

The Back Page

Working the Room

When crime victims are neighbors

By Jennifer Nycz-Conner



I had planned to write a very different column this week. One that talked about what's it's like to be starstruck, and to remember that for all of our own moments of feeling that way, we are often the stars others are struck by, and may never know it. You know, happy networking talk.

Unfortunately, this is very different column indeed.

Sitting on my desk is a black binder containing the nominations for this year's CFO of the Year awards. The name on the cover is Sue Marcum.

If that name sounds familiar, it's because Sue was the American University accounting professor found dead Oct. 25 in a likely homicide.

My first and only meeting with her was Oct. 22. A colleague earning his master's degree in business administration from American thought she'd lend some good insight into our CFO award selection process, and Sue was nice enough to spend a few hours on a Friday in our offices helping select the finalists. She was pleasant, engaged and obviously cared about the art and science practiced by financial professionals.

Now, she's a statistic. A nice lady I met once, the victim of a crime.

Reading the news, I sat in silent shock for a few minutes as I checked different sources.

Then my eyes started to well up. How could the happy picture of the nice person I spent a few hours with that was now staring back at me from the American University website suddenly be no more?

I wish I had something insightful to say, something about how it's a reminder to cherish moments with everyone we know, be it our closest family members or those short professional acquaintances. Or maybe how we should all remember that those violent crimes we see on the evening news or that crawl across our twitter feeds aren't just numbers, but neighbors. Real people who you might just have been next to on a bus, in line at the grocery store, or in my case, an overheated conference room.

But that all sounds very contrived right now, greeting card lessons that don't even begin to match the gravity of the moment. Really, it's just plain sad.

I hope they catch whoever did this awful thing. I hope her family and friends and students can find peace somehow with this tragic event.

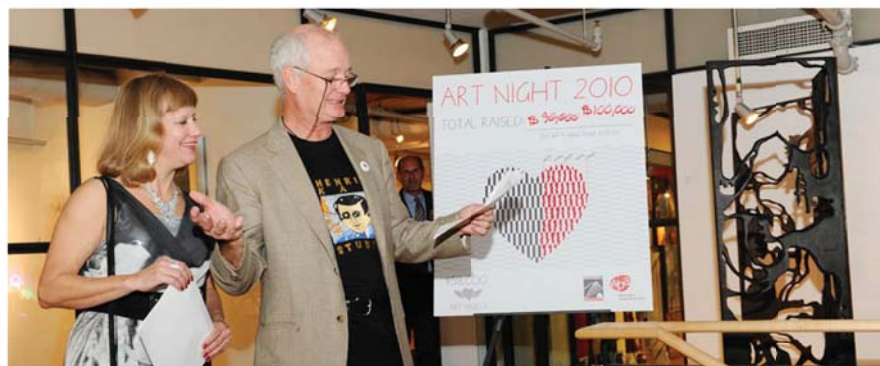
As I stare at this shiny black binder that once sat in the Bethesda home where Sue was found, all I can feel is sad, and chilled to my core.

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A not-so-junior achievement

Business leaders hobnobbed with Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke (CENTER, ABOVE) Oct. 19 at the grand opening of the Junior Achievement Finance Park at Frost Middle School in Fairfax County, sponsored by Capital One. (ABOVE) Cutting the ribbon were Dennis Kim, a Frost student, from left, Jack Dale of Fairfax County Public Schools, Gary Tabach of Deloitte and chairman of JA board of the National Capital Area, Bernanke, Richard Fairbank of Capital One, Ed Grenier, CEO of JA of the National Capital Area, and Ian Staton, a Rocky Run Middle School student. (LEFT) Carolyn Berkowitz and Fairbank of Capital One, from left, chatted with Gerard Robinson, Virginia's secretary of Education. (BELOW) Brad Flickinger of CB Richard Ellis, from left, and Hilary Fordwich of Strelmark, both JA board members, posed with Jordan Goldstein of Gensler, the firm that designed the project.



New heights for Art Night

Hickok Cole Architects' annual Art Night, held Oct. 20 at the firm's Georgetown offices, hit new fundraising heights. (LEFT) Yolanda Cole and Michael Hickok excitedly announced the amount sold: \$100,000 net. Proceeds benefit the Washington Project for the Arts and local artists. Photo by Hoachlander Davis Photography