

2A Rappahannock Times, Tappahannock, Va., Wednesday, July 25, 2012

*With Fund-Raising Efforts; More Support Needed*

## Legal Aid Breaks New Ground

Rappahannock Legal Services has successfully concluded its first major challenge fund-raising campaign, which received enough to pay an attorney to help clients with housing problems for 12 months. "But we are in dire need of more funds just to stay afloat and keep from closing our doors," said RLS Executive Director Ann H. Kloeckner.

RLS helps low-income clients with civil legal matters in a 17-county region that includes Fredericksburg, Culpeper and the Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck.

Community fund drives are not unusual for legal aid programs throughout the state, which depend on donations large and small to supplement dwindling revenues from Legal Services Corporation of Virginia and other traditional sources. But for Rappahannock Legal Services, this was uncharted ground.

Their success began with a \$30,000 grant from the Sunshine Lady Foundation, endowed by philanthropist Doris Buffett of Fredericksburg, who has a special interest in helping domestic violence survivors. With that money, in January RLS hired Daniel Turczan as its housing and consumer attorney for six months. Housing assistance is essential to persons fleeing domestic abuse. The program had not had a staff attorney focused on housing since its previous director, Bill Botts, retired last year.

The \$30,000 came with a carrot: If RLS could match it with other contributions, the foun-

dation would give another \$30,000, which would extend Turczan's employment to 18 months.

Kloeckner began knocking on doors throughout her service area, hat in hand. Board members pitched in. They met with prominent members of the community to raise awareness of their mission and the challenge grant. They phoned previous donors. They held a wine tasting and raffled off a quilt.

Eric Olsen, commonwealth's attorney for Stafford County and an RLS board member, printed mail solicitations to send to previous donors who had not given recently. As a result, "Within four days we got \$2,500 from about eight people," Kloeckner said. Another grant toward the match came from the Fredericksburg Savings Charitable Foundation. Lawyers in the region responded. One, Orange County attorney Michael J. Miller, donated \$3,000.

Ten days before the Sunshine Lady Foundation's deadline for the match, they were \$6,000 short. John Ellis, chair of the RLS Board of Directors, arranged for Kloeckner to meet A. Davis Bugg Jr. of Irvington in the Northern Neck. Bugg's law firm, Rumsey & Bugg, responded with a check for \$6,500. RLS had achieved its match.

"But even after that amazing gift to support equal justice, the donations kept pouring in from previous solicitations, so we are now at almost \$37,000," Kloeckner said.

"We will be pleased to report

to Buffett that we have successfully met our challenge. But even more importantly, we have achieved two very important outcomes: we have energized our board and the community to support the cause of equal justice for all, and we have secured the services of an able and energetic advocate for 18 months to protect the rights of the poor in housing and consumer matters."

As successful as the campaign was, "it doesn't take away from the fact that our program has struggled throughout the year," Kloeckner said. The next challenge Rappahannock Legal Services faces is how to increase and sustain support. The \$60,000 pays the salary and benefits to sustain one lawyer for a year. Rappahannock has five other attorneys in three offices, as well as support staff. They have not received raises since 2007; instead, their salaries recently were cut by 9.25 percent to balance the budget.

In a dynamic reflected experienced by legal aid programs statewide, as financial support has decreased, the number of poor people eligible for services has increased. The Rappahannock service area has 52,573 residents who would qualify — 15,618 in the five counties served by the Culpeper office, 11,126 in the seven counties served by Tappahannock, and 25,829 in the five counties served by Fredericksburg.

"We hope lawyers and other members of our communities will hear our call for more support to meet the day-to-day challenge of keeping our services available to those who need them," Kloeckner said.

## 'Lees Of Menokin' Topic Of 1

Members of *Book Talk*, a local book club sponsored by the Warsaw Baptist Church, will gather at the Menokin Visitor's Center on Thursday, Aug. 9, at 6 p.m. to hear author Suzanne Hadfield Semsch talk about her much-loved book, "The Lees of Menokin". This biographical novel about the life and marriage of 18th century patriot Francis Lightfoot Lee and his wife Rebecca Tayloe is set largely at Menokin, their home.

Francis Lightfoot Lee is known in the annals of Virginia history as one of the colony's signers of the Declaration of Independence. Yet little is known of Lee's personal life, a void which novelist and long-time Virginian Suzanne Semsch set out to fill with extensive research and a healthy dose of creative personalities. The result is "The Lees of Menokin", a biographical novel documenting Lee's career as well as his

## Youth, Women's Day At Rock Of Ages Church

The youth of Rock of Ages United Holy Church will observe "Youth Day" on Sunday, July 29, at 11 a.m. The speaker will be Deacon Ricky Coston of Good Hope Baptist Church and a 2012 graduate of The College of William and Mary.

The women will observe "Women's Day" at 3 p.m. They will be presenting a pageant "God's Rainbow Sign". Deacon Morristene Bowman of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church, Richmond, will officiate. A meal will be served after the morning service. All are welcome.

## Essex Co. Historic Designations Sought

Continued From Page 1

\$8,000 would be raised

## False Voter Information

Continued From Page 1

istration information. It is im-