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Haley Shaha, 11, reads to Tia in the Pohick Regional Library 'Read to a Dog' program that help readers practice their skills in reading aloud.

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PET CONNECTION



Penny gives Ricky Church a kiss for good reading, with Chris Church.



Brothers Aaron and Ryan Shaha read a story with Tia



Ricky Church, 8, gets some reading support from Tricia Lowney, Bubby, and his dad Chris Church

Children Read to Dogs at Library

BY SUSAN LAUME

Every second Saturday of the month, the quiet of the library is broken by the sound of nails clicking on tile as therapy dogs enter the Pohick Regional Library for the “Read to a Dog” program to help readers practice their skills in reading aloud.

Reading is such a fundamental skill, but for many, learning to sound out words and make sense of jumbled letters can be challenging. In some Fairfax County libraries, dogs are lending an ear to children who need extra practice in reading without judgement, or who love to read for the pure enjoyment of books. All find a willing audience in a dog.

For each 15 minute session, the reader and the dog settle down on a blanket with a selected book.

SEE LIBRARY, PAGE 5



Team members (standing) Bob & Tricia Lowney, Sue Bognanno, (sitting) Sammy, Bubby, Susan Laume, Tia, Katie Bradley, Penny, and Emma pose after the reading session



Therapy dogs Tia and Penny find a horror story a good reason to stay close to dog moms Susan Laume and Katie Bradley.

PHOTOS BY
SUSAN LAUME



Zella Wertz gets a paw of support from Emma.



Guzman brothers Dominic, Cruz, and Luca read to Tia with encouragement from their dad.



Sue Bagnanno and Emma hear a story read by David Earwood

No Property Tax Rate Increase and Fully Funded Public Schools

County executive presents proposed FY 2020 budget.

ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

After several years of contentious budget wrangling, an increase in the tax rate, and negotiations forced to “kick-the-can” on many funding requests due to fiscal obstacles in a sluggish local economy, the proposed Fairfax County FY 2020 Budget still presents its challenges, but the county supervisors see progress and reason for optimism.

“There’s more good news than bad,” was Supervisor Jeff McKay’s (Lee District) reaction to County Executive Bryan Hill’s presentation to the Board on Tuesday, Feb. 19.

McKay is the chair of the Board of Supervisors’ budget committee, and while he and other supervisors still expressed some concerns, particularly over the additional monies required of the county to fund Metro, and the lack of funds to support much needed transportation and infrastructure improvements, the initial draft was generally met with a sense of “having something we can work with.”

McKay, board chair Sharon Bulova and others thanked Hill and county CFO Joe Mondoro for a proposed budget of \$4.4 billion that fully funds Fairfax County Public Schools, allows for raises that help align teachers’ salaries with neighboring jurisdictions and modest Market Rate Adjustments and longevity increases for county employees. The proposal also supports board priorities such as the Diversion First Program, Gang and Opioid Prevention efforts, Early Childhood and Environmental initiatives, and staffing and training for the South County Police Center and Animal Shelter that the county hopes to see operational by 2022.

Thanks to an increase in property values last year, more commercial properties added to the tax rolls, and economies and efficiencies instituted by Hill and the county, the proposed budget achieves these funding objectives without suggesting an increase to the residential real estate rate — the main source of the county’s revenue.

“This Advertised Budget assumes no change in the tax rate of \$1.15 per \$100 of assessed property value,” said Hill.

Helping things along financially was Virginia’s economic recovery from the recession and from sequestration.

“Our growth has finally picked up,” said Hill, noting a decline in office space vacancy rates, an increase in government contract spending, and employment gains in the Washington Metro region that rose above



County Executive Bryan Hill presents the proposed FY 2020 to the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 19. A series of public hearings and district town halls are slated before the budget’s markup and adoption, with Hill urging citizens to learn all the facts on the county’s website and get involved. “Your voice matters.”

historical averages in 2018. The county is also expecting a positive impact from the selection of Northern Virginia as a second headquarters for Amazon.

On the other side of the scale, Hill reminded that “no one yet really knows the true effect of the recent partial government shutdown.” In addition, the failure of the current General Assembly session to restore transportation funds to the region has pushed a number of projects further from their anticipated start or completion dates.

Without those funds, work to improve safety and traffic flow on roads like the Fairfax County and Franconia-Springfield Parkways will no doubt be negatively affected, according to Braddock District Supervisor John Cook, who added that “citizens need to know the facts, that even with 3 percent growth in the county, it’s still a struggle to meet our needs. We need their help.”

Several of the supervisors posed budget questions for Hill and Mondoro. The answers to their questions will be forthcoming at one of the Budget Committee meetings, and Hill also noted that the responses would be made available to the public on the county’s Management and Budget website.

While there is no assumption of a tax rate increase, other “non-general fund tax rate” service fees will see slight increases. Sewer Base Charges will rise from “\$30.38 per quarter, to \$32.91, the Sewer Availability

Charge (residential) will increase from \$8,100 to \$8,340 and the Sewer Service Charge will rise from \$7.00 to \$7.28 per 1,000 gallons.

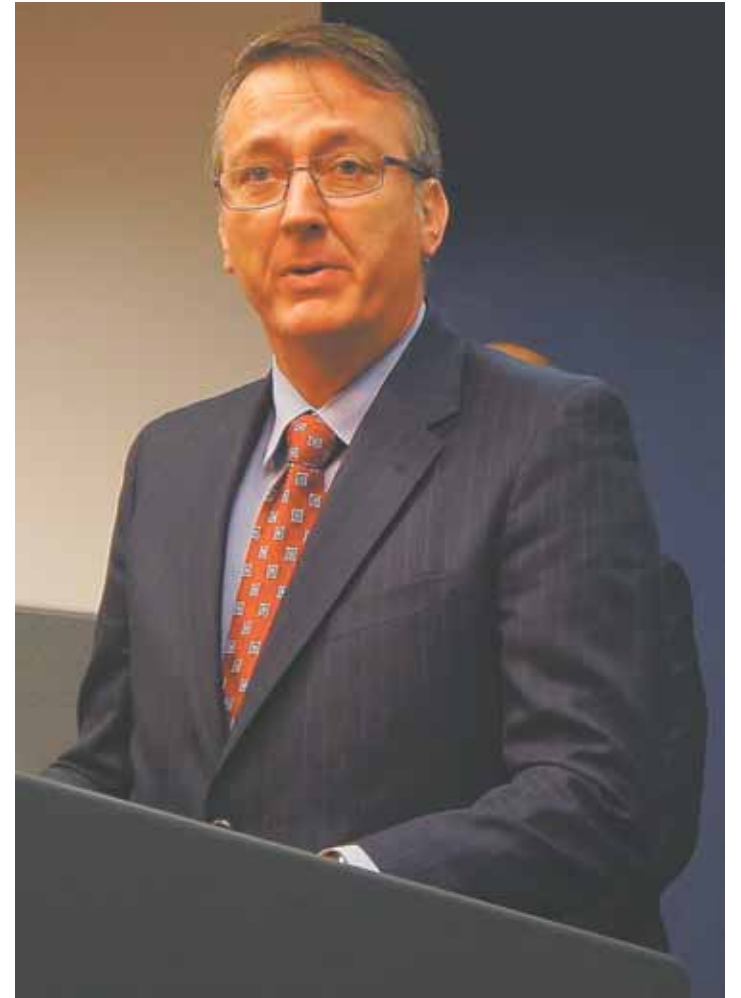
After the Budget presentation, Hill, CFO Mondoro, and Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools Scott Brabrand held a joint Q&A with media representatives.

“This is a superintendent’s dream,” said Brabrand in his remarks, “to be able to work with a county executive and to have the kind of relationship we are creating between the School Board and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. This is the right way to do business.”

To Brabrand, this budget “puts the needs of students first, the needs of the school system first.” He expressed “delight” that the budget is “finishing the work to make our teachers market competitive. We want the best and brightest teachers and support staff” so that the system can continue to provide an outstanding educational experience for the benefit of the entire community.

Brabrand vowed to continue the FCPS’s focus on One Fairfax to strive for equity in all aspects of its operation, and to continue collaborating with the Fairfax County government.

Hill ended on a positive note, saying that while he was disappointed that not all funding requests could be met as “we manage within our means to meet our 5 percent



Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools Scott Brabrand said he was “delighted” about the level of collaboration being created between the School Board and the county Board of Supervisors, and pleased that the FY 2020 proposed budget “puts the needs of students first, the needs of the school system first.”

needs on 3 percent growth,” many unfunded priorities from past years were finally being addressed. He also urged citizens to “get involved. All of the information is readily available. Your voice matters.”

Each district will host at least one budget town hall — with either Hill or Mondoro or both in attendance — before the Board of Supervisors holds public hearings and before the budget goes to “mark-up” on April 30, with adoption slated for the board meeting on May 7.

Public hearings before the board will be held on April 9 at 4 p.m. and on April 10 and 11 at 1 p.m. All meetings will take place at the Fairfax County Government Center in the Board Auditorium. Persons who wish to speak at a public hearing need to sign up with the Clerk by calling 703-324-3151, or by form at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form. Written testimony for the record can also be emailed to the Clerk’s Office at clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov.

A 37-page Summary of the Budget, a reader-friendly two-page highlights document, as well as complete information on the budget process, timeline, meetings and more are all available on the county’s website, search “budget.” Information on the town hall meetings can be found at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2020-budget-town-hall-meetings>.

PET CONNECTION



Freshly Groomed



Sully, Zeke, and daddy

Meet Sully and Zeke

Lindsey Smith, Chief of Staff at Supervisor John C. Cook, Braddock District, Office in Burke shares these few pictures of “his family.”

“Sully age 4 and Zeke age 3 have brightened the Smith house since their arrival. While Daddy stays busy as Chief of Staff to Braddock Supervisor John Cook, Mommy, Jill Westeyn, spends her days as a Federal employee but volunteers many hours to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and is on the Board

of the Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

Sully and Zeke love to hike and take naps on their loving humans. For Halloween this year, Jill made Mario and Luigi costumes and actually won a couple contests.

I also forgot that even though I work in Braddock, I live in Oak Hill in Sully, hence the pup’s name. Whenever I see past Supervisor Michael Frey, he never ask how I’m doing, only Sully and Zeke.”



Enjoying Snow, Patrolling the Coastline

Howard Madnick of Burke writes: “Our snow dog, Safie, is a 13 year old rescue dog from India, and she does prefer cold weather (and her snow stealth mode). Rocco, our five year old bulldog, is ready to patrol the coastline in a perfectly fit kayak.”



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Library

FROM PAGE 2

The child holds the book so the dog can see and begins to read aloud. There may be some help on tough words from the dog's handler or a handy parent, and perhaps even an encouraging kiss or steadying paw from the dog. The session progresses with the dog as a comfortable attentive audience, or perhaps a sleeping one, as the child reads without the pressure of judgement. In this comfortable environment, children find it's easier to practice reading skills; finding it easier to read aloud to a dog than to classmates as dogs take no notice if mistakes are made. As the University of California-Davis found in its 2010 study of the similar programs, children who read to a dog report greater enjoyment of reading.

The dogs in the program are trained therapy dogs. That means they have passed obedience and temperament tests, and they receive regular veterinary care. Some who come to Pohick Regional Library have extensive experience and service hours; others are new, but all show a natural inclination for therapy work.

Tia and Sammy are veteran readers and have served for 8 and 6 years respectively. They hold American Kennel Club Therapy Dog and Canine Good Citizen titles and have both worked with the elderly, severely injured adults, students at all educational levels, and provided comfort from the stresses of travel during holidays to passengers and crew at United Airlines concourse at Dulles International Airport.

Penny, a young Vizsla, is just beginning her service. Michael Bradley, with his wife, Katie, who handle Penny in her work, says "Penny is really good with people and seems to sense disabilities. Though an energetic puppy, she calms immediately when she senses a person needs special consideration. It's also important to Katie and I [therapy dog work]. We both see the benefit."

Tricia and Bob Downey, who handle Sammy and Bubby, have been active with their dogs in therapy work for many years in several settings. Tricia was an original coordinator and volunteered for many years for the program at Pohick, which operates through affiliation with the therapy dog organization, People, Animals, Love (PALS). Tricia notes that the Pohick program is now in its 11th year.

Susan Laume is a part-time writer/photographer for "The Blue View" who works with her dog, Tia, as a therapy dog team; and who advocates for animal legislation (www.novaca.org).

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OPINION

Consider a Greyhound

BY JENNY HARROP

What would you say to having a greyhound as a pet? It needs too much space. I could never give it enough exercise. That's not the dog for me. That is what I thought too. Please reconsider. This past November, Florida voters voted to close all of the state's greyhound racing tracks by the year 2020. There are 11 tracks in Florida, each with hundreds of dogs, many of whom will need homes. So, if you are thinking of adding a dog to your family in the next year, please consider a greyhound.



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

Dutch Julie: Retired racing greyhound.



Jenny and Ken Harrop with Julie on her "gotcha day."

Many of the commonly held assumptions about the breed are just not true, in fact, quite the opposite. The greyhounds have a nickname of the "40 MPH couch potato." While they can go 40 MPH on the track, once they retire they are very content to lounge around the house. My greyhound gets a short walk in the morning, a 30-minute mid-day walk, and a short walk in the evening.

People think greyhounds need a lot of space and fenced in yards. Would you believe they are on the American Kennel Club's list of best apartment dogs? We live in a townhouse and our greyhound does just fine. They do need to be kept on a lead when they are outside. They are sighthounds and can bolt after squirrels or birds.

There are two other aspects of the breed I'd like to highlight. First, they are incredibly sweet

and docile. People think otherwise because they are often pictured in their muzzles at the track. They wear these because they have very fragile skin and the muzzles protect them from injuries. Second, in terms of grooming they are very low maintenance. A bath a couple times a year and some brushing does the trick. They do have fast growing nails that need regular trimming, and as mouth breathers, they require regular dental care. Because they are bred and raised at the tracks they are used to being handled by humans so vet visits are not an issue.

It is surprisingly easy to meet and adopt a greyhound. The local adoption groups – listed below – frequently have "meet and greets" where you can ask questions and see some greyhounds. Once you adopt your greyhound, the groups are very supportive. My early owner

questions were answered within 24 hours, sometimes by multiple volunteers.

So please, if you might be getting a dog soon – be sure to meet a greyhound and research the breed a bit. They make wonderful pets and there are many who will need homes in the not too distant future.

Local Greyhound Adoption Groups:

Blue Ridge Greyhound Adoption – www.brga.org

Virginia greyhound Adoption – www.viriniagreyhounds.org

James River Greyhounds – www.jamesrivergreyhounds.org

Greyhound Pets of America – Northern Virginia www.gpa-nova.org

Meeting Sprite

I recently visited the Fairfax County Animal Shelter to drop off some pet food donations. In addition to seeing bunnies and the most adorable bonded pair of kittens, I also met a little white rat named Sprite. I had no idea that rats could be so affectionate, curious and sweet. Turns out rats make great pets and you can even teach them tricks. If you are looking for a new pet but don't have a lot of room, consider stopping by the Fairfax County Animal Shelter to see if Sprite still needs a home.

— SHARON BULOVA
CHAIRMAN OF THE FAIRFAX
COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**Sharon Bulova
and Sprite**



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WINTER SHELTERS

Find homeless and cold weather drop-in centers and shelters that serve Northern Virginia at www.novaregion.org/174/Homeless-Shelter-Lists.

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.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

Burke
CONNECTION

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NEWS

Filler-Corn's Constitutional Amendment for Disabled Veterans Clears First Hurdle

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

This past Friday, Del. Eileen Filler-Corn's (D-41) amendment cleared its first hurdle towards being added to Virginia's Constitution. HJ 676 would provide that one motor vehicle of a veteran who has a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability shall be exempt from state and local taxes. The amendment would also provide that only automobiles and pickup trucks qualify for the exemption. This legislation was a major priority of Virginia's Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Services Organizations and was a bipartisan effort.

"I consider it a privilege to carry legislation for such important potential change to our constitution," said Filler-Corn. "My district is home to a large military and veteran population. Ensuring that my constituents and other Virginians who have made tremendous sacrifices to defend our freedom can have the independence they deserve is a top priority for me." The Delegate, a member of the General



Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41)

Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus and Leader of the House Democrats has also been a longtime champion of disability-related issues.

In order to change the Virginia Constitution, amendments must first pass the House and Senate during two consecutive legislative sessions. The language cannot change. Following General Assembly action, the amendment becomes a referendum and is added as a question on the ballot. If a majority of voters approve the initiative, then the amendment to the constitution is ratified. The earliest this amendment could appear on a Virginia ballot is the November 2020 election.

PEOPLE & PETS OF BURKE

Remembering Shirley, the Fish

Maria Garcia of Burke writes: "In memory of Shirley, our betta fish. Owned by Noelle Garcia, 11, of Burke, Shirley loved listening to poetry, mini-vacations at our neighbor's house, and road trips. She visited the Buckeye State several times and enjoyed a week at the Outer Banks last summer. St. Francis welcomed her to fish-heaven last November after she spent a unique and fulfilling 3 and a half years with our family."



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CALENDAR

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THURSDAY/FEB. 28

Screening: The Unafraid. 7:30-10 p.m. at Johnson Center Cinema - George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. GMU Visiting Filmmakers Series: The Unafraid with Heather Courtney. The documentary follows three DACA students in Georgia over four years, growing up both American and undocumented in the United States. Free. Call 703-993-2768 or visit fams.gmu.edu/events/8588 for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 28-SUNDAY/MARCH 3

Really Really. Thursday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 2 p.m. at GMU's deLaski Performing Arts Building, A105, TheaterSpace, Fairfax Campus. When morning-after gossip about privileged Davis and ambitious Leigh turns ugly, self-interest collides with the truth, and the resulting storm of ambiguity makes it hard to discern just who's a victim, who's a predator, and who's a Future Leader of America. Contains adult language and situations, and depictions of sexual violence. \$20 Adult, \$10 students, staff, seniors and groups. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/really-really.

FRIDAY/MARCH 1

Registration Deadline: Fairfax Adult Softball. Experience first-hand the enjoyment that only FAS softball offers with play for adult men and women in a number of different leagues across Fairfax County: Men, Women, Coed, Modified Coed, Social Coed, Fast Pitch, Men's 35+, Men's 50+ and Church. Team and individual registration now open. Visit us and register online at www.fairfaxadultsoftball.com.

Hope for the Warriors Workshop. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. In Springfield. A one-day military caregiver workshop that focuses on self-care and mindfulness with activities that include: art therapy, applied theater experiential, therapeutic yoga by Pamela Stokes Eggleston of Yoga2Sleep, share time with other caregivers. Hope For The Warriors assists veterans, service members and military families with a variety of programming including clinical health and wellness, sports and recreation and transition services. Pre-registration is required and can be completed by emailing or calling Dana Thompson at 646-937-1622 or dthompson@hopeforthewarriors.org.

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638 for more.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 1-2

Mark Morris Group. 8 p.m. Friday, and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG), one of the most revered contemporary dance companies performing today, returns to their Northern Virginia home at the Center. This influential dance company performs to live music by the MMDG Music Ensemble in a diverse program that includes *Little Britten*; *The Trout*, a brand new work set to music from Schubert's Trout Quintet; and another of Morris'



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF MALET

Bowen McCauley Dance Company's Alicia Curtis and Sidney Hampton.



PHOTO COURTESY FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Clarinetist Ismail Lumanovski performing with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra on March 9 at Center for the Arts.

New Musical and Dance Journey

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra brings special guests to GMU.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Something unique is in store for patrons of the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. It is to a music and dance program “way off the beaten track. I wanted to combine traditional classical music with music quite removed from those specific traditions,” said Christopher Zimmerman, conductor and music director, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO).

“We are collaborating with the area’s premier contemporary dance company, Bowen McCauley Dance Company, whose dancers will perform alongside three of the six pieces in the music program,” noted Zimmerman. “The choreography will be newly created for this collaboration by their founder and artistic director, Lucy Bowen McCauley.”

The FSO will be performing well-known works such as the Mozart Clarinet concerto, two short Sibelius pieces and an arrangement of Gershwin preludes. Then the performance “culminates in music by the young, provocative Turkish composer, Erberk Eryilmaz, whose two pieces ‘concerto for wind instru-

Where and When

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) performs with special guests the Lucy Bowen McCauley Dance Company and clarinetist Ismail Lumanovski at George Mason University, Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performance: Saturday, March 9, 2019 at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$65, \$43, \$39, and \$25, with \$15 student tickets. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxsymphony.org or by phone 703-993-2787. **Note:** Before the concert at 7 p.m. a discussion with the artists and FSO music director Christopher Zimmerman.

ment, piano, percussion, strings and imaginary folk dancers’ and ‘dances of the yogurt maker’ combine the rawness and fierce rhythmic intensity of Turkish folk music with more established classical traditions,” said Zimmerman.

Composer Eryilmaz will be at the FSO performances, both overseeing his compositions’ recreations and performing on piano.

Also performing with the FSO will be Macedonian clarinetist Ismail Lumanovski. Zimmerman described Lumanovski as “an artist of jaw-dropping technical abilities on his instrument(s) (he plays three types of clarinets for this concert) and equally accomplished in both the classical repertoire and the folk

music of his native land and its immediate neighbor, Turkey.”

Lumanovski indicated that the FSO concert “will be very interesting and challenging at the same time. There will be three totally different styles of the clarinet performed in one night with three different clarinets. From the pureness of sound and expression by Mozart, to the loose and swingy mood by Gershwin, and intriguing fast-changing time signatures with exquisite orchestration by composer Eryilmaz.”

For choreographer Lucy Bowen McCauley the event “will be very special.” She has danced to Sibelius in her career. “It’s terrific to approach the same piece as a Choreographer.” Using the Gershwin piece choreographically is “an opportunity to hear a twist on the arrangement by the FSO.”

Bowen McCauley described composer Eryilmaz’s “yogurt-maker” composition as a “very challenging piece...that’s intricate and sophisticated. Our dancers are truly enjoying the challenge. For me, it’s a privilege to work with a living composer.”

Far from the traditional awaits patrons at this distinctive Fairfax Symphony evening.

newest works, *Numerator*. Cost is \$50, \$43, and \$30. A pre-performance discussion with a member of the company begins 45 minutes prior to the performance.

free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

MARCH 2-31

The Explorer’s Club. Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. at Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. London, 1879. The prestigious Explorers Club is in crisis: their acting president wants to admit a woman, and their bartender is terrible. True, this female candidate is brilliant, beautiful, and has discovered a legendary Lost City, but the decision to let in a woman could shake the very foundation of the British Empire, and how does one make such a decision without a decent drink? This is the area premier of The Explorer’s Club by Nell Benjamin, directed by Frank Shutts. \$20-\$30. Visit www.workhousearts.org for more.

SUNDAY/MARCH 3

Historical Society of Fairfax County Meeting. 2-4 p.m. at

Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters, 12099 Government Center Pkwy., Fairfax. Come join the Fairfax County Historical Society as it tours the new Fairfax County Fire & Police Museum. View vintage uniforms, firearms, patches, and memorabilia. Free parking in the garage. Free. Email suzannelevy@cox.net or visit www.fairfaxhistoricalsociety.org for more.

Basket Bingo. 2-5 p.m. at West Springfield High School – Cafeteria, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield. Doors open at 1 p.m. Twenty Bingo games will be played for prizes. There will be a door prize raffle, three special games, and three raffle ticket drawings. Prizes include electronics, a gift card tree, and more. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. \$25 in advance; \$30 at the door. There is no ATM on site, bring cash or checks. Visit www.spartancrew.org or email info@spartancrew.org for more.

Erth’s Prehistoric Aquarium. 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. at GMU’s Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, Fairfax Campus.

Erth’s Prehistoric Aquarium Adventure is an immersive experience that invites everyone to jump in and explore unknown ocean depths where prehistoric marine reptiles lived eons ago—and maybe live still today. \$15 for Adults/\$10 Children. Family-Friendly. Recommended for ages 5 and up. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/erth-39-s-prehistoric-aquarium-adventure.

MONDAY/MARCH 4

Mason Symphony Orchestra Concerto Concert. 8 p.m. at GMU’s Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, Fairfax Campus. Under the direction of, Dr. Dennis Layendecker, the Mason Symphony Orchestra is comprised of string, wind, and percussion players from throughout the School of Music, but is open for participation by all qualified musicians pursuing any major at George Mason University. \$20 adults, \$15 seniors, \$5 youth through grade 12. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/mason-symphony-orchestra-concerto-concert.

Giving Up the Car Keys?

Recognizing warning signs that it might be time to stop driving.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Tracy Palmer didn't see the accident, but she received a frantic call that every parent dreads: her 11-year-old son had been hit by a car.

"We were on vacation visiting my brother and I'd gone to get coffee and my phone rang," she said. "My brother told that an 82-year old woman hit my son while he and a few of his cousins were sitting just off the driveway drawing with chalk. She never saw the kids and when she hit my son she thought she'd hit a ball, so she kept going. Thank God one of the neighbors saw it and stopped her."

After eight days in the intensive care unit, Palmer's son is on the mend, but Palmer who works as an attorney in Arlington, however, is furious that the elderly driver was allowed behind the wheel of a car in the first place.

Monitoring one's driving abilities is an essential part of our overall healthcare, especially as one ages. "There's no cutoff age for when a person should stop driving. But as we age, our joints can become stiff, our reflexes slow down and our ability to make split-second judgement calls or stop on a dime can become impaired," said Dana Kilgore, MSPT. "Our bodies also become more frail as we age, so the impact of a car accident would probably do more harm to a 85-year old than a 25-year old."

It is important for seniors and their families to pay close to attention to the warning signs that it's time to reduce one's driving or stop it all together, says psychologist Donna Goldstein, Psy.D. "If you notice an increased number scratches or dents on that mom or dad's car, especially if they've always been a good driver, that could be an indicator," she said. "Getting traffic tickets, getting lost frequently, running stop signs

or traffic lights, those are all signs that it might be time to leave the driving to someone else."

Accepting the fact that it's time to stop driving can be difficult. "A driver's license isn't just a plastic card with a bad picture that you keep in your wallet," said Lisa Dombo, LPC, Ed.D, a marriage and family therapist in McLean. "It means freedom and independence. It's hard for anyone to want to give that up. That's one of the reasons why it can be so hard for people to convince someone that they need to stop driving."

That is a lesson that Naomi O'Conner learned one weekend this winter when she made plans with friends to take in a designer sample sale that was happening about two-miles from her house. Her 86-year old mother had agreed to babysit her 7 and 9-year old children. But the weather took a frosty turn and threw her plans into a tailspin.

"My mom lives a mile away from me and has always been my most dependable back-up babysitter for weeknights, but when the snow started falling, I knew that I could not let her get on the road in that weather," said O'Conner who lives in Bethesda. "It was for her safety and everybody else who'd be on road. Unfortunately, she kept insisting that

she would be fine and even became a little peeved that I was suggesting that she was too old. Too keep her off the road, I had to concoct a story about one of my friends getting sick and canceling the plans."

The thought of suggesting to a loved one that it's time to give up their car keys can be daunting. Dombo says that there are steps that one can take to make such a conversation less intimidating. "This is a very sensitive issue for many people because it means dramatic change in lifestyle and having less control over ourselves," she said. "It's important to be respectful and not talk to them like they are a child. Give specific examples instead of making general statements and try not to have the conversation alone. It's usually more effective to have the conversation with a group of family members."

Demonstrating an understand of the what reduced driving means is also important, suggests Goldstein. "You must show empathy," she said. "This type of transition can lead to depression for some seniors. Offering alternatives like gift certificates for cab rides or Uber or Lyft can be good. Coming up with a plan to remain socially active and to run errands and get to doctor's appointments. But this type of life transition is not easy, but it is possible to live a rich, full life without a car."

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CAPPIES REVIEW

From left: Michael Totten, Erik Wells, Carolyn Willmore, Camille Neumann in the Lake Braddock Secondary School performance of "Moon Over Buffalo."



Over-the-Moon Show at Lake Braddock

Lake Braddock Secondary performance of "Moon Over Buffalo."

BY SOPHIE CALANDRA
SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

Lake Braddock Secondary School should be over the moon after their exciting and hilarious performance of "Moon Over Buffalo."

"Moon Over Buffalo" is the comedic Ken Ludwig play set in Buffalo, N. Y. that follows travelling actors George and Charlotte Hay through a series of entertaining mishaps and miscommunication while trying to impress a Hollywood director, all while dealing with their own marital and familial issues. The first production of "Moon Over Buffalo" opened on Broadway at the Martin Beck Theatre on Oct. 1, 1995, directed by Tom Moore. The original George and Charlotte, Philip Bosco and Carol Burnett were each nominated for Tony Award Best Actor and Actress in a Play.

The show is led by the lively Erik Wells who portrayed egotistical actor George Hay, and displayed his wide range and commitment to the role by playing both completely drunk, as well as sober and arrogant. Wells' cavalier and vein character, accompanied with hilarious physicality had the audience roaring with every line. Wells was also extremely compatible with his witty co-star Camille Neumann, who portrayed the other half of the rocky marriage, Charlotte Hay. The two worked well together and played the on and off relationship very convincingly.

Neumann played the classy, confident actress through effective facial expressions and comedic line delivery, along with impressive body language to convey her character's thoughts.

Adin Weingast, as Paul Singer, consistently produced raucous laughter from the audience with every perfectly timed face, movement, and line as he embodied his character without wavering. Weingast was consistently show-stoppingly hilarious in his every scene with every other character, especially George, where as a couple, their physical comedy stole the show.

Shyanne Hall, who played Rosalind, the daughter of the actors, displayed comedic delivery with her lines, and played off her fellow actors very well, particularly in the beginning of the third act where she must delay the play, then is accompanied by the rest of the cast for their show-within-a-show to fall apart. She particularly played well with Weingast as Paul and Michael Totten as Howard, her former and current boyfriends. The timid Totten displayed an awkward and nervous Howard, who could easily snap into his confident weatherman persona, always left the audience howling.

The technical team showed impressive talent with effective makeup and wigs, as well as 1950s period costumes. The lighting was simple, yet appropriate and a lit cyclorama provided a practical background for the well-constructed and accurate set. The sound cues were timed perfectly, including a gunshot followed by a falling vase that was executed flawlessly. The minimal scene changes and use of pre-recorded lines to cover the change kept the show flowing smoothly.

Overall, the Lake Braddock's production of "Moon Over Buffalo" was hilarious, satisfying, and impressively executed.

Rainbow Over 'Old Burke'

Tom Bland of Burke took this picture of "a beautiful rainbow" over "old Burke" from the Coffey Woods Rd west of Burke Lake Road! "Look closely for the special purple color," said Bland.



BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 6

Union Mill Elementary is currently registering new students for the 2019-20 school year. Find registration forms in the Union Mill Elementary office or online at www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/enroll_0.pdf. Call 703-322-8500 or email lrnulla@fcps.edu to make an appointment to bring completed registration forms and supporting documentation to school. Kindergarten Orientation will take place on Monday, April 1, 4-5 p.m.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Interested in local Civil War or Railroad History? Consider volunteering at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. The Museum is also seeking an individual to coordinate the scheduling of the volunteer staff. Training will be provided for all positions. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 for 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. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke needs volunteer drivers for trips to medical appointments (Monday - Friday) and companion shopping (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 or call 703-323-4788.

INPUT SOUGHT

Shaping the Future Together. Fairfax County Government is beginning a strategic planning process with the community to shape the future together. The goal is to hear all voices and reach all segments of the community. This effort will span most of 2019, but in this first phase, the community is being asked to visit fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan and:

- ❖ Take a short five-question online survey
- ❖ Join a community conversation in person: March 6 - Falls Church.
- ❖ Share the survey and conversation invitation with neighbors, co-workers and county family and friends.

FRIDAY/MARCH 1

Technology Fridays in March. 10 a.m.-noon at the Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, Entrance 1, Room 100. Join the Parent Resource Center for this series of technology workshops presented by FCPS Assistive Technology Services. Register for one or all of the workshops. Explore a variety of technology tools to support student success and independence with reading and writing in the digital classroom and at home. Register at www.fcps.edu/index.php/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center. Call 703-204-3941 or email prc@fcps.edu for more.

- ❖ March 1 - Technology to Support Reading and Writing: Encouraging Independence and Student Success
- ❖ March 8 - Exploring Early Childhood AT Home: Assistive Technology for Preschool
- ❖ March 15 - Technology Tools to Support Executive Functioning
- ❖ March 22 - Assistive Technology to Support Communication

SATURDAY/MARCH 2

Sibshops. 9 a.m.-noon at Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. The Sibshop workshops are for children in grades 2-5 who have siblings with special needs enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools. Meet other siblings in a fun, recreational setting; celebrate siblings; share sibling experiences and receive peer support; play games and more. A snack will be provided. Registration is free, donations will be accepted to support the cost of materials and food. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center or call the FCPS Parent Resource Center at 703-204-3941 to register.

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The Following is a Test



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Although you can adjust your television set, it's probably wise to have juiced the battery in your cellular phone. Better still, use your landline - if you have one - thereby preventing a dropped call right in the middle of your interminable hold. Because the call you're about to make - to a government office - is likely not going to be made to the correct number or the correct person or at the correct time or even to the correct department.

And should you be lucky enough to reach an actual person with your call, the explanation for your call/the problem you're attempting to resolve, will no doubt result in a transfer which most likely will not be to the correct number, the correct person, at the correct time or even to the correct department.

Unfortunately, after perusing the government's website, you're just not smart enough to figure out exactly what number you're supposed to call. (Is anyone that smart?) And therefore you are likely going to experience this loop-de-loop - without the upset stomach.

And what makes your attempt even worse? Hanging up, since your call might be "answered in the order in which it was received."

Now presuming/assuming that a less-than-immediate solution will not be at hand, there are a few steps one should take in preparation to not make a bad situation worse:

- * Allow for plenty of time. Do not make this call when you're in a hurry, on break/at lunch or have a limited window of opportunity to complete your task. You will need to be in for the long haul, so to speak.

- * Try to make this call when you're able to sit/stand comfortably - for long periods of time. Moreover, make sure you have the privacy you need so that anything you say will not be heard (or held against you in a court of law) and any movements your body makes will likewise not be seen.

There's something about being stuck on the phone for long periods of time waiting, waiting, waiting; talking, talking, talking; hoping (you'll note I didn't say expecting) to reach the right person and/or resolve the problem/get the answer which prompted the call in the first place, which rarely brings out the best in the person on hold. Quite frankly, it's been my personal experience that it brings out the worst.

In addition to having the time and the place, one must also have the patience. That patience comes from proper preparation. And by "proper preparation" I mean the creature comforts: food, water and access to a bathroom.

The order really should be reversed with bathroom access first and foremost. Being uncomfortable, shall we say, after finding the time and place, and then making the effort to navigate the government's website looking for the proper person, phone number, department and then in the midst of any success you might have accomplishing this Herculean feat, to have that very personal need interrupt the proceedings is the definition of poor planning.

Common sense has to prevail or the consequences may be dire; you might have to start your calling process all over again. I wouldn't wish that on any one.

There is no greater satisfaction than surviving making one of these calls, and having done so because you put all of your adult Boy Scout skills to work. There really should be badge of honor one can earn after completing this dreaded and arduous task.

In fact, there should be some kind of reward. Although I imagine reaching nirvana (not listening to Nirvana) is its own reward.

Nevertheless, having survived the ordeal and endured the suffering for as many minutes as I care not to remember, I can say with absolute certainty, it's a hell of a feeling. I wish you all well in your next pursuit of truth and justice despite the American Way.

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

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