

Chantilly

CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

HomeLifeStyle

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Sully District Police Station's leader, Capt. Todd Billeb, has several commendations and awards.



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'You Get into this Business to Help People'

Meet Capt. Todd Billeb, Sully District Station commander.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Capt. Todd Billeb, commander of the Sully District Police Station, didn't start out to become a police officer. Born and raised in Seminole, Fla., he enlisted in the Marines in September of his senior year in high school.

"I was just 17, and my dad signed for me," he said. "My great aunt and uncle were both career Marines, and I wanted to be one, too."

He served for eight years, coming to this area when he was stationed with the Marine Security Force at the 8th and I streets Barracks in Washington, D.C.

But, said Billeb, "They changed the retirement benefits from 50 percent of your base pay to 35 percent. I loved the job, but it wasn't financially feasible, so I got out. Plus, I was married and had a daughter by then. In my eight years, I went to over 40 countries; but with a family, I didn't want to be deployed all the time."

Instead, he joined the uniformed Secret Service for two years, but didn't like it. So in September 1999, he joined the Fairfax County Police Dept. and now has 20 years under his belt.

Billeb began as a patrol officer at the Mount Vernon District Station, also serving there with its Neighborhood Patrol Bike Unit and then, in 2005, as a Task Force officer with ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, plus explosives). He was also deputized as a U.S. marshal to identify repeat, violent offenders who'd escaped the justice system.

"I was working with the feds to make the streets safer," he explained. "I enjoyed it a lot because I worked with a really great group. And when you do get a violent drug dealer – who's fired a weapon at people – off the street, you feel like you're making a difference."

Then in the summer of 2008, Billeb returned to patrol to get reacclimated to the system. That fall, he went to the Mason District Station for sergeant training, was promoted and stayed there as a squad supervisor.

"We worked with Fairfax County Zoning, Code Enforcement and the Fire Marshal's Office to do business inspections and crack down on massage parlors that way," he said. "We also used that same team and – with Virginia Alcohol and Beverage Control – we went to bars having a high volume of calls to make sure they were compliant with county and state regulations and codes and their liquor licenses."

IN SEPTEMBER 2012, Billeb was promoted to second lieutenant and briefly went to the McLean District Station before returning to Mason as a squad supervisor, that December, when that station's supervisor suddenly passed away. Next, in August 2013, came a two-year stint in Internal Affairs.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Police Capt. Todd Billeb at his desk in the Sully District Station..

After that, in August 2015, he joined the Police Department's Major Crimes Division. There, he supervised the child abuse squad and the financial crimes and fugitive sections. "It was a great experience, I learned a lot," said Billeb. "I was continuously on call, but I worked with a great bunch of hardworking folks."

He served two years in that position until August 2017, when he was promoted to first lieutenant. He then became assistant commander of the Organized Crime and Narcotics Division, which oversees the Street Crimes, Narcotics and Money Laundering units.

The Street Crimes Unit deals with short-term, street-level, narcotics investigations. Meanwhile, the Narcotics Unit handles long-term, more complex, higher-level, narcotics investigations, working with the supply line and tracking the money.

As for the Money Laundering Unit, explained Billeb, "Not only do we want to remove the drugs, but impede the dealers' ability to buy more. And if we can take their product and their proceeds, it makes it much more difficult for them to stay in business."

Then in September 2018, he came to the Sully District Station as its assistant commander under Capt. Dean Lay. They worked well together and, in July 2019, Billeb was promoted to captain and became the station commander, himself. "I enjoy it," he said. "We have a supportive community and a good group of officers. The CAC [Citizens Advisory Committee] is very active, and it's a good community to work in."

"It's the community's station, and Dean was a great mentor," continued Billeb. "So it was an easy transition because we had the same vision and a similar leadership style."

The station has a staff of 138 officers, including 111 sworn officers, 13 civilians and

12 auxiliary officers. They're responsible for covering approximately 70 square miles bounded by Route 50 on the north, Loudoun County on the west and Prince William County on the south. This area includes Centreville, Chantilly, the Town of Clifton, Bull Run Regional Park, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Fairfax Station and Historic Mt. Gilead.

"The biggest thing that impacts everybody here is traffic," said Billeb. "Our main crimes are larcenies from vehicles, especially in the summer, so we reminded our residents to lock their cars. We also analyzed which areas were being targeted and then patrolled them. Then, working with other agencies, we were able to arrest several of the perpetrators and reduce those incidents significantly."

THIS TIME OF YEAR, he said, his biggest concern is pedestrian safety "because it gets dark earlier and also because of im-

"Sully has the lowest crime rate of all the police districts in the county. This is a very safe and good community."

—Capt. Todd Billeb, commander of the Sully District Police Station

paired driving." So his officers are doing their best to prevent any tragedies arising from these conditions.

He's also pleased that "Sully has the lowest crime rate of all the police districts in the county. This is a very safe and good community."

Billeb says the most challenging part of his job is balancing resources – personnel, finances and equipment. "We can always use more, but that's not unique to us," he said. "And when you enjoy what you're doing, those little speedbumps don't seem all that difficult."

His greatest satisfaction, he said, is "working with the people – the officers and the community – and seeing that what we're doing is positively impacting them. You get into this business because you want to make a difference and help people. So when you see that happening, you enjoy seeing good, collaborative, police work that benefits the community."

Also important, said Billeb, are "the relationships you build in the process of accomplishing that. It takes a team effort – we can't do it on our own." And he wants the community to know how thrilled he is to be leading the Sully District Station.

His message to the residents is: "We're here to work with you. And if people want us to be involved in particular, community events – or they need to report a problem – they can contact us anytime."

ROUNDUPS

Blood Drive this Friday

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy staff, in cooperation with INOVA Blood Donor Services, host a blood drive this Friday, Jan. 17, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at 4600 West Ox Road in Fairfax. The bloodmobile will be in the high bay on the Academy grounds. Participants will receive a free, anniversary T-shirt (while supplies last), celebrating INOVA Blood Donor Services' 55th anniversary. Make an appointment at <http://bit.ly/FCFRA0117> or contact Capt. Amy Brantley at 703-803-3852 or via amy.brantley@fairfaxcounty.gov.

'Cinderella the Untold Story'

Chantilly High theater students will present the hilarious children's play, "Cinderella the Untold Story," this Friday, Jan. 17, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 18, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 at the door or via www.chantillyhsdrama.com.

SEE ROUNDUPS, PAGE 6

NEWS



BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW
VDOT Project Manager
Edwin Woo

Location of the bridge-rehabilitation project in Centreville.

'There Are Cracks in the Concrete'

Route 29 bridge northbound over Cub Run to be rehabilitated.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Plans are afoot to rehabilitate the northbound Route 29 (Lee Highway) bridge over Cub Run to improve safety and extend the overall life of the bridge. And local residents learned all about them during VDOT's recent, public-information meeting at Bull Run Elementary.

The bridge was built in 1954, and Route 29 carries an average of 26,000, combined northbound and southbound vehicles a day at Cub Run. So VDOT believes this nearly 66-year-old bridge is definitely due for some upgrades and repairs.

The planned improvements will include removing and replacing the concrete deck, installing steel beams, rebuilding the concrete pedestals, replacing the bridge bearings and repairing cracks. Currently in the design phase, this project is financed with state and federal State of Good Repair funds used for maintenance of structures and bridges.

The work area will run from .15 mile east of White Post Road (in the vicinity of Gate Post Estates) to .08 mile west of Paddington Lane (near London Towne) in Centreville. The existing bridge is 40 feet wide and 68 feet long, with two, equal spans. The northbound portion has two lanes and no sidewalk with a speed limit of 50 mph.

"There are two bridges in that area, but we're only doing the northbound one because of the deterioration in it," explained VDOT engineer Edwin Woo, the project manager for the bridge rehabilitation. "There are cracks in the concrete on the underside of the deck and in the pedestals supporting the bridge."

He then showed various

slides illustrating the significant damage. He also said the work will be done in three stages, first doing the right side of the bridge, then the center and then the left side.

"We'll be shortening the lane widths during construction, but two through lanes will remain open," said Woo. "But nighttime closures will be necessary for erection of the new beams."

It's an in-house, VDOT project being done without the use of outside consultants. And all work will be done within the VDOT right-of-way. Estimated costs are as follows: Preliminary engineering, \$230,000; construction, \$3 million; for an anticipated total of \$3.2 million.

Advertising for construction bids is slated to begin this spring, with construction starting this summer. Project completion is expected sometime during the summer of 2021. Woo said it's being designed to last 75-100 years.

During the question-and-answer period of the meeting, local resident Angelique Calloway, of Centreville's Lee Overlook community, asked, "Are there any plans for a walking trail on that bridge?"

Mike Coyle, with Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith's office, responded, telling her, "The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan does call for a trail along Route 29 in that area whenever that road is widened to six lanes."

Calloway then asked Woo, "Have you examined the south-side bridge? And is it in as bad a shape as this one?" Woo said VDOT has done so, and "No, it's not."

For more information, go to www.virginiadot.org/projects.



This photo shows the existing conditions on the bridge deck.

All Hands on Deck

Local community helps global neighbors through Rotary Club of Reston's service project.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Rotary Club of Reston participated in a global-reaching volunteer event coordinated by Rise Against Hunger to serve vulnerable families and individuals across the globe who have basic, immediate food needs. Held at Aldrin Elementary School, Reston on Sat., Jan. 11, approximately 50 Rotarians and their family members, South Lakes High School students and the local community packed 10,152 meal packets assembly-line fashion.

Mark Griffin, President of the Rotary Club of Reston, said, "This is our signature event." To fund it and other projects, the club solicited donations through Anython, a social fundraising website. The meal-packing event required funds to pay the cost of shipping and customs clearance for the containers of packed meals.

Alzina Fasadeja is a Community Engagement Coordinator with Rise Against Hunger. She ensured the ordering and delivery of the raw materials, equipment and supplies to the site and would facilitate the large group of volunteers to package the meals from filling, weighing and sealing to final boxing of the packs. The well-orchestrated event began shortly after 10 a.m. when the truck arrived. Volunteers unloaded the contents, including the 50-pound bags of rice, crumbled soy protein and dried vegetable flakes.

Reston Club Rotarian, Peter Murray of Oak Hill, brought his daughter Caroline, 6. "I'm trying to set a good example of helping fellow neighbors around the world," said Murray. Caroline applied shipping labels to the boxes. "I'm trying to be helpful," Caroline said. "The food will go in my boxes. My

mom said the people could turn it into soup, people who do not have enough money to buy food." At the label station, Haley MacLean, 8, of Chantilly and her sister Marissa, 6, applied perishable date stickers to



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

During the Rotary Club of Reston's meal packing event to assist Rise Against Hunger, Sheuit Singh, 16, of Chantilly and her brother, Ishaan, 11, fill plastic bags with the correctly measured amounts of rice, crumbled soy protein and dried vegetable flakes with a vitamin packet to make a fortified rice-soy meal.



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Front, volunteer Marissa Haley, 6, of Chantilly receives guidance from her mother as sister Haley, 8, (back) applies perishable labels to meal packets.

SEE MEAL PACKING.
PAGE 6

OPINION

VIEWPOINTS

Legislators Reflect on the First Days of the 2020 Session

—MERCIA HOBSON

PHOTOS VIA VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33): My top priority is recovering the local funding for our regional transportation.

Today (*Monday - Jan. 13), I cast my first votes on the Senate Judiciary Committee and was able to vote for four life-saving bills to prevent gun violence: universal background checks, giving municipalities local control about allowing firearms in government buildings, a red flag law and restricting gun purchases to one gun a month. Last week I cast my first vote on the Senate Privilege and Elections Committee to make Virginia the 38th state to Ratify the ERA.



Del. Ibraheem Samirah (D-86)- introduced *HB 152 Middle housing allowed on lots zoned for single-family use*. “Middle housing is defined as two-family residential units, including duplexes, townhouses, cottages, and any similar structure. Such structures shall not require a special use permit or be subjected to any other local requirements beyond those imposed upon other authorized residential uses.” Samirah said, “Across the country, there is a shortage of affordable units that is putting a squeeze on working families and contributing to rises in rents for existing units...I will certainly get pushback for this”



Del. Mark Keam (D-35) *HB 572 Distributed renewable energy; promotes the establishment thereof*. Del. Keam said, “This bill would free up the solar market, not only for local governments... but also for residents, businesses, schools, institutions and non-profits that want to install solar for their own use... (It would) remove the rule that limits customers to installing only as big an array as would have served their needs in the past year ... Today, residential customers are penalized with so-called “standby charges” if they install more than 10 kilowatts of solar (enough for a larger home, or a modest home with electric vehicles) ... Many Virginians do not have access to solar at all, especially if they live in rental apartments or condominiums, because the building owners are not allowed to install solar panels and sell the output to tenants. My bill would make this legal.”



Del. David Bulova (D-37) introduced HB 1012 Early childhood care and education; establishment of system, licensure. “A child’s earliest experiences - and particularly those in the critical years between birth and age five - have lifelong impacts on their likelihood of success. However, according to statistics from the Virginia Department of Education, 40 percent of students entering kindergarten lack the key literacy, math and social emotional skills that predict success. Further, only 25 percent of Virginia’s early childhood programs that receive public funding participate in the state’s voluntary quality measurement system. I am pleased to be carrying House Bill 1012 on behalf of the Governor, which directs the Board of Education to consolidate and simplify Virginia’s early childhood education programs and create a uniform quality rating system for programs that accept public funding. This will improve quality, foster continuous improvement, and help parents better understand their options. As the parent of three children, this is very important to me. I have personally witnessed the difference that a quality pre-school program has made on my children.”



ASSEMBLY - WEEK ONE

Highlights of Some of the Bills Proposed

—MERCIA HOBSON

PHOTOS VIA VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Del. Karrie Delaney (D-67) introduced *HB 547 Virginia Energy and Economy Transition Council; established, report*. The bill establishes the Virginia Energy and Economy Transition Council, consisting of 28 members, to develop plans to assist the Commonwealth in transitioning from the use of fossil fuel energy to renewable energy by 2050



Sen. Janet Howell (D-32), Chair Senate Finance and Appropriations, introduced *SB 581 Minors; allowing access to firearms, Class 6 felony* which provides that any person who recklessly leaves a loaded, unsecured firearm in such a manner as to endanger the life or limb of any person under the age of 18 is guilty of a Class 6 felony.



Sen. J. Chapman Peterson (D-34) introduced *SB 26 Plastic bags; tax in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* which imposes a five-cent per bag tax on plastic bags provided to customers by certain retailers in localities located wholly within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and directs revenues to be used to support the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan.



Del. Paul Krizek (D-44) introduced *HB 15 Public school buses seat belts*. The bill requires the Board of Education to make regulations to require each new public school bus purchased for the transportation of students to be equipped with a seat belt consisting of a lap belt and shoulder strap or harness in every seat. He also introduced *HB 16 Safety belt system; all occupants of motor vehicles to utilize*.



Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, civility, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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1606 King St.
Alexandria VA 22314

By email: editors@connectionnewspapers.com
On Line: www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter

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HOME LIFE STYLE

Beautiful, Bold, Soothing: Classic Blue

Dependable, stable and calming are the characteristic of the Color of the Year for 2020.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Dependable, stable and calming are the characteristic of the Color of the Year for 2020. For the past 21 years, Pantone Color Institute has announced a "Color of the Year," which the self-proclaimed authority on color says will be on trend during the year ahead. Local designers share how the color can be used in a home's interior.

"Classic Blue is a beautiful and bold, yet soothing color reminiscent of the evening sky and the deep blue ocean," said Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder Design/Build in Bethesda, Maryland. "Soft, rich and versatile, this color has the potential to inject creative confidence into your interiors."

From an accent wall in a child's bedroom, throw pillows or a kitchen backsplash to a home's front door, mailbox or shutters, Allie Mann, designer and senior interiors specialist at Case Design/Remodeling suggests a variety of ways to use classic blue. "Perhaps as a ceiling color to draw your eye up or add interest," she said. "As a powder room wall color or vanity, this bold color will work well in the tiniest of spaces including the back of a bookcase or built-in, a reading nook, a laundry room or mudroom or as cubbies."

Whether bold or subtle, St. Claire said the design options are plentiful. "Opt to incorporate this color in your home with decorative accents like throw blankets, pillows, rugs, and artwork and even kitchenware to add a pop of color without feeling



PHOTO BY JOHN COLE

A Classic Blue sofa is complemented by other shades of blue in this living room designed by Keira St. Claire



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

For this Arlington, Virginia breakfast room, designer Allie Mann incorporated Pantone's color of the year by using Classic Blue fabric on the chairs, window seat cushion and pillows.

over-saturated," she said. "Repurpose old pieces [or furniture]. A fresh blue lacquered coat of paint would magically transform an old chair or dresser into a unique statement piece."

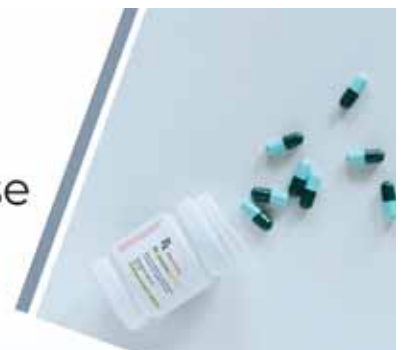
For the courageous homeowner, St. Claire suggests a bolder approach. "Paint your walls or refinish your kitchen or bathroom cabinets in blue or upholster a large piece of furniture like a sofa or armchair in blue," she said. "Introduce other complementary colors like olive greens, golds or magenta to really offset the color and make a statement. Classic blue doesn't have to be the only pop of color."

Adding the color gradually is what Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria, Virginia suggests. "Infuse it into your home and fashion design in bits and pieces," added "Maybe you paint an accent wall classic blue and let that be the focus. The color blue is kind to many colors and

therefore easy to use in a room as an accent color. You can also mix varying shades of blue."

"Classic blue is just that, it's classic and timeless and can be weaved into many design schemes," said Mann. "Do not be afraid of color."

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NEWS

Meal Packing

FROM PAGE 3

the packs. "We are doing this for people who don't have money for rice and vegetables," said Marissa. Nearby, Shruti Singh, 16, and brother Ishaan, 11, of Chantilly, demonstrated how to measure the dry ingredients. Fasadeja said one pack could serve up to six children when hydrated with water. Begin-

ning with one bag, then the next and the next, teams worked non-stop until the last packet was filled. Afterward, Griffin said, "Believe it or not, we packed more than 10,000 meals in one hour, fifteen minutes. It was all hands on deck, and the Reston community came out and helped us with this fantastic project."

Rise Against Hunger is an inter-

national hunger relief organization that is driven by the vision of a world without Hunger. Since 1998, the organization has coordinated the distribution of food and life-saving aid to the world's most vulnerable in countries all over the world. The organization's mission is to build awareness and drive a global commitment to ending Hunger by 2030.

ROUNDUPS

FROM PAGE 2

Paint Rocks with Cops

The Kindness Rocks Project encourages people to "leave rocks painted with inspiring messages along the path of life." People are playing hide-and-seek with painted rocks in hopes of spreading kindness and joy to those discovering them. So police officers at the Sully District Station invite the community to join them this Saturday, Jan. 18, anytime between 10 a.m. and 12 noon, to Paint Rocks with Cops.

Supplies will be provided, but people may also bring their own. RSVP to <http://bit.ly/rockswithcops2> to ensure there'll be enough rocks for everyone.

For any questions, email Community Outreach Officer Meg Hawkins at

Megan.Hawkins@fairfaxcounty.gov. One message at just the right moment can make someone happy and change their entire outlook on life.

WFCM's Stuff the Bus Food Drive

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) will hold a Stuff the Bus food drive, This Saturday, Jan. 18, from 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Walmart at 4368 Chantilly Shopping Center in Chantilly. This event is in partnership with Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and MV Transportation. Incoming customers will receive lists of the most-needed food items and may purchase and donate any of them while shopping at the store. All the food collected will go to local families in need.

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-Werner Heisenberg

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Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Questions? E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

BULLETIN

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

GLORY DAYS GRILL RAISES FUNDS

Glory Days Grill hosted its 32nd annual golf tournament at the Westfield's Golf Club in Clifton, on Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2019. The annual tournament raised a record \$69,031 of which \$40,000 has been designated for the tournament's main beneficiary, The Sunshine Foundation. Glory Days Grill will make additional contributions totaling \$29,031 to a variety of local charities and foundations serving the Washington-Baltimore corridor. Past recipients include local organizations such as: Jill's House; Lorton Community Action Center; Life with Cancer; Little Flower Community; CASA – Baltimore County; and The Fisher House.

THURSDAY/JAN. 16

Car Seat Safety Check. 5-8:30 p.m. at the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Fairfax County Police Department offers free safety check and install events throughout the year to ensure children travel safely. In preparation for inspection, install the seat using the instructions that came with the car seat. Trained officers will review the car seat instructions and car owner's manual to be certain that they are being followed as they should.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 22

Pipelines Community Meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. At Bull Run Regional Library, 8051 Ashton Ave., Manassas. Two pipelines seek permits from Virginia — a 42-inch fracked gas pipeline in Prince William County. Join us; learn about the proposed dirty energy projects and how we can stop them. Free. Visit the website <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002B18gAAC>

NOW THRU JAN. 27

HOPE for Mental Health. 7-8:30 p.m. At Centreville Presbyterian Church, 15450 Lee Highway, Centreville. HOPE for Mental Health is a support group for adults 18-plus who are dealing with mental health challenges of various kinds. The group is designed to provide a welcoming, confidential, supportive, and spiritually-enriching environment where participants are encouraged to share their experiences, give and receive comfort and encouragement, and learn how faith and reliance on God can instill hope.

Email: Lauren Mowbray at lauren@cpceco.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 30

Car Seat Safety Check. 5-8:30 p.m. at the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Fairfax County Police Department offers free safety check and install events throughout the year to ensure children travel safely. In preparation for inspection, install the seat using the instructions that came with the car seat. Trained officers will review the car seat instructions and car owner's manual to be certain that they are being followed as they should.

NOW THROUGH MAY

Sully Historic Site's House to Close for Maintenance. At 3650 Historic Sully Way in Chantilly.

The main house at Sully Historic Site will be closed to the public for the first five months of the new year. The historic house will undergo structural repair and maintenance, and it is scheduled to be closed from Jan. 1, 2020, into May. Exhibits, historic artifacts and furniture in the house will be safely protected and packed to make room for work crews. The historic site's grounds, outbuildings and visitor center will remain open, and the center will remain the main point of contact for all visitors. The visitor center will be open Wednesdays through Sundays. Tours of the Fairfax County Park Authority property will resume in March, weather permitting. Cooking classes and demonstrations, scout programs, and all outreach programs will continue. Visit online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site or call 703-437-1794.

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Still Waiting for “Canswers”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I half expected, with my oncologist out on vacation this week, he and the endocrinologist didn't speak. As a result, after sitting in the examining chair, the first question the doctor asks is “So you have thyroid cancer?” I snickered and said something like “Hopefully,” before I began to elaborate. Though she had access to my medical records, I can't say she was prepped and ready for our appointment. As she listened to my story, I could she see was simultaneously trying to review my medical history on her computer. In fact, as I hemmed and hawed in response to some of her medical questions, I kept saying/pointing to her computer for her to get the proper answer.

Nevertheless, eventually we were able to move forward in the determination of exactly what kind of cancer I have: thyroid cancer or lung cancer - or both (it's possible, she said). To that end-result, the doctor performed a biopsy on my “Adam's Apple” tumor, as I call it. The biopsy I had two weeks prior was from a lymph node. The results from which caused my oncologist to call me with his “exciting news.” Apparently, those results were not enough for the endocrinologist (who had never seen me before) to make a definitive judgment, so in her office, that day, this second biopsy was performed. Fine with me since a second biopsy from a different tumor is absolutely moving the ball forward, as if is so often said these days; I just hope it leads to a touchdown instead of another possible fumble.

For the last nearly 11 years, I've been diagnosed with non small cell lung cancer, stage IV. Now after two biopsies, not so much. Right now, the assessment of my cancer status is somewhere between a definite maybe and a confirmed I don't know.

Will I now know - in another week's time (when the results of this most recent biopsy are confirmed) whether my non small cell lung cancer is actually thyroid cancer or will there be additional biopsies, additional diagnostic scans, injections of isotopes, etc., to make a once-and-for-all confirmation of what the heck is going on (or has been going on) in my body? If so, it's been a long time coming. I first went to the Emergency Room Jan. 1, 2009 so it's sort of an anniversary of sorts as I write this column. I'd just as soon we get it right this time, if in fact it was ever wrong.

I have a few questions, some of which were answered by the endocrinologist. Yes, I can have two types of cancer. Could my lung cancer have changed to become thyroid cancer? No. And the underlying curiosity/question: During this cancer life that I have lived, I have been told - and seen multiple times on discharge-type paperwork I've received that I have “metastatic cancer” meaning that the cancer has moved. Moreover, when one considers the staging aspect, my cancer was stage IV. Stage IV means, among “relevancies,” (like inoperable) that the cancer has moved from its “primary” location. I remember asking my oncologist where did my lung cancer come from (I'm a lifelong non-smoker with no cancer history in my immediate family). His answer, if I recall correctly, and I may not due to “chemo brain,” a confirmed side effect of chemotherapy) was that he didn't know, and if I further recall correctly, he wasn't particularly interested in finding out and accordingly no additional tests were ordered. Perhaps we misunderstand the need to know now or misunderstood the answers we were given then (Feb., 2009). But as of this past Friday, Team Lourie is sort of wondering as was the endocrinologist.

As of this moment, our focus is on hearing back from the endocrinologist. Until then, we'll try to move forward. What's done is done and we'll hear back when we hear back. I have what I have (and have had what I've had) and right now, all we can do is wait.

That being said, we are having a little difficulty restraining ourselves. We can't get past the fact that my oncologist called us in the first place, and in the last place, if he wasn't so sure, why call us and get our collective hope sky high? Why go out on such a presumptive limb? In spite of that call, somehow, we have to internalize and compartmentalize and try to synthesize fact from fiction. So far, it's proving extremely difficult.

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

CALENDAR

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

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 15

Free Photography Class. 7-8:30 p.m. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Learn photography basics and tell us what you would like to learn in future photography classes at the library. Teens and adults. Free. Call 703-830-2223.

FRIDAY/JAN. 17

Winter Bird Walk. 11 a.m. to noon. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Take a hike through the woods with a naturalist to listen and look for Ellanor C. Lawrence Park's winter avian residents and migrants. Find out what birds do to survive the winter weather. It's designed for participants age 4 to adult, and the cost is \$7 per person. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

JAN. 17-19

Home and Remodeling Show. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. More than 300 companies will be on hand at the event offering the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor and redesign. Headlining the show is host of PBS' "This Old House," Kevin O'Connor. O'Connor has hosted "This Old House" for 17 years as only the third host of the pioneering home improvement show that has been showcasing remodeling on national television since 1979. Hours are Friday, Jan. 17 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 19 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$12 Box Office adult admission; \$9 Adult online; \$3 Children age 6-12, Children 5 & under free. Tickets may be purchased online at <https://homeandremodelingshow.com/show-features>

JAN. 17-26

Joshua's Hands Quilting Event. At 38997 E. Colonial Hwy., Hamilton VA. Joshua's Hands is a non-profit in Loudoun County that hosts free quilting events to support wounded servicepeople. Joshua's Hands will host 10 days of quilting fun to make handmade quilts for servicemen and women wounded while serving our country. All are welcome. No sewing experience or registration needed. All materials are provided but donations are appreciated. Come for an hour or the day. Monday-Saturdays 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays 1-9 p.m. Purcellville. Check website for exact location. Info@JoshuasHands.org, or call 540-454-7827, or visit www.JoshuasHands.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23

Centreville Choir Concert. 7-9 p.m. At Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road, Centreville. Centreville High School Choirs present their annual winter concert. Come enjoy the sounds of the season. Free. Email Jennifer Copeland at jennifercopeland2003@yahoo.com.

JAN. 24-26

Jurassic Quest. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Jurassic Quest is America's largest and most realistic Dinosaur event. It is the only dinosaur event that has true to life size dinosaurs. Guests will walk through the Cretaceous period, the Jurassic Period and The Triassic period and experience for themselves what it was like to be among dinosaurs of all kinds. Hours are Friday 3-8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Tickets: \$22.50 to \$39.50.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Cranking Ice Cream. 2 to 3 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn the old-fashioned way of "Making Ice & Ice Cream at Walney." Crank ice cream as you discover how ice was harvested and stored on a 19th century farm. Try your hand at using ice tongs. The program runs from 2 to 3 p.m. and is designed for participants age 4 to adult. The cost is \$8 per person, and children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-



Home and Remodeling Show

Kevin O'Connor, host of PBS' "This Old House," will be at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly from Jan. 17-19.

JAN. 17-19

Home and Remodeling Show. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. More than 300 companies will be on hand at the event offering the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor and redesign. Headlining the show is host of PBS' "This Old House," Kevin O'Connor. O'Connor has hosted "This Old House" for 17 years as only the third host of the pioneering home improvement show that has been showcasing remodeling on national television since 1979. Hours are Friday, Jan. 17 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 19 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$12 Box Office adult admission; \$9 Adult online; \$3 Children age 6-12, Children 5 & under free. Tickets may be purchased online at <https://homeandremodelingshow.com/show-features>

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

SUNDAY/JAN. 26

Flying the SR-71. 2-4 p.m. At the Old Bust Head Craft Brewery, 7134 Farm Station Rd., Vint Hill. SR-71 pilot Buz Carpenter describes what it's like to fly the fastest air-breathing, piloted aircraft ever made — LA to D.C. in 64 minutes. Cost is \$35. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faster-than-a-speeding-bullet-flying-the-sr-71-blackbird-tickets-65458416887>

SATURDAY/FEB. 1

Groundhog Day History. 1-2 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Punxsutawney Phil may hog all the glory on Groundhog Day, but Fairfax County has burrowing critters of its own. On Groundhog Day eve, come to Ellanor C. Lawrence Park and learn the story behind groundhog weather forecasting and visit the home of the Walney garden groundhog. Learn some interesting facts about groundhogs and play groundhog games. For children age 4 to 12. Cost is \$7 per child. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

SUNDAY/FEB. 2

Flying Squirrel Campfire. 4:30-5:30 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Make s'mores and learn about the flying squirrels that live in our area. The "Flying Squirrel Campfire" is for participants age 4 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

MONDAY/FEB. 10

ALNV Volunteer Opportunities. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Sully District Government Center, 3072 Centreville Road, Herndon. Volunteer to help your community through the many programs sponsored by Assistance League of Northern Virginia. Assistance League programs support local children and families in need through Weekend Food for Kids, tutoring programs, and

providing new clothing and layettes.

Individuals looking to stay in touch with the local community are invited to attend to learn more about the organization's programs. Pre-meeting social starts at 9:30 a.m. Free. Visit the website www.alnv.org.

ONGOING

Diabetes Sisters PODS Meetup. Meets the first Monday from 7-9 p.m. At Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. An evening of sisterhood, encouragement, and peer support. Opportunities to share experiences, peer support, and lived expertise with others who have been there too. Meet with other women living with diabetes for encouragement, education, and empowerment. Women age 18+ living with any type of diabetes or prediabetes are welcome, regardless of whether they were diagnosed yesterday or 40-plus years ago. They strive to create an open, respectful environment for women with diabetes or prediabetes to truly focus on their health. Free. Visit the website: <https://diabetessisters.org/pods-meetups>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IMPROVING ENGLISH

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

ESL Book Club. Mondays, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Meet and discuss a book chosen by group. Free. Call 703-830-2223 with questions and to reserve a spot.

English as Second Language Book Club. Mondays, 7-9 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Adults learning English meet to discuss a book chosen by the group. Call the library 703-830-2223 for book title.

Advanced English Conversation Group. Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Drop-in conversation group for adult English as Second Language speakers who want to improve their skills. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

English Conversation Group. Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Farsi Conversation Group. Thursdays, 7-8 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Practice speaking Farsi with native speakers in this weekly drop-in conversation group. No registration required. Adults. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

English Conversation Group. Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Practice English Conversation Group. Saturdays, 3-5 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Drop in and enjoy casual conversation and learning for adult learners of English. Volunteer led program. Call 703-830-2223 for more.