracked grout in the joint so that the full edge of the tile is exposed,” he said. “The new grout can then bond to the full thickness of the tile edge. Simply smearing a thin layer of new grout over old grout will not work.”

Once the room is sparkling clean and totally decluttered, Walker suggests adding display on a countertop or in a shower niche. “A vase full of bamboo, pretty soaps in a rattan basket or a Lucite tray filled with beautiful guest towels are just a few suggestions for fresh objects that will lend an air of tranquility to your bathroom.”

For guests who might cringe at the thought of shared guests towels, Martz suggests adding a tray of disposable hand towels. He also encourages engaging one’s sense of smell by, “adding some scented candles like those by Rigaud’s Cypres and Cythere.”

Another simple fix is to buy fresh new bath linens, says Walker. “No matter how hard you try, towels and shower curtains get dingy over time,” she said. “There are so many places to buy lovely linens, and many of them are very low cost.”

With the right accessories, even the most modest spaces can be made to feel like a spa, suggests Walker, recalling a bathroom in which she added added a Turkish towel, striped shower curtain which became transformative. “Even though the bathroom, itself, is modest, the beautiful shower curtain makes it feel like a resort,” she said. “By adding just a couple of colorful accessories on the countertop, it pulls the whole room together.

Installing new fixtures such as a shower head can quickly transform a bathroom from outdated to updated. “There are many types of shower heads on the market these days,” said “Some offer a variety of water streams and different features, [and] most manufacturers make it so that changing a shower head is fairly simply.”

## NEWS

# Ozcan Sentenced To 40 Years Prison

FROM PAGE 2

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 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."

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

physically disadvantaged children.

To find a local office, go to [www.weichert.com/offices/](http://www.weichert.com/offices/).

### Winter Outerwear Donations.

Through Dec. 14 at American Legion Post 176, 6520 Amherst Ave., Springfield. The Post is accepting new hats, gloves, scarves and coats for ECHO (Ecumenical Community Helping Others).

### Holiday Basket Donation.

Christmas basket donations by Dec. 17. Preparing a special holiday meal and joining one's family around the table to give thanks are visions that come to

mind when we think of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. For many families and individuals, enjoying a special holiday meal when finances are tight is just not possible. Visit [www.koinoniacares.org/holiday-baskets.html](http://www.koinoniacares.org/holiday-baskets.html) for suggestions and to sign up to donate a basket.

### VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke needs volunteer drivers for trips to medical appointments (Monday - Friday) and companion shopping

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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

## ONGOING

**Red Cross Fundraiser.** Through Saturday, Dec. 15 at Crafhthouse, 11861 Palace Way, Fairfax. All three Crafhthouse locations in Northern Virginia are donating 10 percent of all bottled beer purchases to the American Red Cross – California Wildfires Fund to assist those affected by the wildfires in California. Call 703-825-1811 or visit [www.crafthouseusa.com](http://www.crafthouseusa.com).

**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](mailto:director@eaiinc.org) or visit [eaiinc.org](http://eaiinc.org).

**Glass National 2018.** Through Jan. 13 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Gallery, W-16, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center presents its 3rd Annual Glass National exhibition. Glass National is a juried exhibition which promotes and displays the breadth of contemporary glass artwork being created throughout the USA and Canada by highlighting both functional and sculptural works. This year's juror is artist and educator Carmen Lozar, director of the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries at Illinois Wesleyan University. Visit [www.workhousearts.org/event/glass-national-2018](http://www.workhousearts.org/event/glass-national-2018).

### Founding Artists Exhibition.

Through Feb. 3 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Muse Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center presents a group exhibition highlighting Studio and Arches artists that have been a part of the organization for its 10-year span. In honor of their dedication and support, the exhibition will survey their works in various mediums including painting, sculpture, fiber, glass, precious metals, and mixed media. Visit [www.workhousearts.org](http://www.workhousearts.org).

**Farmers Market.** Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, 6699 Spring Mall Drive, Springfield. Visit [www.facebook.com/SpringfieldFoodworks/](http://www.facebook.com/SpringfieldFoodworks/).

**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/](http://www.workhousearts.org/).

**Senior Line Dancing.** Mondays, 1 p.m.; Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. at Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8-week session. Email [barbriba@hotmail.com](mailto:barbriba@hotmail.com) or call 703-524-3739.

### Fairfax Pets on Wheels New Volunteer Orientation.

An orientation for new volunteers interested in visiting residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities with their approved pets through the Fairfax Pets On Wheels program is held the first Wednesday of every month starting at 7:30 p.m. Visit [www.fpow.org](http://www.fpow.org) for each month's location. Prior to attending, please complete the online application found at [www.fpow.org/volunteer](http://www.fpow.org/volunteer). [www.fpow.org](http://www.fpow.org), 703-324-5424 or [dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**Carolina Shag.** Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. [nvshag.org](http://nvshag.org).

**FUN-Exercise** Thursdays, noon-12:50 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. [moorefitt@yahoo.com](mailto:moorefitt@yahoo.com) or 703-499-6133.

**Exercise Program** Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m. year-round at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. The exercises are for strength, balance and maintaining limberness. Contact SCFB office at 703-426-2824 for more information.

### Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).

Wednesdays. 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na'ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. RSVP [Naama.Gold@jccnv.org](mailto:Naama.Gold@jccnv.org).

**Smoke Free Bingo.** 7 p.m. Every



## Toy Drive

Members of the community are invited to drop off new, unwrapped toys at the company's sales offices. The toys will be delivered throughout the holidays in conjunction with local charities that assist financially and physically disadvantaged children. Through Friday, Dec. 14 at local Weichert, Realtors offices. To find a local office, go to [www.weichert.com/offices/](http://www.weichert.com/offices/).

Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot (with breaks for smoking friends). [www.fairfaxvd.com](http://www.fairfaxvd.com). 703-273-3638.

### English Conversation Groups

weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries Practice and improve your English. Day and start times vary. Visit: [va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp](http://va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp)

**Funday Monday** 10:30 a.m., every Monday at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There will be music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more. It is open to children of all ages, however especially for those who haven't yet started school. Programs are free and open to the public, donations are gratefully appreciated. There is ample free parking in the downtown area, and stroller access at the rear of Old Town Hall on Main St. 703-385-7858 [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts).

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 14-16

### “An Invitation to Christmas.”

Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, noon, 4 and 7:30 pm.; 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](http://www.encoretap.org) or 703-222-5511.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 15

### Jazz Brunch and Vendor Expo.

Vendor Expo, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Jazz Brunch, noon at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, 6560 Braddock Road, Alexandria. Fairfax County NAACP offers a Jazz Brunch and Business and Vendor Expo, featuring more than 40 vendors. Shop for holiday gifts and stay to enjoy the jazz brunch celebration. Proceeds benefit scholarships and advocacy efforts. Jazz Brunch, \$65; expo admission is free. Visit [www.fairfaxnaacp.org/](http://www.fairfaxnaacp.org/).

**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](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/police/programs/animal-control/adopt-a-pet).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 16

### Football Viewing Party.

12:30-4 p.m. at Patriot Harley-Davidson, 9739 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax. Patriot Harley-Davidson will host a Redskins viewing party with former Redskin and Hall of Famer, Darrell Green. Green will be available for pictures throughout the event and will take part in a half-time Q&A session. Photos that can be autographed will be available in exchange for a new, unused, unwrapped toy donation for the Sheehy Toys for Tots toy drive. These photos are the only items Green will autograph. Free and open to the public. Visit [www.patriothd.com](http://www.patriothd.com) or call 703-352-5400.

**BHS General Meeting.** 3:30-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6540 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Cindy Bennett shares anecdotes from her new book Wicked Fairfax County, recounting events like the typhoid epidemic at Camp Alger, a 1918 murder in Burke, and, of course, the Bunnymen. Free. Email [slawski\\_brian@yahoo.com](mailto:slawski_brian@yahoo.com) or visit [www.burkehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.burkehistoricalsociety.org).

**Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker.** 4 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts Concert Hall. Experience this timeless holiday classic with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax Ballet. Enjoy a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, sugar plum fairies and epic battles between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice. There will not be a pre-concert discussion for this matinee performance. \$49-\$89. Visit [www.fairfaxsymphony.org/nutcracker-1-1/](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org/nutcracker-1-1/) fore more.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 18

**Santa's Critters and Craft.** 10 a.m.-noon at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Come one, come all to meet Santa and his merry band of critters. Bring a camera to take pictures with Jolly Saint Nick, his elves and their animal friends. Ages 2-12. \$10. Call 703-451-9588 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond).

## FRIDAY/DEC. 21

**Moscow Ballet's Nutcracker.** 4 and 8 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Experience Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker during their Dove of Peace Tour, spreading goodwill in over 100 cities across North America during the holiday season. \$28 and up. Go to [www.nutcracker.com](http://www.nutcracker.com) for tickets.

**Family Movie Night: “The Incredibles.”** Lights go down at 7 p.m. at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Enjoy a free, family friendly (movies are PG) movie night. Participants may bring their own snacks. An adult must accompany anyone under the age of 14. Britepaths will accept donations of non-perishable food until 9 p.m. Call 703-385-7858.

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 26

**Holiday Concert.** 6-7:30 at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 2700 F St. NW, Washington, D.C. Featuring local Encore Chorale groups from Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, and Reston. Encore Creativity for Older Adults, the nation's largest choral program for singers 55+, will present the combined talents of more than 250 Encore Chorales and Encore ROCKS singers in concert. Free, the public is invited and no tickets are required. Call 301-261-5747 or visit [www.encorecreativity.org](http://www.encorecreativity.org).

## THURSDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 27-29

**The Nutcracker.** 2 and 7 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus in the Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater. Virginia Ballet Company and School will present its 68th season of the classic Nutcracker ballet. \$30 for adults; \$20 for children, students and seniors at [www.vaballet.org](http://www.vaballet.org). A limited number of general admission tickets is available for the Working Stage Rehearsal on Dec. 26 at 6:30 p.m. (\$10) at [www.vaballet.org](http://www.vaballet.org). The tickets for the Working Stage Rehearsal must be purchased in advance.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 6

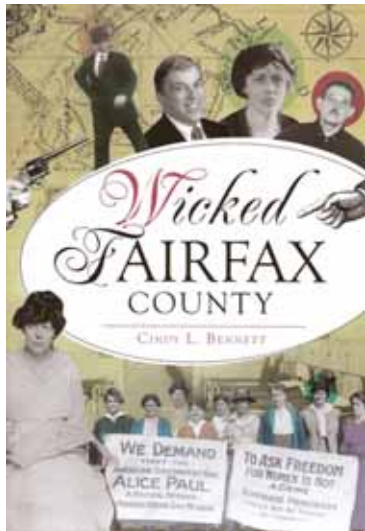
**Winter Make 'n Take.** 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will celebrate the New Year with a Make 'n Take craft event. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) or call 703-425-9225.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 12

**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. Enjoy art exhibitions in nine galleries of the region's finest sculpture, painting, glass, ceramics, and fiber art works. Visit [www.workhousearts.org/](http://www.workhousearts.org/).

## SUNDAY/JAN. 13

**Game Day/Scavenger Hunt.** 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) or call 703-425-9225.



## Wicked Fairfax County

Cindy Bennett shares anecdotes from her new book Wicked Fairfax County, recounting events like the typhoid epidemic at Camp Alger, a 1918 murder in Burke, and, of course, the Bunnymen. Sunday, Dec. 16, 3:30-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6540 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Free. Email [slawski\\_brian@yahoo.com](mailto:slawski_brian@yahoo.com) or visit [www.burkehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.burkehistoricalsociety.org) for more.

## HOLIDAY FUN



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left, the Rowland sisters, Lila, 7, and Charlotte, 5, are ready to eat the s'mores they made at Fairfax's Festival of Lights and Carols.

## Fairfax's Festival Of Lights and Carols

Fairfax's City's annual Festival of Lights and Carols was Saturday, Dec. 1.



Dee Hammell helps son Isaac, 4, and daughter Josephine, 7, toast marshmallows for s'mores.



Alfred Reynolds, 4, poses with Santa Claus before telling him what he wants for Christmas.

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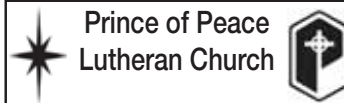


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**NEWS**

**From left: Steven Davis, President and CEO, DGSC Group; Rocky Mitchell, Executive Vice President, Global Fixed Assets, PenFed Credit Union; Gerald L. Gordon, Ph.D. President and CEO, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority; Darrell Green, Associate Athletic Director, George Mason Athletics.**



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**PenFed Credit Union Donates \$50,000 Challenge Grant to GMU Scholarship Fund**

On Dec. 5, PenFed Credit Union made a challenge grant of \$50,000 to start the Dr. Gerald Gordon Scholarship Fund at George Mason University. The donation was presented by Rocky Mitchell, PenFed Executive Vice President of Global Fixed Assets, during a celebration hosted by the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) Commission in honor of Dr. Gerald Gordon's 35 years of service to Fairfax County.

The evening event honored Dr. Gordon who is retiring after serving as president and CEO of the FCEDA in Fairfax County. PenFed's Mitchell is a member of the FCEDA Commission, the Authority's governing body, and served with Dr. Gordon for the past three years.

"Jerry is an asset to Fairfax County and indeed all of Virginia," said Mitchell. "He was instrumental in PenFed's acquisition of our new Tysons headquarters and has supported many of our key initiatives.

PenFed's President and CEO, James Schenck, and our entire Executive Team feel this challenge grant is a most appropriate way to celebrate Jerry's legacy."

Dr. Gordon taught at George Mason University, Catholic University, the University of Maryland, and Virginia Commonwealth University. In the last decade Dr. Gordon has chaired the boards of the Fairfax Symphony, the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the Foundation for Fairfax County Public Schools and the George Mason University Honors College. He also has served on the board of the International Economic Development Council and is a Fellow Member and Honorary Life Member of the organization.

The event was held at the Tower Club, Tysons Corner in Tysons, Virginia. Attendees included many from the Fairfax County business community and Fairfax County government.

To learn more about PenFed Credit Union, visit [PenFed.org](http://PenFed.org)

**Sharon Bulova - second from right - with (from left): Del. Mark Keam (D-35), State Sen. Janet Howell (D-32), Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), Del. Ken Plum (D-36) and Supervisor Catherine Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill).**



**Bulova**

FROM PAGE 3

prove pivotal. Despite all my doubts and misgivings, I did, indeed run for office, and went on to serve as Annandale - later renamed Braddock - District Supervisor for the next twenty years. When then-Chairman Gerry Connolly was elected to Congress in 2008, I ran for his open seat in a special election on February 3, 2009. This coming February will mark ten years since I have served as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Local government is an awesome place to be. It's the level of government closest to the people you represent. It's the place where you can truly make a tangible difference, touch lives, and engage with the community in a personal, positive way. Deciding when to stop is just as hard as making the decision to start down the road of elective office. For me, however, that time has come.

When questioned by Tony Olivo of the Washington Post about my plans for running, I told him I was going to use the Thanksgiving holiday to think about it, and to talk to my family and friends. On Thanksgiv-

ing Day my son David arrived for dinner equipped with a large flip chart and colored stickies for voting. He titled the Chart "Family Decision Making Matrix" and separated it into "Pros" and "Cons." It was a fun, light-hearted after dinner activity. Many of the items listed on the "Pro" side of the chart were some of the reasons that had already persuaded me to not seek another four-year term. More time with family and grandchildren, time for travel, to entertain, to smell the roses.

It has been an honor to serve the Fairfax County community on the Board of Supervisors. During these past thirty years, I have been privileged to work alongside dedicated elected officials at every level of government, with talented, caring county staff and a county full of enthusiastic community volunteers. While I will not be running for re-election in 2019 I sure do have a lot to look back on with satisfaction.

My term does not end until the end of next year. Between now and then there is still much to do and to contribute. I look forward to working with you during these months ahead and thank you for your engagement and participation in your community.

# BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

(Tuesday, Friday) within the Fairfax-Burke area and in the South County area (west of Route 1, Alexandria). Office volunteers are also needed to work in the SCFB (Olley Glen) office to schedule rides. Bilingual volunteers (English and Spanish) are needed as drivers and office volunteers. Email Shavaun Wall at [recruiter@scfbva.org](mailto:recruiter@scfbva.org) or call 703-323-4788.

## WEBINAR

**Online Salary Negotiation Workshop.** AAUW (American Association of University Women) Work Smart is free online for anyone looking to learn how to negotiate a salary increase or promotion. Why is negotiation so important? AAUW's research on the gender pay gap shows that, one year out of college, women are already paid significantly less than men. Visit [salary.aauw.org](http://salary.aauw.org).

## THURSDAY/DEC. 13

**"The Roaring Twenties."** 5:30 p.m. at Glory Days in Barcroft Plaza, 6341 Columbia Pike, Falls Church. Join the Springfield-Annandale branch of the American Association of University Women for Ben Gold's program on "The Roaring Twenties." The meeting includes a dinner for \$27.00. Reservations must be received by Monday, Dec. 10. Contact [wchamnett@gmail.com](mailto:wchamnett@gmail.com) or call 703-560-1760.

**Learn about Citizenship.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Thomas Jefferson Library, 7415 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church. Learn about the process of becoming a U.S. citizen at this free information session. After the presentation a USCIS representative will answer your questions. U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner will make opening remarks. Free. Email [libtj@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:libtj@fairfaxcounty.gov), call 703-573-1060 or visit [librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4476399](http://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4476399) for more.

**Blue Christmas Service.** 7 p.m. at King of Kings Lutheran Church, 4025 Kings Way, Fairfax. During the holidays people can sometimes feel at odds with this being "the most wonderful time of the year." Perhaps they are grieving the loss of a loved one or struggling with illness or have experienced the loss of a job. This quiet service of prayer, meditative music, candle lighting and Holy Communion is for any who need it. Visit [www.kokf.org](http://www.kokf.org) or call 703-378-7272.

## MONDAY/DEC. 24

**Christmas Eve Services.** At Historic Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Evening services begin at 6 p.m. with a Family Holy Eucharist with Children's Choirs. At 10:30 p.m. is a Christmas Carol presentation with choir and brass ensemble, followed by the 11 p.m. Festival Holy Eucharist. Visit [www.pohick.org](http://www.pohick.org) or call 703-339-6572.

**Christmas Eve Service.** 8-9 p.m. at Harvester Presbyterian Church, 7800 Rolling Road, Springfield. Join this traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service. Free. Call 703-455-7800 or visit [www.harvesterpca.org](http://www.harvesterpca.org).

## TUESDAY/DEC. 25

**Christmas Day Service.** 10 a.m. at Historic Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Christmas Day Holy Eucharist. Visit [www.pohick.org](http://www.pohick.org) or call 703-339-6572.

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 9

**Grant Application Deadline.** More than 50 artists have been recognized by ARTSFAIRFAX with an Artist Grant over the past decade. Artist Grants recognize outstanding achievement for work that has already been completed, the artist's commitment to an artistic discipline, their professional activity in Fairfax County and their contributions to the quality of life in Fairfax County. Learn more at [ARTSFAIRFAX.org](http://ARTSFAIRFAX.org).

## THURSDAY/JAN. 10

**Adventures in Learning Open House.** 10 a.m.-noon at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Adventures in Learning winter 2019 classes begin Thursday Jan. 17 and run through March 14. Classes are held at UUCF/Oakton. Students may attend one or all classes for one \$45 fee and are encouraged to create their own schedule – attend classes all day or attend only one class. Students are welcome to sample one class for free. For details call 703-281-0538 or visit [www.scov.org/ail-open-house](http://www.scov.org/ail-open-house) for an application and class schedule.

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## Still Scared to ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a follow up to last week's column: "Scared to ...," let me provide a bit more context for the fear and anxiety I wrote about; as well as some history for you readers to appreciate the emotional challenges some of us cancer patients experience.

It all began with the initial Team Lourie meeting on Feb. 27, 2009 when we met my oncologist for the first time.

After exchanging pleasantries, such as they could be, I was examined by my oncologist in an adjacent room. After he completed his exam, we all re-assembled in his office where he reviewed the results of my most recent medical history dating back to Jan. 1, 2010 when I first showed up at the Emergency Room complaining of shortness of breath.

Subsequently, there were two sets of X-Rays, one CT scan, one P.E.T. scan and then a surgical biopsy to confirm the previous findings. It was nearly eight weeks to the day that I learned my diagnosis: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. And so my oncologist began to talk. I'm semi-quoting, but clearly remembering the substance:

I can treat you, but I can't cure you. Your prognosis is 13 months to two years. The percentage of patients who live beyond two years is 2 percent. Could you be the one who lives beyond two years? Absolutely. This is extremely serious. You should begin chemotherapy as soon as possible. Next week if possible.

Then our questions began – after we gathered our composure that is. I mean, hearing these words directed at you is as surreal as it gets, and with limited knowledge on the subject and the circumstances, we had difficulty starting a conversation.

This is as much as I remember hearing that day. Could there have been more? I'm sure. Unfortunately, we were ill-prepared for the occasion.

Though there were three of us: my wife, Dina, my brother, Richard, and myself – collectively, what went in all of our ears went out in different directions.

What was said, what was heard, what was understood, what was remembered, was all a jumble. No one thought to take notes or bring in a recording device, two suggestions which have been subsequently made and that I now pass on to you.

My oncologist answered our questions about surgery, radiation, treatment, drugs, side effects, schedule, etc., all of which was difficult to absorb.

He then attempted to describe what my life would be like going forward, offering no guarantees of anything particularly hopeful, which now explains the reasons for these two columns: death and progression from dying/symptoms getting worse. He used a staircase as an example.

My health would steadily decline, as if walking down a flight of stairs. As my health deteriorated/symptoms manifested (down a couple of steps), he could stabilize me there by trying new treatment. But he could never bring my health back to its previous place. Then after a while the new treatment would become unsuccessful (down a few more steps), and again, he could stabilize me but he couldn't bring me back. And on and on until ... I think I can remember another visual he offered: playing with a yo-yo as I descended the stairs; down, down, down.

Amazingly, this has not happened to me despite a week's long hospitalization five-plus years ago.

HOWEVER, per my understanding of my condition (I wasn't diagnosed as "terminal" for nothing), I anticipate stepping down at some point. And any time – every time – I experience symptoms uncharacteristic of my semi-normal existence, I ALWAYS wonder if this is the beginning of my end.

And as much as I want to stay one step ahead, it's hard for me (practically impossible) to not think that when new symptoms occur, cancer is stepping up its attack.

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

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