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Senior Living

PAGE 2

John Henry Stamper and Bridgette Carey rehearse a scene from Westfield's upcoming musical, "Rent."

Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

'How Do You Measure A Year in the Life?'

NEWS, PAGE 3

WFCM Helps Workers Affected by Furlough

NEWS, PAGE 3

Weight Lifting for Seniors

SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 2

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CALENDAR, PAGE 6 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

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Senior Living

Weight Lifting in Golden Years

When done properly, strength training can have tremendous benefits for seniors.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Richard Foley of McLean says he hits the gym at 7:30 five mornings a week. He spends about 40 minutes lifting weights followed by 40 minutes of walking on the treadmill and 10 minutes of sit-ups and crunches.

"I've always been physically active," he said. "I've actually slowed down a little, but it's important to me to keep going for as long as I can."

A National Institutes of Health (NIH) study of Americans over the age of 60 showed that strength training, such as lifting weights, reduced the risk of osteoporosis and chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. It also found that strength-training exercises has the ability to increase muscles strength and mass and allows seniors to stay mobile longer, while also combating weakness and frailty.

"Improving and increasing the muscles in your legs for example, makes them stronger, which means that you'll be able to maintain your ability to walk without assistance longer than you might otherwise," said Rita Days, RN, a gerontological nurse in Falls Church who was not involved in the study. "For seniors who enjoy traveling, shopping or any activity that requires walking, having strong quadricep and hamstring muscles means that you'll be able to enjoy those activities longer. It also means that you'll have the strength and endurance to navigate difficult terrain during vacations and other activities that involve walking."

Strength training can lead to a sense of independence for everyday activities like grocery shopping or even getting up from a chair, says Jay Rader, a private health and fitness coach based in Arlington. "When you strengthen the muscles around your joints, you can prolong and even improve your range of motion," he said.

Weight training for seniors, says Days, comes with caveats. "Just because it's beneficial doesn't mean that an 89-year-old should go out and start trying to lift 50 pound weights so that he can regain the ability to walk up three flights of stairs like he could 30 years ago," she said. "The benefits of strength training are tremendous, but they also come with risks and must be done safely. You should definitely consult with a doctor before beginning any kind of exercise program, and it would be my strong recommendation that any one over the age of 50 hire a personal trainer if they're starting any kind of exercise program."

In fact, David Schwartz, a personal trainer in



Strength-training exercises has the ability to increase muscles strength and mass and allows seniors to stay mobile longer.

Bethesda says that he has four clients who are over the age of 60, and while he personalizes each client's workout, there are specific exercises that are particularly beneficial to seniors. "I have one client who is 72 and began training with me when she was 68," he said. "The workouts that I do with her include lunges and squats which strengthen the quadriceps, or the muscles in the thigh area. It's been interesting to watch her gain leg strength and be able to walk longer distances. But strengthening the quads can also protect your knees and prevent injuries and other problems."

The bicep and tricep muscles of the arm are also important to building strength. "All you need are a pair of light to medium weight dumbbells," said Kat Chetrit, a personal trainer in Fairfax. "Two great exercises, that are also relatively simple are bicep curls where you hold the weight in your hand and bend your arm at the elbow and curl the weight in the direction of your shoulder; and hammer curls, which are very similar except that you hold the weight like you would a hammer. Those are both great exercises for maintaining arm strength."

Days however, underscores the fact that there are risks involved "You can strain a muscle or drop a weight on yourself or even fracture a bone," she said. "With the elderly, these injuries can take a longer time to heal than they would in a person who is much younger. The benefits definitely outweigh the risks, but you want to be safe and smart. That includes talking with your doctor and getting help from a personal training, especially if you've never or rarely exercised before."

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'How Do You Measure a Year in the Life?'

BY BONNIE HOBBS

Bringing a message of love and support, Westfield High presents the musical, "Rent." It's the high-school version of this show, but it's still for PG audiences.

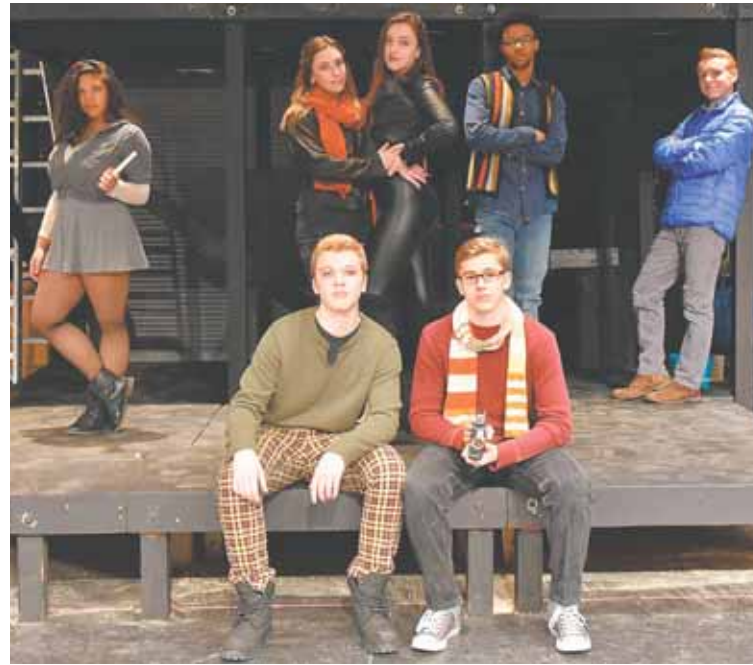
The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, Feb. 8-9, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 10, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 at the door and \$10 via www.westfieldtheatre.com. It features a cast and crew of 34, and the students have been rehearsing since November.

The story takes place during the AIDS epidemic in late 1980s-early 1990s New York City. It follows a group of friends struggling to pay their rent while several of them also deal with AIDS. And it shows how they bolster each other's spirits, giving encouragement and love through the hard times.

The actors are all in Director Rachel Harrington's most advanced theater classes. "I chose a show with a message I could talk about with the students," she said. "And 'Rent' has a lot to offer about loving people different from you and learning to find joy, even when you're afraid."

"I'm really proud of this cast because they've taken on very heavy material and brought it to life in a mature way," she continued. "I told them this show was an important turning point for musical theater, so we really need to do it justice – and they took that and ran with it. It was the first rock opera produced that dealt with such a controversial topic."

Harrington's also proud of everything her students have learned about this time period and how they've grown through the process. "It's a reminder of how theater gives us the opportunity to stretch and open



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NATALIE LASSITER

The cast during rehearsal: (Back row, from left) are Bridgette Carey (Mimi), Lauren LeVine (Joanne), Keeley Rogers (Maureen), Breon Atkins (Collins) and Harry Schlatter (Benny); and (in front, from left) are John Henry Stamper (Roger) and Colin Brown (Mark).

our eyes," she said.

Excited about this show, Harrington said, "We've put on a lot of good productions, but I have a really good feeling about this one because of all the great voices and the passion that went into making it. I think audiences are going to love the energy, the music and the overall message of the show that – as one of the songs says – 'There's no day but today.'"

Senior Bridgette Carey plays Mimi Marquez, a club dancer with AIDS. "She's fierce, spunky and sassy and lives each day without regrets, because she knows one day she'll die," said Carey. "She can be seductive, in a comedic sense. Roger, who also has AIDS, is her love interest. But she makes

a couple bad decisions and can get a little feisty, which causes problems for them."

Carey said it's been her dream role for five years. "Ever since I saw the movie, I fell in love with Mimi's character," she said. "I liked her mindset of living each day to the fullest. I relate to her fierce and sassy personality and, like her, I've been a dancer my whole life."

Her favorite song is "Out Tonight," Mimi's solo. "It's such a fun number, and I'm able to add my own personality aspects to Mimi's," said Carey. "It's high-energy and upbeat, and she's singing about going out, dancing and just having fun."

Stressing that audiences will appreciate the show's passion, Carey said, "It shows

everybody's friendships and relationships and the support you get from them. And the music will definitely draw people in with its mixture of happy songs, ballads and big production numbers."

Also thrilled to be acting in "Rent" is junior John Henry Stamper, portraying Roger. "I've always loved this show; so when Mrs. Harrington said we were doing it, I was so excited," said Stamper. "It has 41 songs, and the music is unlike anything else on Broadway and really tells a story."

He described Roger as a starving musician in his early 20s. "He's a rock guitarist stricken with AIDS and is struggling with it, both internally and externally," said Stamper. "He longs for success, but knows his life will be cut short. His soliloquy, 'One Song Glory,' is about his desire to write a memorable song that means a lot to him before he dies."

Roger is roommates with Mark – played by Stamper's real-life friend, Colin Brown – and is in a complicated, romantic relationship with Mimi. "It's a blast playing Roger, but also challenging, because of the complex storyline," said Stamper. "I've always wanted to play this character, so it's fun to fulfill that personal desire. And as one of the eight, main characters, I get to interact with my friends in real life. The challenge is portraying Roger's back story, struggles and desires correctly through song."

"Rent" is considered a rock opera because the story is mainly told in song, with very little dialogue. It's based on the French opera, "La Boheme." And Stamper's favorite number is "La Vie Boheme" because it "incorporates the whole cast and is a really

SEE 'RENT', PAGE 7

WFCM Helps Workers Affected by Furlough

They're welcome at the food pantry.

BY BONNIE HOBBS

Although the federal-government shutdown is over for now, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) is lending a hand to anyone in Fairfax County affected by it and still feeling the pain. And it's even going beyond its normal, Western Fairfax County service area to do so.

"WFCM is here to help any Fairfax County resident needing food or emergency financial assistance," said WFCM Community Outreach Manager Jennie Bush. "If you have been impacted by the partial federal-government shutdown, please don't hesitate to use our services."

The community-based nonprofit is at 4511 Daly Drive, Suite J, in Chantilly. And since it'll be awhile before affected federal employees receive paychecks — and contractors may not receive any back pay, at all — on Wednesday, Jan. 30, and Feb. 6, from 5-7 p.m., WFCM's food pantry will be open for any employee or contractor af-

ected by the shutdown.

During that time, WFCM will distribute pre-bagged food for families. It will include shelf-stable items and – if possible, while supplies last – fresh meat, milk, cheese, produce, bread and toiletries will also be available, as will a limited amount of gasoline gift cards.

"When you come, you'll be asked to show a photo ID and provide proof of Fairfax County residency for yourself and members of your household," said Bush. "There's some brief paperwork, as well."

In addition, proof of financial impact is needed. "This can be your furlough notice or other documentation showing that your paycheck did not get deposited," said Bush. "An appointment is not necessary; but if you have further questions, please call our office at 703-988-9656."

Last Friday, after the end to the shutdown was announced, Bush said, "WFCM is grateful for the support we received from our community – businesses, churches, individuals – everyone working together to help

WFCM volunteer Kitty Beachy helped fill 25 bags of nonperishable food to distribute to furloughed government workers.



those who were furloughed and not receiving a paycheck. Because of your support, we have been able to provide groceries and gas cards to those workers who needed help during this difficult time. Thank you for your care, your compassion and, mostly, for your generosity."

But that's not all. Also expressing his thoughts about the shutdown was Chris Granberg, who attends Centreville United Methodist Church and is active in WFCM's holiday food and backpack programs. He emphasized how living without an income publicly exposed the fear and reality that many residents face.

"This was probably the most powerful reminder that anyone – regardless of how

steady their job may seem – can be just one missed paycheck away from financial disaster," he said. "This can be from foreclosure, from losing medical insurance or from not being able to provide food for their families. It put in stark relief the threat that confronts far too many hardworking folks in our own neighborhoods, cities and nation – and for much longer than five weeks."

"So my hope – in addition to no more shutdowns – is that the generosity and hospitality shown to our feds put a less hazy face on what it means to be the 'working poor,'" continued Granberg. "I hope the lessons we learned will translate into renewed support for community organizations working to lend a hand up to those in need, or to help a neighbor make it through a tough month. It really doesn't take much. And in so doing, it will hopefully lessen the space between 'us' and 'them.'"

WFCM has been serving Western Fairfax County residents since 1987 to prevent hunger and homelessness. It's able to give people in need emergency financial help so they can pay their rent and utilities and purchase their prescribed medications. Normal office hours are Monday-Friday, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, from 4:30-7 p.m.

OPINION

Human Trafficking: Monstrosity in Our Backyard

BY PAT HERRITY
SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR (R)



Human trafficking is a heinous crime and major issue in Northern Virginia. The victims are often children, teens, and young adults who are forced to have sex with as many as 30 customers a day while their trafficker profits. It's easy to think that this awful exploitation of our most vulnerable citizens wouldn't be prevalent in one of the richest regions in the country. But the truth is it's happening in our backyards, and the fight to end it starts with raising awareness to prevent it.

COMMENTARY

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I'm proud to say that I've supported anti-human trafficking legislation for many years, including nationally recognized bipartisan legislation put forward by former Congresswoman Barbara Comstock. I continue to support the efforts of Fairfax County law enforcement, nonprofits, faith groups, and schools in the fight to end human trafficking, but there's still so much to be done.

Since 2013 Northern Virginia has seen over 500 cases of human trafficking, in addition to a significant spike in calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline within the last two years. Human trafficking is the second fastest

growing crime sector nationally, and is projected to surpass the drug trade as the first.

Prevention of this heinous crime starts with awareness, which is why I support January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

For that reason, I recently awarded a proclamation to Bill Woolf, executive director of Just Ask Prevention, declaring January 2019 as Human Trafficking

Awareness Month. Just Ask Prevention is a leading nonprofit I've worked closely with, as their goal is to make sure that young people and parents are able to protect themselves and their children from becoming victims of trafficking.

Over the last few years, we've worked together to support the implementation of human trafficking curriculum in Fairfax County Public Schools. This curriculum teaches students to recognize the recruiting and manipulation tactics of traffickers. As some survivor videos note in the curriculum, often times these tactics are subtle, not the "snatch-and-grab" tactic you would expect. Traffickers are becoming increasingly savvy in trapping their victims, even using social media to identify teens who are likely targets and grooming them through flattery.

As a father of two, I see raising awareness of human trafficking as critical for securing the safety of our children. While I have supported many grants to provide funding for our police

to combat trafficking, awareness can protect our children before they fall prey to the horrors of this monstrous crime. With trafficking cases involving all 26 high schools in Fairfax County, we cannot fall into the mindset that it could never happen to us, never to our kid.

I've listened to heartbreaking stories of parents who never believed something as awful as sex trafficking would happen to their daughter or son, until the police found their child assaulted and drugged in a hotel room. No child and no family should ever have to go through that pain.

Those parents have impressed upon me the importance of listening to our kids and asking them questions about the people they meet and interact with before they are manipulated into believing there is no way out.

But it's not enough to just watch out for our own kid. As a community, we need to look out for other people's kids as well by taking notice of the kids on our daughter's soccer team, at our son's bus stop, and at the fast food place on the corner. Together we can ensure that our community is inhospitable to all forms of human trafficking and that no kid goes unnoticed and unprotected.

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, contact the National Sex Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733 for help. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

For more information about protecting yourself and others from human trafficking, visit <http://www.justaskprevention.org>.

Federal Tax Code Changes Affect State

BY TIM HUGO
STATE DELEGATE (R-40)

During my time as a member of the House of Delegates I have worked to solve problems for my constituents, from fixing potholes to finding solutions on transportation in order to improve the quality of life for the people I serve and it has been my honor.

COMMENTARY

In this 2019 session of the House of Delegates, I've introduced legislation to tackle one of the biggest issues facing middle class families in Northern Virginia — taxes.

Due to our state's tax laws and recent

changes in the federal tax code, many of our families in Northern Virginia, through no fault of their own, will be facing a significant increase in their state taxes. For example, absent legislative action, a newly married teacher and police officer who just purchased a home, could possibly end up paying more than \$800 in higher taxes. I firmly believe this is wrong and it is why I introduced HB 2529.

My bill contains three important provisions for middle class taxpayers that will ensure they keep more of their hard-earned money. First, you will be able to itemize your taxes regardless of whether you took the standard deduction on your federal taxes or vice versa. Second, it doubles the standard deduction.

Third, it does not cap state and local taxes protecting homeowners from another hidden tax increase.

Governor Northam proposes to keep your money and overwhelmingly increase the size of Virginia's government. I see things differently. You should decide how to spend the money from your wallet, not Richmond. Even after providing our hard-working teachers, first responders, and other blue-collar workers with tax relief, the state will still have more money for education, transportation and other key services than it did last year.

As your delegate in Richmond, my office is always available at 703-815-1201 or DelTHugo@house.virginia.gov.

Newly Appointed

Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith (D) has appointed Cheryl-Ann Repetti to the History Commission. Her term is for 3 years. Repetti serves on the board of the Historic Centreville Society and the Friends of Historic Centreville, and has been helping to organize Centreville Day since 2004. She currently works at Historic Huntley in Huntley Meadows Park. Repetti received a PhD in sociology from George Washington University.



BULLETIN BOARD

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

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 30, 2019, are eligible to attend kindergarten. Find the correct neighborhood school by entering your address at boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/. Complete a packet of registration forms found at www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf or in the school office. Gather supporting documents: proof of residence in the school boundary, a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required

before the student may start school, but is not required for registration. Parents who choose to delay enrollment in kindergarten by one year are required to notify the school in writing of their intent. Learn more at www.fcps.edu/registration/general-registration-requirements.

❖ **Colin Powell Elementary School** in Centreville will conduct their Kindergarten registration on Friday, April 5, 9 a.m.-noon; parents may also call 571-522-6008 to schedule an appointment. Due to the time required to register a child, they request that only parents come to school for registration.

Chantilly CONNECTION

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com

Steven Mauren
Editor, 703-778-9415
smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

Jean Card
Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Worker
Contributing Writer
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
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Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
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NEWS

Milestone in Electronics Recycling

Chantilly-based Securis recycled almost one million pounds of electronic storage devices in 2018 — including old computers, monitors, memory boards, and smartphones.

Moreover, the company trains and employs high school students and individuals with disabilities through a special job training partnership with ServiceSource, Inc.

“This is a significant milestone,” said Jeremy Farber, owner and president. “We are excited and know we’ll do even better next year. A lot of this work was done by people with disabilities who have become fully integrated into our workforce.”

Securis is a faith-based company dedicated to helping safely and securely dispose of computer hard drive destruction, as well as all of the e-waste recycling that is critically needed when old IT equipment is discarded.

“One of our core values is to be of service to the community, and we’re pleased to be able to help nonprofits and schools with free electronics recycling,” said Farber. “Nothing we process ends up in a landfill.”



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Workers at Securis recycle old data devices.

CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Fair Oaks District Police Station.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY: 4201 Stringfellow Road (Chantilly High School), Jan. 16, 10 a.m. The school resource officer (SRO) was notified of swastika symbols etched on two different bathroom stalls. The symbols were promptly removed. The SRO and school security continue to investigate.

ROBBERY: 2500 block of Chain Bridge Road, between Jan. 1, 11 p.m. and Jan. 2 12:37 a.m. A group of men were walking when they were approached by another group of three to five Hispanic men wearing black masks. One of the masked men had a gun while the others had knives. The victims were robbed of their money, electronics, and other personal property. No one was injured.

UNLAWFUL ENTRY: 12723 Lee Highway (Pleasant Acres Motel), Jan. 1, 8 a.m. Officers were called to the motel for three people who broke into a room after being told they could not rent a room. Officers arrived on scene and gave commands for the people inside to come out. They came out and were taken into custody. During the search of the room, officers discovered a loaded pistol and a digital scale. Further investigation revealed one of the individuals in the room was a juvenile. A 23-year-old man from Reston and a 20-year-old man from Springfield were charged with

destruction of property and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. The 17-year-old girl was charged with destruction of property and outstanding petitions from Prince William County were served.

RECKLESS DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM: 14100 block of Asher View, Jan. 1, 12:15 a.m. Hospital staff reported to officers that a man was being treated for a minor gunshot wound after he accidentally discharged a gun. Officers investigated and found that the bullet from the gun entered the next-door neighbor’s bedroom and struck their bed while they were sleeping. No one else was injured. A 22-year-old man from Centreville was charged with unlawful shooting and obstruction of justice.

JAN. 28 LARCENIES
3800 block of Fairfax Ridge Road, jewelry from residence

13800 block of Metrotech Drive, phone from business

JAN. 25 LARCENIES
13000 block of Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, purse and laptop from vehicle

STOLEN VEHICLES
4000 block of Fountainside Lane, 2006 Lexus ES330

JAN. 23 LARCENIES
11200 block of James Swart Circle, merchandise from business

JAN. 22 LARCENIES
12800 block of Cross Creek Lane, dog

from residence
12900 block of Fair Lakes Shopping Center, cash from business

9900 block of Oak Creek Place, shoes from business

2700 block of Shawn Leigh Drive, credit card from vehicle

4000 block of Spring Pond Place, debit card from location

JAN. 18 LARCENIES
13000 block of Autumn Willow Drive, package from residence

13300 block of Franklin Farm Road, liquor from business

4500 block of Market Commons Drive, wallet from location

3300 block of Willow Crescent Drive, property from residence

JAN. 17 LARCENIES
13300 block of Glen Taylor Lane, cell phone from residence

12400 block of Liberty Bridge Road, package from residence

JAN. 16 LARCENIES
11900 block of Grand Commons Avenue, cash from residence

JAN. 14 LARCENIES
12300 block of Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, license plate from vehicle

JAN. 11 LARCENIES
4200 block of Fairfax Corner Avenue, merchandise from business

13000 block of Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, wallet from location

10700 block of Page Avenue, cell phone and wallet from location

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Public Hearing Scheduled on E-Bike Use on Park Trails

A public hearing will be held in Lorton, Va., on Thursday, February 7, 2019, on proposed changes to regulations on the use of Electrically Assisted Bicycles, or e-bikes, in Fairfax County and NOVA Parks.

The hearing will cover proposed changes to Park Authority Regulation §1.14 Motor Vehicles and Traffic. Under the proposal, the regulation would define an e-bike and clarify distinctions between e-bikes and mopeds. E-bikes would be allowed anywhere traditional pedal-powered bikes are allowed. Mopeds would be allowed only where motor vehicles are permitted.

As part of the proposed change in regulation, draft guidelines for the use of e-bikes within Fairfax and NOVA Parks’ will be presented. These guidelines outline the type and level of performance for e-bikes that are suitable for use within Fairfax and NOVA Parks. Draft guidelines define e-bikes as a “wheeled vehicle equipped with (i) pedals that allow propulsion by human power and ii) an electric motor with an input of no more than 750 watts that reduces the pedal effort required of the rider. This applies to both road and mountain style (e/MTB) e-bikes.” These use guidelines will be recommendations only and will not be enforceable by law.

The guidelines for e-bike riders would call for them to yield to pedestrians and equestrians and keep e-bike speeds below 20 miles per hour. In addition, e-bike riders would be strongly encouraged to operate only in areas where traditional bicycles are allowed and to not disturb wildlife, livestock or domesticated animals on park property. E-bike riders would be expected to follow the same regulations and rules regarding access to the parks as other visitors. Riders would assume responsibility for the safe and respectful operation of their e-bike. For more information, visit online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/e-bikes>

The joint hearing to be held by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Board and the Fairfax County Park Authority Board will begin at 7 p.m. at The Jean R. Packard Center at Occoquan Regional Park, located at 9751 Ox Road, Lorton, VA.

Please contact the NOVA Parks Operations office at 703-359-4612 or NOVAParks@nvrpa.org to sign up to speak at the public hearing, or the Fairfax County Park Authority Public Information Office at 703-324-8662 or via email at Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov All speakers are welcome; it is not necessary to sign up in advance.

Written comments must be received by March 11, 2019 to be included in the official public record. Please send your feedback to either the Fairfax County Park Authority or NOVA Parks: Email (preferred): Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov or NOVAParks@nvrpa.org



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person. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Designed for participants age 3-adult. \$7 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

ONGOING

Fitness for 50+. Daytime hours, Monday-Friday at Sully Senior Center, 14426 Albemarle Point Place, Chantilly. Jazzercise Lite, Zumba Gold, Hot Hula Fitness (dancing Polynesian style), Strength Training, Qi Gong, Tai Chi and more. Membership is \$48 a year, and waivers are available. Email lynne.lott@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-322-4475.

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. It is open every Sunday, except holidays, from 1-4 p.m. www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225.

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.

Carolina Shag Dance. 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 at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.nvshag.org.

Open Rehearsal. Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Centreville. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires barbershop chorus invites men of all ages who enjoy singing. Free. Visit www.fairfaxjubilairs.org.

Live After Five. Fridays at 5:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Every Friday night a band plays on the patio of the winery. Free to attend. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com for a full schedule.

Mondays are Family Night. 5-7 p.m. at Villaggio, 7145 Main St. \$45 for a family of four. Call 703-543-2030.

SUNDAY/FEB. 10

T-TRAK Scale Model Train Show.

1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia T-TRAK members will hold a N gauge Model Train Display. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Live Music: Laurie Lewis & the Right Hands. 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Make plans to "hitch up the team" and head to Frying Pan Farm Park this season for Bluegrass Barn. Food and beverages available for purchase. \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park/bluegrass-barn or by phone at 703-222-4664 or 703-437-9101.

THURSDAY/FEB. 14

Make Art Inspired by History. 10 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. This Valentine's Day, gather friends and family together at the park to create art inspired by history. The artwork created will reflect the season or month, and the projects are designed for artists age 6-adult. The park will be offering two, one-hour sessions. \$8 per

SUNDAY/FEB. 17

NTRAK Scale Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold a N gauge Model Train Display at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/FEB. 24

Fire Building and S'mores. 4:30-5:30 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn the science and art of fire building at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. Discover what it takes to build a fire, and then test new abilities with primitive fire bows and modern fire-making techniques and then roast s'mores. \$8 per person, and children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Live Music: Nothin' Fancy. 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Make plans to "hitch up the team" and head to Frying Pan Farm Park this season for Bluegrass Barn. Food and beverages available for purchase. \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park/bluegrass-barn or by phone at 703-222-4664 or 703-437-9101.

The Capitol Steps Benefit Performance. 7 p.m. at Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run Road, Fairfax. Join in for a SILLYarious evening as the Capitol Steps political satire comedy troupe performs a show to benefit high school theatre for the Cappies of the National Capitol Area. Free parking. Adults, \$30; students/senior citizens, \$20; children 12 and under, \$10; and groups of 10 or more, \$15. Contact Amy.Young@cappies.com or visit www.cappies.com/nc.

SUNDAY/MARCH 24

Live Music: Valerie Smith & Liberty Pike. 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Make plans to "hitch up the team" and head to Frying Pan Farm Park this season for Bluegrass Barn. Food and beverages available for purchase. \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park/bluegrass-barn or by phone at 703-222-4664 or 703-437-9101.

SUNDAY/APRIL 14

Live Music: Becky Buller Band. 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Make plans to "hitch up the team" and head to Frying Pan Farm Park this season for Bluegrass Barn. Food and beverages available for purchase. \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park/bluegrass-barn or by phone at 703-222-4664 or 703-437-9101.

SATURDAY/FEB. 2

Groundhog Day in the Park. 1-2 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Join the "Groundhog Day!" program to learn the story behind this holiday and pick up some interesting facts about groundhogs. Visit the home of the Walney garden groundhog and play some groundhog games.

SUNDAY/FEB. 3

Make a Valentine Card Craft. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have a Valentine's Day Make and Take event. Visitors will create their own Valentine's cards to take home with them. The cost of supplies is included with admission. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

MONDAY/FEB. 4

Journey to the Past. 9-11 a.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Treat a favorite doll to a visit to the past. Bring the doll to the "All-American Girl: Living Dolls" program at Sully Historic Site and explore the life of an American girl from an era in history through fun activities, costumes, crafts and themed games in a beautiful historic setting. For children age 5-9. \$30 per child. Bring a snack and drink. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site.

LIBRARY FUN

Toddlin' Twos. Tuesdays, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Early literacy storytime with songs and activities included. Age 2 with caregiver, free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Storytime for Three to Fives. Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Stories and activities for children age 3-5 with caregiver. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Plant Clinic. Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. A neighborhood plant clinic with horticultural tips, information, techniques, and advice. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Lego Block Party. Every other Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Legos will be provided for an afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Duplo Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Develop and reinforce early literacy skills for reading success. Ages 1-3 with adult. Free. Call 703-502-3883 for a spot.

Legos Kids Club. Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Thousands of Legos for children to play with. Ages 6-12. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Starlight Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Stories under the stars for ages 4-8. Wear pajamas and bring stuffed friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

IMPROVING ENGLISH

One-on-One English Conversation. Various times at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Spend an hour with a volunteer tutor to practice conversing in English. Various times and days. Reservations are required. Call the library at 703-830-2223 to make a reservation.

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News 'Rent'

FROM PAGE 3

high-energy song. The friends are living in the moment and enjoying what they have now."

Besides the music, he said the audience will like the set design illustrating many, different locations. "They'll also like the message – live in the moment, enjoy yourself and don't be afraid to embrace others," said Stamper. "And with the diversity of personality types, everyone is very relatable."

Junior Colin Brown plays Mark Cohen, an aspiring filmmaker. "He's a loner, single and afraid of putting himself out there and getting involved in all the drama and tumult of life," said Brown. "So he hides behind his camera. He's secretly in love with his ex, Maureen, who left him for someone else. So that also holds him back. He's awkward and reserved, but he can bust loose when he's with his friends, and he's very loyal to them."

Brown calls his role both "super-fun and challenging," and he, too, enjoys acting with many of his best friends offstage. Toughest, he said, are singing high pitches and playing someone so shy, since he's more outgoing, himself. He especially likes the song, "What You Own," which he and Stamper perform together. "It's the show's big, turning point," said Brown. "It goes from the depressing start of the second act to the more uplifting and climactic ending."

He said the characters will appeal to the audience, as will the message to "be yourself, follow your own dreams and live every day like it's your last."

Classmate Lauren LeVine portrays Joanne, who's dating Maureen and is one of the more affluent people in the group. "She's gone to Harvard, but isn't part of the preppy life," said LeVine. "She's assertive, has some sass and is a little bossy. But she can also let loose and rough it with the rest of the gang. Because she's so different from them and grew up in a different world, she finds freedom in the artists' world and in being a friend."

Furthermore, said LeVine, "Joanne doesn't have to be perfect around them because they're not perfect, either. It shows that everyone can be affected by AIDS. She's gone to Harvard, yet has friends dying of the disease. As Joanne, I get to belt out some songs, and 'Rent's interesting because the whole cast collectively drives the story. Through this character, I've learned about the AIDS epidemic and how it affected people."

LeVine's favorite number is the iconic "Seasons of Love." She said everyone can relate to it because "it's about life and love. It's asking how you measure someone's life. And the whole ensemble sings some really nice harmonies."

Although the show's sad at times, she said it also has humor and excitement. "Its message is that we're all human beings, and more things connect us than separate us," said LeVine. "I think this story changed how people thought about the AIDS epidemic. They learned it was about normal people and it wasn't so distant from them."

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Cat It Again



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As my white cat, Twinkle, continues to walk left to right and right to left across my writing pad with various stops in between for scratching, nudging, belly-rubbing and paw patty cakes, I can't help wondering if there's a method to her non-madness. She doesn't appear to be the least bit agitated. She's not meowing her presence or seemingly demanding anything – other than attention, that is. In fact, she's purring and seems quite pleased with herself.

What's puzzling to me is exactly what the attraction/need is here? I don't have any treats. Her food and water bowls are not here. Neither is her litter box. It's in the adjacent room. Yet here she sits and rolls and scratches herself with what appears to be not a care or concern in the world. She seems extremely content with her situation.

I would have expected her to be sleeping in the house somewhere like our other four cats. I mean, it is 2:15 in the afternoon, many hours after her 6:30 breakfast and hours still to go before her 5:30 dinner. Heck, I've even dozed off myself for a bit before I sat down to try and write this column. But here she is, wide awake, and back and forth.

My wife, Dina, maintains that cats and dogs have a sixth sense when it comes to people being sick, and tend to hang around those afflicted with something or other, providing aid and comfort, if you will.

And so, she gets nervous when multiple cats surround me when we're sitting on the couch watching television: a black cat, usually "Sleeky," lays on top of the couch behind where I'm sitting; Twinkle, sits on the couch next to me and cuddles up against my left thigh; and Biscuit (one of our two buff-colored brothers) "sphinxes" on the coffee table staring at me while I'm having to stare through him to watch television. The other two cats, "Chino" and Andrew are usually sleeping in their spots, out of sight, but never out of mind.

A shift change, apparently. "Chino" has just jumped on my desk and Twinkle has jumped off, no doubt to find a warm spot to sleep perchance to dream. Chino is now laying on his side/back – partially on my writing pad, with his rear end pressed up against my left forearm with all four paws raised up in the air not exactly in my direction but definitely in my proximity.

This cat exchange sort of reminds of how my brother and I would alternate our visiting time with our parents on Sundays, splitting the day so that one of us was always present and accounted for.

But I'm not sick (OKAY, diseased then), and I don't feel as if I need 24/7-type cat companionship. Though I am home alone a lot – and left with my own thoughts, I don't view the cats shifting around me as anything more than there considering me as a big toy.

A toy whose movements and appearance are stimulating to them, sort of like a giant scratching post infused with catnip. A combination they couldn't possibly ignore, like peanut butter and chocolate is to me.

So as much as I feel nurtured and loved and comforted by this cat behavior, I don't feel it's because I'm sick, or rather about to be sick (again, their sixth sense at work), I feel simply that we have some very affectionate cats whose indoor-only lives have caused them to become dependent and appreciative of those who feed and water them. (We won't mention that we're also the ones who stuff them into cat carriers and drive them to the vet, an experience which they collectively hate.)

But if I do get sick (I guess I should be honest: get sicker, I do have cancer) I know I can count on "Chino," Biscuit, Twinkle, Andrew and "Sleeky" to always keep me company. I don't know how much better their presence will make me feel, but I do know their presence will keep me from feeling worse.

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

SPORTS



Centreville's Chris Kuzemka (12) beats Westfield's Sam Johnson (33) to the basket. Chris Kuzemka (12) scored 17 of Centreville's 62 points in win over Westfield



Sam Johnson (33) led Westfield with 15 points in game with crosstown rival Centreville.



Centreville's Bryce Douglas #1 and Lance Douglas #2 converge on Westfield's #3 Marshall Reed.

Centreville Defeats Westfield, 62-54

BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Centreville Wildcats hosted the Westfield Bulldogs on Jan. 24 in a conference game. Centreville came in having beaten Westfield 70-53 on Jan. 8. Centreville scored 19 1st-quarter points while allowing the Bulldogs just 12.

In the 2nd quarter, Centreville added to that lead, outscoring Westfield 18-14 to take a 4 point halftime lead, 37-26.

In the 3rd quarter, Westfield outscored the Wildcats 19-14, erasing the Wildcat double digit lead to pull within 6 points 61-55.

In the 4th quarter, the Wildcats put the

game away, outscoring Westfield 11-9, for a 62-54 win.

Centreville improved to (13-4), while Westfield fell to (1-13). Centreville was led by Bryce Douglas who scored a game and team high 22 points. Chris Kuzemka added 17. Westfield was led by Marshall Reed's 15, Sam Johnson's 14 and Taylor Morin's 11. For the game Centreville converted on 14-25 free throws. Westfield converted on 7 of their 11. Westfield out rebound Centreville 39-29, including 17 from Marshall Reed and Taylor Morin's 7.

Westfield will host James Madison and Chantilly this week. Centreville will play at Oakton and James Madison.



Taylor Morin (2) goes vertical to elevate over two Centreville defenders.



Westfield's Sam Johnson #33 dribbles the ball as Oakton's Ethan Kaloi #32 defends.

Cougars Claw Bulldogs

BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Oakton Cougars traveled to Chantilly to take on the Westfield Bulldogs on Jan. 22. The Bulldogs opened a 11-9 lead after playing the first eight minutes. Tahj Summey scored 5 points in the quarter while teammate Sam Johnson added 4. Oakton's Max Wilson would lead all scorers with 6 points.

In the 2nd quarter Oakton recovered from the deficit to take a 22-15 halftime advantage behind Garrett Johnson's 5 points. Micah Johnson-Parrotte and Max Wilson each added 4. Westfield's only scoring came from Trent Reimonenq and Jalen Pinna who

each scored 2 points.

In the 3rd quarter Westfield cut the deficit to 1 point outscoring the Cougar's, 16-10. The Bulldogs were led by Jalen Pinna's 7 points. Oakton was led by Garrett Johnson and Max Wilson who each scored 4 points.

With a 1 point lead, 32-31 to start the 4th quarter, the Cougars again outscored the Bulldogs 16-13, for a 52-48 victory. Oakton's Garrett Johnson would add 6 points for the quarter, giving him and teammate Max Wilson 18 points for the game. Westfield was led by Jalen Pinna and Tahj Summey who each scored 11 points.

With the win Oakton improves to (11-7). Westfield falls to (1-12).

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR/THE CONNECTION



Westfield's Taylor Morin #2 avoids Oakton's Max Wilson #23.