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Celebrating the victory, from left: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chair Sharon Bulova, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) and Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay. Connolly was chairman before he was elected to Congress.



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Celebrating the victory, from left: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chair Sharon Bulova, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) and Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay. Connolly was chairman before he was elected to Congress.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Round 1 is over. The Democratic primaries for the Board of Supervisors, Commonwealth's Attorney, and other elected positions came to an end on June 11. Just after 7 p.m., all that is left outside Government Center are the candidates' signs.

Small Voter Turnout Heralds Big Changes

McKay's 'Experience Counts' tagline resonates, as does the call for criminal justice reform in the Commonwealth's Attorney race.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

In an election night that will deliver major change to Fairfax County, voter turnout was just 10.2 percent of the county's more than 700,000 active registered voters.

It was not a general election, nor was it an election during a Presidential election year — events that generally bring the largest number of voters to the polling booths — but a higher turnout was expected given the unprecedented number of seats up for grabs on the Board of Supervisors, including the chairman's position. Some of these races hadn't experienced a primary in decades.

IN THE UNOFFICIAL RESULTS posted by the Virginia Department of Elections, Jeff McKay, the current Lee District representative on the Board of Supervisors, beat out his three opponents — Ryan McElveen, At-Large Fairfax County Public Schools Board member, Georgetown law professor Alicia Plerhoples, and developer Timothy Chapman, for the chairman's spot, taking 42.48 percent of the vote. Plerhoples was his closest rival with 31.34 percent and was the obvious favorite in several precincts, particularly in the Reston, Herndon and Vienna areas, with Chapman a distant fourth at 9.80 percent, despite outspending the McKay by more than \$350,000. Both Plerhoples nor McElveen campaigned with far less money. The Virginia Public Access Project (vpap.org) reports \$87,327 spent by



McKay



Descano



Alcorn



Lusk



Palchick



Walkinshaw



Saslaw

McElveen; \$147,791 spent by Plerhoples; \$503,169 by McKay; and \$853,399 by Chapman.

McKay promoted his 11 years of experience on the board — and the relationships he has built over those years — during his primary campaign. Previous experience did not win the day for all of the candidates, but seemed to weigh in his favor with the Fairfax County electorate.

McKay will face Republican Joseph Galdo in the general election on Nov. 5, but supporters at his election Watch Party at Kilroy's Sports Bar and Restaurant in Springfield — including U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) and current Chair Sharon Bulova — were more than ready to declare McKay the chair-elect.

"Things aren't perfect," acknowledged McKay supporter Henry Dent of Springfield at the McKay Watch Party, but the retired federal contractor said McKay won his vote because he has seen "progress in the right direction on the real issues — like affordable housing and pay raises for teachers and first responders and working on the traffic problems." Like McKay, Dent doesn't think

that now is the time to "take a chance on people without any experience."

McKay's progression toward the chairmanship of the board leaves his current Lee District seat vacant. Four Democratic hopefuls contended: Planning Commissioner James Migliaccio; attorney Kelly Hebron; lawyer and nonprofit Melwood chief of staff Larysa Kautz all fell to Rodney Lusk, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority national marketing director. Lusk won with 46.21 percent of the votes. With no Republican or Independent candidates having filed for the seat, the primary win will send Lusk directly to the board in the new year.

James Walkinshaw, the former chief of staff to Connolly, won his race for the Braddock District Supervisor to replace Supervisor John Cook, who announced that he would not be seeking re-election. Walkinshaw defeated Irma Corado 67.22 percent to 32.78 percent, but unlike Lusk, Walkinshaw will be back on the campaign trail in just a few weeks as he will face two opponents in November — Republican Jason Remer and Independent Carey

Campbell who is running for the position for the fifth time.

"I will take a few minutes to catch my breath and say 'hello' to my wife again, then it's back at it," said Walkinshaw at the Kilroy's event where he celebrated his victory along with McKay. "I can't take anything for granted. I have to get out there and keep listening and offering my message."

The impending retirement of long-time Supervisor Catherine Hudgins brought out five candidates seeking to replace her in representing the residents of the Hunter Mill District, a contest which featured some unusual elements.

Walter Alcorn, who has served on the Fairfax County Planning Commission for 16 years, took first place in that race, with 47.17 percent of the votes. Reston resident, long-time activist and child advocate attorney Laurie Dodd was the runner up with 24.94 percent. Shyamali Hauth, Maggie Parker and Parker Messick ran third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

SEE LOW TURNOUT, PAGE 14



Mayor of the City of Alexandria Justin Wilson delivers the keynote address.



Parents try to get the attention of their graduate with a sign.

Keynote Speaker Warns of Change

Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson spoke to Lee graduates about embracing change.

BY ABBY SACKS
THE CONNECTION

At 59th commencement ceremony of Robert E. Lee High School, almost 400 students received diplomas.

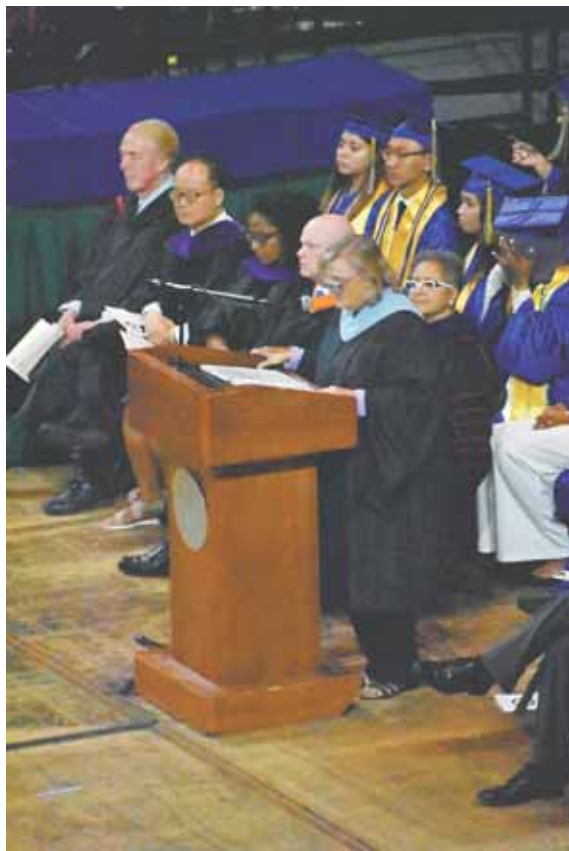
Of those students, several groups were specially recognized by Principal Deirdre Lavery in her address. She first thanked those who committed to serve in the military after graduation. She also commended the 61 honor graduates who earned a grade point average of 4.0 or higher. The students who completed two years of International Baccalaureate curriculum and were IB diploma candidates were also praised for their hard work.

She then congratulated the class as a whole. After listing some achievements of sports teams, theater productions, art groups and other clubs, she said, “you have experienced success, happiness and triumph along the way.”

To close her speech, she gave advice to the students. “Be passionate, be creative and be bold. Work hard for what you want,” she said. “Be strong. Be courageous. And above all else, believe in yourselves.”

Following Lavery, Justin Wilson, the mayor of the City of Alexandria, gave the commencement address. As a 1997 graduate of Lee, Wilson was welcomed warmly by the audience.

He first spoke about leaving Lee as a less-than-perfect student. “My grades were mediocre. I did not have a large social circle. I



Lee Principal Deirdre Lavery addresses the graduates.

crashed my mom’s cars three times before I graduated,” he said. “I spent the last few weeks of my time at Lee scrambling to get my Latin grade high enough so that I would meet the graduation requirement for language.”

But graduating allowed Wilson to start anew. In college, he became more involved in school and extracurriculars than he had been in high school. He told the audience that after high school, “the game reset,” he



Students throw their caps in the air after graduating.

said. “And I was able to chart a new course.”

This change of schools was extremely beneficial for him. He encouraged the students to see change as opportunity. “The people that are successful in the world,” he said, are those “that not only endure change, not only embrace change, but... celebrate change in its every form.”

He told the students that having a positive outlook on change is necessary in the fast-paced world they will enter. “You’re constantly going to change careers,” he said. “Find that change, and celebrate the heck out of it.”

Before closing, he gave a final piece of

advice. He recounted being too intimidated by the track coach to join the team in high school. Now an enthusiastic runner, Wilson has completed several marathons and regrets being scared of the sport as a teenager. So, he urged the class to “be absolutely fearless and laugh while you’re doing it,” he said. “Fear and taking yourself far too seriously is going to hold you back.”

He wished the students well, saying, “congratulations on your achievement. Celebrate today.” But, he also reminded them that change is imminent and important. “Reset the game and move on to what is next,” he said.

FATHER'S DAY PHOTOS



World's most Dad-est dad: Tintin, Kyndra, Kyle and mom Rima.



Fatherhood is the best thing that could happen to me, and I'm just glad I can share my voice, Dusty and Keifer of Springfield, sharing a great moment.



Some people don't believe in superheroes, but they haven't met my dad. Wayne and Bobby of Springfield



The number one thing I've been doing is being daddy. Baby Liam and Dada Nathan



Our father didn't tell us how to live; He lived and let us watch him do it. Linley Michael and Kevin Tims. RIP

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Father's Day Thoughts on Foster Parenting

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Each year for the past 15 years, I have attended 5-10 graduation ceremonies. Sure, some of these are for friends and families, but most are as a representative of our community in recognition of this important rite of passage. Graduations serve as a powerful connection between generations, symbolically passing the torch to the next and inspiring both young and old, alike. One speaker I heard this year reminded me that our paths in life are seldom a straight line and it is those zigzags in life that sometimes help us stop and think, refocus our goals and renew our determination to reach our full potential. As I celebrate my first Father's Day as a new grandfather I think of the circle of life, the varied experiences of our family and of the many life stories yet to come. I had forgotten the intensity of feelings, concern, and very frequent, joyful sharing that a first born creates in new parents' lives. It has been a wonderful reminder of my own early moments as a new parent. We all know parents are a critical part of childhood development and growth. It does not matter whether those parents are biological, foster or adoptive.

Did you know there is a constant need for more foster parents in the County? Have you ever considered becoming a foster parent?

When children enter foster care, their worlds are often turned upside-down through no fault of their own.

To lessen the trauma, it's especially important to keep siblings together, and to find foster homes that are close to their friends, schools, and activities so they can maintain as much normalcy as possible. Currently, there are more than 200 kids in foster care in Fairfax County. The Department of Family Services' Foster Care and Adoption program offers temporary foster homes for these children and ser-



Newest Storck delivery – Dan and Deb Storck welcome grandson Samuel Steven Storck born May 6 to Ben and Katie Storck, Lincoln, Neb.

vices to help their families. Right now, the greatest need is for foster families willing and able to take in sibling groups, unaccompanied minors, teens and medically fragile children. There is also a need for families who speak Spanish.

Stories abound from the foster families in our community:

"Finding my forever family has made such a big impact in my life! We enjoy being together, supporting each other, and making lots of new memories. I strongly encourage anyone considering fostering or adopting to do it - you can make all the difference in the life of a kid like me." — Mikalah

"As a first-time single parent, I was nervous about raising a teenager, but everything fell into place the minute I met her, and it's been an exceptional experience ever since!" — Lesley

"I have learned that adoption is not for the faint of heart. Some days I am aggravated. Some days I am exasperated. Some days I am heartbroken. Some days I ask, 'what have I



Making a difference in each other's life: Mikalah and Lesley.

gotten myself into?' But every day I know that this is among the greatest things I have ever done. In some situations you are literally saving a child's life. But in every situation you are offering a child the opportunity to see all the possibilities this world has to offer." — Leslie So as you ponder parenting this Father's Day weekend and if you have room in your life for more, I hope you will consider the important role you could play in a young person's life as a foster parent. To learn more about becoming a foster parent and the resources available, come to a monthly information meeting or call 703-324-7639 or TTY 703-222-9452. More information can be found here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption>.

Video Stories

These video stories are also powerful testimony to the successes of foster care: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption/videos>

Special Session on Gun Violence

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

Virginians are lovers of history, including this Virginian as regular readers of this column know. This year Virginia is celebrating 400 years since the first representative legislative body met at Jamestown. Virginia is the Mother of Presidents.

One bit of history that continues to loom large in Virginia's psyche these days with as little mention as possible from the state apologists is the prevalence of gun violence in the Commonwealth. Twelve years ago the campus of Virginia Tech was the scene of the largest mass murder of its time. While other mass murders have

occurred since then, VA Tech through no direct fault of its own continues to hold the record for the most people killed on a college campus.

Virginia last week made history again. Virginia Beach was the scene of the biggest mass murder so far this year. A dubious distinction that we would least like to have. Virginia lost 1,028 people to gun violence in 2017, and as the Governor described it, that is almost three people a day; that is more deaths than those due to vehicle accidents.

For Governor Ralph Northam and for me and countless other Virginians, we long ago have had enough. As Governor Northam said in a press conference which I took part in last week: "No one should go to work, to school, or to church wondering if they will

come home. But that is what our society has come to, because we fail to act on gun violence. I will be asking for votes and laws, not thoughts and prayers."

The laws he is seeking to get passed have been introduced in the General Assembly during its regular sessions without success. In a special session that will begin in the coming weeks, only bills intended to end gun violence will be considered. And the Governor requested that "members of the General Assembly engage in an open and transparent debate and that the bills brought before the legislature are put to a vote by the entire General Assembly."

Bills related to gun violence that have been introduced in the regular session including my bill to require universal background checks have been routinely referred by

the Speaker of the House to the Militia, Police and Public Safety Committee where they are sent to a subcommittee of six members. The members of the subcommittee are appointed by the Speaker of the House, four of whom have perfect voting records of opposing any gun safety legislation. My background check bill and the approximate 15 other bills related to preventing gun violence were defeated on a predictable vote of 2 to 4 with limited discussion or debate. Yes, that's right. Four members who are buddies with the NRA get to make the decision of 140 elected members of the General Assembly. It is time for Virginia to make history again by leading the nation in doing the right thing to end gun violence. Voters, please pay close attention to how your elected representatives vote.

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Cousins Joy Mtila, 4, and Kas Kachale Banda, 5, from Fairfax, have fun riding the Frog Hopper up and down.

Celebrating Fairfax

Fairfax County Government Center hosted the 38th annual Celebrate Fairfax festival from June 7-9. The event was filled with a wide range of activities for the whole family including carnival rides and games, local vendors, and performances from rock bands Better Than Ezra and Smash Mouth.



Zahara Safavian from the Andrew Gause's Marital Arts Studio in Springfield breaks boards during a demonstration on the Community Stage.



PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

Friends (from back left) John Park, Madhi Lin, Faith Vargas, Fatima Vargas, Bao Ho, and Tanvi Wason, all from Fairfax, were not deterred by Sunday's rain to have a good time at Celebrate Fairfax.



Andrew Kraak, who works in Fairfax, and his fiancée Gretchen Pascolini enjoy the rainy Sunday Brew with music from Herr Metal.



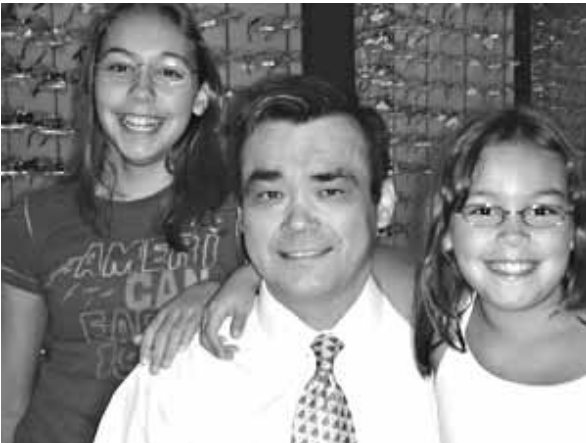
Yena Han, 5, from Fairfax loves jumping high on the Spiderman ride.



Sara Park, 10, from Manassas Park takes a ride on the merry-go-round.

DR. GENE SWEETNAM DR. GRACE CHANG

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Designer Annie Elliott designed this room adding an abstract painting by artist Karen Silve.

PHOTO BY
ANGIE SECKINGER

Versatility of Abstract Art

Ideas for decorating with this adaptable art form.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

From adding a burst of boldly colored angular shapes to a sterile, white wall to using spheres in muted tones to create serenity in a bedroom, abstract art has the ability to set the tone or change the mood of a space. In spite of its versatility, melding it tastefully into a home's décor can be daunting. Local designers share their strategies for aesthetically appealing placement of this adaptable art form.

Abstract art can become the center of attention in a space, notes Pamela Harvey of Pamela Harvey Interiors of Herndon, Va. "One of my favorite ways to transform the look of a room is to add an over-sized piece of abstract art to create a dramatic focal point," she said. "My go-to frame is a simple floater frame to give the art a clean finished look."

Abstract art works well in pairs allowing the use of smaller scale pieces, advises Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria.

"Don't be afraid to hang abstract art in gallery style. Be mindful to use like frames and materials," she said. "The use of complementary colors to your space is a safe way to incorporate abstract art into your décor without allowing it to grab all the attention."

One of Mertins' favorite uses of abstract art is pairing it with what she describes as its decorative opposite: traditional décor. "Beautiful wood furniture, silver, crystal lighting and porcelain accessories are perfect as a backdrop for bold prints and abstract paintings," she said. "Mirrors are wonderful to use as abstract décor, but always pay attention to what will be reflected in the mirror."

Abstract art work is a versatile accessory and works well in modern as well as traditional room settings, suggests Harvey. "When choosing a piece I look for something that has some of the room's existing colors in it with an opportunity to introduce new colors into the space."

Harvey implemented this technique in the recent

re-design of a client's living room. "We added a piece that had blue and white, but introduced a bold pink to create a dramatic focal point on the back wall."

Abstract art shouldn't be limited to neutral spaces, says Annie Elliott of Bossy Color, Interior Design by Annie Elliott. "If your walls are white and your furniture is gray, the effect will be pretty, but cold and museum-like, not homey," she said. "You should complement a painting's colors [and] the room should feel harmonious. If you put a red sofa under a red and blue painting, the effect may [appear similar too] a hotel lobby."

From a practical standpoint, Anne Walker of Anne Walker Design believes in mixing media to avoid creating a space that has an overly uniform aesthetic. "Oil paintings, both abstract and traditional, framed photography, sculpture, textiles, antique botanicals, framed mirrors, antique porcelain china – all of these art forms can co-exist happily in a single home," she said.

Versatility is one of the traits of abstract art that Mertins appreciates. "This style of art can be very bold and take charge of a room or be soft and fade into the background," she said. "If your room needs a focal point, then abstract art is the way to go."

"The use of black and white art will make a bold statement without adding color to a space," continued Mertins. "Monolithic art produces a solid look, splatter art is happy and upbeat while graceful line drawings impart a feeling romance and intrigue. Photographic art can be personal, bold and sometimes more affordable than painted pieces."

Works of art that one purchases spontaneously, such as during travels, is often both more meaningful and more likely to enhance a home's décor, says Walker. "When art is purchased for the entire home all at once, the result can often feel contrived," she said.

"Surround yourself with art, furnishings and objects that make you feel joyful, and consult a design professional if you need help editing or arranging your collection," continued Walker. "I've often helped clients sort through their existing art collections and place them in just the right spot," she said. "Moving a piece of art from the wrong location to the right location can not only transform a room, it can transform the work of art itself."

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PEOPLE

Springfield Native Trains the Next Generation of U.S. Naval Aviators

BY LT. PAULA KNIGHT
NAVY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A 2007 Robert E. Lee High School graduate and Springfield native is playing a key role in the lengthy and rigorous training process that transforms officers into U.S. naval aviators.

Lt. Erik Olsen is an instructor pilot with the "Wise Owls" of Training Squadron (VT) 31, based in Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas. The squadron flies the T-44C Pegasus aircraft.

A Navy instructor pilot is responsible for taking command of the aircraft to ensure safety of the flight.

"I enjoy mentoring the student pilots in the air and on the ground," Olsen said.

OLSEN credits success in the Navy to many of the lessons learned growing up in Springfield.

"My family and my hometown near Washington D.C., instilled a sense of duty to serve and be part of something bigger than myself," Olsen said.

The T-44C Pegasus is a twin-engine, pressurized, fixed-wing monoplane used for advanced turboprop radar aircraft training using two 550 shaft horse-powered engines, with a cruising airspeed of 287 mph.

VT-31's primary mission is to train future



PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS DAVID FINLEY

Lt. Erik Olsen

naval aviators to fly as well as instill leadership and officer values, Navy officials explained. Students must complete four phases of flight training in order to graduate, including aviation pre-flight indoctrination, primary flight training, and advanced flight training. After successfully completing the rigorous program, naval aviators earn their coveted "Wings of Gold."

After graduation, pilots continue their training to learn how to fly a specific aircraft, such as the Navy's P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft or the Marine Corps' MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. They are later assigned to a ship or land-based squadron.

A key element of the Navy the nation

needs is tied to the fact that America is a maritime nation, and that the nation's prosperity is tied to the ability to operate freely on the world's oceans. More than 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water; 80 percent of the world's population lives close to a coast; and 90 percent of all global trade by volume travels by sea.

Olsen plays an important role in America's focus on rebuilding military readiness, strengthening alliances and reforming business practices in support of National Defense Strategy.

"Our priorities center on people, capabilities and processes, and will be achieved by our focus on speed, value, results and part-

nerships," said Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer. "Readiness, lethality and modernization are the requirements driving these priorities."

Though there are many ways for sailors to earn distinction in their command, community and career, Olsen is most proud of earning his instructor pilot qualification.

"It was recognition of my hard work, both in flight school and in the fleet," Olsen said. "It has allowed me to train my replacement in Naval aviation."

SERVING IN THE NAVY is a continuing tradition of military service for Olsen, who has military ties with family members who have previously served. Olsen is honored to carry on the family tradition.

"My grandfather was a Naval aviator and my father was a surface warfare officer," Olsen said. "These men are my heroes, it is my honor to continue the tradition."

As a member of one of the U.S. Navy's most relied-upon assets, Olsen and other sailors know they are part of a legacy that will last beyond their lifetimes providing the Navy the nation needs.

"I feel honored to serve my country and be part of something I believe in," Olsen said. "I am proud to continue in my family's footsteps and hope to be a strong role model for my children."

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PHOTOS BY ZACHARY SCHONFELD/THE CONNECTION

Jason Cerda, a three-time Billboard Top 20 Artist, told Edison graduates to not be scared to fail and never stop dreaming.



The Edison Commencement Choir, Symphonic Band and Orchestra joined together to perform “Slipping Through My Fingers” during the ceremony as a tribute to the graduates.

Celebration, Farewell and Beginning at Edison

Thousands watch Edison High School seniors turn their tassels Monday night.

BY ZACHARY SCHONFELD
THE CONNECTION

Before the approximately 449 students walked across the stage, speakers celebrated the Thomas A. Edison High School’s diversity and urged graduates to achieve their dreams by making a difference in the world and taking risks.

Jason Cerda, a three-time Billboard Top 20 artist and a 2005 graduate of the school, gave the commencement address. He told the graduates that their biggest dreams may sound “crazy,” but they can be achieved through hard work and perseverance.

“It should scare you and make you sleep at night trying to figure out how on Earth you want to pull this off, because if it didn’t, then you’re not dreaming big enough,” he said.

Cerda added that it will be easy for the graduates to make excuses, but that only leads to regret and proves everyone else’s doubts.

“I’ve never had a single doubt in my mind that this is what I was supposed to do for the rest of my life,” Cerda said. “And you should be thinking the same thing, too: Why not you?”

He said the graduates will need to make sacrifices and fail along the way, but these failures will lead to eventual success.

“We’re scared of failing,” Cerda told the graduates. “Let me tell you something: if you don’t fail in life, you will never know exactly what it is you want out of it. Every little failure you have will contribute to your journey and you will grow so much from it.”

Principal Pamela Ellison Brumfield also addressed the crowd, and began by thank-



Reem Ali, an honor graduate, urged the seniors to take “leaps of faith” and overcome obstacles to succeed.

ing faculty, staff and the seniors’ families for their role in supporting the graduates. Graduation marks a celebration, farewell and beginning for every graduate, she said.

“It’s a time that you look forward – you set new goals – and realize that the future is where you’re going to spend most of your lives,” Brumfield said. “Dream big, don’t limit yourself, set goals and do the work.”

She said the graduates have earned millions of dollars in scholarships and told them to remember to always have “eagle pride,” in reference to the school’s mascot.

Reem Ali, an honor graduate who spoke at the ceremony, said the graduates have overcome mental health struggles and structural expectations with a “continual drive to success.”

She urged the graduates to take “leaps of faith” and become voices of change to make the world a better place.

“To be honest, we’re all terrified,” Ali said. “We’ve always been told not to fear the unknown. But if there’s one thing I’ve learned – because it definitely wasn’t Euler’s formula – it’s that fear is okay.”



A graduate waves to her family as she walks out of the arena to music performed by the Edison Symphonic Band and Orchestra.



Many seniors were recognized as Honor Graduates during the ceremony by earning a 4.0 GPA or higher.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

One of the live bands performing rock music was the East Hollywood Band.

Sunny Weather and Beer in the Burbs

Fairfax City's first-ever, craft beer festival, Beer in the Burbs, was Saturday, June 1, in Old Town Square. Some 15 Virginia craft breweries served up the suds, while food trucks including Taco Bamba, The Inside Scoop, Dolce Vita, and Red, Hot & Blue offered lunch and dessert. Live music and children's activities rounded out the fun.

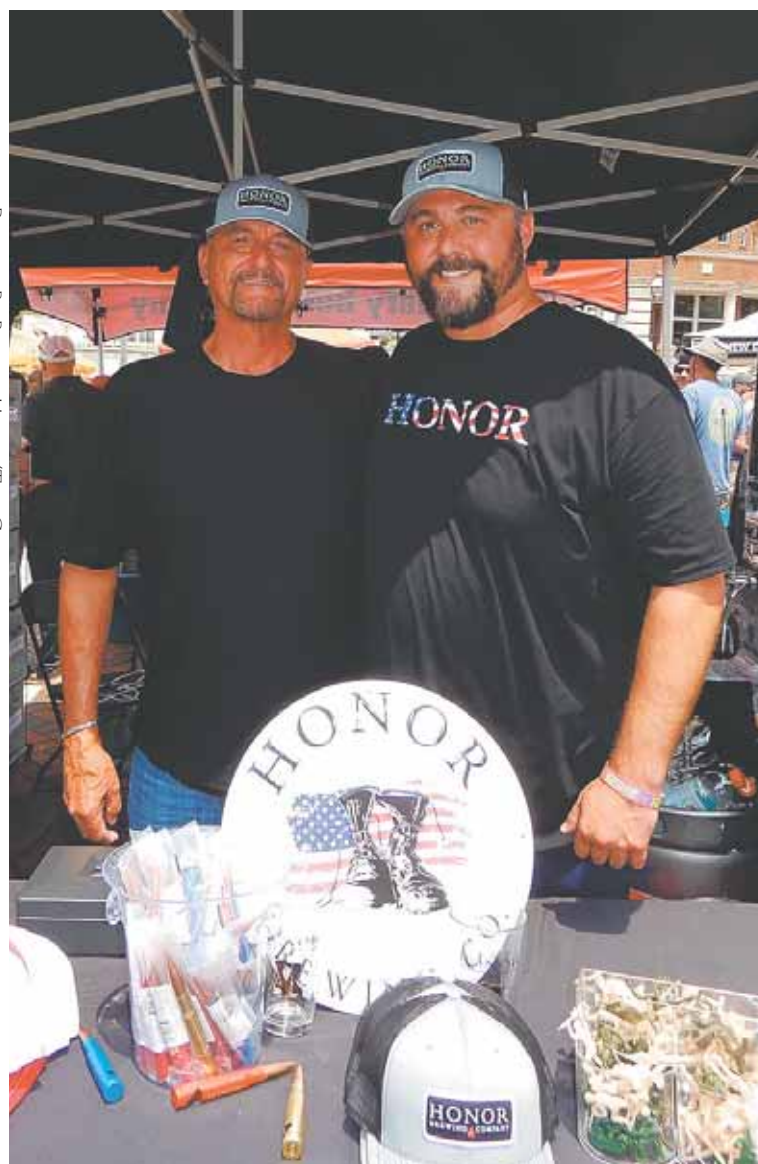
Attendees relaxing, chatting and enjoying the festival on a warm, sunny day.



Cheers! Enjoying some craft brews are (from left) Nick Schnare, Derek and Sarah White, and Jen and Lee Mansfield.



Daniel Azar of The Inside Scoop hands Carin Bousman a cup of chocolate ice cream.



From left, Honor Brewing Co. owner Allen Cage Jr. and son Tre, whose company donates to military charities.



The Heine sisters, (from left) Laney, 2, and Kaylynne, 8, made "hippie headbands" at the festival.

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Art Exhibit: Somewhere Between You and Me. Through July 20, Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Olly Olly, 10417 Main St., 2nd Floor, Fairfax. In Somewhere Between You and Me, young nonbinary transgender artists intimately seek to understand and bring understanding to what it means to experience life as a nonbinary person. Call 703-789-6144 or visit ollyollyart.com for more.

Art Exhibition: Virginia Watercolor Society. Through Aug. 2, gallery hours in the McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Virginia Watercolor Society (VWS) is organizing its 40 th annual juried painting exhibition with about 85 paintings on display. Free and open to the public. Visit www.workhousearts.org/ or www.virginiawatercolorssociety.org for more.

Crafters Wanted for 2nd Annual Fall Craft Show. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will hold its 2nd Annual Fall Craft Show and LEGO (TM) Train Show on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2019 ,10 a.m.-4 p.m. For crafters interested in joining the event, booth space is enough room for a 10x10 canopy and cost is \$50 per space. Email dmueller@fairfax-station.org for an application and further information. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Kingstowne Farmers Market. Fridays, through Oct. 25, 4-7 p.m. in the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center, Alexandria. Farm fresh eggs, local honey, berries, fresh picked vegetables, fresh local fruits, baked breads and treats, chicken, tamales, salsa, hummus, gourmet sausage, fresh roasted coffee beans, and much, more. Call 703-642-0128 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/kingstowne.

Wakefield Farmers Market. Wednesdays, 2-6 p.m. through Oct. 30, at Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale. Eleven local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce and fruits; meats; breads and pastries; jams; dairy products and eggs; herbs; flowers, and more. All products are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within 125 miles. The Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association will be there each week, providing horticultural information to home gardeners in Fairfax County. Call 703-642-0128 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/wakefield.

Lorton Farmers Market. Sundays, 9 a.m.-noon, through Nov. 17, in the VRE Parking Lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd., Lorton. Eleven local farmers and producers sell fresh produce and fruits; meats; breads and pastries; jams; dairy products and eggs; herbs; flowers, and more. All products are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within 125 miles. The Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association will be there each week, providing horticultural information to home gardeners in Fairfax County. Call 703-642-0128 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/lorton.

Springfield Farmers Market. Saturdays, through Nov. 23, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, 6699 Spring Mall Drive, Springfield. Vendors include Cascade Beverage, Celestial/Fossil Farms, Chilanga Tortilla, Conecopia, Greenwich Farms, Iganacio's Produce, Kingdom Gourmet, Lola's Kusina, Lund's Produce, Smiths Mecklenburg, Taste Old Country, Three Puppies, Tyson Farm, and Windmill Meadows. Visit www.community-foodworks.org or call 202-697-7768.

Burke Farmers Market. Through Dec. 21, 8 a.m.-noon at the VRE parking lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke. A great selection of fresh produce, baked goods, seafood, and dairy. All vendors make their own food or grow it locally within 125 miles. Call 703-642-0128 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/burke for more.

FRIDAY/JUNE 14

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.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GUNSTON HALL

Newly minted American citizens offer their pledge to the flag.

Declaration Day

Join Gunston Hall in celebrating the anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, written by George Mason. This family-oriented program kicks off with a naturalization ceremony, followed by a variety of activities for all ages, a museum theater performance, and visits to Gunsont Hall's brand-new exhibit: Revolutionary Rights. Saturday, June 15, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Complimentary. Call 703-550-9220 or visit www.gunstonhall.org.

SATURDAY/JUNE 15

39th Annual Spring Civil War Mosby Bus Tour. The bus will leave Truro Parish, 10520 Main St., Fairfax City, promptly at 8:30 a.m. (return 5:30 p.m.) The tour will stop at Mount Zion Church, Aldie Mill, the Hathaway House (where Mosby climbed out on a limb), Old Whitewood and more. \$65 members of the Stuart-Mosby Historical Society; \$75 for non-members. To sign up contact Don Hakenson at 703-971-4984 or email dhakenson@verizon.net.

Declaration Day. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Join Gunston Hall in celebrating the anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, written by George Mason. This family-oriented program kicks off with a naturalization ceremony, followed by a variety of activities for all ages, a museum theater performance, and visits to Gunston Hall's brand-new exhibit: Revolutionary Rights. Complimentary. Call 703-550-9220 or visit www.gunstonhall.org.

Summer Saturdays. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Join Gunston Hall for a summer of fun. Each Saturday in June, July, and August, stop by for a historic adventure on the grounds and in the Visitor Center. Included with regular admission. Call 703-550-9220 or visit www.gunstonhall.org/visit/guide/upcoming-events.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 15-16

Father's Day Park Programs. This Father's Day weekend spend time with fathers and grandfathers in a program just for them at a county park.

- ❖ **Golf Tournament.** Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon at Burke Lake Golf Course. Kick off the weekend with the "Father's Day Golf Tournament." Two-player teams compete in an 18-hole scramble format in three divisions: Father/Jr. 7-12; Father/Jr. 13-17; Father/Adult partner with closest-to-the-pin contests and prizes for the top three places in all three divisions. \$75 per team includes lunch. Call 703-323-1641 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/burke-lake.
- ❖ **Wood Carving.** Sunday, noon-4 p.m. at Colvin

Run Mill. Celebrate by treating Dad to a free wood carving lesson with the Northern Virginia Carvers. There is a nominal charge for wood blanks. While visiting the mill, take a tour. Dads and granddads tour for free on Father's Day when accompanied by a paying child. Call 703-759-2771 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill.

- ❖ **"Animal Dads."** Sunday, 1-1:45 at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Annandale. Children age 2-6 can pretend to be a penguin, wolf and beaver dad as they learn about these doting fathers. Participants will meet live animals and make a craft for their favorite father/grandfather. The program at Hidden Oaks Nature Center runs from 1 to 1:45 p.m. \$8 per child. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 703-941-1065 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-oaks.

- ❖ **Family Fishing.** Sunday, 2-3:30 p.m. and 4:30-6 p.m. at Riverbend Park, Great Falls. If Dad likes to fish, register for the "Father's Day Family Fishing" program at Riverbend Park. Supplies and equipment will be provided, or bring a rod and reel. Pick up some fishing tips. All fish caught will be released. Designed for participants age 4-adult. \$12 per person. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

- ❖ **Father's Day Campfire.** Sunday, 6-7 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Chantilly. Wrap up the day with the "Father's Day Campfire." Learn about some of nature's best fathers, take a hike near a stream and eat s'mores. Of course, moms are invited, too. \$8 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SUNDAY/JUNE 16

Films in the Park: Space Jam (1996). 7 p.m. at Strawberry Park in Mosaic, Fairfax. Mosaic's summer movie lineup has something for the whole family. Grab a blanket, friends and family and watch favorite films underneath the stars. Visit mosaicdistrict.com/events/event/films-in-the-park-2/.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 16-17

Two-Day NTRAK 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 two day N gauge Train Show. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

MONDAY/JUNE 17

Under the Full Moon. 9-10:30 p.m. at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. See moonlight reflected off the water on the "Full Moon Boat Tour" at Burke Lake Park. As the tour boat departs, test your listening and observation skills and spot local wildlife with the help of one of our naturalists. The program for participants age 6-adult. \$10 per person. Call 703-323-6600 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burke-lake.

FRIDAY/JUNE 21

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.

Celebrate the Year's Longest Day. 9-9:55 p.m. at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Cozy up to a campfire at a "Summer Solstice Campfire." Learn to separate fact and fiction regarding midsummer and its celestial events. Head out on a hike while waiting wait for the sun to set and enjoy roasting marshmallows around a campfire. The minimum age to attend this program is 6 years. \$7. Call 703-323-6600 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burke-lake.

SATURDAY/JUNE 22

WhoDunit Mystery Letterboxing. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Kings Park Community Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Celebrate the Golden Age of Detective Novels by solving mystery puzzles while seeking letterboxes through a clue hunt. Letterboxing is a scavenger hunt game. Adults and teens. Free. Call 703-978-5600 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

Summer Saturdays. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Join Gunston Hall for a summer of fun. Each Saturday in June, July, and August, stop by for a historic adventure on the grounds and in the Visitor Center. Included with regular admission. Call 703-550-9220 or visit www.gunstonhall.org/visit/guide/upcoming-events.

Movie Night: Fantastic Mr. Fox. Dusk. Liberty Lorton, the former prison turned new development, is hosting a series of events that includes barnyard yoga, outdoor movie nights, and the second annual Turkey Trot. Events are open to residents and non-residents of Liberty. Visit thelibertylife.com for more.

Mosaic Harmony Choir. 7-8:15 p.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 3022 Woodlawn Ave. Fairfax-based Mosaic Harmony celebrates diversity and inclusiveness through song. The group has performed throughout the Washington, D.C. area, including at the White House and Washington National Cathedral. Free. Visit www.holytrinityfallschurch.org/music.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 22-23

Field Day 2019. Starts 2 p.m. on Saturday, running 24 hours to 2 p.m. on Sunday at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Members of the Vienna Wireless Society will be participating in Field Day at Burke Lake Park. The club will demonstrate radio communications, use satellite communications, and have a station where visitors may operate and talk on the air and experience the fun of amateur radio. Free. Call 703-395-6721 or visit www.viennawireless.net.

SUNDAY/JUNE 23

Hands On Activities. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Some of the activities will include operating model trains, decoding and writing telegraph messages as well as observing Tom Boltz, one of the Station's volunteers, demonstrate how an old train order hoop was used by the railroads so that the train engineer and a train station employee could communicate when a train was entering a station. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

PEOPLE

Springfield Resident Publishes Book of Essays

Sydney Spicer graduated from Juniata College in May.

Recent Juniata College graduate Sydney Spicer's experiences living and learning while developing a deep appreciation of place culminated in her recently-published work, "Bloom."

"I've been writing for a while and started working on pieces of the book in the fall," says Spicer, a resident of Springfield, who earned her degree at Juniata in May. "For my capstone, I chose to do a writing project, but had no idea what I wanted to do."

With a Program of Emphasis centered on environmental studies with a secondary focus on communication, she penned a collection of insightful essays ranging in subjects, but interwoven with her love of nature.

"I knew I wanted to write observational essays," she says. "At the end of the semester, heading into spring, I saw that the pieces I had written all went together. I wanted to see if they could be used to form a larger work."

Spicer discussed her progress with her adviser Neil Pelkey, professor of environmental science and studies.

"He gave me good advice and recommended that I consider publishing my work," Spicer says. "I don't share a ton of my writing, so by publishing it, I was able to share it in a way I hadn't before."

The encouragement she received from both Pelkey and Donna Weimer, Thornbury Professor of Communication, and the partnership with many other faculty members were invaluable in helping her to achieve her goal.

"The main role Juniata played was in encouraging me to do something different," she says. "Not to include on a resume or to have something to tell people, but something for myself."

By incorporating photographs by fellow 2019 graduate Kaila Topping, Spicer compiled her works so that they formed three parts.

"The essays go through the process of self-growth and going through the journey of life," says Spicer. "It's a quick read, but it goes in depth in talking about my journey and experiences in nature."

She opted to self-publish her work, single-handedly undertaking the layout and design.

"I did a few test runs to see how it would print," Spicer says. "When I got the first one from Amazon, it was crazy and awesome to hold something in my hands that I had made on my own. It's one of my cooler accomplishments."

The lessons she both learned and taught through "Bloom" will be continued in her service as a Massachusetts Promise Fellow through AmeriCorps, as she mentors young women beginning their own journey through nature and life.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Sydney Spicer

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NEWS

Low Turnout, Big Changes

FROM PAGE 3

THE HUNTER MILL RACE made election headlines on a number of occasions. For starters, there was the wide disparity in campaign dollars spent. Winner Alcorn shows a total of \$75,926 in campaign dollars expended, while fourth place Maggie Parker spent \$246,368, according to the Virginia Public Access Project.

Bulova and others raised First Amendment concerns when Parker displayed large signs at the Wiehle-Reston Metro station while her opponents were barred from campaigning there. Parker works for Comstock Companies developers, the company that built the station with Fairfax County in a public-private partnership. The question of access remains to be resolved.

The Hunter Mill contest also included the youngest candidate in any of the Board of Supervisors races in Parker Messick who is just a few years beyond his college graduation.

PROVIDENCE was another district that saw five Democrats on the Primary ballot to replace Supervisor Linda Smyth who, like Hudgins and Bulova, announced that she will retire at the end of the year. In the unofficial results, FCPS School Board member Dalia Palchik's 39.79 percent of the votes tops Planning Commissioner Phil Niedzielski-Eichner's 23.40 percent; court officer Erika Yalowitz's 13.97 percent; former Vienna Town Council member Edythe Kelleher's 12.73 percent; and consultant Linh Hoang's 10.12 percent for the seat.

Next up, Palchik will face Republican Paul Bolon in November.

Dranesville Supervisor John Foust and Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck appear to be unopposed in November. In the Springfield District, Republican Pat Herrity will face Democrat Linda Sperling; in the Sully District, current Supervisor Kathy Smith will see Republican Srilekha Palle on the ballot; and Democrat Penny Gross will be challenged by Republican Gary Aiken.

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE to some was the defeat of longtime Commonwealth's Attorney Ray Morrogh. Challenger Steve Descano, a former federal prosecutor pressed a progressive agenda for criminal justice reform, winning with 51.04 percent of the vote.

Morrogh has served for 35 years and has held the top prosecutorial spot in Fairfax County and Fairfax City since 2007, prosecuting a number of high-profile cases.

Descano is a West Point graduate who spent 6 years as a federal prosecutor in the Obama Administration, first as a Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia and then as a trial attorney in the Criminal Tax Division and the Consumer Protection Branch. He served on the inaugural Fairfax County civilian panel providing oversight to the Fairfax County Police.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Getting a selfie with the winner. A supporter gets a photo with James Walkinshaw, the winner of the Democratic primary election for the Braddock District Supervisor. Walkinshaw will face Republican Jason Remer and Independent Carey Campbell in November, so he will "be back on the campaign trail almost immediately."

The two men met at public forums several times during the campaign. Morrogh often described his opponent as "unqualified."

Descano said Morrogh lacked a vision of where reforms — particularly to combat systemic racism and bias — need to occur.

Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe endorsed Descano, as well as the reform minded challenger in Arlington, Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, who defeated incumbent Theo Stamos there because the two incumbents signed on to a Republican effort to block restoration of voting rights of former felons who had completed their sentences. Both Descano and Dehghani-Tafti received large donations from the same Political Action Committee, giving them a financial advantage.

With no other declared candidates to be faced in November, Descano will be the new Commonwealth's Attorney.

The number of races and candidates and the contentious nature of some of the campaigning for Board of Supervisor positions and for Commonwealth's Attorney may have stolen the election limelight there were also primaries for several members of the General Assembly. Incumbent Barbara Favola handily defeated Nicole Merline to retain her position as the nominee for Virginia State Senator for the 31st District.

Jennifer Boysko did the same with her challenger M. Sharafat Hussain for Senate District 33.

Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35), the Senate minority leader, had a tougher time of it. In the first challenge he has faced in decades, Saslaw held off human rights lawyer Yasmine Taeb by only 362 votes. Taeb is the first Muslim woman to be elected to the Democratic National Committee. A third candidate, Karen Elena Torrent, received 697 votes.

At the victory party, Saslaw admitted that things got a "little closer than I thought it was going to be."

In the Democratic primary races for the Virginia House of Delegates, the incumbents Kaye Kory (D-38) and Alfonso Lopez (D-49) triumphed over their opponents.

BULLETIN

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

CAMPS

Art Camp Registration. Summer Art Camp in Burke for 5-8 year olds, 8 years and up, and teens/adults. Camp is held through Burke Centre Conservancy at the Woods Community Center, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Camp weeks run July 22-26; July 29-Aug. 2; and Aug. 5-9. Call 703-250-6930 or visit www.czartlessons.com.

* Fine Arts & Crafts Camp (8 years & up)
* Drawing Camp (8 years & up)
* Drawing Plus Color & Craft Fun Camp (5-8 year olds)
* Art Boot Camp for teens/adults
Call instructor at 703-250-6930 or visit www.czartlessons.com.

Vacation Bible School. Monday-Friday, July 8-12, 9 a.m.-noon at Fellowship Baptist Church, 5936 Rolling Road, Springfield. Vacation Bible School with an "In the Wild" theme. Free. Call 571-337-0209 or visit honoringgod.org.

Summer Bible Camp. Monday-Friday, July 8-12, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Harvester Presbyterian Church, 7800 Rolling Road, Springfield. Children will be able to have fun, be safe, and hear about the love that God has for them. For children in grades K-6. Free. Call 703-455-7800 or visit www.harvesterpca.org.

FRIDAY/JUNE 14

Application Deadline: Fire Academy. The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department is now accepting applications for its Girls Fire and Rescue Academy summer camp, which will take place July 11-13, 2019. The Academy is open to female students who will be in grades 7-12 in the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. Participants must be a Fairfax County resident. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems.

MONDAY/JUNE 17

Voice-Over Class. 7-9 p.m. at Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Learn to do voice for commercials, films, videos, and more. 18 and older. \$79. Call 703-658-1201 or visit bit.ly/2PZQ16N.

TUESDAY/JUNE 18

Community Input Welcome. 6:30 p.m. The Potential Hollin Hills Historic Overlay District (HOD) Working Group (appointed by Supervisor Dan Storck) meets monthly at the Administrative Offices of Supervisor Stork at 2511 Parker's Lane in Alexandria. The purpose of the working group is to explore the feasibility of establishing a potential HOD and to facilitate communication between the entire community and the county. The working group welcomes input. Contact co-chairs Barbara Ward (barlward1@cox.net) or V. Lee Cutler (velmalee_13@msn.com) with questions, comments or to observe an upcoming meeting. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/plan-amendments/hollin-hills-hod for more.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 19

Person-Centered Approach to Care. 1-3 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, #100, Fairfax. How can one reconnect with someone with dementia? Keeping their current abilities in mind, learn ways to keep loved one engaged in personalized activities. This program is a part of Insight's ongoing Classes for Caregivers series, held the third Wednesday of the month, all sessions are free. Respite care may be available by request; notify when registering to confirm availability. Register online at www.insightmcc.org, or contact Lindsey Vajpeyi at 703-204-4664 or lindsey.vajpeyi@insightmcc.org.

SATURDAY/JUNE 22

Retirement Planning Event. 9-10 a.m. at Living Savior Lutheran Church, 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. A retirement planning educational event, including topics: five keys to retiring fearlessly; securing and preserving a retirement strategy; and Social Security: timing is everything. Free. Refreshments will be served. Contact Mark Knauff at 703-209-2406 or mark.knauff@thrivent.com to reserve a space.

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What A Week!



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The least of it was my pre-immunotherapy lab work on Wednesday and then my actual immunotherapy infusion on Friday. The most of it was my navigating websites and trying to properly complete applications/enrollment forms for the Virginia Unemployment Commission and the Maryland Health Connection.

For a man (me) who fancies himself your go-to-guy for sports and chocolate, getting immersed in policies and procedures for government agencies providing unemployment benefits and health care – with our (my wife, Dina and I) respective lives somewhat dependent on the time-sensitive completion of said documents, was akin to sending yours truly out to sing the National Anthem at the next Nationals' game. It would be a disaster of titanic proportions (fortunately without the loss of life).

As it has been my entire life, I can't sing any more than I can now compute.

As I sit and write this week's column, having barely survived the excruciating ordeal of this past week – with only an in-office visit left to go on Monday – I now have next week to look forward to. And what garden path am I leading you down?

Another week of time-sensitive/computer-centric tasks, of course. Once again I will be sitting at my computer attempting to navigate through another government web site and this time a private sector website, as I try to sign up for Medicare effective Sept. 1, as well as the associated but independent supplemental medical insurance necessary to fill in the coverage gaps that I, as a former insurance broker, know exist.

Granted, with these two tasks I do have some time. I just hope I have the wherewithal.

This past week took a toll emotionally. And I'm not sure if I really want to climb that emotional mountain yet again.

This week's tasks are not any easier. Shooting fish in a barrel they're not. They're more like having to make the barrel and then catch the fish. Not easier said than impossibly done. For a man who knows his limitations, the week ahead will likely test those limitations.

But if not me, then who? Unfortunately, it has to be me. The other party with whom I share a long-standing arrangement has a skill set unsuited to and incompatible with, computers, and the kind of searching/deciphering/hunting and pecking on web sites required for completion of this week's tasks.

Moreover, if I enlist her support or insist on her participation, my present and future will not be enhanced by the experience. She may be a resource in many other respects, but in this respect, she's not.

And I can respect that. Give me a little credit, I've learned something in our 40 years together.

That being said – and understood, I think I'll take the weekend off from such endeavors and prepare myself for next week as I consider the challenges which lie ahead.

I'd like to think I've gained some confidence in the progress I made this past week. I've nearly completed both tasks, tasks which initially seemed almost insurmountable. However, if it were not for the amazingly patient, courteous and knowledgeable assistance I received from the call centers associated with these sites, I'd still be stumbling and stammering (literally) into oblivion.

But as of this past Friday, I've nearly reached the promised land. ("I can see Russia from my house.")

I can only imagine the satisfaction I'll feel next Friday when I anticipate I will have completed two more of these tedious tasks and secured yet another part of our financial and emotional future.

Four huge hurdles overcome, but still with a few more yet to go: probably applying for a reverse mortgage and possibly researching a kitchen renovation.

Wait a second. Don't I have lung cancer? Jeez, I almost forgot.

With all this other stuff going on, the cancer compartment stayed closed. Now it's open again. Damn, now I really have problems.

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

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