

Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

HomeLifeStyle

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Residents, Scouts Fill Food Pantry

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Traffic Relief Expected By December 2022

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Westfield Beats Chantilly, Improves to 10-0

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From left, Elisabeth Keeley, Vidya Malgari, Kira Lorentz and Kaitlyn Carlin, of Girl Scout Troop 3327 in Chantilly, sort food donated for Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' food pantry.

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AREA ROUNDUPS

Boy Scout Collecting Bikes for Charity

Boy Scout Trey Telleen is a member of Troop 1822 in Centreville. And for his Eagle Scout project, he's collecting bicycles to donate to the charity Bikes for the World. The collection is set for Saturday, Nov. 16, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., in the parking lot of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 14150 Upperridge Drive in Centreville.

Centreville Road Construction Meeting

VDOT will hold a Centreville construction-update meeting on Monday, Nov. 18, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Stone Middle School, 5500 Sully Park Drive in Centreville. A brief presentation will begin at 7 p.m. Attendees will learn about the upcoming, long-term, traffic-pattern changes and detours at the Routes 28 and Route 29 interchanges, upcoming construction activities along the Route 28 corridor, and the Route 29 partial bridge demolition.

Stringfellow Road Lane-Closing

The right lane of southbound Stringfellow Road will be closed for underground utility relocation, from now through late November. However, this lane will be reopened weekdays from 3-9 p.m. to accommodate the evening rush. The impacted section of Stringfellow is between Fair Lakes Boulevard and Village Square Drive, and the work is part of VDOT's I-66 Outside the Beltway project.

Meet with Del. David Bulova

Del. David Bulova (D-37) invites constituents to meet with him informally on Saturday, Nov. 23, from 9-11 a.m., at Jireh Cafe, 13848 Lee Hwy. in Centreville. They're invited to talk about issues of interest and to ask questions about legislation affecting their community. The format is casual, and no appointment is needed.

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At a map showing the wetlands and waterways in the project area, Trish Holmes points out something to Jason Yazawa, one of the consultants.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

One of the maps showing a section of the Route 28 widening project.

Traffic Relief Expected by December 2022

Update given on Route 28 widening project.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Even on a good day, driving on Route 28 in Centreville is no picnic – and things are even worse at rush hour. But an \$86.7 million-dollar widening project will eventually ease the pain for local residents and commuters, alike.

Under the plan, Route 28 will be widened from four lanes to six, for about 2.3 miles, from the bridge over Bull Run at the Prince William/Fairfax County line to the Routes 28/29 Interchange in Centreville. Besides adding more through lanes to Route 28, the project will provide additional lanes on side streets to improve traffic flow.

It will also improve intersection operations, upgrade existing traffic signals and improve bicycle and pedestrian crossings. In addition, new, 10-foot-wide, shared-use paths will be created on both sides of Route 28.

About 60 residents heard about the latest, project updates at a recent, design public hearing at Centreville Elementary. Attendees perused several maps, listened to a presentation by Todd Minnix, chief of the Transportation Design Division of Fairfax County's Department of Transportation (FCDOT), and then got to ask him questions.

He showed slides of the various portions of the project area and discussed the turn lanes and other changes planned for: Route 28 south of Compton Road, Route 28 at Compton and Ordway Roads, Old Mill Road and Green Trails Boulevard, Darkwood Drive, New Braddock Road, Old Centreville and Upperridge roads, and Machen Road.



Centreville residents Teri and Marie Travi look at the project map but worry that Route 28 will still be a bottleneck in Prince William County.

“The curves north of Compton Road and south of New Braddock will be improved for better sight distance, and Bradenton Drive will remain unsignalized,” said Minnix. “Northbound Route 28 will be widened on the outside; and on southbound Route 28, the center line will be shifted over 5 feet so a future lane could go in the middle.”

Due to lack of funding to do more, the road will just be widened to six lanes, but it's being designed for eight lanes in the future. And the noise analysis and environmental impacts are both based on eight lanes existing in 2040 at the loudest hour of the day.

UNDER THE PLAN, improvements would be made at all signalized intersections by adding turn lanes and/or one or more additional lanes on side streets. Doing so would eliminate split-phase, signal operations and improve overall intersection operations. Being proposed are:

- ❖ Dual left-turn lanes on northbound Route 28 at New Braddock (which may not be needed/required);



Todd Minnix

- ❖ Dual left-turn lanes on northbound Route 28 at Machen Road;
- ❖ Triple left turns from westbound New Braddock to southbound Route 28;
- ❖ Adding one lane on both westbound and eastbound Compton Road, eastbound Old Mill Road and westbound Old Centreville Road (at the north end of the project).

In addition, median crossovers at Darkwood Drive and south of Compton Road will both be removed. There'll be some right-of-way impacts on various parcels, but the land acquisition will be done for a road with all eight lanes, so it won't have to be done again later.

“We don't anticipate any demolitions of any homes or commercial businesses,” said Minnix. “But some additional, utility easements may be needed.”

Initially, four design options were proposed for the intersection of Ordway, Compton and Old Centreville roads. The engineers and many residents preferred Option Four, which would have realigned Old Centreville Road to a “T” intersection with Ordway, with a traffic signal. But due to financial constraints – Option Four would

cost an estimated \$15 million more – Option One was chosen. The most-affordable plan, it keeps Ordway's alignment the same and just adds the new lanes.

This is a county project being done in cooperation with VDOT and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). And to get it accomplished as quickly as possible, a design-build process has been adopted. This method allows for more-rapid progress by combining and overlapping the design, right-of-way, utility and construction phases. As a result, many of the tasks are done concurrently, rather than one after another.

Since this project contains federal money, a proposal for noise mitigation is required for neighborhoods where the projected noise levels will exceed established criteria. But the residents must declare, in writing, that they want noise walls.

CURRENTLY, said Minnix, 26 buildings meet the excessive-noise criteria for sound walls, and this number would increase to 68 by 2040. As a result, two areas are receiving further evaluation for potential noise barriers. One is on the east side of Route 28, between New Braddock and Darkwood; the other is on the west side of Route 28, north of Compton Road.

Once construction is done, Minnix said drivers during the afternoon rush will be able to go from I-66 to the Bull Run Bridge in just 6 minutes, as opposed to 13 minutes now. “It increases to 22 minutes if we do nothing,” he said.

The whole, road project is estimated to cost \$86,748,000 and, currently, it's completely funded from the following sources:

- ❖ NVTA Regional Funds - \$26 million;
- ❖ State Revenue Sharing Funds - \$10 million;
- ❖ State SmartScale Funds - \$23,422,583;
- ❖ Federal Demonstration Funds - \$9,407,418; and
- ❖ Local Funds - \$17,918,629.

SEE UPDATE, PAGE 7

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CALENDAR

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

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 13

Wagon Ride and Campfire Meal. 5:30-7 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Enjoy a night under the stars with the "Hot Dog, Smores! Wagon Ride & Campfire" program. Dine on a turkey hot dog supper roasted over the campfire and take a brisk wagon ride through the Rocky Run Stream Valley. Learn about the park's namesake, Ellanor C. Lawrence, and discover some of the area's local and natural history. Hot dogs, buns, condiments, and s'mores will be provided. Feel free to bring your own drinks and sides. Cost is \$10 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Meet at Cabell's Mill. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SATURDAY/NOV. 16

2019 Girl Scout Expo. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Girl Scouts Nation's Capital is hosting the G.I.R.L. EXPO to showcase the remarkable programs, badges and activities offered by Girl Scouts. The event will demonstrate the girl-led and fun-filled community that is an integral part of the Girl Scout experience. Girls from across the region will challenge themselves on the monkey bridge or climbing wall, learn about mosquito habitats, knot-tying, how to code arcade games and more. Visit the website at gscnc.org/Expo.

SUNDAY/NOV. 17

Celebrate Harvest Season with Crafts. 1-3 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Wheat and corn were the two main crops grown on the grounds of what is now the Sully Historic Site. See what you can do with them during "A Bountiful Harvest" program. Stop by Sully's kitchen to see foods being made using corn and wheat. Make a corn husk doll and a woven wheat ornament to take home. Designed for participants age 5 to adult. The cost is \$10 per person. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site.

TUESDAY/NOV. 19

AARP Dinner Group. 5-8 p.m. At City Grille of Manassas, 10701 Balls Ford Road, Manassas. AARP has reserved a section of City Grille of Manassas for AARP members and their guests to enjoy dinner together with a 15 percent discount on their entrée. Meet new people, make new friends, connect with neighbors, and enjoy dinner together. Come as you are and leave as you wish anytime between 5-8 p.m. Call 1-877-926-8300 or signing up online at <https://aarp.cvent.com/ManassasDGNov19>

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

"The Nutcracker in a Shell." 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. At Freedom High School, 25450 Riding Center Plaza, South Riding. Nutcracker in a Shell: Clara's Wish - The Institute of Performing Arts for Youth at Creative Dance Center presents a delightful journey through the four realms where Clara rediscovers the joy of Christmas. Cost: \$10/student and seniors, \$15/adults. Visit the website: www.ipayouth.com/nutcracker

FRIDAY/NOV. 29

The Nutcracker. At Hylton Performing Arts Center, Merchant Hall, 10960



The 2019 Girl Scouts Expo will be held Saturday, Nov. 16 at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly.

The 2019 Girl Scouts Expo

Saturday, Nov. 16, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Girl Scouts Nation's Capital is hosting the G.I.R.L. EXPO to showcase the remarkable programs, badges and activities offered by Girl Scouts. The event will demonstrate the girl-led and fun-filled community that is an integral part of the Girl Scout experience. Girls from across the region will challenge themselves on the monkey bridge or climbing wall, learn about mosquito habitats, knot-tying, how to code arcade games and more. Visit the website at gscnc.org/Expo.

George Mason Circle, Manassas. 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Presented by the Virginia National Ballet. Treat yourself to Virginia National Ballet's full-length, traditional production of The Nutcracker. Featuring gorgeous scenery, costumes, and choreography, enjoy world-class professional, international dancers accompanied by the students of Virginia National Ballet School. VNB is led by Artistic Director Rafik Hegab, 2019 Winner of the Seefeldt Award for Outstanding Individual Artist. Tickets: \$37 adults, \$25 children (ages 17 and under). Visit www.virginiernationalballet.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 2

African-American Genealogy. 7-8:30 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. An African-American Genealogy study group meets the first Monday of the month (except September and November). Participation in the study group is free but registration is requested. To register, or for more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/events or call 703-830-2223.

DEC. 6-7

Mesdames de la Halles. Dec. 6 at 8 p.m.; Dec. 7 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. At Hylton Performing Arts Center, Gregory Family Theater, 10960 George Mason Circle, GMU Campus in Manassas. Celebrate the joy of the Holiday Season and join Mason Opera for a production of Mesdames de la Halles, a comic one-act opérette bouffe by Jacques Offenbach, with libretto by Armand Lapointe. First performed in Paris in 1859, this comedy revolves around the competitive street vendors of a famous Parisian fruit and vegetable market, "La Halle." All the women vendors have fallen head over heels in love with the handsome kitchen boy, Croûte-au-pot, and they compete for his attention. Croûte-au-pot however loves the beautiful fruit vendor, Ciboulette. After a comedy of errors and misplaced identity, true love triumphs. Tickets are \$15 for Adults, \$10 for seniors, \$5 for youth, and may be purchased in person, by phone, and online. To purchase in person, visit the Center for the Arts Box Office located on George Mason University's Fairfax campus or Hylton Performing Arts Center Box Office located on the George Mason University Manassas campus. Tickets may be purchased by phone at 703-993-2787 or 703-993-7759. To purchase online, visit cfa.gmu.edu or hyltoncenter.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

Holiday Ice Show. 6:30-8 p.m. At Ion International Training Center, 19201

Compass Creek Pkwy., Leesburg. The Snow Story is a Holiday Ice Show featuring the Loudoun Ballet, 21st Battalion Grey Coats Fife & Drum Band and Four-Time World Champion Kurt Browning. Cost is \$20-\$30. Visit the website: www.ionite.com.

ONGOING

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

History Volunteers Needed. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum needs history buffs. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 to explore opportunities. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. It is open every Sunday, except holidays, from 1-4 p.m. www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225.

Art Guild of Clifton Exhibit. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St., Clifton. Includes oil paintings of European settings; doors, windows, and flower shops. Free. Call 703-409-0919 for more.

Carolina Shag Dance. Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m.; no partners needed; dinner menu at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.nvshag.org for more.

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

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

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

LIBRARY FUN

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



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Helping ready the donated food for transport to Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' food pantry are members of Faith Encounters Community Church. From left are Abby Pickett, Sean Grapin, the Rev. Martin Pickett, Marcia Pickett, Geri Terry, Greg Alexander, Vicki Venable, Mark Grapin and Benjamin Terry.

Residents, Scouts Fill WFCM's Food Pantry

Nearly 900 Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, plus some 700 other volunteers, eagerly lent a hand during the Nov. 9, Sully District Scouting for Food drive to help fill Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' food pantry. They collected, sorted and transported more than 65,000 pounds of

food donated by the community to help local families in need. "It's an increase from last year of about 3,000 pounds," said event chairman Michael Adere. "This is a phenomenal achievement for a one-day collection and is a testament to the overwhelming generosity of the people in our community."



Helping sort canned goods on a chilly morning are (back row, from left) Karah Breeze and Ruth Moran, and (front row, from left) Atti Albrecht, Sophie Roberts and Josephine Carroll, all with Girl Scout Troop 3327.



From left, Westfield High freshman Josh Cho and Woodson High senior Brian Kim carry a box of snack foods.



From left, Sabrina Shumway, Ava Przybysz, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Kathleen Olsen, Liam DeLap, and Sarah and Emma Dakin, of Girl Scout Troop 3327 in Chantilly, help organize canned goods.

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PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR/THE CONNECTION

The Westfield Bulldogs celebrate their Concorde District Championship over the Chantilly Chargers.

Westfield Beats Chantilly, Improves to 10-0

The Chantilly Chargers (8-2; 2-1) traveled to take on Westfield (9-0; 3-0) in the final regular season game of the year for each.

The Bulldogs would open scoring in the 1st quarter when Harrison Saint Germain caught the first of his two touchdown receptions. After a successful PAT Westfield was up 7-0. Chantilly would strike back with 8:41 to play in the quarter after a Pierre Johnson 73 yard touchdown run. The game would be deadlocked at 7 following a successful PAT. Just over a minute later the Chargers would take advantage of a turnover and Chantilly would now take the lead 14-7. Mikal Legal would pull Westfield to within a point but a blocked PAT ensured Chantilly kept the lead at 14-13.

Alex Richards would score the first of his two touchdown receptions early in the 2nd quarter, Westfield's PAT was successful and Westfield had regained the lead 20-14. Tyler O' Reilly would score on a 70 yard touchdown run just 18 seconds later and Chantilly would retake the lead 21-20 after a successful PAT. Mikal Legal would score his 2nd touchdown of the game when he ran in from 2 yards out, and Westfield now led 27-21.

In the final minute of the quarter Westfield's Max Ahiakpo blocked the Chargers' punt and teammate Richie Aguilar picked the ball up and ran it to the 1 yard line. A few plays later Harrison Saint Germain would score his 2nd touchdown of the game on a 7 yard touchdown reception giving the Bulldogs a 34-21 lead at half-time.

Pierre Johnson would add 6 points when he scored on a short



The USMC award Harrison Saint Germain the Most Valuable Player award after his two touchdown receptions. The game was a Great American Rivalry Series which is sponsored by the men and women of the USMC.



Tyler O' Reilly rushes for positive yardage

run from 2 yards out with 1:18; however the PAT was wide left and Westfield was now up 34-27.

Alex Richards added 6 more points for Westfield when he took the pass from Noah Kim 53 yards for a touchdown. Westfield was now leading 41-27. Avery Howard would then score on a 24 yard touchdown reception. The PAT was blocked and the score was 47-27. Pierre Johnson of Chantilly would add his 3rd rushing touch-

down of the game and complete scoring for the game.

With the win Westfield improves to (10-0; 4-0), Chantilly falls to (8-2; 2-2). Chantilly will host South Lakes (6-4) in the 1st round of the playoffs. Westfield will host Wakefield (5-5). Noah Kim completed 14 of 24 passes for 210 yards and 5 TD's. Harrison Saint Germain was voted Great American Rivalries MVP

— WILL PALENSCAR



Alejandro Robles from the SYA U8 Academy in Centreville leans in as he kicks the ball.

SYA Hosts Soccer Scrimmagefest

Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) Soccer hosted Scrimmagefest, a free U8 soccer tournament for clubs throughout Northern Virginia, on Nov. 10 at Centreville High School. Thirty-two teams

competed: 22 boys teams and 10 girls teams.

Each team played four 30-minute games. Partner organizations included DC United, Loudoun United, and Washington Spirit.



Players compete in a kicking competition for prizes.



Malike Bangura from the Northern Virginia Soccer Club gets the ball past several Gunston defenders.

PHOTOS BY
TOM MANNING
THE CONNECTION

Austin Smith from the SYA U8 Academy in Centreville tries to gain control of the ball.



Update

FROM PAGE 3

The road is expected to be constructed and open to traffic by spring 2023. But if all goes well, three lanes of traffic should be open in both directions – minus landscaping, cleanup and final details – by December 2022. At the meeting, Carol Hawn, of Centreville’s Old Mill community, was concerned that her neighborhood might lose its fence. Minnix said it wouldn’t and noted that “The trail between the fence and road will be rebuilt, brought up to standards and extended all the way to New Braddock Road.”

Neighbor Hal Payne said, “There’s no crosswalk at Old Centreville Road and New Braddock, so my children can cross the road to get to school.” And he asked if one was planned there.

“Our project doesn’t go all the way back to Old Centreville Road, unfortunately,” replied Minnix. “But three areas will have crosswalks and median refuges to wait while traffic passes.”

Little Rocky Run’s Al Francese asked how rush-hour traffic would be handled during construction, and Minnix said there’ll be “No lane closures during rush hours. But there’ll be lots of night work, with message boards about lane closures and detours.”

Regarding the Compton Road/Route 28 intersection, said Francese, “Exiting Compton, as you approach Route 28, it’s difficult to tell which lane you’re turning into. Can you put in some markings or infrastructure?” Minnix said a raised, concrete median between Ordway’s north- and southbound through lanes is proposed.

Resident Jonathan O’Neill asked if the project would have any impact on Centreville Elementary, and Minnix said no. He also said that requests for proposals were already sent to three design-build firms and, “If their bids come in lower than we anticipate, we could revisit Option Four.”

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.

FRIDAY/NOV. 15

Construction Career Fair. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Dulles Expo Center, North Hall, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Interested in a career in building America’s infrastructure? Employers will be collecting resumes, discussing current openings, and interview applicants on site. Industry employers are seeking new employees at all levels, from laborers to engineers. This event is free to all job seekers. Visit the website <http://www.nuca.com/careerfair>.

SUNDAY/NOV. 17

Road to Success: College Bound Preparedness Luncheon. At The Fair Oaks Waterford, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Presented by the Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Free for high school students and one parent. The program offers information on the college application process, applying for scholarships and tips for succeeding in college for students as well as parents. Please share this information with your students, and encourage them to register. While this program is free to attend, an RSVP is requested because seating is limited. Email: scholarship@fcadst.org.

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Chino Lourie, Rest in Peace



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As much as I try not to self-indulge in my weekly column, I am aware that I don’t always succeed. It seems I can only write about what I feel, what I see and what I hear, be it personal, professional or public. To that end — which justifies my means, I have often involved you regular readers in my cancer life, as well as a few other “privacies” I’ve been comfortable sharing: family (including pets), friends, finances and the occasional faux pas (if I am anything, I am open, perhaps too open, if certain other familial opinions are to be considered).

This meandering start is meant to explain — indirectly, how when something is preoccupying my mind, it is difficult/near impossible for me to write about something that’s not. At present my preoccupation is with one of my cats: Chino. He is not doing well, at all. After multiple emergency room visits and follow-up appointments with veterinarians over the past few weeks, it appears his diabetes has finally gotten the best of him leading to the worst possible outcome: death, with some dignity, hopefully.

In two of our most recent visits to the veterinarian, we have had preliminary discussions about euthanizing Chino. We have resisted so far and have continued, especially my wife, Dina, to give him as much t.l.c. as we can. However, his quality of life, as described by our primary veterinarian on Friday, is “not good.” To invoke/rework a phrase commonly associated with some human beings in early childhood: Chino is failing to thrive, though he turned 13 in late September. Other than engaging with us when we call his name or pet him, Chino is not able to do nearly enough (eating, drinking, grooming, using the litter box) to give us much hope. Nevertheless, he is home and curled up in his favorite spot in the kitchen, though barely able to get around.

I wouldn’t characterize our activity as a vigil, but neither Dina nor myself are planning to leave the house (or one of us will be at home if the other needs to go out) anytime soon. With this weekend of inactivity, our focus is exclusively on Chino. Yet here I sit, a literary task at hand, attempting to navigate emotionally the prospect of his passing and the significance of such a loss.

It’s been 10 years or so since we’ve had to consider euthanizing a pet. It was either Bailey, our second golden retriever or Chester, our second dwarf rabbit. I can’t remember exactly as it was around this time that I was diagnosed with lung cancer and began heavy-duty chemotherapy. But we’ve all survived since then and even added a few critters: Chino’s brother, Biscuit, Twinkle, our white cat with an attitude and two more rescues “The Blackies,” as we call them: Andrew and Sloane, black, domestic short hair siblings. As longtime animal owners, we knew this day would come, but given my cancer diagnosis: “13 months to two years,” I think we figured I’d be the first to go. So it’s both upsetting and distracting in a way, our normal pursuits, because what’s happening — both good (me still being alive) and bad (Chino succumbing to his illness) is not what we anticipated happening. As a result, I am self-indulging you in my preoccupation because I’m unable to think/write outside the box. A figurative box on which Chino sits front and center, mostly down but not quite out.

Still, we’re not exactly sitting and staring blankly into space, but neither are we entertaining too many other thoughts. We are here for Chino so with a column to write, it is being written with Chino as the subject, and excuse for what is written in this space. For 13-plus years Chino has been my companion. We have rubbed noses too many times to remember. He has my scent and as such, I have belonged to him. Soon I fear he’ll belong to no one and I’ll have lost his loving feeling. He was a sweet and affectionate cat. We will miss him terribly.

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

OPINION

Historic Election Results in Virginia

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



The Nov. 5 elections in Virginia produced results of historic proportions. The House of Delegates that has had a Republican majority since 2000 was flipped to a blue Democratic majority of 55 Democrats to 45 Republicans. As recently as the election for 2014-2016, Democrats in the House had dropped to 32 members. The turnaround came decisively in amazing political time; there will be a recount in only one seat the Democrats won. The Senate that had a Republican majority before the election flipped to blue with 21 of the 40 Senate seats now being held by Democrats.

The General Assembly when it convenes in January will have a Democratic majority in both houses. In addition, as a result of elections held in 2017 Democrats occupy all statewide offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. The historic level of Democratic wins is not only about party, it is about representation. There will be more women in the General Assembly than ever before in Virginia's history. In the House of Delegates there will be 30 women in the 100-member legislative body. In the Senate there will be 11 women in the 40-member body bringing the

total number of women to 41 in the General Assembly. While the number is small relative to the proportion of women in the total population, the number of women

in the legislature is a huge increase when compared to past years when it could be counted on the fingers of one's hands. The number of women running this year in both parties was at a historic level of 85.

There were other historic changes in the oldest continuous legislative body in the western world celebrating its 400th anniversary this year. A Muslim woman will join the Senate as the first ever elected to that body. The number of African Americans in the General Assembly will increase to the highest number since Reconstruction. The first ever Indian American man was elected to the House of Delegates.

The new members of the legislature have already indicated their willingness to make history. The Democratic caucus of the House met this past weekend and chose as its Speaker-designee, Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn, the first woman to ever serve as Speaker of the House of Delegates in the 400 years of its history. She will be elected formally by the entire House when the General Assembly convenes in January. Adding



Speaker-designee, Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) is the first woman to ever serve as Speaker of the House of Delegates in the 400 years of its history.

to this historic moment, she will assume the leadership position, considered the most powerful in Virginia government next to the governor, with the least seniority of anyone ever taking the position in the modern day. She will be the first Jewish Speaker serving along with the Senate majority leader who is also Jewish. While I had hoped to become Speaker myself, I fully support Eileen who is amazingly smart and talented and I will

do everything I can to ensure her success.

The electorate broke through many hurdles in its votes this election year. Some results called historic today will become commonplace in the future as the General Assembly reflects more the demographics of the state as a whole. I have always felt honored to serve, and with the historic results of this election year I feel even more honored. Thank you, voters!

LETTERS

Two Years of Justice Delayed

To the Editor:

Nov. 17 will mark the two year anniversary of the shooting of Bijan Ghaisar by two US Park Policemen. He died of his wounds 10 days later. The FBI has refused to provide any information of substance to his parents, the Senators and Congressional representatives who interceded on their behalf or the media, all of whom have kept the pressure on since day one. If those two Park Policemen are not put on trial, and convicted at a minimum of Manslaughter, justice will not have been served. And if that happens, I believe there will be a ground swell of cries of an FBI cover up.

Kevin Bergen
Alexandria



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