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Saint Archer the puppy was born on Valentine's Day to Momma dog, Lunabell. "I call the coffee cup, a pup-a-ccino," writes Theodore Bonham of Reston.

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Best of Reston Honorees Revealed

\$150,000 committed to Cornerstones at its Community Celebration Reception.

PHOTOS BY CHIP MCCREA PHOTOGRAPHY

Cornerstones and the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, along with SOS International LLC (SOSi), hosted a Celebration Reception where eight 2019 Cornerstones of Our Community-Best of Reston Award Honorees were revealed. The selected Honorees will be celebrated at the 2019 Cornerstones of Our Community – Best of Reston Awards Gala on April 4 for giving selflessly of their time, for the causes about which they are passionate, and in so doing, making the community stronger.

The 2019 Honorees are:

- ❖ A Simple Gesture (Bob Schnapp)
- ❖ BEI (Ellen and Mike Jennings)
- ❖ Omicron Kappa Kappa Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity/OKK Foundation, Inc.
- ❖ Synergy Design & Construction (Mina and Mark Fies)
- ❖ Touching Heart (Helen and Taylor Yi)
- ❖ Maggie Parker
- ❖ Roz Rakoff
- ❖ Kurt Rose

Mark Ingrao, President and CEO of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce said at the reception, “Partnering to produce this event reaffirms our commitment to recognizing those who go above and beyond to build, sustain and enrich this community. The Chamber is dedicated to collaborations that offer a business environment that is planned, proven and connected.”

Julian M. Setian, President and CEO of SOSi serves as the 2019 Gala Chair and hosted the Celebration Reception. Setian announced an ambitious fundraising goal for the Best of Reston Gala and pledged SOSi’s commitment to Cornerstones by presenting Cornerstones with a \$50,000 donation.

Best of Reston sponsorships, seat and table reservations for the April 4th Awards Gala can be made online at www.cornerstonesva.org/BOR.

Bob and Lisa Van Hoecke were also recognized for their support of Cornerstones for more than ten years, and for committing \$100,000 as Cornerstones’ Champion Annual Partner. Bob Van Hoecke recently chaired the 36th Annual Capitol Steps Benefit, which raised over \$400,000 this year.

“SOSi, Bob and Lisa, Reston Community Center and Bechtel and others here tonight are among a very special group of organizations who have made



Cornerstones recognizes Bob and Lisa Van Hoecke for more than ten years of support and for committing \$100,000 as Cornerstones’ Champion Annual Partner during the Cornerstones of our Community Celebration Reception.



Julian M. Setian, President and CEO of SOSi announces an ambitious fundraising goal for the Best of Reston Gala pledging SOSi’s commitment to Cornerstones of a \$50,000 donation.



The Omicron Kappa Kappa Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity/OKK Foundation, Inc. is among the eight 2019 Best of Reston Honorees. Members inspire young people with their service to the community by volunteering at events like Taste of Reston, Flavors of Fall, Reston Relay for Life, Northern Virginia Project Giveback and the Dr. Charles Drew Blood Drive.

a commitment to Cornerstones as Annual Partners - whose sustaining support helps us meet challenges in the community year-round,” said Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Cornerstones.

For more information, visit www.cornerstonesva.org or call 571.323.9555.



PHOTO BY VALERIE LISTER

South Lakes High School’s 4x400 meter relay team (from left): Juvannadean Mullings, Emily Lannen, Hannah Waller, Mary Gregory

Lady Seahawks Finish Second at State Championship

Going into the final event of the meet, South Lakes High School only needed to finish ahead of South County High School to preserve second place at the 6A State Championship.

They did that and much more at the Boo Williams Sportsplex in Hampton, Va.

Juniors Mary Gregory, Emily Lannen, Hannah Waller and sophomore Juvannadean Mullings won the 4x400 meter relay with a school and state meet record time of 3:54.75, topping not only South County but race favorite Western Branch High School.

It’s the second consecutive runner-up finish for the SLHS girls track team. The Lady Seahawks scored 49 points and were followed by South County’s 40. Western Branch won the title again, this year with 77 points. There are 52 schools in 6A.

The school record of 3:57.52 was set by Kristen Cohen, Misty Johnson, Jeraldine Cofie and Carielle Doe during the 1995-1996 season. The state meet

record of 3:54.98 as set by Oscar Smith High School in 2016.

Waller led the team scoring by winning the long jump in 18.08.75, finishing second in the 55 meters (7.05) and third in the 300 meters (39.29). Mullings teamed with freshman Jillian Howard, junior Rhema Konadu and senior Nicole Post for second in the 4x200 meter relay (1:45.52).

Gregory and Lannen also scored in individual events. Gregory was sixth in the 300 meters with a personal-best time of 40.44. Lannen also had a personal best time in finishing sixth in the 1,000 meters (3:02.04). Senior Samantha Van Haaren was seventh in the high jump (5-00.00).

Junior Caleb Miller was sixth in the shot put (47-08.25) for the boys team that finished 34th. Senior Asher Levy-Myers finished eighth in the pole vault.

SLHS will close the indoor season with a select group participating in the New Balance Nationals March 8-10.

WEEK IN RESTON

Hunter Mill District to Hold Town Hall on the Budget

Supervisor Cathy Hudgins will be hosting the annual Hunter Mill District Town Hall on the Budget, Saturday, March 2 at Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. County Executive Bryan Hill, County Staff and staff from Fairfax County Public Schools will be presenting the Fairfax County FY2020 Budget Proposal and Fairfax County Public Schools proposed budget.

Come early for coffee at 8:30 a.m. with presentations beginning at 9 a.m. Questions and answer session will follow the presentations.

Afterwards, stick around and take a tour of the farm and visit with this year’s new baby animals. There’s always something new on the farm!

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."

"... a very sensitive issue for many people because it means dramatic change in lifestyle and having less control over ourselves."

— Lisa Dombo, LPC, Ed.D

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PET CONNECTION

From Common to Exotic

Reston pets mark their owners' hearts.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Pet owners in Reston take pride in their creatures and enjoy their unconditional love and amusing antics. Pets, on the other hand, help care for their humans. Reston dogs take their willing and not so willing two-legged friends out by the leash for a little exercise and socialization, up and down pathways and into nearby village centers. Indoor creatures, cats, birds and even curious little hedgehogs appear to know just when to cuddle up to their humans.



"Hedge has been the best thing to happen to me; his tiny feet have made a huge mark on my heart. He told me he wanted a sibling...but my own sibling/landlord told me no, so I bought this shirt instead."
- Heather Fields, former Restonian, current Reston volunteer and owner of the hedgehog, Baron von Hedge of Elkridge, "Hedge" or "The Baron" for short.



"Luna's a couch potato Italian Greyhound who loves relaxing at her home in Reston!" - Tom Steiner of Reston



Chance, an Australian Shepherd says, "Snow days are the best!" - Sophia Staples of Reston

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



"I have an overbite," says Kona, a chocolate English Labrador Retriever owned by Patrick Leonard of Reston.



Saint Archer the puppy was born on Valentine's Day to Momma dog, Lunabell. "I call the coffee cup, a pup-a-ccino." - Theodore Bonham of Reston



Momma dog, Lunabell watches over newborn pup, Saint Archer. The dogs belong to Theodore Bonham of Reston.

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Announcements

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FRC Balance LLC trading as True Food Kitchen, 11901 Democracy Drive, Reston, Fairfax County, Virginia 20190-5662. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on Premises, Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Allison Nicole Schuider, CFO authorizing advertisement. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

Announcements

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Go on a "Blind Date" for Charity.

At Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Take a chance this February and let Scrawl set you up - sight unseen - with a great read. Get a few hints and a brief description of what might be hidden inside. Proceeds from sales of "Blind Date" books will benefit local schools and pre-k programs. Visit www.scrawlbooks.com or call 703-966-2111.

Audubon Photography Awards Show.

Through Feb. 27, Mondays, Wednesdays-Fridays 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; and Sundays 1-4 p.m. at Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. The winning photographers and their photographs were selected from more than 8,000 entries submitted by photographers from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and 10 Canadian provinces. This year's photographs celebrate the splendor of many bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Call 703-476-9689 or email naturecenter@reston.org for more.

Winter Golf.

Through Feb. 28, skip the traffic with the Afternoon Drive special at the heated and covered ranges at Burke Lake Golf Center and the newly renovated Oak Marr Golf Complex. All buckets are \$2 off, Monday-Thursday, 4 p.m. until closing. Or try the indoor studio at Pinecrest Golf Course's Valis Family Golf Learning Center, featuring three indoor hitting bays or a private session with the TrackMan Golf Simulator Suite (five person max.), both reserved by the hour. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf.

Exhibition: "For the Love of Art."

Through Feb. 28 at the Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Members of the League of Reston Artists display paintings, drawings, mixed media, photographs and two-dimensional works suitable for wall hanging. This show is free and open to the public during the center's regular operating hours. Kathleen Best Gillman judges the show. Visit www.leagueofrestonartists.org for more.

Winter Wonderland Ice Skating.

Public skating every day and extended hours for all Holidays, through March 10, hours vary at Reston Town Center Ice Skating Pavilion. Special events throughout the weekend, join in: Thursdays for College Night, \$2 off admission with a valid ID; Fridays for Rock the Rink with a live DJ; and Saturdays for Cartoon Skate, glide around the ice with The Grinch and Scooby Doo. The skate shop is stocked with over 500 pairs of skates ranging from size 8 toddler through men's size 13, in both figure and hockey styles. Visit restontowncenter.com/amenities/ice-skating for more.

Art Exhibition: IRL.

Through April 23, Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at The Signature at Reston Town Center, 11850 Freedom Drive, Reston. IRL is a solo exhibition featuring work by painter and video artist Monica Stroik. Through a combination of video and paintings selected from her ongoing Cyber series, IRL (online shorthand for "in real life") investigates concepts of simultaneously being present and disconnected and how the natural world becomes entangled in digital lives. Free and open to the public. Visit restonarts.org for more.



PHOTO COURTESY RESTON COMMUNITY PLAYERS

Jane Steffan as Sarah Goodwin in Reston Community Players production of "Time Stands Still" at Reston CenterStage, March 1 to 6, 2019.

War Photographer Comes Back Home

Reston Community Players presents "Time Stands Still."

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Where and When

"Time Stands Still" is truly a play that could have been ripped from today's headlines, covering the full range of emotions from love to betrayal, pride to envy, and commitment to disillusion," said Adam Konowe who directs the play. "It deserves to be produced and seen."

Written by Donald Margulies, "Time Stands Still" was nominated for two Tony Awards, including Best Play. The play examines the lives and relationship of one couple making a living out of documenting the horrors of war. When Sarah Goodwin (played by Jane Steffan), a photojournalist, returns from covering the Iraq War after being injured by a roadside bomb, her reporter boyfriend James Dodd (played by Greg Lang) is racked by guilt. He had left Sarah alone in Iraq.

Both Sarah and James are bruised and exhausted. Together they explore whether it is even possible for two people who are used to living in dangerous conditions to find a normal life together. They are joined by Richard Ehrlich (portrayed by Todd Hulse) and Mandy Bloom (portrayed by Alex Sands).

For Konowe, "Time Stands Still" reflects the complexity of life at home, at work and among friends. It demonstrates that what fulfills us in one sense can be destructive elsewhere. It reinforces that truth - portrayed here through journalism - is worth fighting for and serves

Reston Community Players present "Time Stands Still" at Reston Community Center, CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Hunters Woods, Reston. Performances March 1 to 6, 2019. March 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, and 16, 2019 at 8 p.m. March 10 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$28 Adults (19-64), \$24 Seniors (65 and older), and \$24 Students (18 and younger). Call Reston Community Center CenterStage Box office at 703-476-4500 or visit www.restonplayers.org. **Note:** CenterStage is accessible and offers listening devices for the hearing impaired

society well, even when the news it conveys is difficult to comprehend or appreciate."

One of the most interesting parts about the character of James is "the choices and actions he makes in an attempt to protect the one he loves and, his inability to correlate these with the downhill spiral his life is taking. He gives us a glimpse into the life of someone living with PTSD and how this tragic disorder can severely impact the way we live our lives" said Greg Lang. According to Jane Steffan, her character "Sarah is the most complex character I have ever played. She has many walls she knows about and others she discovers along the way. She's not sure she knows who she is anymore."

Inviting audiences to the RCP's "Time Stands Still" Todd Hulse said that playwright "Donald Margulies doesn't set out to provide answers in his plays. Rather, he is a master at exploring the nature of relationships, both personal and societal. He challenges audiences to consider bigger issues that both unite and divide us, without preaching."

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 6

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 27

Meet Me at the Movies. 10 a.m. At Bow Tie Cinemas, 11940 Market Street, Reston. Reston Association presents the feature film, "Old Man and the Gun." Movies for seniors; doors open at 9:15 a.m. Refreshments and door prizes provided prior to movie. Free to 55-plus. For information: email Ashleigh@reston.org; call 703-435-6577 or www.reston.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 28

Trip to the National Building Museum. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Explore the greatest stories of architecture, engineering and design, learn the devastating impact of chronic, low-income eviction in Evicted, and learn about the architecture and planning of the Manhattan Project. Enjoy lunch in their café and shop in the museum's giftshop. Bus pickup: RA Headquarters. Cost is \$32/RA members/\$40/non-members. Visit www.reston.org, email ashleigh@reston.org or 703-435-6577 to register.

Watercolor 2.0. 5:30-8:30 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. In this course students will learn more in depth color theory, mixing watercolor pigments, composition concepts, how to create texture and the use of negative space. With Katherine Rodgers. Six-week session, \$225. Call 703-956-6590 or visit www.artspaceherndon.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 1

Open Mic and Poetry with Mike. 7-9 p.m. At ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Featuring Eric Pankey and Jennifer Atkinson. The first hour is the featured poets and the second hour is open to anyone. Eric Pankey is the author of many collections of poems, most recently AUGURY (Milkweed Editions 2017). Jennifer Atkinson is the author of five poetry collections. The most recent one, The Thinking Eye, was published by Parlor Press/Free Verse Editions in 2016. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 2

ArtSplash. 2-4 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Create a masterpiece in this art workshop led by artists from Abakadoodle Northern Virginia. Adults. Free. Registration starts Feb. 16 at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events or call 703-689-2700, ext 4.

Opening Reception: Emerging Visions. 5-7 p.m. at GRACE, 12001 Market Street #103, Reston. The Greater Reston Arts Center presents Emerging Visions, a group exhibition featuring select artwork by students participating in the Center's signature education program, Emerging Visions. The exhibition will be on view March 2-30, 2018 at the gallery located at the Reston Town Center. Visit the website: www.restonarts.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 3

Mardi Gras Celebration. 4-7 p.m. At Kalypso's Sports Tavern, 1617 Washington Plaza N, Reston. The Reston Historic Trust & Museum to host a special Mardi Gras celebration to support the Lakeside Pharmacy Icon Preservation Project. With a \$20 donation, you can create your own Mardi Gras mask and enjoy tasty appetizers. While you eat, enjoy listening to the Catchin' Toads performance. A Mardi Gras mask parade will take place around 6:30 p.m. Visit www.kalypsoSPORTstavern.com.

MONDAY/MARCH 4

Family History Research. 7-8:30 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Learn to find courthouse, immigration and military records in this workshop taught by a librarian from the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Public Library. Free. Call 703-689-2700 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events.

TUESDAY/MARCH 5

Bollywood Dance Fitness. 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Try out some fun Bollywood dance moves in this fitness program for spring, led by local instructor Aparna Rao. Adults, teens. Free. Call 703-689-2700 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events.

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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.

OPINION

Sine Die

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

Virginia's state law-making body, the General Assembly, adjourned *sine die*, until another day, this past Sunday one day later than its scheduled adjournment date. With more than 3,000 bills and resolutions considered, it is somewhat miraculous that the body came that close to its scheduled 45-day end date. Setting aside the major distractions that have enveloped Richmond and placing the session in the context of all seats being up for election this November any accomplishments might be considered miraculous.

There were positive accomplishments. Legislation designed to curtail record levels of rental evictions was passed. Major reforms to the foster care program were enacted with Delegate Karrie Delaney providing leadership in this area. The legal age for buying cigarettes and vaping products was raised from 18 to 21, a remarkable achievement in a city that was once the cigarette making capital of the world. A bill I introduced at the suggestion of the Chris Atwood Foundation passed and will increase



COMMENTARY

the persons authorized to administer the miracle drug Naloxone that can save the lives of persons suffering from drug overdoses. The concern about coal-ash ponds has been resolved with a requirement that clean-up occur on the property of utility without transport and in ponds that are sealed at the highest level of environmental protection.

Revisions that were made to the biennial budget that we are now half-way through bring lots of good news. Monies were increased for public education including districts that have the highest levels of poverty and most need. School counselors were increased in numbers although not at the level sought by the Governor. Most taxpayers will get some money back as a result of the impact of federal tax cuts on state revenue.

A resolution that could lead to a constitutional amendment if passed next year would result in a redistricting commission. While the commission is not as strong as I and the independent redistricting advocates had hoped, it will increase public input into the process of

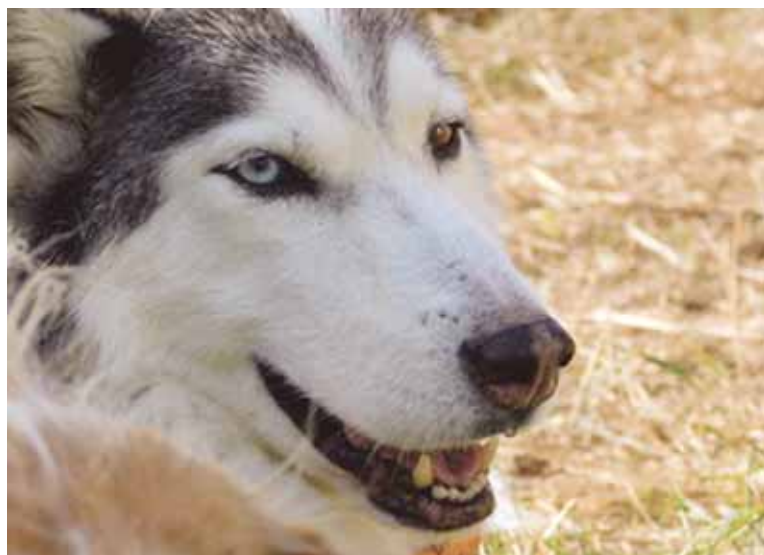
drawing legislative boundaries. A week of no-excuse absentee voting before elections that was passed is much less than in other states, but it will start the process of opening up elections in the future.

Up until the final hours of the session it appeared that the current limitations on holding a phone while driving would be strengthened, but the bill died for failure to agree to language that would be enforceable.

Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment that I thought was going to occur was defeated by a mostly partisan vote. When the legislation was passed by the Senate and defeated in a House committee there was an effort to change the rules to allow a vote by the entire House. The rules change was defeated by a 50-50 tied vote with one Republican who had narrowly won re-election in 2017 voting with the Democrats.

All gun safety measures were defeated including my bill to require universal background checks. My bills to raise the minimum wage and to establish an earned income tax credit system were also defeated.

I am available to speak to groups and organizations about the session; just email me at kenplum@aol.com. Future columns will discuss the session further.



Ms. Dixie.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Missing Ms. Dixie; Finding Sam

Cindy Morrow of Reston writes: "We welcomed a new pack member in January after saying goodbye to Dixie, a sweet 'young at heart' girl in December. I volunteer at a local shelter walking dogs and fate stepped in and brought Sam into our lives, whether Blu (my other dog) and myself were ready or not. Sam is a black/white Husky with one blue eye and one brown eye, a description that matches Dixie except that the eyes are reversed. I found her 30 days to the date that I lost Dixie. The snow in January helped Sam settle in with her new pack mates - Blu and Molly, my neighbor's Chihuahua mix and an "honorary" snow dog."



Blu, Cindy and Sam.

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.

WINTER SHELTERS

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

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.

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