

Lees Corner teacher Tina Pivarnik and Principal Bob D'Amato stand beneath the pergola of the school's outdoor classroom. Some of the raised gardens are behind them.

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Hoping to Improve Local Bicycling

FABB shares information, solicits community input.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

The Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) is an all-volunteer group that advocates for more bike lanes, bike trails and neighborhood connections. Formed in 2005, it wants to improve the opportunities for people to bike to work, shopping and other places in their everyday lives.

"It helps communities be more effective in advancing their bicycling priorities, such as getting a new bike lane or trail," said FABB Board of Directors member Douglas Stewart. "We've also been active in getting better, safer bike routes to schools. For example, they might need a trail connection or bike racks. We also have a bike-light giveaway program, working with churches and other partners."

He and others spoke recently at the Sully District Governmental Center about planned bicycle improvements in that district. Basically, said Stewart, "We're about making bicycling safer, more fun and easier in Fairfax County. And often, we need better infrastructure to make that happen."

For example, he said, "We've been advocating for a parallel bike trail along I-66 in Fairfax County, and it's now in the plans. We've also been working to get a bike-parking ordinance enacted in commercial developments so, when they're built, they'd have to include bike-parking areas and racks."

Fairfax County Bicycle Coordinator Adam Lind noted that, in 2014, the county approved a \$1.4 billion program of bike improvements over six years. Included in the projects is construction of the Pleasant Forest Trail from Pleasant Valley Road to Pleasant Forest Drive.

"We're also working on a Sully Historic Area cycle tour [to see where bicyclists encounter problems]," said Lind. "And regarding the Route 29 widening from Centreville to Prince William County — and the Route 29 widening from Union Mill Road to Buckley's Gate Drive — both projects should include bike lanes on both sides."

He said one of Pleasant Valley Road's southbound lanes was recently converted into a buffered bike lane. And, he added, "Also planned is a median rescue-area for pedestrians crossing this heavily traveled road."

At the park-and-ride on Stringfellow Road, said Lind, "There's now a secure bike room to park your bike for \$60/year. And we're now starting to update our bike map. We'll look at roads' traffic volume, speed, width and percentage of trucks to give [people] a better idea of what it's like to ride on them."

Franklin Farm resident Jim Keating asked



Adam Lind talks to the group.



Douglas Stewart listens to a resident speak.

The bike path along Pleasant Valley Road, near Meherrin Drive, in Centreville's Virginia Run community.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

about trail maintenance, and Lind said the county Board of Supervisors appropriates \$300,000 to \$400,000 a year to maintain the county's trails. "But there are hundreds and hundreds of miles of trails." He then asked people to contact him (adam.lind@fairfaxcounty.gov) if they see problems with a trail, and his office will notify the county's Department of Public Works or, in applicable cases, VDOT.

"FABB also advocated for grade-separating the bike crossings from the ramps on the I-66 widening project because they're the most dangerous places for bicyclists," added Stewart.

Sully District Transportation Commissioner Jeff Parnes said three entities are responsible for trails. The county Park Authority maintains the park trails, VDOT is responsible for trails bordering the roads, and the county handles trails not in parks.

Fair Oaks resident Fionnuala Quinn lives on West Ox Road, on the north side of Route 50. But, she said, "There's only a 4-foot-wide, biking-and-walking trail on one side of it — and that's our only way to access Route 50. You have to cross two ramps to get to the Fairfax Towne Center, and there are dire safety issues there; we can't see on the crossings."

She asked if there's funding to continue

that trail or improve safety there for bicyclists. Lind said he didn't think there was, and Mike Coyle with Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith's office said he'd check for her.

"Sully is a newer part of the county, so many of the developers had to build sidewalks and trails as part of their projects," said Lind. "But there are also many missing links where they don't connect."

A male resident also noted that King Charles Drive is about a 20-foot-steep incline, and Lind said it'll be on the Sully cycle tour.

"It's great that you're telling our staff what the issues are," Smith told the meeting attendees. "It's important that we have different ways for people to get around. I'm prepared to fight for your issues, but you need to communicate with us."

Agreeing, Lind said, "If you want bike lanes in your area, come out to these meetings. Often, we can get these done at no cost to the county when VDOT's repaving roads."

"Sully Park Drive [in Centreville] got bike lanes done this way, a few years ago," said Coyle. "So it's a great opportunity."

"Far more men than women bike in Fairfax County, and it's a reflection of the infrastructure conditions," said Quinn. "And it's an important issue because, as long as

women aren't biking, it's a problem."

Lind asked what roads people bike on in Centreville and Chantilly and was told Centreville and Lee roads, Conference Center Drive and Walney Road. Parnes, of Chantilly Highlands, said, "I just ride on the extreme right of a four-lane road because I'm more visible to traffic than when I'm on a sidewalk. And drivers can give me more right-of-way when they're turning."

Keating said he bikes from Franklin Farm to the Burke VRE station. Admittedly, he noted, "It's been an adventure to find a good route. Around Monument Drive and Government Center Parkway, there are fairly wide roads with plenty of room for everybody."

Another resident, Sara Dyer, said she bikes along Stringfellow. "The outside lanes are 14-foot wide now, so there's more room on the road," she explained.

Lind also asked if the meeting attendees prefer riding on paved roads or bike trails, and they were equally divided.

"Because we're doing so much suburban driving, the right-on-red [lights] for drivers is an issue where people

can get hit," said Quinn. "The drivers don't look for bicyclists and don't realize the bicyclists have the right of way."

However, related Parnes, "I've been in a car and was hit by a bicyclist on Poplar Tree Road, on the east side of the bridge over Route 28. She ran into my wife's side door because she wasn't looking at the stoplight. And I'm a bicyclist. So as much as bicyclists fear cars, we need to be aware of what we're doing, too." Noting that she rides just for fun, Dyer said she stays on Stringfellow because "Everything else is a mess."

Added Parnes: "The Franklin Farm Trail is less than 10 feet from the Fairfax County Parkway Trail — but there's no connection between the two." Lind replied that, "In the next funding go-round, we'll be looking at opportunities to do some of these small connections."

When the draft of the new bike map comes out, people may contact FABB at info@fabb-bikes.org and list where the missing trail connections are. They should contact VDOT to report pedestrian-signal and trail-maintenance issues. Stressing that FABB is nonprofit, Stewart invited anyone interested to "volunteer with us and donate to us." For more information, go to www.fabb-bikes.org or contact Stewart at douglasbstewart@gmail.com.



Principal Bob D'Amato speaks during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The backs of the benches can be turned into tables.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Clapping after cutting the ribbon on the outdoor classroom are (from left) Bob D'Amato, Tina Pivarnik, Frances Ivey, Assistant Principal VaRonica Sloan, Region V Executive Principal Rebecca Baenig and Zippy Shell's Paul Vicente.

'What If a Garden Could Teach, Inspire Children?'

Lees Corner celebrates its outdoor classroom.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

It took the combined actions of many people to bring Lees Corner Elementary's outdoor classroom to fruition. But it began with the vision of third-grade teacher Tina Pivarnik.

"I started here as the primary, lead science teacher, and I thought we could do more than plant a tree or recycle paper," she said. "And I wanted our kids back outside again."

Once just grass, the site behind the school now contains 15 raised, garden beds around a wooden pergola with latticework sides, plus a cement patio with benches that flip back to become tables.

Created before school began in September, it's now a learning environment where all ages may do particular reading, math and art projects outside. The garden beds are tied to each grade level's curriculum, and the pergola can be used for events and guest speakers.

"We also plan an outdoor whiteboard for teachers on the brick wall at the back of the patio," said Pivarnik. "And our special-needs and autistic kids will have a safe-play area with a touch wall off to one side of the patio, so it'll be a five-senses garden with wheelchair-accessible planter beds."

To kick off the funding for it, last February, the school received a \$2,000 grant from the Whole Foods's Healthy Kids Foundation. It also won a sweepstakes sponsored by

WTOP radio and Zippy Shell Moving & Storage.

"We wrote a proposal telling what we'd use the money for, and we were up against high schools," said Pivarnik. "The school with the most votes won — and you had to be 13 or older to vote — so we were at a huge disadvantage. But still, we were neck-and-neck 'til the last three months. First prize was \$20,000, and we won second — \$10,000."

A PTA booster track event last spring raised \$18,000 more, for \$30,000 total, to build and maintain the outdoor classroom. "It's amazing," said Pivarnik. "It's unbelievable when you aim big and it gets bigger than you ever thought."

But she said it wouldn't have been possible without the whole community fundraising and supporting her efforts. She especially praised J&M Landscaping, Portugal Construction and Custom Fence. And at the recent ribbon-cutting ceremony for the classroom, Lees Corner Principal Bob D'Amato told those attending how proud he was of the school's accomplishment, of Pivarnik and of contractor and parent Dave Trumbull.

D'Amato said Pivarnik's "sheer joy for connecting the environment and school was contagious. She applied for every grant possible and we set goals and made plans for implementation. And we realized we could do it with hard work and dedication."

As for Trumbull, D'Amato said, "He reached out and helped design and develop this beautiful project, and his team of contractor friends helped build it. He realized what a great learning opportunity it'll be for students for years to come, and we're grateful for all their generosity. And our parents raised money and helped assemble

the benches."

He said the outdoor classroom fits right in with Lees Corner's green-school initiative. And the school is taking three paths to achieve it. The first is cutting back on electricity use to save energy. During the last school year, Lees Corner saved more than \$4,000 this way.

The second is reducing waste. "We saved over 500 pounds of food in our cafeteria last year, put it in our refrigerator and donated it to a local food bank at the end of each week," said D'Amato. "It was food the students didn't eat during the week. And we'll eventually grow our own fruits and vegetables here to serve in the cafeteria."

The third path is healthy living by making sure the school staff and students are healthy. "Our teachers ran or walked an additional 2,400 miles last year," said D'Amato. "And we have Fun, Fit Fridays. In the morning, we play music, and the students and teachers run or walk around the track. It relieves stress and gets the kids ready to learn."

And each day, he said, "Our staff continues to grow and learn about nature and the environment. Our kids love this outdoor learning space; and as principal, I'm proud to lead this charge. But we appreciate you all and thank you for taking this step with us."

Also addressing the crowd, Pivarnik said, "This is the end of one phase of our journey and the beginning of many possibilities to come. At the start, seven or eight years ago, I asked, 'What if?' What if we could have more of a hands-on experience for our kids? What if we could build garden boxes here? What if our garden spaces were accessible to all students — and what if they reflected our curriculum, instead of just being ornamental?"

"What if a garden could teach and sustain, support and inspire children to care about a living thing that depends on us? And what if that caring is extended to our relationships, our jobs and into the community outside of Lees Corner?"

So Pivarnik started researching gardens and the value of children being outdoors. And that's especially important today, she said. "When so many children spend so much time indoors, looking at an electronic screen. Here, they can plant pollinator gardens and organic produce and marry what they learn to social studies and other subjects." For example, she said, students could use Colonial methods to start their gardens and could host Thomas Jefferson's plants. Then they could have poetry time and read books on the grass. Furthermore, said Pivarnik, "The produce we grow can also support our school families; and in exchange, the families receiving it can work in the garden." Then, quoting inspirational writer Steve Maraboli, she said, "Plant seeds of happiness, hope, success and love. It will all come back to you in abundance; this is the law of nature."

Next, Region V Superintendent Frances Ivey congratulated and thanked the school. "This is an example of what can be accomplished when we have visionary leaders, opportunities and resources from businesses, and the strong support of the parents, teachers, Chantilly Pyramid, Region V principals and FCPS facilities staff," she said. "And I look forward to the 'what ifs' for many years to come."

At the end of the ceremony, just before the outdoor classroom's ribbon-cutting, kindergarten teacher Martha Hellman gave Pivarnik a gift "in awe and in gratitude for what you've given to our school. It's a gift for all of us."

Predatory Loans in the Crossfire

Lawmakers conflicted about how to handle high-interest loans.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE
CENTRE VIEW

At this time last year, members of the General Assembly were feeling the heat about car-title lending. Public outrage was growing about the industry, which charges interest rates in excess of 300 percent in some of the poorest neighborhoods in Northern Virginia. Lawmakers were particularly concerned that car-title lenders were evading the regulations they put in place to protect consumers by offering more than one kind of loan at their storefront locations, a move many members of the General Assembly considered a bait-and-switch operation.

Behind the scenes, car-title lenders were taking action to head off efforts to crack down on their industry.

In the week before the General Assembly session began, title lenders gave \$35,000 in campaign contributions even though the campaign for General Assembly seats had ended the previous November. Like many businesses, title lenders make a habit of making campaign contributions after the election and before the session, during which they are prohibited from giving. The donations are not reported until

after the session, so following the money isn't really a possibility during the flurry of action in Richmond.

"They serve a very useful purpose for the business because it reminds people right at the start of the session who their friends are," said Stephen Farnsworth, political science professor at the University of Mary Washington. "The coalition of people to block regulation may include some Democrats and some Republicans, and that's why they are equal opportunity givers. Some money goes to Democrats and some goes to Republicans."

Take, for example, the \$15,000 contribution LoanMax gave to the Senate Democratic Caucus the day before the session began. A few days later, the Senate Democratic leader brokered a deal that involved two of the state's leading title lenders voluntarily agreeing to stop offering multiple kinds of loans at their storefront locations. That deal ended up torpedoing all the reform bills.

"It's impossible to say that there was a quid pro quo. I mean, you just can't say that," said Quentin Kidd, a professor at Christopher Newport University. "But it is possible to say that there was an effort on LoanMax's part to gain access to elected officials so that their case could be heard."

Senate Democratic Leader Dick Saslaw, the senior member of the Fairfax County delegation in the state Senate, is the one who negotiated the deal involving a voluntary agreement with two of the three title lenders authorized to offer consumer finance loans. LoanMax was not part of that deal, even though it had dual license authority at the time. Saslaw says LoanMax isn't the problem.

"LoanMax doesn't do that business," says Saslaw. "They don't do it in the same facility. They're the ones that called and alerted me to what was going on."

According to public documents from the State Corporation Commission, LoanMax had dual licensing authority to offer car-title loans as well as consumer finance loans at its Alexandria location on Mount Vernon Avenue in the Arlandria neighborhood.

The commission also has documents that show how many loans made last year — including what kind of loans — as well as how many automobiles the company repossessed. But regulators don't want to hand over those documents. And Saslaw isn't in the mood to answer questions about his involvement in the deal.

"They don't do it," he said when asked about

SEE PREDATORY LOANS, PAGE 7



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OPINION

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After your event, email us a photo and a note so we can consider including it in our coverage. Be sure to include the names of all the people who are in a photo, and say when and where the photo was taken.

We also publish notes about news and events from local businesses. Notes about openings, new employees, anniversaries are welcome.

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We are always looking for contributing writers and photographers.

EDITORIAL

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The publications and websites have won hundreds of awards for news and community coverage just in the past few years, including the Virginia Press Association Award for Integrity and Community Service for coverage of efforts to prevent and end homelessness, and Best in Show for information/art for coverage of local parks.

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— MARY KIMM

Accomplishments in Sully District in 2016

BY KATHY SMITH
SULLY DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

This past year, it had been my pleasure to represent Sully District on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. As my term begins its second year, I am issuing you a report on important 2016 milestones in Sully District and Fairfax County at large.

Early in the year, we hit the ground running with a review of land use process in Sully District. We facilitated a plan to streamline the development process and harness maximum resident input while saving staff time and legal fees. Simultaneously, we launched a comprehensive planning review of the Dulles Suburban Area Center. This is the first time such a review has taken place since 1991. I'm very pleased to have my predecessor Michael Frey leading the Dulles Suburban Area Advisory Group. The members have experience ranging from land use planning to transportation to airports. We recruited this team from across Sully District and they are currently in the process of reviewing and compiling recommendations for revisions to the comprehensive plan that will guide land use in our community for the next 20 years.

In my role as chair of the Board of Supervisor's Development Process Committee, I was pleased to oversee new regulations on permissible shape factors for new residential developments in the Residential Conservation

and Residential Estate zoning districts. These regulations will protect current and future homeowners from overdevelopment.

Finally, we shuttled the final site plan for Wegmans through the approval process with minor modifications. I'm optimistic that this grocery store and shopping center will be positive additions to our community.

Our Human Services Bond passed in November. That bond includes funding for a new Sully Community and Senior Center. The senior center will be moved temporarily until the new center is constructed.

As Sully supervisor, perhaps my greatest responsibility is constituent service. When a major snow event hit our area in January, my office fielded over 1,400 constituent contacts. We helped identify for VDOT areas of the county that were overlooked. After the storm, we convened a snow summit to investigate what improvements could be made when the next storm comes.

During the budget discussions, I hosted a joint town hall with Sully School Board member Tom Wilson and we heard from many residents about the need to balance a small tax increase with increases in quality school and county services. After months of negotiation between my colleagues and myself, we raised teacher salaries \$40 million and saved the taxpayers money in other parts of the budget.

The Board of Supervisors also made progress on the Police Commission Report. For my part,

I met with community leaders and faith leaders as well as over 20 officers from the Sully police station to understand how our actions would effect each stakeholder. Because of my outreach, I was able to provide valuable edits regarding the release of officer names and annual review of the implementation of the Civilian Review Panel.

In transportation news, the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway project moved forward with VDOT making their selection of the private partner to finance, design, build, maintain and operate the project. We also authorized the preliminary engineering and partial right of way acquisition for Route 28 widening between the Prince William County Line and US 29. Finally, Governor McAuliffe came to Dulles Airport to announce a new \$50 million investment over the next two years.

This year, we received ringing endorsements of the strong economic activity happening here in Sully District. We opened the first brewery in Sully — Mustang Sally — in May. Governor McAuliffe visited the district again to celebrate the expansion of CarFax in August. The Driver Rehabilitation Center of Excellence opened to wide media acclaim in November. In December, the Fairfax County Disability Services Commission awarded the Martha Glennan Disability Service Award to the Sully District small business I nominated — Wildflour Caterers of Chantilly.

It has been a busy year in Sully District and 2017 promises to be just as exciting.

CENTREVIEW

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A Connection Newspaper

Predatory Loans in the Crossfire

FROM PAGE 5
LoanMax. "End of discussion."

THE DISCUSSION ABOUT car-title lending may not be over yet though. After Saslaw cut the deal with industry leaders, he and state Sen. Frank Wagner (R-7) sent a letter to the State Corporation Commission asking "your assistance in removing dual business authority for title, payday or open-end lending companies operating at the same location."

Regulators say they don't have authority to revoke the dual licensing without the General Assembly taking action. That means the concern lawmakers raised last year about bait-and-switch has yet to be resolved. Documents from the State Corporation Commission show that five car-title lenders currently offer open-end lines of credit, and five consumer-finance companies currently offer open-end lines of credit.

"Rather than leave it to the SCC to figure out, we're just going to put in legislation to make sure they can offer one product or the other but they can't offer both at the same location," said Wagner.

Meanwhile, the Virginia Supreme Court is considering a case that could open up a treasure trove of information about the industry — how many consumer-finance loans LoanMax makes or how many cars TitleMax repossesses, for example. The law-

Predatory Loans

❖ **Car-Title Loans:** Last year, two of the three biggest car-title lenders cut a deal with the Senate Democratic leader to avoid additional regulations. Part of the arrangement included state regulators withdrawing the ability of car-title lenders to offer other kinds of loans at the same location, which many lawmakers considered a bait-and-switch operation. Regulators said they didn't have the authority to do that, so lawmakers may take action to limit car-title lenders to car-title loans. The Virginia Supreme Court is also considering a case that could open up the books to show how many loans individual businesses are making and how many cars they are repossessing.

❖ **Open-End Line of Credit Loans:** These were originally created so consumers could purchase appliances from department stores, but they have now become a favorite product by former payday lenders that don't want to deal with all the regulations lawmakers created for the industry. They are almost completely unregulated. State regulators don't track them. Lenders don't need a license to offer them. There's no limit on the interest rates they can charge. Lawmakers will be considering an effort to make these loans subject to the same restrictions as payday loans and car-title loans.

❖ **Internet Loans:** They may be technically illegal in Virginia, but that doesn't mean that businesses aren't eager to offer people who live here loans at up to 900 percent interest. Last year, a company known as OneMain persuaded Del. Terry Kilgore (R-1), chairman of the Commerce and Labor Committee, to introduce legislation legalizing internet lending. That bill failed, but more may be on the way this year.

suit was filed by the Center for Public Integrity, which asked for documents car-title lenders filed with regulators. The Virginia State Corporation Commission sided with the industry, deciding to keep the documents secret. The case is now on its way to the Virginia Supreme Court, and state Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) is representing the Center for Public Integrity.

"You know the law is the law, and if the

law says you have to release the records you've got to release the records," said Surovell. "I've never heard of a court before saying I'm not going to interpret the statute. I'm just going to call up the legislature and ask them to make a decision so I don't have to make a decision."

Michael Pope will report from Richmond for the 45-day session of the Virginia General Assembly which began Jan. 11. See www.ConnectionNewspapers.com for updates.

ROUNDUPS

Fatal Car Crash

Sully District Police officers responded to the report of a single-vehicle crash on Centreville Road near the intersection of Bradenton Drive, on Tuesday, April 10 shortly after 2 a.m. Once in the area, they found a white, 1987 Chevrolet van that had left the roadway and struck a tree. 43-year-old, Jose L. Merida, of Takoma Park, Md., was in the front passenger seat; he was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver, a 53-year-old, Centreville woman, was taken to Inova Fairfax Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Anyone who might have witnessed this crash is asked to call the CRU witness line at 703-280-0543.

Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, Jan. 19, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed.

Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

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ENTERTAINMENT

The Centreville Garden Club, shown here at a White House Tour, is hosting a speaker on Monday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m. at Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. Topic: "5 Designer Secrets to Take Your Garden to the Next Level" by Carolyn Mullet, garden designer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CATHY SLY

Email announcements to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com. Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

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.

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.

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.

English Conversation Group.

Selected Saturdays, 3 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for a list of dates.

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.

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.

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.

ESL Book Club. Every other Saturday, 11 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Adults learning English are welcome to meet and discuss a book chosen by the group. To find out book title, call 703-502-3883.

Lego Block Party. Every other Tuesday, 3 p.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.

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

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.

PET ADOPTIONS

Adopt a Cat or Dog. Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Visit www.lostdogrescue.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Saturdays, 12-3 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Highway. Visit hart90.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Sundays, 1-4 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit aforeverhome.org for more.

Adopt a Dog. Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit www.lostdogrescue.org for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 15

G-Scale trains at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. noon-4 p.m. at 11200 Fairfax Station Road. If looking for a train to run in the garden, this is the event to see these trains and speak with experienced people about this facet of the model railroading hobby. Museum members, free; adults 16 and over, \$4; children 5-15, \$2; under 4, free. www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225.

MONDAY/JAN. 16

Centreville Garden Club. 7 p.m. at Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. "5 Designer Secrets to Take Your Garden to the Next Level" by Carolyn Mullet, garden designer. centrevillegardenclub@gmail.com, 703-266-9233 or Centrevillegardenclub.blogspot.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 21


Let Them Eat Cake at a Birthday Party at Sully Historic Site. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way. Richard Bland Lee represented Northern Virginia in the first congress of the United States, and Sully was his country home. Learn about Lee's political career and how he demonstrated his concern for the future of the nation. \$7 for adults, \$6 for students and \$5 for seniors and children, weather dependent. 703-437-1794 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/

FRIDAY/JAN. 27

Hot Dogs Over the Campfire. 5:30-7 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Enjoy a wagon ride through the Rocky Run stream valley and a hot dog dinner cooked over the campfire. Learn who Ellanor C. Lawrence was and hear about the area's local history. Hot dogs, buns, condiments and s'mores provided, bring drinks and sides. \$10 per person, and children must be accompanied by an adult registered for the program. Meet at Cabell's Mill. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence

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Organizing a Home Office Design ideas for workspace order.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
CENTRE VIEW

Whether located in a basement, spare bedroom or kitchen corner, one of the keys to creating a functional home office is organization. Local designers offer suggestions for styling a space that is both practical and aesthetically appealing.

“Start by thinking about how you would like to use your home office and plan accordingly,” said Megan Padilla, senior designer at Aidan Design. “Will it be a desk that easily converts to a homework station or craft area or a dedicated home office for the everyday telecommuter?”

Keeping office equipment out of sight will give the space a home-like feel, says Padilla. This can be accomplished by using storage solutions like printer drawers.

Practical home office organizational solutions include roll-out trays for computer accessories like printers and a wire management system above and below the desk for power cords and computer cables both on top of the desk, advises Chuck Kheel, vice



PHOTO BY MORGAN HOWARTH

This new home office by Anthony Wilder Design/Build incorporates a custom-designed cord control system.

president of Fred Home Improvement, a division of Case. “Create a Bluetooth operational office space,” he said.

“Organizing all of the smaller office supplies can be accomplished with a series of coordinated containers for tools such as pencils, scissors and markers ... or within drawers,” added Padilla. “Consider a mix of drawer heights to allow ample storage

for smaller desk supplies as well as your typical file folders.”

Use open shelving to allow for quick access to frequently used items and book storage. “[It] can also make a smaller space feel more expansive,” said Padilla.

If a home office is in a spare bedroom, closets can be repurposed and organized to hide copy and fax machines, says Shannon

Kadwell, interior designer at Anthony Wilder Design/Build.

“Add fabric bulletin boards in prominent locations and in a complementary color for visual appeal,” she said.

“Custom built-ins make a huge difference as you can tailor the storage space to individual needs and create more functional spaces.”



PHOTO BY ROBERT RADIFERA

Storage solutions such as those in this office by Megan Padilla help make home offices aesthetically appealing.

New Year, New Order Organizing an unruly linen closet.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
CENTRE VIEW

If retrieving an item from the top shelf of one’s linen closet sets off an avalanche of mismatched sheets and tattered towels, it might be time for a linen closet reorganization. With a plan and a few tools, tackling the mess won’t be a daunting task, say local organizers and designers.

To start, take inventory of existing linens and toiletries to determine storage needs, says Kelly Emerson, designer/showroom manager at Aidan Design. “Begin by organizing like items together,” she said. “For example gather bedding and towel sets for specific rooms [like] the guest, master and kids rooms, in groupings so that they are easily identified. If you have the space, consider labeled bins to identify the rooms to

which each set belongs.” Install an LED light inside the closet operated by an automatic switch, so that the light turns on when the door is opened, suggests Chuck Kheel, vice president of Fred Home Improvement, a division of Case. “Create multiple depth shelves, such as deeper shelves on the bottom, shallower shelves higher up,” he said. “Deeper lower shelves will allow more efficient use of space.”

Organize storage so the most frequently used items are most easily accessible. Allot extra space on upper shelves for seldom-used supplies, like extra blankets and pillows. “Dedicate a shelf to toiletries,” said Emerson. “Group tall bottles together ... and use trays or decorative baskets to organize smaller items.”

“If one closet is used for multiple bathrooms, consider creating a dedicated shelf for each bathroom,” added Kheel.

Devise a solution that is adjustable and flexible enough to handle future changes. “Consider custom built-ins where possible for a more de-centralized storage approach,” said Emerson. “This allows for easy access to everyday items and takes some pressure off the main linen closet.”

One final recommendation, for those with limited space, a clear over-the door shoe holder is a tool that professional organizer Susan Unger of ClutterSOS in Vienna advises, “It changes dead space — the back of the door — into a fabulous space [by] ... holding toiletries. Unger and fellow organizer Lauri Mennel co-authored the book, “Fifty Shades of Organizing.”



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

Built-in shelving by Case/Fred Home Improvement helps keep the linen closet of this Potomac, Md. laundry room organized.

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Slippery Hope



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When you're diagnosed with a terminal form of cancer, you spend a lot of time talking to yourself, not aloud; well, mostly not aloud, trying to convince yourself of a million and one things that don't lead to that inescapable conclusion: premature death (I know, any death is premature). And when you get sick, as I am now and have been for the past 10 days; not getting worse, just not getting better; it is, at least for me, not only next to impossible, but impossible as well, not to think that perhaps this is the time when you have crossed the Rubicon.

Though what I am referring to are merely/mostly cold symptoms: sneezing, coughing, runny nose, nasal congestion, watery eyes, occasional headache; no temperature or sore throat, no vomiting, no nausea; it's easy to rationalize that I am simply experiencing a severe seasonal reaction to some strain of something which is, if what I hear from friends and family is true, something which is definitely going around. However, that assessment would presume I'm a relatively normal person, 'normal' meaning not a person diagnosed with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer. Ergo, the conversations me, myself and I are constantly having with ourselves.

And though the answers rarely change (always minimizing, never reinforcing a negative, accentuating the positive), I have to admit the longer I live through these blips on the radar, the less conviction I am able to sustain in my ongoing attempts to talk myself into or out of, whatever the case may be, the challenges emotionally and/or physically, that characterize one's life living with cancer. And believe me, 'living with cancer' is all it's cracked up to be, and I'm one of the lucky ones, a survivor, nearly eight years in fact, post my Feb. 27, 2009 face-to-face appointment with an oncologist; my new best friend, who lowered the diagnostic boom to Team Lourie that day.

I think I can say with some certainty that the one constant in my life these past eight years has been the many conversations I've had with myself. Trying to maintain an even keel; heck, any keel that would keep me emotionally afloat. Obviously, encouraging and supportive words from others have filled many gaps, but there are way more gaps when I'm alone that need to be filled. Reading, writing, 'rithmetic, radio, television and the Internet, fill some and provide distraction for others, but still there are many more times when you're left alone with your thoughts; when the rubber really hits the road and somehow you must get through the night or the post-chemo weak or the before, during and after "scanzxiety" and navigate the slings and arrows of the outrageous misfortune which has befallen you.

Mostly I have been successful. Occasionally though I have been depressed. Occasionally I have felt lonely. Occasionally I have felt out of control. And more than occasionally, I have just plain worried. Like now, when I'm sick and tired and wondering if persistent cold symptoms portend the beginning of something worse. After all, I do have lung cancer so any breathing-related and/or coughing problems could indicate an exacerbation of my underlying condition, or so I would guess.

Ah yes, guessing. That's perhaps the real problem. How do you stop yourself from going down that rabbit hole, especially when you've already quadrupled the back end of the number of years: two, offered up by your oncologist eight years ago? I don't suppose I could experience a normal life expectancy after being given a terminal diagnosis. Could I? I guess it's possible. Probable? I wouldn't know. However, there's no harm thinking about it. Except if you're thinking about it all the time.

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

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21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements

OBITUARY



Mahlon M. Hamilton, 97, of Stephens City, Virginia, formerly of Batavia, New York, passed away peacefully Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at Greenfield Reflections in Strasburg, Virginia, with his wife of 64 years, Lila, 88, at his bedside.

Mahlon "Ham" Hamilton was born on November 12, 1919 in Avon, New York, the son of Myron and Hettie Lucas Hamilton. Ham attended and graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, where he was a member of the Chi Phi Fraternity. His senior year was interrupted by his service as a C46 and C47 pilot in the Army Air Corps in WWII in the CBI theatre, flying materials and supplies to allied forces in Burma, and evacuating wounded and prisoners of war. Later, he flew missions over the Burma Hump to China. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster and the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, and honorably discharged as Captain, USAF. After the war, he was a health and physical education teacher and administrator at Oakfield-Alabama Central School, the State University of New York at Brockport, and Genesee Community College for 37+ years, during which time he coached and officiated various interscholastic sports, including football, basketball, baseball, tennis, swimming and diving. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Batavia, New York.

Mahlon married Lila R. Dean of Batavia, New York on August 30, 1952. Surviving with his wife are his three daughters: Wendy Wygant and her husband Mike, of Stephens City, VA; Sally Dohse and her husband Jeff, of Centreville, VA; Amy Hamilton and Jeff Sanfrantello, of Batavia, NY; seven grandchildren: Tim and Brad Wygant of VA; Josh Wygant of Tacoma, WA; Jeffrey, Cameron and Emily Dohse of VA; Andrew Cowan of Batavia, NY; three great-grandchildren in VA; and several nieces and nephews.

Arrangements are being made by Jones Funeral Home in Winchester and by H.E. Turner & Co. Funeral Home in Batavia, NY. A celebration of Ham's life will be held in Batavia, NY, details to be announced at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to the First Presbyterian Church, 300 East Main St., Batavia, NY 14020, or to the Veterans organization of your choice. Condolences may be sent to Lila Hamilton at 766 Germany Road, Stephens City, VA 22655.

Online condolences may be left at www.jonesfuneralhomes.com

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OBITUARY



Virginia L. (Bostic) Bisson passed away peacefully with her family at her side on December 30, 2016 at INOVA Fairfax Hospital in Fairfax, VA. She was born on October 21, 1934 in Centreville, VA to Orville and Dorothy Bostic. Virginia grew up in Centreville, VA and graduated from Fairfax High School in Fairfax, VA in 1953. After high school she worked with the Fairfax County Circuit Court, Department of Defense at the Pentagon, Fairfax County Public Schools and served as an employee for the High's Dairy Store and Hunter Hardware until her retirement in 2006.

Her greatest joy was her family and friends, especially her beloved grandchildren. Virginia was preceded in death by her parents Orville and Dorothy Bostic, her siblings, Orville Bostic Jr., Sherlock Bostic, James Bostic, Joyce Stephenson, Roger Bostic, Jonas Bostic, Ruth Lamb, Lois Shropshire, Larry Bostic, Betty Devinney and her spouses Frederick Bisson and Phillip Yarborough. Virginia is survived by her siblings Ann Turk of Herndon, VA, Robert Bostic of Centreville, VA and David (Teofilia) Bostic of Florence, AL and her children Jennifer Lowman of Centreville, Va, Tim (Nathalie) Bisson, John (Sheila) Bisson of Warrenton, VA, Cindy (Jim) Draucker of Front Royal, VA and Robert (Sharon) Yarborough of Leesburg, VA and her grandchildren Jessica Lowman, Ben Draucker, Marie Bisson, Austin Bisson, Matthew Yarborough, Kelley Yarborough, and her great-grandchildren Samuel Draucker and Skylar Draucker.

Services were held at Adams-Green Funeral Home on Saturday, January 7, 2017. Donations may be made to the Capital Caring Hospice Organization or to the American Cancer Society. Condolences may be left on the online guest book at <http://adamsgreen.com/1/Home.html>.

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NEWS

Fairfax Lawmakers' Last Call for Input

More than 80 speak at General Assembly public hearing.

By TIM PETERSON
CENTRE VIEW

We're not letting teachers do their jobs," was the plea from Jo Neuber of Vienna Co-chair of the organization Class Size Counts. Neuber thanked Del. Jim Lemunyon (R-67) for developing three class size bills for the 2017 session of the Virginia General Assembly, including HB1498. Neuber said she was in favor of putting a cap of 24 students in science labs.

Neuber was one of more than 80 Fairfax County residents who spoke directly to members of the Fairfax delegation to the General Assembly at a public hearing on Jan. 7 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

The General Assembly is set to convene in Richmond at noon on Jan. 11, when they will begin work on new or amended legislation for the Virginia Code.

The public hearing was the last chance local constituents had to voice their hopes or concerns for pending or potential legislation in person without traveling to the state capital, though most lawmakers have already all but finalized their legislative agenda for the session.

Education was once again an important topic for many speakers, beginning with Board of Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova.

"Of the \$21 million in additional state

funding the county was expected to receive in FY2017, \$4.4 of that is already at risk due to the cancellation of funding for raises for teachers and other instructions personnel," Bulova said. "We must get that funding back and we must make sure that funding for those raises is included in the FY2018 budget."

Bulova and Fairfax County Public School Board vice chair Jane Strauss said the Virginia Retirement System rates were accelerated by one year last year, which increases the costs for FCPS by more than \$25 million in FY 2017.

"We ask for help in avoiding funding reductions to our local programs and services," Bulova said, "and opposing restrictions on our local revenues."

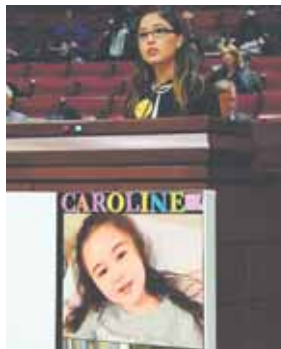
Several education advocates echoed Neuber's call to reduce class size, and Bulova's concern for competitive teacher salary levels.

Other topics with numerous speakers included legalization of marijuana for medicinal use; funding for disability services waivers; transportation and congestion reduction; funding for the court system; and the tax on toilet paper, adult diapers and some feminine hygiene products.

Holly Seibold of Vienna is founder and executive director of the group Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters that provides donated feminine hygiene products to who have insufficient access to them. She urged the delegation to support the "Dignity Act," introduced by Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86), that would make toilet paper, adult diapers and some feminine hygiene products tax exempt.

For more information on the General Assembly, to track a bill or find out who your representative to the assembly is, visit virginiageneralassembly.gov.

Marta Conner of Clifton spoke on behalf of her daughter Caroline, whose syndrome caused her to have 98 seizures last year. An Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) waiver helps the Conner family with nursing costs. Conner urged the legislators to reject what she said was Gov. Terry McAuliffe's (D) proposal to reduce money to the waiver system. "You have the power to improve or even save our lives," Conner said.



Robert Stewart of Chantilly, representing Vienna-based Social Action Linking Together (SALT), addressed the General Assembly delegation regarding Medicaid and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants.



Al Francese of Clifton spoke on behalf of the group Centreville Citizens for Rail. "What is our vision for I66?" he asked. Francese called for enhancing existing congestion control on the major roadway, as well as increased provisions for carpooling, telecommuting and bus transit along the corridor.



Cayce Utley of Centreville demanded a change in Virginia law to allow for civilian groups to be able to independently investigate police. She called for asking "zealously for justice, for all marginalized people."

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/
CENTRE VIEW

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SPORTS



Centreville's Bryce Douglas #33 elevates for a jump shot and avoids Christian Parana #3. Douglas led all scores with 23 points.



Centreville's Giorgio Thompson #10 gets past Chantilly's Daniel Carmichael #5.



Chantilly's Elijah Ford #34 lays in two of his 9 points as Tyler Lohman #35 of Centreville defends.

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

Chantilly Wins Conference Opener Against Centreville

The Chantilly Chargers and Centreville Wildcats met up for each team's Conference 5 opener on Jan. 9 in Chantilly. The visiting Wildcats opened the 1st quarter with 19 points while Chantilly scored 17.

In the 2nd quarter however Centreville was held to 8 points and Chantilly scored 14 to take a 31-27 halftime advantage.

In the 3rd quarter the Chargers again outscored the Wildcats 15-11, taking a 46-38 advantage into the 4th quarter.

In the 4th quarter the Chargers and Wild-

cats combined for 38 points, with Chantilly outscoring the visitors 20-18 and Chantilly winning the Conference opener 66-56.

The Chargers scored 29 of their 66 points from the charity stripe, shooting 74 percent for the game. Daniel Carmichael was one of three Chargers who scored in double figures.

Carmichael finished with 19, while teammates Kendall McHugh added 16 and Bret Caslavka added 14. Centreville's Bryce Douglass led all scorers with 23 points. Marcus Mack added 11 and Tyler Lohman added 10.

Chantilly improves to (9-4) (1-0). With the loss, Centreville falls to (7-6) (0-1).



Westfield's Tory Martin #44 rises over #12 Tori Birks of Potomac Falls. Martin would score 12 points in her team's win.



Rita Yoham #30 of Westfield controls the tipoff over Potomac Falls Tori Birks #12.



Elise Toliver #24 slides between two Potomac Falls defenders.

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR

Westfield Girls Outscore Potomac Falls, 60-41

The Westfield Lady Bulldogs faced Potomac Falls in their last non-conference game in Chantilly on Jan. 3.

In the 1st quarter Westfield took an early 11-6 advantage after playing just one quarter.

In the 2nd quarter Westfield again outscored Potomac Falls 16-11, to take a 27-17 halftime advantage.

In the 3rd quarter Westfield scored 22 points and held Potomac Falls to just 8 points building a 24-point lead heading into the 4th quarter. Potomac Falls would cut into the lead in the 4th forcing Westfield coach Noel Klippenstein to put her starters back in. Potomac Falls would outscore Westfield in the 4th, 16-11.

With the 60-41 win, Westfield improved

to (6-6) heading into their first conference game of the year at Robinson. Westfield was led by Kirah Johnson's 18 points and Tory Martin added 12. Sami Knox (8 pts.) and Zakara Scott (6 pts.) each made two 3's, and Nicki McNamara (9 pts.) added another from 3-point range. With the loss Potomac Falls, falls to (2-7). Potomac Falls was led by Grace Decker and Mallory

Levenhagen's 7 points.

Westfield also won an away game, their first conference game, versus Robinson on Jan. 6, 45-35, to improve to (7-6) (1-0). Westfield will play home games against Centreville (9-3) on Jan. 10 and Oakton (12-1) (0-1) on Jan. 13.

— WILL PALENSCAR

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