

Fairfax Station Clifton & Lorton

Musical Night with ‘Little Shop of Horrors’

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7

Let the Jury Decide
Commonwealth
Attorney Race

NEWS, PAGE 6

Lee District Primary

NEWS, PAGE 3

Darin Stringer, music director for
The Workhouse Arts Center produc-
tion of “Little Shop of Horrors.”

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Democratic Primary for Lee District Supervisor

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Lee District representative Jeff McKay is looking to move over one place on the dais and replace retiring Board Chair Sharon Bulova at the end of this year. To accomplish that objective,

McKay will give up his current seat when the term ends, opening the door for a quartet of Democratic candidates.

Kelly Hebron, Larysa Kautz, Rodney Lusk and James Migliaccio all want the opportunity to represent the residents of Lee District.

Since there are no Republican or Independent challengers for the seat, their race is all about the June 11 Democratic primary.

To help our voting readers gather a bit more information on those who seek your support, the Connection asked each candi-

date to respond to an identical, basic questionnaire. Here are their responses.

[Some of the responses have been edited for space allotment]

— ANDREA WORKER



Kelly Hebron

Age: 49
Education: Catholic University of America, J. D. 1996
Catholic University of America, M.A. Public Policy, 1996
University of Maryland, B.A. Economics, 1992
Family: Husband and two daughters.
Native of: Philadelphia, Pa.
Moved to this District: 1999

Professional Experience:

- ❖ Full-time Community College professor
- ❖ Former small business owner
- ❖ Former Legal Aid attorney
- Civic/Community involvement:**
- ❖ Lee District representative – Community Criminal Justice Board
- ❖ Lee District representative – FFX Small Business Commission
- ❖ Board member – Community for Business Partnership
- ❖ Member – Economic Advisory Commission
- ❖ Leadership Fairfax 2010
- ❖ EmergeVA 2016

Why are you running?

“I am running to bring a collaborative and innovative voice for all Lee District.

Top 3 issues in your district and what solutions do you propose?

“Transportation, Affordable Housing and Education.

Key ways you differ from your opponents?

- ❖ I am a 20-year resident of Lee District.
- ❖ I am the grassroots candidate and long-time community volunteer.
- ❖ My longevity and activism demonstrate my commitment.
- ❖ I bring a broad range of experience to the position.
- ❖ I am the only lawyer, small business owner and educator running.



Larysa Kautz

Age: 40
Education: Georgetown University, LL.M. 2007; Yale Law School, J.D. 2003; Connecticut College, B.A. 2000
Family: Husband Ryan, son Symon.
Native of: Newark, New Jersey
Moved to this District: 2014

Professional Experience:

- ❖ Bingham McCutchen - Counsel
- ❖ Schaner & Lubitz - Partner
- ❖ Melwood – Chief of Staff & General Counsel

Civic/Community involvement:

- ❖ Founder, Lawyers for Good Government Foundation
- ❖ Board member – CityCenter, NOVA
- ❖ Gubernatorial Appointee – State Rehabilitation Council (appointed by Gov. McAuliffe, re-appointed by Gov. Northam)
- ❖ Member – Fairfax County Advisory Social Services Board, Lee District member (McKay appointee)
- ❖ Member – Fairfax County School Board Adult & Community Education Advisory Council
- ❖ Member – Fairfax County Bar Association
- ❖ Officer – Groveton Civic Association (GCA)
- ❖ Member – Lee District Association of Civic Organizations (GCA representative)

Why are you running?

“I decided to run in 2016 after recognizing the critical importance of local government in ensuring equity and opportunity for all residents. With federal and state levels of government in GOP hands, looked more closely at my state and local elected officials and realized there was very little diversity in my representatives. I didn’t see my experience or point of view represented. No working moms with young children or immigrants/first generation Americans on

SEE KAUTZ, PAGE 9



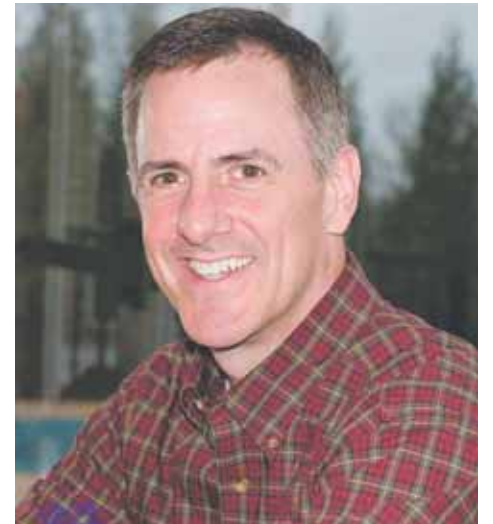
Rodney Lusk

Age: 53
Education: University of Virginia, B.A. American Government, 1988
Family: Wife Jacquelyn, daughters Sheridan and Addison.
Native of: Alexandria, Va.
Moved to this District: 1992-1995, 2003-Present

Professional Experience:

- ❖ Director of National Marketing, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority
- ❖ Land Use and Zoning Aide, Supervisor Gerry Connolly 1995-1998
- ❖ Employment and Training Specialist, FFX County Dept. of Human Services, 1989-1995
- Civic/Community involvement:**
- ❖ Fairfax County Planning Commission, Lee District, 2004-2010
- ❖ Fairfax County Parks Authority, At-large Board member (2002-2004)
- ❖ EMBARK Richmond Highway, Lee District representative (2015-present)
- ❖ Leadership Fairfax – Chair, Katherine K. Hanley Public Service Award (2004-present)
- ❖ Fairfax County Committee to Prevent and End Homelessness – Member, Governing Board (2008-present)
- ❖ Northern Virginia Technology Council – Co-chair Big Data Committee (2016-2018)
- ❖ Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation – Member (2008-present)
- ❖ Affordable Housing Resource Panel (2017-present)
- ❖ Committee for Dulles Member, Board of Directors (2010-present)
- ❖ Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce – Board member (2018-present)
- ❖ Business Alliance for Innovation and Entrepreneurship – President (2008-2012)
- ❖ Leadership Fairfax – Chair (2006-2007)

SEE LUSK, PAGE 9



James Migliaccio

Age: 49
Education: James Madison University, 1991
Legislative Studies Institute, 1995
Family: Partner Alessia, one son
Native of: Lifelong Northern Virginia resident

Professional, political, civic, community involvement?

- ❖ Fairfax County Planning Commission – Lee District representative (2010-present)
- ❖ Chair, Planning Commission Land Use Process Review Committee
- ❖ Planning Commission liaison to Zoning Modernization Working Group
- ❖ Past co-Chair, Planning Commission Policy and Procedures Committee
- ❖ Deputy Chief of Staff, US Senator Charles S. Robb
- ❖ Political and Legislative Staff, National Association of Letter Carriers (AFL-CIO)
- ❖ Virginia Certified Planning Commissioner
- ❖ Member of the Democratic Party of Virginia since college.

Why are you running?

“For the better part of 25 years I have strived to make our community a better place to love, work and play for all Lee residents. I’ve done this through civic activism, volunteering, and nearly a decade of service as the Lee District representative to the Fairfax County Planning Commission. I will work to protect and improve the quality of life in Fairfax County by creating better transit options, keeping our schools world class, protecting our natural resources and working to ensure affordable housing needs are met.”

Top 3 issues in your district and what solutions do you propose?

“Provide equitable educational chances for all from pre-K to high school...continue to implement the One Fairfax plan.

SEE MIGLIACCIO, PAGE 9

OPINION

Help the Class of 2019 Celebrate Graduation Safely

BY SUPERVISOR
JOHN C. COOK
BRADDOCK DISTRICT



The last month of Senior year in high school is an exciting time for students and their families. Our children are moving on to a new stage in life after four years of hard work and intensive studies. When one considers the caliber of our schools, graduation is an even more impressive milestone. Amidst these great achievements, I urge parents to talk to their teens about the dangers of alcohol and to prohibit teens drinking in their own homes.

The Fairfax County Police Department will arrest parents who knowingly host teen parties with alcohol.

This may seem harsh to some, but this is a public safety issue. Teens are not yet ready to make good choices about alcohol. When adults serve it to them they send the wrong message and encourage the wrong choices.

It is no secret that teen drinking is wrought with dangerous consequences. Since teens who drink are more likely to binge drink, they are also more likely to make poor choices, such as drunk driving. In fact, the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that every year hundreds of young people get behind the wheel intoxicated and cause deadly accidents: 648 people aged 16-20 were involved in a fatal accident with a BAC higher than .08 in 2017. Furthermore, teen drinking can also lead to sexual assaults and other crimes.

I cannot remember one year without hear-

ing of a tragic local teen death caused by drunk driving. It is up to us as parents to do everything we can to encourage smart choices and safe celebration. That starts with clearly setting the boundary with your children that no alcohol will be served at any parties your family is hosting.

This is a community wide problem and will require community support. If you suspect there is underage drinking happening in your neighborhood, you can call the West Springfield Police Station at 703-644-7377 (or your District station).

Graduation season should be a time of merry making, reveling, and kudos for all the hard work our children have done. It should not include jail cells, ambulances, or coffins. Please join me in promoting a safe environment in our community by keeping alcohol out of teen parties.

Mental Health Awareness Month

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



Before we tear off the remaining couple of pages on the May calendar, I want to address the important recognition of May as Mental Health Awareness Month. While Virginia is credited with having the first mental health hospital, or asylum as they were called in the eighteenth century, the Commonwealth has had difficulty in recent times coming to grips with the enormity of the need and the provision of funds to respond to those needs. In fact Virginia is ranked 40th in the nation in mental health care according to the results of a national study of the issue. It took a state senator's mentally ill son attacking his father with a knife to shock the state to greater action. That father now chairs the Joint Subcommittee on Mental Health Services in the 21st Century, or the Deeds Commission, that includes Senator Janet Howell as a member and has made critically important recommenda-

tions on which the state has made significant progress.

A special thanks goes to the The Commonwealth Institute (thecommonwealthinstitute.org) for documenting recent progress and remaining opportunities in behavioral health in a recent edition of The Half Sheet. The Institute which is a nonprofit organization focusing mostly on human service needs used the term "behavioral health" to be more comprehensive than "mental health" to include mental health services and supports such as substance abuse treatment. The Institute recognized accomplishments this past year to include a 21 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement to encourage more licensed mental health professionals to accept Medicaid thus increasing access to services for people with low income. Additional funding for emergency opioid kits will expand the access to and availability of Naloxone which is used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. The General Assembly also passed and the Governor signed my bill to expand the health care providers authorized to dispense Naloxone to make it more readily available.

Increased funding was provided to increase

staffing at state mental health facilities that are struggling to keep up with demand. Funding was also approved to replace the aging mental health facility Central State Hospital. In addition, monies have been made available for transportation of persons needing mental health hospitalization from having to be transported by law enforcement.

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services indicates that there is a need for 5,000 permanent housing units for those who need supportive housing in the state. This year's funding along with an increase last year will provide 1,300 units of supportive housing. Obviously, there is a severe need to do more in this area with a price tag of about \$47 million.

Challenges remain to be addressed in providing greater access to programs and services for those who live in rural areas and to those who have experienced the trauma of having been exposed to the immigration and refugee system. A task force is looking at ways to increase the number of mental health professionals in the state.

Our awareness of mental health needs cannot end with the month of May. More needs to be done!

Health Insurance Tax: An Attack on Seniors?

To the Editor:
Regarding The Connection's recent article on health

disparities in Virginia (March 25, 2019, "Report Shows Geographic Disparities in Health in Virginia,") I want to highlight another threat to care in our region: the Health Insurance Tax.

As a senior who depends on Medicare Advantage for affordable health care to help manage debilitating chronic migraines and back pain, I am appalled by the lack of congressional action on the Health Insurance Tax (HIT).

Medicare Advantage coverage

has helped me get my life and my health back, but the HIT is nothing short of an attack on seniors. It would raise annual costs for more than 22 million Medicare Advantage beneficiaries by as much as \$241 per person annually, imposing a huge

burden for those living on fixed incomes. Seniors on Social Security often live on significantly less than the mean income in Appalachia.

Key legislation before Congress (H.R. 1398 and S. 172) would stop the HIT and protect seniors, but Senators Kaine and Warner and Congressman Connolly have re-

fused to sign on as co-sponsors. It seems like Congress

has forgotten we are here.

If Congress allows a tax on my healthcare premiums, I won't be able to afford coverage. If costs go up, I'm out of the game. Senior health isn't a game – and the HIT is a multi-billion-dollar tax on health insurance premiums that will go into effect in 2020 unless Congress acts soon.

It's time for congressional action to stop the HIT and protect our care.

Carol Frysinger
Herndon

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue.

The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
The Connection
1606 King St.
Alexandria VA 22314

By email:
editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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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.

CAMPS

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

- ❖ Fine Arts & Crafts Camp (8 years & up)
 - ❖ Drawing Camp (8 years & up)
 - ❖ Drawing Plus Color & Craft Fun Camp (5-8 year olds)
 - ❖ Art Boot Camp for teens/adults
- CAMP WEEKS: 7/22 -26, 7/29-8/2 & 8/5-9
Call instructor at 703-250-6930 or visit www.czartlessons.com.

THURSDAY/MAY 30

Interfaith Ramadan Dinner. 7:30 p.m. (registration); 8 p.m. (program starts) at Fairfax County Government Center – Cafeteria, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Join for an Interfaith Ramadan Dinner hosted by Fairfax County Chairwoman Sharon Bulova. Call to prayer and dinner are at 8:30 p.m. Register at bit.ly/fxcounty2019.

SATURDAY/JUNE 1

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Seminar. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, #100, Fairfax. Take the path to certification as a Certified Dementia Practitioner through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. All health care professionals and front line staff who work in the healthcare industry are encouraged to attend. \$200. Register online at www.insightmcc.org, or contact Lindsey Vajpeyi

at 703-204-4664 or lindsey.vajpeyi@insightmcc.org.
Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group. 2-4 p.m. at Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. The Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group for greater Washington meets the first Saturday of the month. All are welcome. RSVP for available seating. Call 301-263-0616 or visit www.dcpnsupport.org for more.

MONDAY/JUNE 3

Mind and Body Workshop: Travelogue Session. 4:15-6:30 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, #100, Fairfax. A new session of the Mind and Body Workshop, runs Mondays, June 3-24. The workshop is a multi-session program series for both the caregiver and the recently diagnosed individual to participate, promoting social engagement and peer support, while adjusting to life with a new diagnosis. Register online at www.insightmcc.org, or contact Lindsey Vajpeyi at 703-204-4664 or lindsey.vajpeyi@insightmcc.org.

Phillips Right Response. 6-8 p.m. at Phillips' Annandale Campus, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale. Phillips Programs for Children and Families, a nonprofit helping youth with behavioral challenges and their families. Right Response is a proactive and evidence-based approach for de-escalation, intervention, prevention and positive behavior support. A two-session training helps parents remain in control during stressful situations, support a child through challenging behaviors, and avoid the wrong response. \$25 per session or \$40 for two. Email Carrie.Clark@phillipsprograms.org or visit www.phillipsprograms.org/right-response-training-for-parents.

Deadline Extended. 11:59 p.m. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) has posted Frequently Asked Questions about the Fairfax County & Franconia-Springfield

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11



Saturday & Sunday, June 1-2



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- Car Show
- Taste of Springfield
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- Cardboard Boat Regatta

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Let the Jury Decide

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Commonwealth's Attorney Raymond (Ray) F. Morrogh is the chief law enforcement officer for Fairfax County, serving a population of more than a million residents in the County, the City of Fairfax, and

the Towns of Herndon and Vienna. He left private practice in 1983 to join the Fairfax County criminal justice system as a prosecutor, then became an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, then Chief Deputy before being elected to the top slot in 2007. He was re-elected to another four-year term in 2011, and again in 2015, when he ran unopposed.



Steve Descano

Name: **Steve Descano**

Age: 38

Education: Bachelor of Science, United States Military Academy (West Point, NY) 1998 - 2002; Juris Doctor, Temple University - Beasley School of Law (Philadelphia, PA) 2006 - 2010

Family: Ryanne, wife of 16 years, daughter Charlotte, 7 years old

Native of: Philadelphia, Pa.

Moved to Fairfax County: 2010

Professional Experience:

❖ COO/General Counsel, Paragon Autism Services, 2016 - present

❖ Federal Prosecutor (Trial Attorney), US Dept. of Justice, 2010 - 2016

❖ Aviation Officer, US Army, 2002 - 2004

Civic/Community involvement:

❖ Member, Fairfax County Democratic Committee, 2015 - present

❖ Member, Fairfax County Police Civilian Review Panel, 2017 - 2018

❖ Board of Directors member, NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia, 2016 - 2018

❖ Member, Fairfax County NAACP Criminal Justice Committee, 2016 - 2018

Why are you running?

"I am running for Commonwealth's Attorney to create a modern criminal justice system so that no one, no matter how powerful, is above the law. I'll work to ensure that systemic discrimination based on race, wealth, status, and zip code is in the past. I'll take a holistic approach to justice that builds up our communities. Reforming our system means that we will break the cycle of decreased opportunity, increased poverty, and increased crime that is the story of far too many of our neighbors."

Top 3 issues in your district and what solutions do you propose?

"Transparency and accountability"

- Currently there is no publicly available

data or measures for holding the elected Commonwealth's Attorney accountable during times of crisis. I will invite an outside organizations that will, for no cost to the taxpayer, generate demographic, socioeconomic and geographic data to compare outcomes of cases. This will help identify sources of systemic discrimination. To improve accountability, I will hold regular in-person and electronic town halls to inform constituents about policies and progress towards goals set by the data collected.

Cash Bail - Currently in Fairfax County, 45.9 percent who are eligible for pretrial release have cash bail as a stipulation. These are people deemed not dangerous to themselves or others, but must sit in jail because they cannot pay a system that unfairly penalizes poor people simply for being poor and increases recidivism.

Treatment, not incarceration - People who are addicted to drugs are ill and need our help we need to help them overcome their addiction and come out the other side without the type of criminal record that limits their opportunities in the future. To do this, I will overhaul our diversion pro

SEE ATTORNEY RACE, PAGE 11

Incumbent Morrogh and challenger Descano make their cases to serve as Fairfax County Commonwealth Attorney.

This year, Morrogh is facing a challenger in Steve Descano - one who is determined to unseat him and vocal in his criticism of an incumbent and an office that he says "lacks transparency and accountability" and that has become distanced from the people that they serve.

The two men have squared off on several occasions to make their cases before the

"jury" of Fairfax County voters.

The Connection invited both to respond to an identical questionnaire.

Note: Morrogh did not respond despite repeated requests, so information has been summarized from his campaign website. www.RayMorrogh.com.



Ray Morrogh

Name: **Ray Morrogh**

Age: 61

Education: Juris Doctor, George Mason University School of Law, 1982

Bachelor of Science, George Mason University, 1979

West Springfield High School, 1975

Family: Married

Resident of Fairfax County since 1974

Prior and current professional, political and civic experiences, community involvement:

Professional Experience:

❖ Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney, 2007 - present

❖ Fairfax County Assistant/Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney, 1988 - 2007

❖ Prosecutor, Fairfax County, 1983 - 1988

Civic/Community involvement:

❖ Chairman, Fairfax County Alcohol Safety Action Program

❖ Board of Directors - Fairfax County Bar Association and Bar Foundation

❖ Member - Fairfax Criminal Justice Advisory Board

❖ Faculty - Virginia State Bar's Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Course

❖ Adjunct Professor - George Mason Uni-

versity

❖ Board of Directors & President - Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys

❖ 2018 & 2004 Robert F. Horan Award - Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys

❖ 2004 Director's Award - U. S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, for the prosecution of sniper Lee Boyd Malvo.

According to his campaign website, Morrogh lists continuing improvement to diversion programs for drug offense individuals, Veterans Treatment in the Fairfax County court system to help veterans get treatment for substance abuse or mental illness rather than be incarcerated, continuing support for the Diversion First Program, support of Supervised Release Programs for pre-trial defendants who are not deemed dangerous, protection of seniors from abuse and crime, and continuation of SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax County that provides a safe community for child victims of sexual and physical abuse.

Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney Candidate Forum

Monday/June 3. 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Vienna, 450 Orchard St., NW, Vienna. Meet the Fairfax, Va., Democratic candidates for Commonwealth's Attorney and find out where they stand on key criminal justice issues. The event is co-sponsored by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, the ACLU of Virginia, and the Fairfax County NAACP. Free and open to the public. RSVP at tinyurl.com/fairfaxcandidates.

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ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

Antonio Bullock as Audrey II in "Little Shop of Horrors" at the Workhouse Arts Center.

Casey Fero as Seymour in "Little Shop of Horrors" at the Workhouse Arts Center.

Musical Night with 'Little Shop of Horrors'

Broadway smash sci-fi musical comes to the Workhouse Arts Center.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Get ready for "Little Shop of Horrors," the Broadway smash sci-fi musical that has delighted audiences for decades.

"For 'Little Shop of Horrors,' our creative team is taking inspiration from the film and stage versions of the work while embracing the nature of its original small theatre roots," said Joseph Wallen, director, performing arts at the Workhouse. And worry not, indicated Wallen, the Workhouse will have "Little Shop" puppets that will enthrall audiences.

If you are not familiar with "Little Shop of Horrors," it is the comic tale of a mild mannered floral assistant named Seymour. He has stumbled upon a new breed of plant. He names the plant "Audrey II," after the coworker he adores.

What Seymour learns is that the plant has a mind of her own. Way more than Seymour imagined, "Audrey II" not only has a naughty way of talking, but is also a singing carnivore that promises fame and fortune to Seymour. Well, as long as he feeds her what she craves.

Music and songs for "Little Shop of Horrors" draw from the early 1960s, particularly the "girl groups" of the era. Music direction is by Darin Stinger who leads a six member band. The performers have "killer voices and incredible chemistry. The harmonies and vocals are effortless," said

Where and When

Workhouse Arts Center presents "Little Shop of Horrors" at W3 Theatre, 9518 Workhouse Way, Building W3, Lorton. Performances June 7 to June 30, 2019. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p. m., Sundays at 2 p.m. The Saturday, June 29 will be a 1 p.m. matinee, with no evening performance. Tickets: \$25-\$35 (Ticket prices may increase, based on demand. Advanced purchase recommended). For tickets visit www.workhousearts.org or call 703-584-2900.

Stinger.

"Of particular note, The Urchins, who appear throughout the story as a modernized Greek chorus are a fireball of energy and musical magic every time they take the stage," added Stinger.

Antonio Bullock plays the voice of "Audrey 2." "This is such a fun role to tackle, there are not many featured roles in the bass vocal range and of course playing a villainous character is always fun. The best songs are always written for the villains."

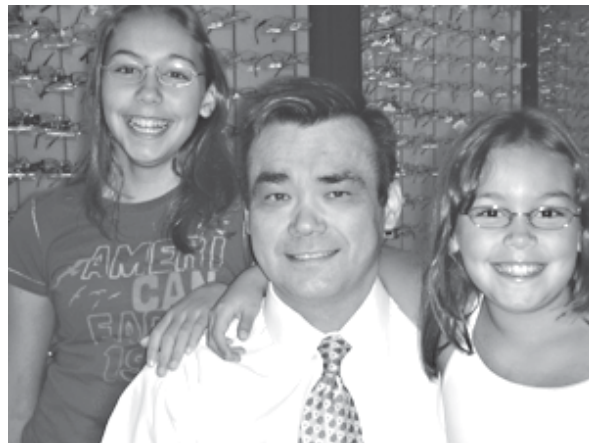
Playing the role of Seymour is Casey Fero. "For me, the key to the role is in the song 'Grow For Me.' Seymour has hopes and dreams and believes this is his one shot to a better life. He's a bit of an 'everyman' and everyone can relate to him on some level."

Jay Tilley plays a half dozen roles, including Orin, the dentist. "It is important that each character is distinct - how they talk, how they walk, posture, demeanor- often with little time in between characters."

It aims to be a fun night at the Workhouse theatre with a long time favorite show.

Let us know about an upcoming event
www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

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ONGOING

Creative Aging Festival. Through May 31, in locations around Fairfax County. The Creative Aging Festival supports Fairfax County's 50+ Community Action Plan's Arts Initiative to promote arts programming for and by older adults. bit.ly/FairfaxCreativeAgingFestival.

Art Exhibit: "Transcend." Through June 2, Wednesday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic Gallery, 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax. Featured work by juried artists from the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Visit www.torpedofactoryartists.com for more.

Featured Artist: Anne Hollis. Through June 2, gallery hours at Arches Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The whimsical exhibition, titled "Cirque du Plume," is a series of mixed media collage artworks that depict circus acts performed by intrepid birds while dually representing family life. Visit archesgallery.weebly.com for more.

Art Exhibit: Somewhere Between You and Me. Through July 20, Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Olly Olly, 10417 Main St., 2nd Floor, Fairfax. Young nonbinary transgender artists intimately seek to understand and bring understanding. Call 703-789-6144 or visit ollyollyart.com

Art Exhibition: Virginia Watercolor Society. Through Aug. 2, gallery hours in the McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, www.workhousearts.org/ or www.virginiawatercolorssociety.org for more.

Springfield Farmers Market. Saturdays, through Nov. 23, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, 6699 Spring Mall Drive, Springfield. Visit www.community-foodworks.org or call 202-697-7768.

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

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/MAY 30-31

Broadway Pops Concert. 7:30-10 p.m. at Centreville High School Auditorium, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. The CVHS choir's annual Broadway Pops concert features music from the Broadway musicals "The Lion King," "Mama Mia!" "Guys and Dolls," "Dreamgirls," "Motown," and "On Your Feet!" Free. Email slsweetman@gmail.com or call 703-389-1676.

FRIDAY/MAY 31

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638 for more.

Campfire Fridays. 7:30-9 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Stop by for nature explorations, animals, a campfire, s'mores and more. Each program features a different topic and different areas of the park. Designed for family members age 3-adult. \$8 per person. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

Haydn's Nelson Mass. 8-10 p.m. at Truro Anglican Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax. Mark Irchai, Washington D.C. based concert pianist, chamber musician, and conductor, presents a program of masterworks from the orchestral and choral literature of the classical era. Joined by soloists Christie Phillips, Rhianna Cockrell, Joe Regan, and Ross Tamaccio. Free. Tickets are available for the Pre-Concert Lecture, beginning at 7 p.m. Visit markirchai.com/events for tickets.

SATURDAY/JUNE 1

Family Mindfulness Workshop. 10:15-10:45 a.m. at Children's Science Center Lab, Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Mindfulness is an increasingly popular approach for parents, guardians, and schools to allow students to experience calm, positivity, and presence. For children K-5 and their parents or guardians. \$13 per person. Call 703-648-3130 or visit childsci.org/events-programs/in-the-lab/special-programs-events/

Summer Saturdays. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Join Gunston Hall for a summer of fun. Saturdays in

Beer in the Burbs on Saturday

Fairfax City's first-ever, craft beer festival, Beer in the Burbs, is slated for this Saturday June 1, from noon-5 p.m., in Old Town Square, 10415 North St. This celebration of suds will toast Virginia craft breweries, including hometown beer-makers Chubby Squirrel and Ornerly brewing companies.^o

More than 15 breweries will be showcased during this family-friendly event. The festivities will also feature plenty of food trucks and live music. This year's theme will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Woodstock.



Clifton Caboose Run

A 5K Run and 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk beginning in the turn-of-the-century town of Clifton. A post-race party with refreshments, live music and an awards ceremony will take place at the Red Barn near Clifton's Main Street area. Saturday, June 1, 6-9 p.m. in the Town of Clifton, at the intersection of Clifton Road, Newman Road and Main Street. 5k run, \$21; 1-mile fun run/walk, \$15. Call 703-968-0740 or visit www.facebook.com/cliftonva.org.

June, July, and August, stop by for a historic adventure on the grounds and in the Visitor Center. Call 703-550-9220 or visit www.gunstonhall.org/visit/guide/upcoming-events.

Spring Festival. Noon-4 p.m. at Fellowship Baptist Church, 5936 Rolling Road, Springfield. Fellowship Baptist Church will hold a Spring Festival. Activities will include a petting zoo, moon bounce, obstacle course, remote control race course, games for all ages, kids crafts, cake walk, prizes and refreshments. Free. All are welcome to attend. Visit www.honoringGod.org.

Bunny Yoga. 1-3 p.m. at Veterinary Holistic Center, 7950-1 Woodruff Court, Springfield. Join Friends of Rabbits for Bunny Yoga with adoptable bunnies. Yoga class suitable for all ages, 12 and over, all levels. Proceeds benefit animal rescue. \$25. Call 703-922-9226 or visit friendsofrabbits.networkforgood.com/events/13007-bunny-yoga-returns

Search for Hidden Treasures. 2-4 p.m. at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Go on a treasure hunt in the afternoon with the "Geocaching Workshop." Students age 8-adult will learn to use hand-held GPS units to locate hidden treasure caches. Limited number of GPS available at class. \$22 per person. Call 703-323-6600 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burke-lake.

Concert: Sounds of Pohick. 4 p.m. at Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. "The Sounds of Pohick" annual concert will feature the St. Cecelia and St. Alban Children's Choirs, the Pohick Pickers bluegrass group, the Pohick Bell, and the Early Church Music Ensemble. Free admission, and a reception follows. Call the church office at 703-339-6572, or visit www.pohick.org.

Clifton Caboose Run. 6-9 p.m. in the Town of Clifton, at the intersection of Clifton Road, Newman Road and Main Street. A 5K Run and 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk beginning in the turn-of-the-century town of Clifton. A post-race party with refreshments, live music and an awards ceremony will take place at the Red Barn near Clifton's Main Street area. 5k run, \$21; 1-mile fun run/walk, \$15. Call 703-968-0740 or visit

www.facebook.com/cliftonva.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 1-2

Rose and Photography Competition.

Saturday, 1:30-6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Arlington Rose Foundation presents a friendly rose and photography competition, a celebration of roses in more than 50 categories. Ask advice of award-winning exhibitors, vote for best fragrance, bid in a silent auction and plan a rose garden. Free and open to public. Visit www.arlingtonrose.org/

SUNDAY/JUNE 2

Maker Faire NoVa. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Maker Faire NoVa is the Greatest Show (& Tell) on Earth — a family-friendly showcase of making, invention and creativity. Glimpse the future and get inspired. \$2-\$50. Call 703-437-5780 or visit nova.makerfaire.com.

Celebrating Israeli Innovations. Noon-4 p.m. at The J, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Performance by the Tzofim Friendship Caravan; hands-on activities; "Masada" rock climbing wall; "Jerusalem Café;" moon bounce; Israel-style shuk (market); exhibits. No on-site parking. Free shuttle service from NoVa Community College, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Park in B lots or the garage, shuttle pick up by Lot B 17). Email Laurie.Albert@jccnv.org or call 703-537-3064

"Memory Lane Day" Tours. 1-4 p.m. at The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Short walking tours (about 45 minutes) of the immediate historic neighborhood around the Museum. Moderate walking. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Mellifera String Quartet Concert. 4-5 p.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Experience Mellifera in their debut season. Come and enjoy this new group as they showcase American favorites and newly-composed works. Free admission. Childcare provided. Reception to follow. Visit

www.standrews.net or call 703-455-2500.

Heritage Nepal Festival. 4-8 p.m. at Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. America Nepali Society Heritage Festival will showcase Nepali Heritage, Traditions and Culture. The Cultural Program will be organized by kids from the community which will last approximately one and half hours. Free. Call 571-331-5412 or visit www.americanepsociety.org/ for more.

TUESDAY/JUNE 4

Totally Turtles at Hidden Pond. 5-6 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Boulevard, Springfield. Catch the current and come to Hidden Pond Nature Center for the "Totally Turtles" program. Meet and learn about Northern Virginia's native turtles. Give a turtle a bath or feed a turtle its next meal. Learn about turtle behaviors, diet and more. Designed for participants age 3-adult. \$7 per person. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

Visionary Women. 7-8 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote with a presentation from the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. Learn about the founding of the League of Women Voters in 1920 as a direct descendant of women's suffrage in America. Light refreshments will be provided. Free. Call 703-644-7333 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/5202429 for more.

TUESDAY-SATURDAY/JUNE 4-8

Transcribe-a-thon. Various times at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Help transcribe Library of Congress documents related to the Women's Suffrage movement. Projects include the papers of Clara Barton, Mary Church Terrell and more. Service hours for students. Adults. Teens. Learn more about the By The People project at the Library of Congress <https://crowd.loc.gov/>. Check for times at librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/5424792.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 5

Celebrate the '80s with Insight. 4-6 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, #100, Fairfax. Insight was just starting in 1984, in a church basement, offering respite services for families living with memory impairment. Now in 2019, Insight is celebrating 35 years. Come and celebrate in style - or at least come to laugh at everyone else's styles. RSVP at www.insightmcc.org.

THURSDAY/JUNE 6

Silent Sentinel Awards. 6-9 p.m. at Army Navy Country Club (Arlington), 1700 Army Navy Drive, Arlington. Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association is bestowing the Silent Sentinel Award upon seven people who exemplify suffragist strength in pursuit of equal rights. The evening's festivities include a cocktail reception, dinner. \$200. www.eventbrite.com/e/countdown-to-suffrage-centennial-and-silent-sentinel-awards-gala-tickets-59388838615 or email pwirth@suffragistmemorial.org.

FRIDAY/JUNE 7

Grand Opening: Stemtreet. 6 p.m. at Stemtreet Education Center, 11226A Waples Mill Road, Fairfax. Light refreshments will be served. Visit www.stemtreet.com/fairfax for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 7-9

Celebrate Fairfax! Festival. Northern Virginia's largest community-wide event, the 38 th annual Celebrate Fairfax! Festival, is set to take place on the grounds of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The Celebrate Fairfax! Festival features 25 acres of concerts, family programs, exhibits, carnival rides and nightly fireworks. Among the festival's highlights are more than 120 performances on seven stages, including Better Than Ezra and Smash Mouth. Call 703-324-3247 or visit www.celebratefairfax.com.

SATURDAY/JUNE 8

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

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

Lee District Primary Preview

Kautz

FROM PAGE 3

the Board – and I want to change that.

As a working mom of a 3 year-old on the autism spectrum, I know the daily challenges families in the county face trying to navigate the system and get the best education for their child.”

Top 3 issues in your district and what solutions do you propose?

“Shortage of affordable housing – we have

a housing crisis on our hands...we must aggressively invest in preserving the affordable housing we have and build new mixed income developments...we must work towards workers being paid a living wage.

It’s an issue of rising rents...falling subsidies...property tax, steep benefits cliff...

The housing crisis is wiping out savings, increasing inequality and reducing the ability to weather the next illness, furlough or recession.

Universal pre-K – I think we have both

the money and the resources to make this a reality...this should also include substantial investment in vocational training and support for youth transitioning out of high school.

Smart and responsible development – we cannot only focus on transportation and then housing, the environment and schools. We have to bring together the residents, stakeholders, officials, etc. to address issues immediately and plan for the future.

Key ways you differ from your op-

ponents?

“As a first-generation American, as someone who has lived below the poverty line, and as a working mother of a young child with special needs, I understand the struggles faced by so many in our community. These are voices being left out of the conversation and it’s diversity that makes Lee District such an incredible place to live.

The breadth and depth of my experience in tax law, business, government procurement, advocacy and nonprofit governance make me the most qualified for this job.”

Lusk

FROM PAGE 3

❖ Northern Virginia Community College – Vice Chair Business Curriculum Advisory Committee (2002-2015)

❖ Citizen of the Year, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

❖ Lee District “Lord Fairfax”

*Leadership Fairfax, Torchbearer Award

Why are you running?

“I have been a Fairfax County employee for the past 30 years, and a resident of Lee District for the past 18...I have seen our county do a lot of things very well...but also had a front row seat to some areas where we’ve come up short. I’d like for my daughters to make the same decision we did to raise their families in Lee District – for that to happen some things will have

to change – specifically related to the cost of housing, the resources allocated to public education and workforce development and the way we think about equity in our community.”

Top 3 issues in your district and what solutions do you propose?

❖ **Education & Workforce Development** - Our two top priorities must be fully funding public schools and protecting teacher pay. We must take proactive steps [to see] our K-12 students prepared for the jobs of the future...providing guidance for those that will immediately go on to four-year degrees, as well as those who will pursue trade certifications and technical degrees.

Affordable Housing – Facing a crisis, with a recognized need of an increase of 15,000 affordable homes...the county must

move to enact a dedicated and permanent revenue source for development of affordable housing...beginning with a penny on the real estate tax, and to increase by an additional penny over a designated period of time. Next, find additional opportunities to co-locate affordable housing stock on the sites of carefully selected county-owned assets. Corporate partnerships similar to Microsoft and the city of Seattle... explore use of industrial revenue and general obligation bonds.

The county should take advantage of its...role...in enforcement of local development regulations.

Equity – A child born on the Historic Richmond Highway Corridor must be afforded the same educational outcomes, employment opportunities, and life expectancy as one born along the Silver Line.

Key ways you differ from your opponents?

“U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly has called me the most prepared person ever to run for the Board of Supervisors. Chairman Bulova...has placed her trust in me. Former Lee District Supervisor Dana Kauffman was one of the first to support my campaign.

I am the only candidate with support of a past or current Board member; the only candidate with the support of our local labor community; only candidate with the support of our immigrant advocacy community; the only candidate that has served the County for the past 30 years and who can build the coalitions to have an impact on the District from day one.”

Migliaccio

FROM PAGE 3

Job creation and economic opportunities in Lee District and across Fairfax County – for Fairfax County to remain an economic engine for the region, we must preserve and

grow all levels of housing stock, especially affordable housing...a basic human right.

Preserve and protect our natural resources and support Fairfax Green New Deal initiatives. Fairfax has made many strides in the environmental area, we must do

more...implement a more robust Green Fairfax Plan.”

Key ways you differ from your opponent(s)?

“I am the only person in this race to have significant experience in both the public and

private sectors. My background, knowledge, experience, and relationships will allow me to start on day one advocating for the residents of Lee District.”

Springfield Girl Scout Brownies Give Back at Hidden Pond Nature Center

Girl Scout Brownie Honor Troop 1778 of Service Unit 52-11 completed a Take Action Project for the Brownie Quest Journey by giving back at Hidden Pond Nature Center in Springfield on March 23.

The third grade Brownies brainstormed ideas to give back to their community in a sustainable way in November 2018. Leader Emily Kauffman worked with the girls to come up with ideas and a plan, which she facilitated with Mike McCaffrey, Hidden Pond Site Manager. Working with youth volunteers, the Brownies planted bulbs and pansies in garden plots in front of the nature center. They also dug up worms, which they later fed

to the turtles that call Hidden Pond home. Later, the Brownies walked a portion of the trails and picked up litter they found. The Brownies helped clear and prepare the planting beds, and that the flowers they planted are nectar plants that serve an important and lasting function in our local ecosystem.

Service is a long-standing tradition in Girl Scouts, which was founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low. This project supported the Girl Scout Leadership experience: STEM, outdoors, life skills and entrepreneurship.

Service Unit 52-11 is located in Springfield and serves approximately 550 Girl Scouts in grades K-12.



Girl Scouts from Troop 1778 work to clear beds to make way for nectar plants.

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News

Healthy Job Market, International Travel Difficulties Impact Local Pools

**Memorial Day pool openings delayed;
swimming plans come up dry in some spots.**

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Area teens are choosing other job options this summer besides the lifeguard stand and the lifeguards from overseas that have come over with the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program in previous years have hit a travel roadblock leaving some pools in Fairfax County scrambling for help.

At Newberry Station in Newington, the pool was ready but the day before it was to open, an email came out from the property management group about the delayed opening.

"I unfortunately have to share that because of staffing challenges with our contracted pool company, by no fault of theirs in particular, we will be unable to open the pool until further notice," wrote Birgit Burton, the Community Association Manager.

"The delays have been caused by the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program which directly affects the foreign summer staffing for Newberry Station," Burton wrote.

In Reston, it was the local job seekers who have not been interested in a lifeguard job so the hours were adjusted. Of the 15 swimming locations in Reston, their hours and closings were shifted around for the Memorial Day weekend, and an undisclosed time period after.

"Due to a shortage of lifeguards we must revise our pool schedule to ensure the safety of all swimmers. We apologize for the inconvenience and schedule change," their announcement read. In Reston, they are holding lifeguard job fairs now to fill the positions, said communications rep Mike Leone. "We are being creative to attract area teens and college students, but many are opting for jobs in other fields," he said.

The Pool and Hot Tub Alliance is working with government officials to lessen the impact, and has formed a J-1 Coalition to work "with members of the U.S. House and Senate to discuss the potential unintended consequences of regulator changes to the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program," their information stated.

"More U.S. teen and college students are opting for summer education or the opportunity to gain professional experience through internships," said PHTA's Director of Government Affairs, Jennifer Hatfield. "The roadblocks that are limiting the number of J-1 visas being issued are placing unprecedented burdens on pool and spa industry companies and limiting their ability to service their customers," she said.

At Springfield Golf and Country Club, their lifeguard positions have seen a steady flow of applicants



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

In Newington, there was a parking spot reserved for the lifeguards but it remains empty due to a travel hiccup.



Newberry Station's pool management company Continental Pools relied on overseas help such as Martin Stefanov and Victoria Tshacheva shown here at the Newington pool a few years ago.

because their pool operations manager Sheri Landfair has built a loyal network and develops her staff along a progressive growth plan. They have seen the impact of the job market in other areas at the club. "With unemployment being the lowest since 1969, staffing for food and beverage has been especially challenging this past year for nearly all country clubs in our region, including Springfield Golf & Country Club," Dawn Siebenhaar, the SGCC membership director.

In Kingstowne, their staffing is full and there weren't any issues with finding enough applicants.

According to a Department of State website, the program allows "College and University students enrolled full time and pursuing studies at post-secondary accredited academic institutions located outside the United States come to the United States to share their culture and ideas with people of the United States through temporary work and travel opportunities."

Attorney Race

FROM PAGE 6

grams which currently only address the first part of the equation.

I have written a 20-page plan for reform called “Progressive Justice” that goes further into depth about specific policies and procedures I will implement while in office. (The Plan is available on the candidate’s website at www.stevedescano.com)”

Key ways you differ from your opponent(s)?

I am committed to ending a two-tiered system of justice that disproportionately affects people based on race, wealth, and zip code. My opponent signed on in 2016 to the Republican lawsuit to stop then-Gov. Terry McAuliffe from restoring voting rights of nearly 200,000 people who had finished their sentences. He has since altered his reason, but earlier he noted that he did not want ‘those people’ on his juries.

I have been a leader on criminal justice system reform as a member of the Fairfax County NAACP’s Criminal Justice and Legal Redress Committees, and as a member of the county Police Civilian Review Panel. My opponent, in 2014, as the Executive Director of the conservative National District Attorneys Association testified against the Obama Administration’s plan to reduce mandatory minimum sentences and curtail the War on Drugs.”

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

Parkways Alternatives Analysis and Long Term Planning Study, and has extended the deadline for the online survey. The survey was developed based on community input from first round survey results last year. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/study/fairfax-county-parkway.

TUESDAY/JUNE 4

Safe Walking Summit. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at NVRC Offices, 3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax. Learn from America Walks, local staff, Virginia DOT, and DMV on tools and initiatives that improve walking and reduce crashes. The summit is sponsored by Share VA Roads through a federal highway safety grant from Virginia DMV. Event and registration details can be found at: www.novaregion.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=686.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 5

New Volunteer Orientation. 7:30-9 p.m. at Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. Join Fairfax Pets on Wheels, Inc. Learn about volunteering to make a difference in the community by visiting residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities with a pet dog, cat or bunny. Visit www.fpow.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/JUNE 7-9

White Elephant Sale. Friday, 5-8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church, 5222 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. St. Mary’s White Elephant sale will feature furniture, antiques, household, garden, toys, books, jewelry, china and more. Admission: Friday, \$5; Saturday-Sunday, free. Call 703-978-4141.

SATURDAY/JUNE 8

Caregiver Workshop. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Join this Caregiver Workshop with Pete Shrock, nationally known grief and crisis responder, focusing on building resilience through caregiving challenges. This is a free event, and all caregivers and family members are invited to attend. Lunch will be provided. Visit insightmcc.org, to register or contact Lindsey Vajpeyi at 703-204-4664 or lindsey.vajpeyi@insightmcc.org.

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The Weak That Was



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

All's well that ends well.
The fortnight or so from you-know-where has finally ended and I am here to write that my warranty has been extended for another two months. The CT scan showed no tumor growth or movement. The “promise” of immunotherapy so far is keeping its ‘promise’ – keeping the tumors stable.

Throughout my extremely fortunate cancer experience, I have felt reasonably well and manifested few symptoms/side effects; at least the kind of symptoms/side effects: shortness of breath, coughing, expectorating blood, mind-numbing neuropathy and headaches, among others, about which my oncologist regularly inquires.

Generally speaking then, my health status has always been about the tale of the tape – to invoke a boxing reference – meaning the diagnostic scans: brain MRI, CT scan of the neck/lower abdomen, PET scan and the initial X-Ray which started the whole adventure, to determine my fitness for duty, so to speak.

It is not until my oncologist shares/summarizes the radiologist’s findings – and occasionally shows us the actual computer images themselves, that yours truly/Team Lourie knows where we stand.

And, where we stand typically is where we are sitting, in a cramped exam room, face to face with the man who holds my life in the palm of his hand – or more specifically, in the words that he chooses and the gesture/body language he exhibits. It’s not exactly “Bath Fitter,” but “the reveal” is imminent.

It never gets easy, but it does get easier to endure this kind of potentially life-altering/life-ending moment. Though the familiarity of it has’t dulled the pain, it has enabled us to balance the pros and cons, up and downs and all-arounds, as we anticipate the words we are about to hear.

During most of these post-scan visits, we’ve exhaled in relief, but we have had our share of disappointment.

On one occasion, back in late July 2013, I was hospitalized for a week when my lungs accumulated 4.5 liters of fluid, among more significant internal problems (lung collapsing).

Externally, I was unable to speak more than a few words before needing to regroup. As a matter of humorous fact, when my long-time oncology nurse, Ron, saw me that infusion day, he thought I “was a goner,” since my oxygen level was so low.

Within a few hours, I was a ‘goner’ in an ambulance to Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Md. where I was eventually admitted. Two days later, a thoracic surgeon operated, and a day or two after that, my lung amazingly reinflated.

As a result, in my head and in my gut, (though I’m no Jethro Gibbs from NCIS), when I show up for my infusions and for my post-scan appointments, there’s always a part of me that thinks I might not be spending that evening in my own bed.

When you’re a cancer patient/survivor, and this kind of whisking off not to Buffalo but instead to the local hospital affiliated with your HMO has happened once, it’s only a matter of time (it’s impossible not to believe it’s inevitable when you’ve been staged a IV) before it will happen again. I’m not being negative, I’m just saying.

As we sit and wait at home for my oncologist to email us the scan results, or whether we sit and wait in the on-site exam room, I wouldn’t say our respective lives pass before us, but I will certainly admit to the total unpleasantness of it.

That being said, we’re the lucky ones. There are nearly 160,000 lung cancer patients who succumb to this terrible disease every year who aren’t nearly so lucky.

So when I hear the words “stable” from my oncologist, I am humbled as much as I am relieved, that I have lived to fight another eight weeks until my next scan is scheduled and my next fortnight is fought.

And that’s how I live my life: in increments. Increments which I’m grateful to have. It may not be ideal, but it’s a living, and it sure beats a dying.

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

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