

Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ♦ Fair Lakes

Inside
PET CONNECTION

2nd Lt. Chris Sharp's dog, Jack, likes to hold Sharp's hand when he gives a presentation.

Service Dogs Provide Comfort, Stress Relief

NEWS, PAGE 3

Celebrating 100 Years
with Community Service

NEWS, PAGE 4

Girl Scouts Tour
WFCM Food Pantry

NEWS, PAGE 3

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Budgeting the State's Resources

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



COMMENTARY

In contrast to the federal government's method of budgeting, the budget for the Commonwealth of Virginia is more than balanced. The state Constitution prohibits the borrowing of money for operations, and it requires a "rainy day fund" of reserve monies that can be drawn upon in an economic downturn. That is in part why the state has a perfect AAA bond rating giving it the best terms when monies are borrowed for capital projects. Both the House and the Senate have completed work on their versions of the budget that was proposed by Governor Ralph Northam earlier this year. The two budgets will be reconciled in a conference committee that will resolve differences between the two. Total spending for the biennium will be about \$48 billion in general funds raised through taxes. Individual and corporate income taxes provide three quarters of the revenue with sales tax providing about seventeen percent and additional smaller taxes making up the rest. General funds coming from taxes make up about

36 percent of total revenue. Non-general funds that consist of fees such as motor vehicle and gas taxes, college tuition, federal grants and other fees make up 64 percent of the budget. Noteworthy features of the House and Senate budgets that are being reconciled and are subject to change before a final budget is adopted include a much needed increase in rates for personal care providers in Medicaid programs, an increase in developmental waiver disability slots by 1,135 in the Governor's budget to 1,635 in the Senate version of the budget. While the increase will help, the number of persons on the waiting list still number in the thousands. The Governor and the House budgeted for 630 supportive housing slots for persons with serious mental illness while the Senate provided 1,630. Budget language provides for the establishment of a state-based exchange for health insurance. The budgets of both houses provided for teacher raises as did the Governor's budget.

The amount differs in each with an expected three to four percent over the biennium. The ratio of counselors to students in the public schools will be improved. The Governor proposed a ratio of one counselor per 250 students. The House ratio is 325 and the Senate's is 300. Likewise, the ratio of teachers for English learners will be improved. A major point of contention among the Governor's and the House and Senate budgets is that only the House has proposed to restore the cost to compete funding for Northern Virginia schools because of the high cost of living in the region. The average per pupil direct aid for public school students range from \$6,206 in the Governor's budget \$6,297 in the House budget. A major emphasis in the budget is an increased investment in preschool education that was championed by the First Lady. The Governor's "Get skilled, Get a job, Give back" (G3) funding to provide tuition assistance to low- to moderate-income students who meet certain criteria is receiving significant funding. The Housing Trust Fund will receive a much-needed infusion of cash proposed in all the budgets. For information comparing the three budgets, go to www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org.

We Both Deserve \$15. Why Don't Our Senators Think So?

BY NICK RIVIERE AND
TONY HEDGEPEETH



Riviere



Hedgepeeth

Like millions of Virginians, we work hard. As home care providers, we work every day to help older adults and people with disabilities live independently at home and in the community. By keeping people out of costly nursing homes and institutions, we save taxpayers money and deliver quality care. We do the same work but in different parts of Virginia – Fairfax County and City of Richmond – and have different backgrounds. One of us is a 21-year-old assisting young adults with developmental disabilities and one of us is a 61-year-old Army veteran helping his fellow vets who suffer from PTSD. However, we both love what we do. It's a blessing to be able to help others live with dignity. We both deserve to make at least \$15 per hour and live with dignity ourselves. Unfortunately, our Virginia state Senators seem to disagree. Earlier this month, the Virginia House of Delegates passed a bill to raise the minimum wage to \$15 for all workers by 2025. They recognized that working families are falling behind no matter how hard we work, and that we need to build an economy that works for everyone. The Senate, however, passed a bill which would create different minimum wages in different regions, even for workers who do the exact same jobs like us.

Their bill also forces workers to wait even longer to get a raise. If the Senate bill becomes law, people working in Fairfax won't make \$15 until 2027, while those in Richmond won't make \$15 until 2032. Our fellow homecare providers and others working in Hampton Roads won't make \$15 until 2034. Delaying the minimum wage increase for 14 years, and paying different wages for the same work, is not only unfair; it's unacceptable. Every person who works hard and plays by the rules in Virginia deserves equal respect. We deserve living wages, paid sick days, affordable health care, a secure retirement, and the right to join together in a union. While the cost of living varies in different parts of Virginia, we all feel the same pain when we struggle to pay rent, buy groceries and pay utilities. Housing costs are skyrocketing in both Richmond and Northern Virginia. Health care costs, food costs and transportation costs are all increasing. We need a state-wide \$15 minimum wage to ensure that no one gets left behind. To our Senators, we ask: why should a home care worker in Richmond or Roanoke make less than a home care worker in Fairfax when we make the same contribution to Virginia's families? We elected Democratic majorities to the House and Senate because they promised to deliver a brighter future for working Virginians. It's time that our Senators delivered on that promise.

LETTERS

A Time to Elect a Fixer

To the Editor:

As a physician who has treated kids in Northern Virginia for more than two decades, I've seen firsthand the transformative impact of the availability of high quality health care. It's also clear that uninsured families and high prescription drugs costs are a fiscal burden on families and means that people receive less timely medical care. The stakes of the 2020 election are crystal clear - do we stay on the same dangerous path of skyrocketing prescription drug costs and constant attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act? Or do we elect a fixer, someone who has spent his whole career solving problems? The choice is clear: we must elect Mike Bloomberg President. A Bloomberg Administration would put the focus back where it belongs - on helping citizens like those I care for in Virginia every single day. While the Trump administration has filed multiple lawsuits attempting to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Mike Bloomberg would use the federal government's bulk price purchasing power to dra-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 6

Chantilly
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A Connection Newspaper

Peer Support Service Dogs Provide Comfort, Stress Relief

Pilot program helps police officers cope with a dangerous job.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When people think about police dogs, what normally comes to mind are K9s trained to find drugs and criminals. And they can be pretty scary and ferocious when they've found their suspect.

But in addition, the Fairfax County Police Department now has peer support service dogs. Their main purpose is to provide comfort to the officers – who often handle dangerous and traumatic situations – and to help them deal with the stress of their jobs. And some of the dogs also respond to crime scenes to give support to both victims and first responders.

The Department has five of these dogs, and two of them plus their handlers came to the Feb. 12 meeting of the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). There, 2nd Lt. Chris Sharp and PFC Dusty Granofsky discussed the Peer Support Service Dogs program and introduced attendees to their dogs, Jack and Lennie, respectively, each 1 year old.

They came from First Responder Canine Service Dogs (FRK9), a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that provides the dogs and their medical care, food and training at no cost to the police. And they're part of a two-year pilot program that will also spread awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries, as well as psychological and physical disabilities sustained by many first responders.

THE DOGS are golden retrievers and Labrador retrievers, chosen for their good dispositions, health and longevity. They come from certified breeders and can bond with multiple people. There are three types of service dogs – mobility service dogs, facility dogs and therapy dogs.

FRK9 trains mobility service dogs for first responders who've incurred life-altering injuries on the job. To be eligible, recipi-



2nd Lt. Chris Sharp with his peer support service dog, Jack, happily perched on a chair.

ents must be retired and have sustained a disability impacting their quality of life and independence. They face challenges such as mobility issues and diagnosed, trauma-related conditions. Their dogs live with them and are specially trained to assist them. For example, these dogs can retrieve items, open and close doors, interrupt stress cues and reduce symptom severity.

Facility dogs go to work with an officer and are deployed to community events, plus traumatic/critical incidents and their debriefs. Therapy dogs are trained to provide affection, comfort and love to first responders at the scene of tragic and devastating events and can do the same for sexual-assault victims, for example, or a child who's witnessed a terrifying incident.

"The dogs are trained as puppies and donated to us," said Granofsky. "We have five dogs currently in the police department, including one named Sully, after the Sully District Police Station." The plan is to eventually have one dog at every police district station, plus one at headquarters.



PFC Dusty Granofsky says his dog, Lennie, can reduce officers' stress after a tough day.

"We choose the dogs for their temperament, so there's no whining or growling and they have good behavior," said Sharp. Indeed, as he addressed the meeting, his dog Jack placed a big, furry, reddish-brown paw in his hand. "Jack is a comfort, therapy dog," explained Sharp. "Anywhere I go now, Jack likes to be up on a chair and hold my hand while I make a presentation."

The dogs get two years of training; and, said Granofsky, "We do monthly progress reports. Only 30 percent of the dogs that go through the service-dog program actually pass. We also try to raise awareness of this program, as well as help our people on a day-to-day basis."

Law-enforcement officers' jobs aren't easy; the officers frequently deal with life-and-death situations and see horrific sights that remain in their thoughts. They're in a profession where they need to be tough – yet they're still human beings – and the weight of it all can eventually take a terrible toll on them.

The nonprofit Blue H.E.L.P. (Honor. Educate. Lead. Prevent.) keeps statistics of the number of law-enforcement officers who died by suicide and honors their service. Its goal is to reduce mental-health stigma through education, advocate for benefits for PTSD sufferers, assist with healing and shine a light on suicide and mental-health issues in the law-enforcement community.

Indeed, according to Blue H.E.L.P., in 2019, more police officers lost their lives to suicide – 228 nationwide – than died in the line of duty (132). And barely two months into this year, there have already been 29 suicides. So the Peer Support Service Dogs Program, begun a year ago, is one tool in FCPD's arsenal to try to prevent these tragedies here.

"The dogs go everywhere with us," said Granofsky. "They also do stress-recognition so they can interrupt it to divert our attention to them, the dogs, to get us through it. We're trying to head off PTSD symptoms before they come on."

For example, said Sharp, "We went to a murder-suicide with kids in the house. But having Jack there for the officers, technicians and kids was a big help. Peer support service dogs go to all the major incidents, and you can really see a difference when we deploy them."

IN ADDITION, said Granofsky, "Handling a bad car accident can cause a lot of stress for officers, or events dealing with kids – especially if they have children of their own. And it can even bring up stress and trauma from their own lives. An officer will come in from a long shift, and I can tell something's wrong. And my dog Lennie is a tool for me to breach that topic and ask about their day. Then the officer will open up and get it off his chest."

Besides that, Granofsky added, "Being around the dog is fun and entertaining; guys will play with her. A bloodhound just has one purpose – smelling a scent and finding something. Lennie and Jack have a lot of different functions, but we don't always realize their success immediately. An officer will pet Lennie and walk away feeling better. We can't tell, but we know it'll help him."

Girl Scouts Tour WFCM Food Pantry

On Wednesday Jan. 15, Girl Scouts from Troop 54002 visited the Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) food pantry. Since they'd previously donated more than 40 pounds of food for Thanksgiving meals, their visit gave them the chance to tour the pantry and learn about the program and the people it serves. All the girls are in fourth grade and are already talking about how they can do another, bigger food drive during the summer months when the pantry needs the most help.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NADINE KAISER

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS



(From left) Sundas Haq, 6, and Fatima Suhail, 5, help with the meal-packing.



The women share a laugh while sealing the food packages.

Celebrating 100 Years with Community Service

Ahmadiyya Muslims fill food packages for people in need.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Hamza Qumar carefully measured a portion of fortified rice and poured it into a large, yellow funnel that opened into a plastic food bag. Into that same bag, as well, went vitamins, soy protein and dried, mixed vegetables.

He and other members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community at the Mubarak Mosque in Chantilly were creating food packages to send to people in need in the Philippines. They did it in partnership with Harvest Pack, a humanitarian, hunger-relief nonprofit.

"I want to help people who don't have food or shelter," explained Hamza, an eighth-grader at Liberty Middle School. "Because we have food and they don't, I don't want them to starve."

He was one of about 120 Ahmadiyya Muslims participating, Feb. 15, in a nationwide day of service to express their gratitude to America. The Ahmadiyya Muslims are a sect of Islam whose central tenet is "Love for all, hatred for none." They condemn violence, terrorism and Jihad and, instead, believe in morality, justice and peace.

FEB. 15 is historic for the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in America, since it marks 100 years since its establishment in the U.S. So, in thanks and commemoration, each of its 62 chapters around the country did local, community-service projects. In Chantilly, it was the food-packing event – for which the participants raised money to purchase the food.

"We want to serve humanity and the poor wherever they are," said Shahid Malik. "And we wanted to do something to make an impact."



The men pose for a photo while measuring out ingredients for the meals.



(From left) Danisch Malik and Hamza Qumar wear their centennial celebration T-shirts while they work.

When the food bags were filled, they were sealed and packed in boxes. They were then sent to Harvest Pack's warehouse in Minnesota for shipment to the Philippines. Each bag yields six servings; and when the volunteers were all done, they'd packed a whopping 17,280 meals.

"Our mission is to put healthy meals on every table, both overseas and locally," said Sophie Klein, an event leader with Harvest Pack. "These meals will go to adults in a job-training program in the Philippines. That way, while they're studying, they can focus on learning skills to make them more employable so they can obtain higher wages, instead of worrying about feeding their families."

"I'm participating for the very noble cause of helping the needy," said Farhana Fouzia. "I've been ladling the powdered vitamins into the food packets. I'm enjoying it; and it's nice that, as a community, we're able to come together."

ALSO HELPING OUT was high-school freshman Lyla Malik. "Normally, I'd be sleeping in on Saturday morning," she said. "But when I heard about this, I really wanted to participate, and my mom said it would be a good experience. I like to help other people; it makes me feel good and happy. I've been scooping vegetables into the funnel for the food packets. I'm having fun being with everyone, working together."

Akavish Khan, one of the women's presidents at the Mubarak Mosque, was pleased with the volunteers' efforts. "I wish everyone a happy centennial celebration; we're looking forward to the next 100 years," she said. "I'm happy with the turnout. We take part in various service activities throughout the year, and we instill community service in our youth. That's why we have a lot of children here today, helping, too."

"I'm excited to celebrate 100 years by giving back to our community and reminding ourselves and everybody else that we're an integral part of American society," added Saira Bhatti. "It's also an example of our presence in U.S. history as a community."

PET CONNECTION

A Perfect Friend

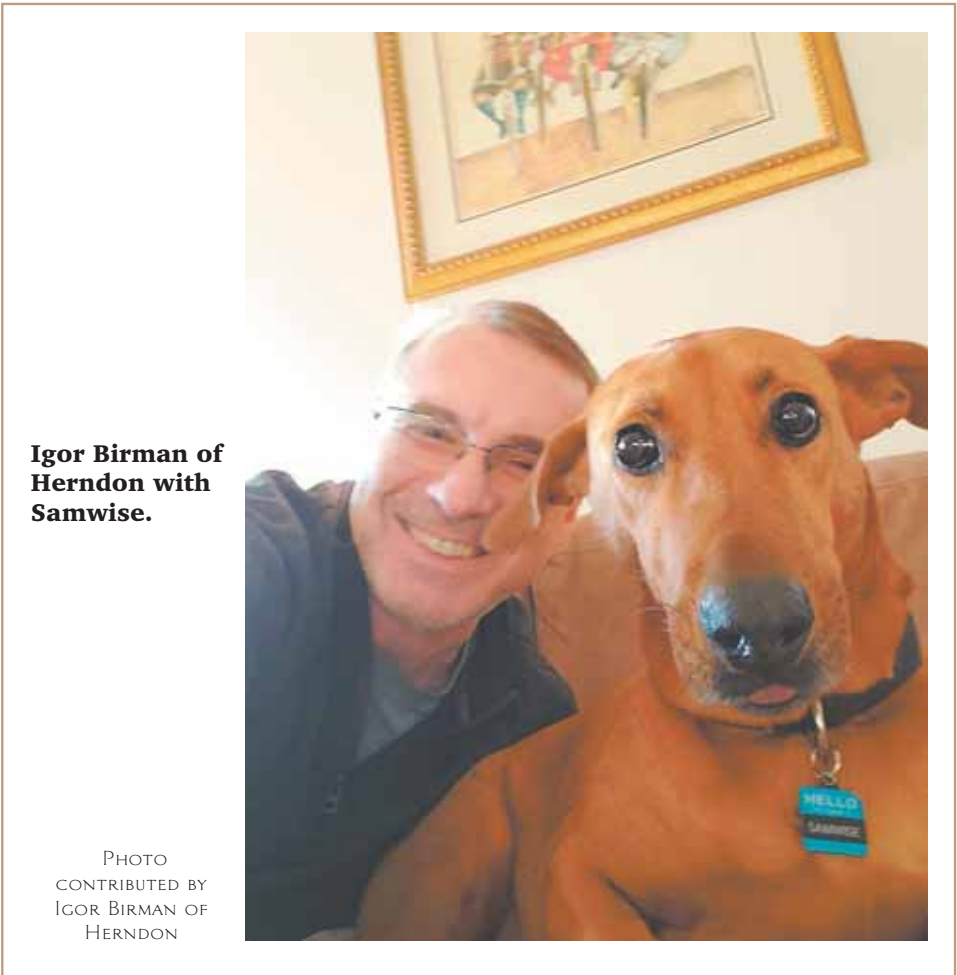
County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay: “I have an adopted retired racing Greyhound named Pascal. Despite their reputation as fast dogs that can run 45 mph, they also live up to their nickname as the ‘40 mph couch potato.’ Greyhounds are loving, calm, and relaxed; a perfect friend for me and my kids Aidan and Leann. Adopting older pets from places like the Fairfax County Animal Shelter is great too.”



Pascal with Aidan.



Pascal with Leann.



Igor Birman of Herndon with Samwise.

PHOTO
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OPINION

Climate Change at Our Doorstep

How Virginia is taking the high road.

By ROHAN MANI

Growing up in a world in which scientists predict we only have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe is understandably unnerving for an 18-year old. And the most worrisome concern is that we are doing almost nothing about what is looming over the horizon.

For decades, our planet has experienced consistent increases in temperature, changing rainfall patterns, increasing frequency of floods, droughts, melting of glaciers and more. While cutting back greenhouse gas emissions responsible for global warming is the only way forward, limited progress has been made on this front. Coal and oil continue to dominate as major energy sources despite the availability of relatively cheap and abundant solar and wind energy. What then are realistic and sustainable solutions that we should pursue in order to leave a thriving planet for our children and grandchildren?

According to the Fourth National Assessment Report, the impacts of global climate change are already being felt in the United States and are projected to intensify in the future. But the severity of future impacts will depend largely on actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the changes that will occur. This report draws a direct connection between the warming atmosphere and the resulting changes that affect Americans' lives, communities, and livelihoods, now and in the future. Multiple studies have now projected that the climate of our region will turn more southern over

the coming decades. The unusually warm winter of this year may not be an exception but a norm for coming years. That means, less need for jackets, gloves, hats, scarves etc.

Many communities are attempting to answer this question in different ways. And it's been fascinating to see how some are gearing up to cope with immediate problems through advocacy and the support of local governments. It's obvious that communities need to adapt to a changing climate irrespective of what happens globally to reduce greenhouse gases.

There is, however, a ray of hope. The Virginia lawmakers passed an unprecedented climate legislation last week that will significantly alter use of clean energy in our power generation. The measure, called the Clean Economy Act, lays out a plan to get Virginia to 100 percent renewable generation by 2050. The legislation will significantly alter our generation energy capacity with solar and offshore wind taking the lead. That will not only reduce our dependence on fossil fuel-based energy generation but will put Virginia among the top US states in terms of dealing with climate change.

Climate change has the potential to significantly transform every aspect of our lives, ranging from where we live to what we eat and the stories we tell. It is an existential crisis for our generation and generations to come. I believe this is the time to act now to save the planet and it begins at our doorstep. We can do our own bit by driving less, switching to cleaner energy sources, using energy efficient appliances and reducing usage of water. As activist Greta Thunberg put it aptly, "the climate crisis has already been solved. We already have the facts and solutions. All we have to do is to wake up and change."

Rohan Mani is a Senior and a student journalist at McLean Highlander.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 2

matically bring down the cost of prescription drugs. Mike would ban drug company payments to the people who make decisions at pharmacies so drug makers compete on the value of their products — not on the amount of money they pay to get preferential treatment. As a businessman, Mike would also work to increase competition in the marketplace, giving consumers more options at lower costs.

Mike Bloomberg is a trained engineer, a businessman, and a philanthropist who has spent his life solving the big problems facing Americans and I know that if he is elected, he will work tirelessly to reverse the rising cost of

healthcare in the United States.

Marjorie Brennan
MD MPH Pediatric Physician
McLean

Targeted by Scammers

To the Editor:

Recently, I was stuck at home and unable to go to work for a few weeks due to health reasons. While to some people that may seem like a welcome respite from the drudgery of commuting to a 9 to 5 job, let me tell you it was not.

While Week 1 wasn't too bad, one can only watch so many episodes of Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit! What I would like to share with everyone is just how many calls we all get on our house landlines each day. When we're at work and don't answer, most callers don't leave messages so we have no idea of the volume of these calls each day.

I can honestly say that 99 percent of these calls are cold calling sales people or scammers! Yes,

there is the occasional call from Giant Food that "a prescription is due for pickup," but for the most part they are from strangers trying to separate you from your hard-earned cash.

Social Security scams, lower credit card interest rates, police benevolent association donations, hail damage inspection teams that are in my neighborhood and countless free vacations I've won where I only have to sit through a short two hour presentation, are just some of the calls I get every day!

Boredom forced me to pick up the phone and actually speak with these people. Civic duty caused me to engage in as long a conversation as I could so they would have less time to rip off my neighbors. They target the young and the old. Their metrics must show they succeed enough to make it profitable. And our number is registered with the "Do Not Call" list! Something must be done.

Bill Byrne
Oak Hill

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By e-mail:
editors@connectionnewspapers.com

ROUNDUPS

WFCM's Stuff the Bus Food Drive

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) will hold a Stuff the Bus food drive, this Saturday, Feb. 29, 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.

Sully District Budget Town Hall Meeting to Be Held March 4

Area residents are invited to join Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith, School Board Member Stella Pekarsky, The Sully District Council, and Budget Staff from Fairfax County Public Schools to discuss the FY 2021 budget for FCPS and Fairfax County on Wednesday, March 4, 2020, 7 to 9 p.m. at Sully Government Center - McDonnell Room, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly.

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.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 26

Sully District Council Meets. 7 p.m. At Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Topic: Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Speaker: President and CEO, Victor Hoskins.

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation will hold community meetings in every district of the county this spring with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to discuss proposed 2020 paving and restriping projects. The first meetings will be held in the Hunter Mill and Springfield Districts in February.

❖ The Springfield District meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 26, 6:30 p.m., in the cafeteria of Liberty Middle School, 6801 Union Mill Road, Clifton.

The meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m., with a formal presentation beginning at 6:45 p.m., followed by time for questions, feedback and comments. For residents who cannot attend the meetings in person, the meeting presentation will be available on the District paving and restriping webpages, and feedback may be submitted online for two weeks following the meeting. Visit the Fairfax County 2020 Paving and Restriping Program: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/2020-paving-and-restriping>.

TUESDAY/MARCH 3

Kindergarten Registration. 12:30-3:30 p.m. At Colin Powell Elementary School, 13340 Leland Road, Centreville. Colin Powell Elementary School will conduct its Kindergarten Registration on Tuesday, March 3 from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. Parents may also call 571-522-6008 to schedule an appointment. Forms and other information are available on line at: <https://www.fcps.edu/registration/general-registration-requirements>. Due to the time required to register your child, they request that only parents come to school for registration.

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Useless Is As Useless Doesn't Have To Do



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It began years ago when technology enabled many public bathrooms to change to hands-free. Other than the obvious hands-on responsibilities, many of the other elements no longer required any touching. Be it the paper-towel dispenser, the hand dryer, the hot and cold/on and off functions in the sinks, and of course, the urinal and toilet flushing functions. All providing a convenience never before possible. Other than an automatic entry/exit function for the bathroom door, and one as well on the inside for the stalls themselves, using many public bathrooms has become much less involved, shall we say, than ever before. And it has not stopped there. It has gone public in a very big way.

Driving, specifically through tolls, that is. Thanks to EZ-Pass, tolls or rather interacting with them by having to hand money over to a "toll collector," (or even to stop and toss money into a basket) has nearly been eliminated. Due to a device (transponder) attached to my licence plate, as me and my car approach the toll booth, I simply go about my normal driving business with nary a worry in the world. I steer into the dedicated EZ-Pass lane at a bit less than the posted speed, and ding!, as I drive through the toll booth, the toll is paid. No fuss, no muss, no window roll-down and no scrambling for change or digging for dollars. What's done is done so long as the yellow light illuminates and "paid" appears. (Although if what's done isn't done, you'll soon receive a paper bill in the mail at the address on file.)

Metro, our local public conveyor, also provides a hands-free or very nearly hands-free experience. If you have a plastic "Metro card" linked into their system, all you need do as you enter the turnstile is tap your card and go. No more standing in line at the "Fare"/"Add Fare" kiosks to load your card with money to start or end your journey. As with your EZ-Pass, once you sign up and link your Metro card to a credit/debit card, you are "In Like Flint," as some of us from a certain generation might say. Henceforth, your card is automatically updated to always provide sufficient dollars for this trip and any subsequent trips to make sense.

Now imagine if I had a "smart phone." How many more functions/people-free interactions might I enjoy with a tap, a scan or a wave? Unfortunately, I have what my wife, Dina calls a "stupid phone." That's a flip phone with no internet access. As such, I am cut off from an evolving world. A world in which I'll likely not have to interact with anybody or reach into my pocket for anything resembling money. All I'll have to reach for is my "smart phone." I've seen its functionality at the airport in lieu of a paper ticket, on Amtrak, at concert venues and of course sports venues. It seems to help speed up the entry process.

I don't really don't want to be the last flip-phone-holding man standing. But neither do I want to get into a life-accident while negotiating the learning curve. At the moment, the road ahead seems full of twists and turns with more curves than I can possibly imagine. How do I negotiate something I can't see? Moreover, how do I negotiate the road less traveled, by me? Where will I draw the experience necessary to acclimate to these ever-changing signposts? I mean, the words may be familiar, but some of the context may be off putting and counterintuitive, to me.

I'm not a complete Bozo. I have partially integrated into this new world. I have had insurance and car payments automatically debited from my bank account for years. I have some over-the-counter medicines, supplements and a variety of cat-related care and feeding products automatically delivered to my home. However, sometimes I feel like a pinball (and I'm no wizard) without the bells and whistles banging around trying to stay on top of what product is debit/paid and when. Now that's a service I could use: an automated weekly reminder of what's happening when. And the beauty of it, I wouldn't need any new devices. I use what I always use: my home computer. Turn it on, click the email, open, read and then close. Even Bozo the clown could do that.

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.

ONGOING

Beginning English Conversation.

Fridays 10:30-12:30 p.m. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Drop-in conversation group for ESL speakers who want to improve their skills. Adults. No registration required. Fridays 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. Call 703-830-2223. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/6119888>

Collect Coats for Children in Need.

Now thru Feb. 28. At CSB Office, 14150 Parkeast Circle, Suite 200, Chantilly. The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) Youth & Family Outpatient staff is holding a coat drive to benefit its clients and the community. Bring new or gently used coats, hats, scarves and gloves to CSB's office.

SATURDAY/FEB. 29

CVHS Choral Cabaret. 6:30-10 p.m.

At Centreville High School Cafe, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Come join the 16th annual Choral Cabaret, featuring a night of marvelous music, spectacular silent auctions, and delectable desserts. Cost is \$10.

Pink Tie Breast Cancer Charity

Ball. 6 p.m. to midnight. At Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon. The IIIB's Foundation will host its 9th Pink Tie Breast Cancer Charity Ball to raise funds for their Bosom Buddy Baskets which are presented to women when they wake up in hospitals following breast cancer surgery. These baskets provide comfort from the pain associated with breast cancer surgery and treatment and lets them know they are not alone in their journey. The event will feature a Candlelit Served Dinner, Open Bar and Dancing All Night, Silent Auction, Raffles, Surprise Guests and More. 100% of All Proceeds benefits The IIIB's Foundation. Ticket prices are \$199 per person.

SUNDAY/MARCH 1

Bobby Berk at Belfort Furniture. 2 p.m. At Belfort Furniture, 22250 Shaw Road, Dulles. This award-winning interior designer and member of the Fab 5 from Netflix's "Queer Eye" will be on-site for a conversation on design and to launch his exclusive new furniture collection in partnership with A.R.T. Furniture. Door prizes, refreshments, much more. RSVP here: <https://www.belfortfurniture.com/events/default.aspx>

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Travel the Forgotten Road. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. These one-hour, outdoor walking tours cover the original outbuildings and slave quarter at Sully that were used during the late 18th century. Tours take place at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily, except on Tuesdays, during special events, or when there is severe weather. Call the site to confirm the tour status. The tour cost is \$8 for adults; \$7 for students age 16 and older with ID; \$6 for children age 5-15; and \$6 for seniors age 65 and older. Tours of the historic house will not be available through May because of ongoing structural repair and maintenance work. The rest of the historic site is open. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site.

Celebrate Pi Day with Pie. 3:14 to 5 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Sully Historic Site is hosting a "Pi Day Pie Celebration" for visitors of all ages to mark the return of 3.14 day. See historical interpreters in 18th-century clothing bake over an open hearth with pie recipes dating from the Lee time period through the 19th century. The cost, of course, is \$3.14 per person. Call 703-437-1794.

Following Mosby Thru Fauquier County. 4-6



Super Pet Expo

Hermit crabs will be one of the highlights at the Super Pet Expo at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly.

MARCH 20-22

Super Pet Expo. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Fri., Mar 20 – 3-8 p.m.; Sat. Mar. 21 - 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun. March 22 - 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: Adults \$13; Children age 4-12 \$8, age 3 and under – Free. The family-friendly event will feature more than 200 pet-related exhibits along with entertainment and educational activities. Dogs, cats, Champion Trainer, hermit crabs and reptiles will highlight this show. Tickets: www.superpetexpo.com

p.m. At the Sully District Government Center, Frank Room, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Join authors Don Hackenson and Chuck Mauro as they describe the exploits of Colonel John S. Mosby in Fauquier County during the Civil War and discover sites that still remain today. Mosby is among the more complex historical figures of the Civil War. Known as the "Grey Ghost" the romantic lore surrounding him is consistent with the "Lost Cause" interpretations of the war. Yet Mosby himself denied this view of the war and suffered for it. Presented by the Historic Centreville Society. Light refreshments will be served. Free. Email CentrevilleFHC@gmail.com

St. Patrick's Day/St. Joseph's Day Party. 6-9 p.m. At St. Veronica's Church parish hall, 3460 Centreville Road, Chantilly. This is a family event that includes food, drink, sing-alongs, Irish dancers and plenty of smiling Irish eyes. Adults \$8, Children \$6, drinks extra. Visit the website: <http://www.stveronica.net/> or 703-773-2000.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

Climate Change Forum. 7:30-9:30 p.m. At Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Sully District Democratic Committee sponsoring a Hot Topic Forum on Climate Change - A Message of Urgency and Hope featuring Molly Bakal, Earth Rise Indivisible/Climate Reality Project, and Karen T. Campbell, Green New Deal Virginia. For details, email: LizWalker2@iCloud.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 27

Bake Old-fashioned Biscuits. 5:30-7 p.m. At Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Fairfax County parks preserve history, as well as nature. Get a taste of that history at the "Cooking Biscuits" program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. Come to the park and learn to cook the old-fashioned way — over a fire — the way Virginians did for generations before us. Cook biscuits and top them with fresh-made butter and jelly. Discover the kinds of tools that were once used in the kitchen and the safety measures required when cooking with open flames. This program is designed for participants age four to adult. Call 703-631-0013.

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 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.fairfaxjubilaers.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 Villagio, 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.

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.