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(From left) Caleigh Davis, Nathaniel Smith and Tommy Kelleher rehearse a scene from Paul VI's upcoming production of 'Little Shop of Horrors.'



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MARCH 30 - APRIL 5, 2017

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

‘Something I Will Cherish’

Animal Shelter named after Michael Frey.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

If a dog is man’s best friend, then certainly Michael Frey is one of the best friends of dogs, cats and other animals. In fact, he’s advocated for them so much that the Fairfax County Animal Shelter has now been named and dedicated in his honor.

After serving 37 years in county government — including six, four-year terms as Sully District supervisor — Frey retired at the end of 2015. And on March 4, family, friends, shelter staff and supporters, former Board of Supervisors colleagues and staff members from his tenure as supervisor attended the dedication ceremony.

There were speeches, laughs and heartfelt sentiments, plus the unveiling of the sign declaring the building the Michael R. Frey Animal Shelter. Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova led things off.

Quoting Charles Darwin, she said, “The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man.” She then said, “The compassionate and humane treatment of animals cannot be separated from the quality of life for people. The two go hand-in-hand.”

Saying this county has come a long way since the days of the dog catcher and the dog pound, Bulova called Frey a leader and an inspiration in the community for bringing about many positive changes for animals here. “Almost 40 years ago, when Michael first joined county government — first as staff and then as the first elected supervisor of the Sully District — he noted that there was little thought about the humane treatment of animals,” she said. “This bothered Michael a great deal.”

Bulova said Frey always stresses that it took many hardworking and dedicated people to make progress at the shelter and in the community, fighting for better conditions for the animals. “And that is true,” she said. “Before these improvements were made, we had cats in cages in the hallways — and that was not OK.”

But Frey, too, campaigned for the animals and, said Bulova, “Today we recognize the importance of Michael’s contributions to these monumental changes. Whether it was for dog parks in the community, dog runs for the shelter, recognition of other people’s work for animals — like [veterinarian and shelter volunteer] Susan Hall, support for improvements in our animal facility or changes to animal ordinances and laws, Michael was always at the forefront on our Board to champion these important causes.”

AT LONG LAST, citizens approved a bond issue and the shelter was renovated. “Just three years ago, we came together for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to



(From left) are Supervisors Jeff McKay, John Foust, Kathy Smith, Sharon Bulova, Michael Frey, Pat Herrity, Penny Gross and John Cook outside the newly renamed animal shelter.

celebrate the opening of this beautiful, state-of-the-art animal shelter,” said Bulova. “Today, we celebrate one of our community leaders whose vision, dedication and advocacy helped to make these changes a reality.”

Addressing Frey directly, she said, “I am so proud to be here today for the dedication of this wonderful building in your honor, Michael. We are grateful for all your years of service to the community and the Board of Supervisors. We are happy to celebrate and to honor you with this fitting tribute to your passion and advocacy for animals with this building dedication.”

Gina Lynch, of the Animal Services Advisory Commission, said Frey established that commission and pushed the county to adopt a no-tethering law. “A community’s core values are reflected in how we act — including how we treat animals,” added Deputy County Executive Dave Rohrer. “Michael’s been a leader in that and has earned our respect.”

But when Frey stepped to the podium, he remained his usual, humble self.

Although the shelter now bears his name, he related something a friend told him. “He said, ‘If a building is named after you, that includes the floors, too,’” said Frey. “So whenever an animal has an accident on that floor...”

The rest of his sentence was drowned out by laughter, but the audience got the point and knew Frey wasn’t about to let the honor go to his head. He then sincerely thanked Supervisors Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) and Kathy Smith (D-Sully) for introducing the naming resolution to the Board of Supervisors and thanked the Board for approving it.

“Before I joined the Board, the shelter was something considered ‘out of sight, out of mind,’” said Frey. “I brought it to their attention; but without the Board’s support I couldn’t have done anything. Then

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The Doo Wop Girls (from left) Ronalenne Gruseck, Grace Tecala, Meghan Kelly, Kim Phan, Madeleine Mangilit, Mackenzie Bacarella and Kelly Farmar, pose with Andrew Goldstein.

‘Fun Musical with Great Characters’

Paul VI presents ‘Little Shop of Horrors.’

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Take a man-eating plant, add music and a dash of romance, mix well and you get Paul VI High’s upcoming play, “Little Shop of Horrors.” The cast and crew of about 50 have been rehearsing since early February, and it’s the school’s Cappies show.

“It’s probably one of the most technically difficult shows we’ve ever done,” said Director Kathy d’Alelio. “But I love it because it’s a fun musical with great characters and something for everybody. There’s campy humor and our choreographer, Ahmad Maady, and musical directors, Erin and Naj Qureshi, are phenomenal. We have an enormously talented cast, and I’m so proud of our leads.”

The story takes place in a poor area of New York City in the early 1960s. It tells what happens after a mild-mannered, flower-shop assistant named Seymour discovers a deadly plant that he calls Audrey II after his girlfriend.

“We have four Audrey II puppets, and a boy will operate the largest one from inside,” said d’Alelio. “We rented them from the company that did the ones for the Broadway production. In the story, the plant starts bringing in tons of business, and both Seymour and the

shop become very successful — but at a price. And in the process, he and Audrey fall in love. So the moral dilemma is whether Seymour should continue to feed this plant — or, if not, will he lose the love of his life, if he’s not a success?”

Senior Nathaniel Smith plays Seymour. “He’s nerdy and incompetent and works for and lives with the florist shop’s owner, Mr. Mushnik, on Skid Row,” said Smith. “Seymour discovers a new breed of Venus Flytrap, but he still lacks self-confidence. He’s an orphan; Mushnik took him in when he was very young, so he’s never had a family to look out for and encourage him. He’s easily molded and will do anything for someone who gives him a compliment.”

Thrilled with his role, Smith said, “I’ve been wanting to play this character since I was very small, so it’s nice to finally live it out. I realized his low self-confidence could be portrayed in many ways — for example, through his voice, posture and movements — so I like getting to explore that. Playing the lead is hard work, but performing with such a fantastic, talented cast — who are also my friends — makes it all worthwhile.”

Smith’s favorite number is “Grow for Me,” which he sings to the plant to encourage it to grow. “Seymour sees it as his only chance out of Skid Row,

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PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN CURREN

Paul VI Presents ‘Little Shop of Horrors’

FROM PAGE 3

so it’s an emotionally charged song,” he said. “It’s his fight-to-survive song.”

Smith said the audience will like the Audrey II puppets, music and acting, as well as the dancing by the Doo Wop Girls. “They’re Skid Row residents and school dropouts

who roam the streets, singing, dancing and causing trouble,” he said. “Their dancing is fast and sharp, and they do an incredible job.”

Portraying Seymour’s love interest, Audrey — who’s also dating an abusive dentist — is senior Caleigh Davis. “Audrey’s very pretty and looks like a bombshell,

but she is also sweet, genuine and naïve,” said Davis. “She’s the hot girl with the temperament of a Disney princess, although her circumstances don’t reflect that. She keeps getting into abusive relationships with guys, but never learns from them. She’s been stuck in Skid Row, her whole life, and has always been poor. She hopes

to have a suburban lifestyle and the American Dream, but doesn’t know how to reach it.”

THE MOST CHALLENGING thing, said Davis, is “nailing Audrey’s New York accent. But she has great ballads that are so much fun to sing. And in this role, I get to channel the old Hollywood actresses who had this energy about them, and it’s really wonderful to tap into that.”

Davis especially likes singing, “Suddenly Seymour,” with Smith and the Doo Wop Girls. “Audrey and Seymour are declaring their love to each other,” said Davis. “And Audrey finally realizes she has a shot at a real family and a life with someone who’s not a joke.” She said the audience will “love the plant — it looks so cool. The dancing is great and the musical numbers are energetic and really stand out. And we’re having so much fun on stage that, hopefully, the audience will, too, just watching us.”

Classmate Tommy Kelleher plays Mushnik. “He’s stressed and desperate,” said Kelleher. “His business is on the brink of bankruptcy, so he’s about to close it. He doesn’t feel like God’s helping him, so he’s loud and angry and takes things out on Seymour. He has a strong personality that makes him easy to play and he’s also physical. And it’s fun to pretend to beat Nathaniel, as Seymour.”

Kelleher’s favorite song is “Mushnik and Son,” his duet with Smith. “The music is simple, yet entertaining, with a ‘Fiddler on the Roof’-style parody,” said Kelleher. “And at the end, there’s a tango.” He said the audience will enjoy this “modern musical with updated Broadway songs,” the plant

To Go

Show times are Friday-Saturday, April 7-8, at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, April 9, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for students and senior citizens, and \$15 for adults, at the door or via www.paulvi.com.

puppets, music, characters and set.

His twin brother, Bobby Kelleher, designed the set, with a florist’s shop and dentist’s office that both rotate. The audience will first see the outside of the florist shop, and then it’ll open to reveal the interior. And since it’s on Skid Row, Kelleher and his crew made it look old, dingy, worn out and water-damaged.

PORTRAYING THE DENTIST is senior Drew Goldstein. “He’s extremely narcissistic and believes he’s entitled to all the women around him,” said Goldstein. “He’s dating Audrey and likes beating her. He also feels like he knows better than everyone else.”

Goldstein enjoys playing him because “he’s not your stereotypical villain. He has some redeeming qualities and really believes he’s helping people, although he’s not. He’s also addicted to nitrous oxide, and it’s fun to sing a whole song while on it.”

Goldstein especially likes singing, “The Dentist,” in which his character explains why he loves causing pain and why he tortures his patients. “It has an awesome beat and is humorous and fun to sing,” he said. “Overall, the audience will like how ridiculous the story is — about a plant coming to eat the world — but with a dark side. It has its horror bits, but is still fun. They’ll also like all the crazy characters, and all our hard work will definitely show through.”



Nathaniel Smith and Caleigh Davis perform a song from Paul VI’s ‘Little Shop of Horrors.’

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