

Participating in Jeans Day 2012 (from left) Supervisor John Cook with staff members Ann Sharp, Rosemary Ryan, Kiel Stone, Kalia Sokos and Lindsey Smith with Ryan's dog Finn, an Irish wolfhound.

## Capturing Fifty Years Of Christmas History

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Going Casual for A Cause

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## NEWS

# Enhanced Security Around Schools

## FCPS releases message about Connecticut tragedy.

**O**n Sunday, Dec. 16, Superintendent Jack Dale sent an email message to all FCPS families and employees.

He said the Fairfax County Police Department will be increasing patrols and visibility this week around all FCPS schools, including elementary schools, in response to Friday's tragedy in Connecticut.

"This is not in response to any specific threat but rather a police initiative to enhance safety and security around the schools and to help alleviate the understandably high levels of anxiety," Dale said.

Police patrols will be increased throughout the school day from the opening of

schools to dismissal. FCPS security personnel will also be patrolling our schools, focusing on elementary schools during the school day.

Counselors and mental health support for staff and students will be available at all schools beginning tomorrow. Students and staff are advised to let a teacher, counselor, or principal know if they need assistance. In addition, resources for support are available at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu).

"There is nothing more important to us than providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students and employees. I want to assure you that we will continue to be vigilant in our efforts to protect them," Dale said. "Thanks to the Fairfax County Police Department and FCPS security personnel for their efforts. Our thoughts remain with the children and families in Newtown."

—VICTORIA ROSS

## AREA ROUNDUPS

### Don't Drink and Drive

During the holiday season, the City of Fairfax Police Department reminds drivers to consider all options available before drinking and making the decision to drive. Making arrangements in advance to rely on a designated driver, calling a cab or spending the night are all alternatives police recommend to help prevent tragedies resulting from impaired driving.

Police strongly encourage people to utilize the SoberRide program offered by the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP). This program allows for free taxi rides (up to a \$30 fare) from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.; it started Dec. 14 and continues through Tuesday morning, Jan. 1, 2013.

To take advantage of it, call 1-800-200-8294 (TAXI), or #WRAP (#9727) for customers of AT&T wireless telephones, to request a cab ride as an alternative to driving after drinking. Persons must be 21 or older to use the SoberRide service.

### Animal Shelter Open House

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter is holding a holiday open house Saturday, Dec. 22, from noon-5 p.m., at 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax. Attendees may meet new director Tawny Hammond, tour the newly constructed, spacious, animal-adoption wing, enjoy holiday refreshments and learn about the many opportunities to volunteer.

The shelter is also offering a free spay or neuter for the first 100 cats, kittens, dogs or puppies adopted from the shelter through Dec. 31. The special offer is part of the shelter's annual Home for the holidays adoption celebration to help homeless animals leave the shelter for stable, new homes in time for the holidays.

The shelter also has rabbits, small mammals, reptiles and birds. To view animals available for adoption, visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/animalservices/> and click on adoption. Regular adoption hours are Tuesday-Friday, noon-6:30 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more information, call 703-830-1100.

### EQAC Environmental Hearing

The Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) will hold its annual public hearing on the environment on Monday, Jan. 7, 2013, at 7:30 p.m. The hearing will be in the county Government Center auditorium, 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. Citizens are invited to attend, share their views and identify environmental issues applicable to the county.

Environmental issues considered by EQAC include water quality, air quality, noise, hazardous materials, solid waste, stream valley protection, wildlife management, light pollution, visual pollution, energy, climate change response and adaptation, land use, transportation and the use and preservation of ecological resources.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Seen here, cutting a ribbon to open the new office are, from left: Marcia Twomey, president of the chamber; Craig Durosco, founder and chairman of Sun Design; Bob Gallagher, president of Sun Design; and John Foust, member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Sun Design recently was named, for the second year in a row, among the region's best places to work.

## Sun Design Opens McLean Office

After 25 successful years of growth in the region, a Burke-based Sun Design Remodeling, Inc., has now opened its second Northern Virginia office, this one on

Elm Street in McLean. The company hosted an open house (Thursday, Nov. 29) co-sponsored by the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce.

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# NEWS

PHOTO BY DEB CORB/THE CONNECTION



Participants of the Jeans Day 2012 ceremony held at the government center.

## Going Casual for a Cause

Nearly 10,000 people and 130-plus organizations participate in Jeans Day 2012 to help end homelessness.

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Nearly 10,000 residents representing 130 businesses, Fairfax County agencies, schools and organizations pulled on their favorite jeans Friday, Dec. 14 for the second annual Jeans Day—a powerful community initiative that aims to “Put the ZIP on Homelessness” through building awareness and fundraising.

“This is a fun way to dress, but a serious challenge for our community,” said Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors during the Jeans Day 2012 ceremony held at the government center.

Bulova noted the county’s longstanding commitment to the issue by establishing the Office to Prevent and End Homeless (OPEH) in 2008. OPEH supports the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness which engages nonprofits, businesses, faith-based communities and county agencies in its efforts to implement the 10-Year plan, which focuses on rapid re-housing and prevention by increasing the availability of permanent affordable housing.

“It’s not okay to have people living in tents or in their cars. . . . We have it within our power to end homelessness as we know it in Fairfax County, and Jeans Day is just one of many great ways we are doing just that,” Bulova said.

The day of community give-back was facilitated by the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce (Fairfax Chamber), Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Federal Credit Union. Participating organizations allowed employees or members to wear jeans to work Friday in exchange for a \$5 contribution to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent & End Homelessness.

“Jeans Day is an especially vibrant example of the meaningful impact we make when businesses, nonprofits and government come together to raise awareness about an important issue and take action to help prevent it,” said Fairfax Chamber President & CEO Jim Corcoran. “The Chamber and business community are proud to be a part of this powerful initiative.”

Corcoran, who typically wears business suits as president of the Fairfax Chamber, said he went into a detailed explanation earlier that morning about his casual attire when he was speaking to a group of

### Facts About Homelessness in Fairfax County

❖ On Jan. 25, 2012, there were 1,534 people who were literally homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community. Six hundred and ninety-seven of them were individuals and 837 were people in families.

❖ During the past year, the number of people who were homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community declined by one percent (15 people) from the number counted in January 2011. Persons in families decreased by 5.2 percent (46 people) compared to 2011. The number of single adults increased by 4.5 percent (30 adults) compared to 2011.

❖ The majority of the homeless are families and many work full time:

❖ Close to 60 percent of homeless persons are in families.

❖ More than 75 percent of children in homeless families are under the age of 11.

❖ Nearly 60 percent adults in homeless families work.

❖ Lack of affordable housing is the main cause of homelessness.

❖ Monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,134.

❖ A family must earn \$22.25 an hour to afford a one-bedroom apartment.

❖ 82 percent of homeless families earn less than \$14.24 an hour.

More information about homelessness in Fairfax County, and the partnership to end it, is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/>.

high-powered business executives. “The reason I went into such detail was to save my job,” he joked. “Please, don’t anyone suggest wearing a skirt next year.”

“By God, if we have to wear a skirt next year, we’ll call it a kilt,” joked Michael L. O’Reilly, Chairman of the Governing Board of Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. O’Reilly told the crowd that the Fairfax community is especially passionate and committed to the cause of ending homelessness. “For there to be one family, one child who is homeless is simply unacceptable.”

Dean Klein, the executive director of OPEH, said he was energized by the success of this year’s effort. “We have heard so much goodwill and positive feedback about our effort this year. The number of participants really is amazing and we are so pleased we have been able to increase our reach and impact this year. We have had such amazing collaborations from each sector of our community, including business, nonprofit, government, schools, faith and individuals.”

“In Fairfax County, it’s easy to forget that there are homeless families here, homeless children in the schools, and that many people who are homeless here are actually working, but don’t make nearly enough money to afford housing,” said The Connection Publisher Mary Kimm. “The Connection is committed to raising awareness of homelessness and the need to provide permanent shelter, and to recognizing the good works of individuals and businesses in Northern Virginia.”



All three of Dominion Virginia Power’s local offices in Fairfax, Herndon and Springfield participated to support efforts to end homelessness in Fairfax County. From left to right, employees at the Fairfax Office: Brandon Arnold, Lynn Miller, Mike Shipe, Nathan Jennings, Jane Hollenback, Liz Schwind and Julie Wagoner.



The staff of Fairfax Villa Elementary School in Fairfax, Virginia in their denim in support of Jeans Day.

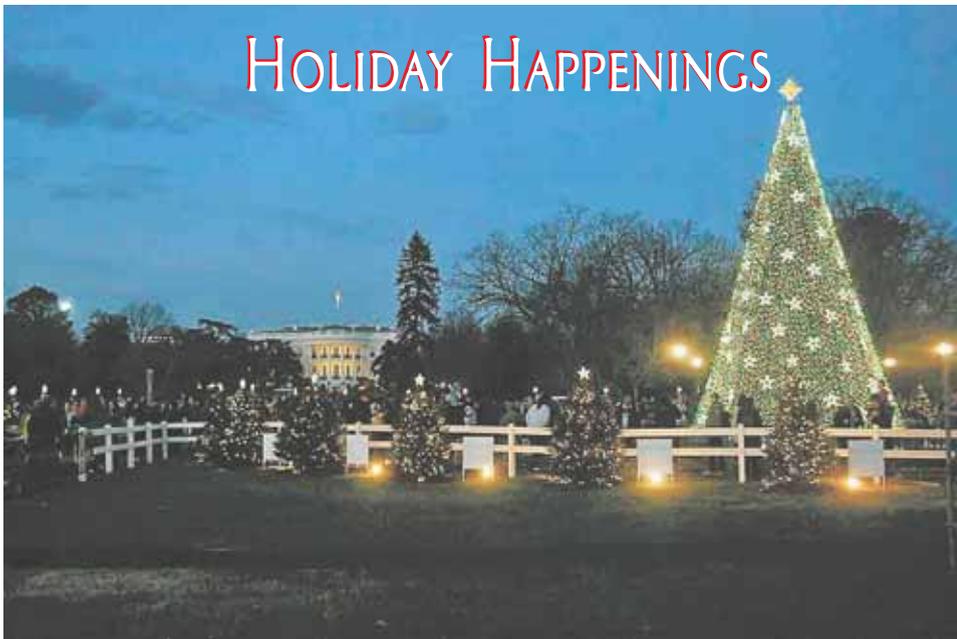


Employees with the Fairfax County Regional Library.



FACETS employees

## HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS



PHOTOS BY AL NIELSEN



**2012 National Christmas Tree**

**1980 National Christmas Tree (unlit during the Iran hostage crisis).**

# Capturing 50 Years of Christmas History

**Springfield resident Al Nielsen has photographed the National Christmas Tree every year since 1963.**

In December 1963, Al Nielsen drove his wife and four children to Washington, D.C. to see the National Christmas Tree, a red spruce from West Virginia. That year, the lighting of the tree was delayed due to the mourning period following the assassination of President Kennedy. Being without a tripod, Nielsen placed his camera atop his car and captured the first photo of what would become a long-standing annual tradition. Now 90 years old, Nielsen recently photographed the 2012 National Christmas Tree, making this the 50th consecutive year that he has captured history in the nation's capital.

While all 50 years have been memorable for Nielsen, a few years particularly stick in his mind. In 1979 and 1980, the National Christmas Tree remained mostly unlit out of respect for the American hostages being held in Iran. However, upon their release on Inauguration Day in 1981, the National Christmas Tree was relit in celebration of their impending return to the United States. That day, Nielsen recalls that he was helping his wife Vivian who was working with her church to provide hot beverages to those attending the inauguration ceremony. "When I heard about the lighting of the tree, I took my camera and got over there," said Nielsen.

Nielsen also fondly recalls the 1995 National Christmas Tree. "President Clinton himself financed the lighting of the tree," said Nielsen. During that time, there was a partial government shutdown; to avoid the possibility of the National Christmas Tree

**1963 National Christmas Tree—the first captured by Springfield resident Al Nielsen who has photographed the National Christmas Tree every year since then.**



going dim that year, Clinton requested to receive the electricity bill for the tree.

**OVER THE YEARS,** Nielsen has kept up with modern technology. He switched from Minolta to Nikon when digital photography began to flourish, and now he even

has a remote-controlled tripod, a major improvement from 1963. In addition to capturing still images, Nielsen began to videotape the trees when enhanced technology allowed the lights and decorations to change colors and designs, so as to capture all of its displays.

In April 2003, Nielsen and his



PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKAY

**Al Nielsen looking through his collection of National Christmas Tree photos.**

wife moved to Greenspring retirement community in Springfield. He has since become the "unofficial-official" resident photographer for the community, often taking photos for the resident-produced monthly newsletter and volunteering to operate the cameras in the community's television studio. He has also produced several special video features for the studio.

After moving, Nielsen continued to make his way into Washington, D.C. each year on the morning following the tree lighting ceremony, just as he had done for the forty years prior. In early 2011, Nielsen even managed to capture a photo of the tree after it toppled from high winds. That tree, a blue spruce, had served as the National Christmas Tree since 1978.

This year, two of Nielsen's sons and a grandson accompanied him on his trip to see the brand new Colorado blue spruce on the Ellipse donned with 450 LED light strings. "It was a family outing, just like my first photo in 1963," said Nielsen. Nielsen has asked his

youngest son Brian to carry on the tradition.

So what is Nielsen's explanation for continuing the tradition for 50 years? He said plainly, "I got hooked on it." The National Park Service got wind of his collection, and have displayed his National Christmas Tree photos from 1965-1995 on their website. Nielsen is very pleased that his annual tradition has helped to make the National Park Service's records more comprehensive.

**LAST YEAR,** Nielsen produced a 31-minute video featuring each National Christmas Tree since 1963. Nielsen, who taught himself how to use Photoshop and Final Cut Express on his Mac computer, included snippets of National Christmas Tree history from each year and set the images to various holiday tunes. "I'm still working on it," said Nielsen, who is planning to add the 50th tree to the video before the end of the year.

Additional information about Greenspring can be found at [www.ericksonliving.com](http://www.ericksonliving.com).

# CALENDAR

To have community events listed, send to [south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9416 with questions. Deadline for calendar listings is two weeks prior to event.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 20

**Great Russian Nutcracker.** 7:30 p.m., at the GMU Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Moscow Ballet 20th anniversary production brings new "Dove of Peace" choreography inspired by the work of Stanislav Vlasov, former Bolshoi Ballet dancer, to Fairfax for the holidays. \$48-127. [www.Nutcracker.com](http://www.Nutcracker.com).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 22

**Animal Lovers Holiday Open House.** Noon-5 p.m., at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, 4500 West Ox Road, Fairfax. Meet Director Tawny Hammond, learn about many opportunities to volunteer, see the newly constructed spacious animal adoption wing and enjoy holiday refreshments at the open house. 703-830-1100 or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/polic/animalservices](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/polic/animalservices).

**Holiday Pops: Songs of the Season.** 8 p.m., at George Mason University's Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. As part of the Great Performances at Mason series, the American Festival Pops Orchestra Holiday Brass Quintet performs holiday classics with guest narration from Rick Davis. \$24, \$40, \$48; youth through 12th half price when accompanied by adult. 888-945-2468 or [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu).

## TUESDAY/DEC. 25

**JCCNV's Annual J Fest.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m., at the JCCNV, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Kosher food for purchase, arts and crafts, music, "wild and crazy" games and activities, a moon bounce, a community service project, face painting and a balloon artist are among the attractions of the festival. \$15 for JCCNV members per family; \$20 per family, general entry. 703-323-0880 or [www.jccnv.org](http://www.jccnv.org).

**Fiddler on the Roof Sing-Along.** 3 p.m., at the JCCNV, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. A free film showing serves as the musical ending to the day's J Fest activities (see above listing); sing "If I Were a Rich Man," "Matchmaker" and other fun, traditional favorite from the 1971 musical. Ages 8-and-up. [www.jccnv.org](http://www.jccnv.org).

## MONDAY/DEC. 31

**Fairfax Four Miler.** 6 p.m., at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The most fun way to kick off New Year's Eve; sweatshirt, pizza and soda included. Register at <http://pacersevents.com/race/fairfax-four-miler>.

## TUESDAY/JAN. 8

**Encore Chorale Rehearsal.** 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at The Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Former high school and college choristers, church, synagogue and community choral singers are invited to sing in a dynamic rehearsal with the Encore Chorale for their Spring 2013 season. 301-261-5747, [info@encorecreativity.org](mailto:info@encorecreativity.org) or <http://encorecreativity.org>.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 18

**Aquila Theatre with Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano De Bergerac."** 8 p.m., at George Mason University's Center for the Arts, Intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123, Fairfax. **Edmond Rostand's** classic tale of unrequited love, presented by acclaimed British-American touring troupe **Aquila Theatre**. \$20; \$32; \$40. 888-945-2468 or [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 19

**Fairfax Symphony Orchestra: Masterworks IV.** 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Conductor Christopher Zimmerman and flautist Christina Jennings perform Mozart's Overture to The Magic Flute, Leshnoff's Flute Concerto, Ives' The Unanswered Question and Brahms' Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68. \$25-\$55. 703-563-1990 or [www.fairfaxsymphony.org](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org).

## SUNDAY/JAN. 20

**Garden Gauge Model Train Display at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum.** 1-4

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7



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## Reminder: Shop Locally, Give Locally

### Supporting the community.

With less than a week before Christmas, many people have not completed their shopping, and so we remind you of the importance of spending a significant portion of your shopping budget locally. At this point in the season, the high cost of expedited shipping might also serve as an incentive to shop in locally owned stores.

One way to be sure holiday shopping comes with some holiday spirit is to do a portion of your shopping in some of the area's locally owned stores. There is special holiday ambience available by shopping in the heart of a town that is decked out for the season.

Small retail shops are part of defining any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them. A small business owner pays attention to every detail in his or her business in a way that no chain can. Frequently, it is the small retail person who is active in fundraising for local charities, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing holiday events.

Local retail stores, mom-and-pop stores, continue to face tough challenges. Competition from big box stores and online sellers makes the holiday shopping season all the more important to locally-owned retailers.

With less than two weeks to go before the end of the charitable giving year, we also remind you of the critical local needs that are filled by a variety of local nonprofit organizations.

With suggestions from readers, we have updated our lists. We welcome suggestions as we continuously update our local lists of community organizations. You can find a complete list on our website, [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com).

### Last News Issue of 2012

This is the last regular edition of the Connection for 2012, and it includes the last of our 2012 series on immigration. Next week, delivered shortly after Christmas, is the Children's Connection, devoted to the artwork and writing of area students.

— MARY KIMM,

[MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](mailto:MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

### Where to Give Locally

- The Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships has put together a list of 12 ways to support nonprofit partners that are in need of contributions to carry out their mission. Visit [www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org](http://www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org)
- ❖ Support services for aging in place through Life Circle Alliance [www.lifecirclealliances.org/donate.htm](http://www.lifecirclealliances.org/donate.htm)
- ❖ Shop online "Gifts that Give Hope" Alternative Gift Fair for Fairfax County [atwww.giftsthatgivehope.org/fairfax](http://atwww.giftsthatgivehope.org/fairfax) providing links to buy gifts that support more than 20 Fairfax County nonprofits including Alternative House, Herndon-Reston FISH, FACETS, Stroke Comeback Center, and more.
- ❖ Honor the memory of a relative or friend or recognize a birthday, wedding, anniversary, retirement or other special event by donating a bench to a park through the Fairfax County Park Foundation <http://fairfaxparkfoundation.org/support/benchtree.htm>
- ❖ Buy a book to fulfill the Library Foundation's Wish List [www.amazon.com/gp/registry/registry.html/002-9627810-1915264?id=2P3AKWX1F9FO](http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/registry.html/002-9627810-1915264?id=2P3AKWX1F9FO)
- ❖ Donate the gift of trees through Reforest Fairfax of the Fairfax County Restoration Project <http://www.fcrpp3.org/reforestfairfax/>
- ❖ Give the gift of Art to benefit the Arts Council of Fairfax County, <http://artsfairfax.org/donate>
- ❖ Protect a child's smile and health by donating to Project Pearly Whites from the MCCC Foundation, [mcccfoundation.org/news/mcp\\_foundation\\_launches\\_project\\_pearly\\_whites/](http://mcccfoundation.org/news/mcp_foundation_launches_project_pearly_whites/)
- ❖ Help end homelessness through the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/oeph.htm>
- ❖ Give the gift of your time and become a mentor for BeFriend-A-Child, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childrenyouth/befriendachild.htm>
- ❖ Provide for a family for the holidays through A Way Forward and donate care packages to those who need it most, <http://www.awayforward.org>

- ❖ Other Fairfax County organizations that need your help to keep helping others:
- ❖ **Literacy Council of Northern Virginia**, 703-237-0866, [www.lcnv.org](http://www.lcnv.org), Teaches adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and understanding English. Offers one-to-one tutoring programs for adult learners as well as beginning-level ESOL and Family Learning adult programs.
- ❖ **Computer C.O.R.E.** 703-931-7346, [www.computercore.org](http://www.computercore.org), Adult Education, Computer Training and Career Development, with classes in Alexandria, Fairfax, Herndon and Annadale
- ❖ **Our Daily Bread** has been serving needy families in Fairfax County for 25 years. The Holiday Program helps those in need with food for the holidays and gifts for their children, making last year's holiday season brighter for approximately 3,000 families. [www.odbfairfax.com/holiday](http://www.odbfairfax.com/holiday)
- ❖ **Food for Others** distributed more than 2.4 million pounds of free food to families in need in Northern Virginia in the year ending June 30, 2012. The non-profit provides a safety net for people who face emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. [www.foodforothers.com](http://www.foodforothers.com)
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO)**, 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year. [www.echo-inc.org](http://www.echo-inc.org).
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Sales from the shop generate funds for LCAC and clients also shop there. Now collecting gift cards and food baskets for Christmas, and warm coats. 703-339-8611 [www.lortonaction.org](http://www.lortonaction.org).
- ❖ **Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE)** —

- ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation. 4114 Legato Road Suite B, Fairfax, VA 22033, 703-591-4968, [cause-usa.org](http://cause-usa.org)
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. [www.capitalareafoodbank.org](http://www.capitalareafoodbank.org)
- ❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly (near Backyard Grill and Bar). For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153. 703-988-9656.
- ❖ **The Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic**, 13525 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171, 571-235-3577. Last year, 139 community volunteers including nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians, gave more than 1,300 hours of their time to see patients. [jsfreeclinic.org](http://jsfreeclinic.org).
- ❖ **Alternative House** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182, 703-506-9191. [www.thealternativehouse.org](http://www.thealternativehouse.org).
- ❖ **Reston Interfaith**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, [www.restoninterfaith.org](http://www.restoninterfaith.org). Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program and holiday food drives.
- ❖ **SHARE of McLean** is fully volunteer run, and seeks donations of grocery gift cards and more. Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101. 703-284-2179. [www.SHAREofMcLean.org](http://www.SHAREofMcLean.org)
- ❖ **LINK**, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. More than 4,000 adults and children have signed up for help with holiday meals. 703-437-1776 [www.linkagainsthunger.org](http://www.linkagainsthunger.org)
- ❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area.

- FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or [volunteer@facetscares.org](mailto:volunteer@facetscares.org). FACETS offers a monthly Youth Volunteer Night. [www.facetscares.org](http://www.facetscares.org). 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others (CHO)**, Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of concerned churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. 703-281-7614 <http://www.cho-va.com>
- ❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), working with the Office of Coordinated Services Planning, Fairfax County Department of Human Services, FISH helps local citizens who are in temporary need of food, clothing and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880 <http://fairfaxfish.org/>
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
- ❖ **Lamb Center**, [www.thelambcenter.org](http://www.thelambcenter.org), Day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178
- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**, 10455 White Granite Drive Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124 703-385-3267 <http://www.nvfs.org/>
- ❖ **United Community Ministries**, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306 <http://www.ucmagency.org/>
- ❖ **Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN)** of Northern Virginia, 703-820-9001, [www.scanva.org](http://www.scanva.org), Parent Education, Public Education-re: child abuse and Court Advocacy for Abused and Neglected Children

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# CALENDAR

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p.m., at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, Virginia & Maryland Garden Railway Society will have a display and running G Gauge (Garden Gauge) model trains. \$3 for adults; \$1 for children. 703-425-9225 or [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org).

**Savion Glover's "SoLe Sanctuary."** 7 p.m., at George Mason University's Center for the Arts, Intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123, Fairfax. Celebrated choreographer and tap dancer **Savion Glover** honors his art form with a Hooper's meditation on the art of tap. \$23; \$38; \$46. 888-945-2468 or [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu)

## TUESDAY/FEB. 19

**22nd Annual Board of Supervisors Breakfast.** 7-9:30 a.m., at the Waterford in Fair Oaks, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Join Leadership Fairfax and other Fairfax County leaders for a morning of information and great networking and gives businesses and residents of Fairfax County an opportunity to hear straight from the Board of Supervisors about what is happening in Fairfax County. Limited seating; \$50 paid alumni member, \$65 alumni non members and general public, \$30 current LLP '12 and LFI/ELI '13 members. [www.leadershipfairfax.org](http://www.leadershipfairfax.org).

## ONGOING

**Join Jewish War Veterans of the USA.** The Burke Post E 100 at 5712 Walnut Wood, Burke, invites Jewish veterans and service members to join. Call David B. Meyers at 703-209-5925 for information.

**Collecting Fairfax.** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. With six major themes, this exhibition highlights objects added to the collection since 1992; the exhibit is open through Jan. 29, 2013. 703-385-8414.

**NVSC Dance.** 6:30-10:30 p.m., at the Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Boulevard, Fairfax. Beginner lessons at 7:30 p.m. and a buffet dinner preceding from 6:45-8 p.m.; cash bar available. No partners needed. \$4; \$5 additional for buffet dinner. [www.nvshag.org](http://www.nvshag.org).

## SATURDAY/MARCH 16

**Fairfax Symphony Orchestra:** Masterworks V. 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Conductor Christopher Zimmerman performs J. Strauss' Emperor Waltz and Tick Tack, Pizzicato, Trisch-Tratsch Polkas and Overture to Die Fledermaus; R. Strauss' Suite from Der Rosenkavalier, Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks and Salomé's Dance. \$25-\$55. 703-563-1990 or [www.fairfaxsymphony.org](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org).

## SATURDAY/MAY 11

**Fairfax Symphony Orchestra:** Masterworks VI. 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Conductor Christopher Zimmerman, tenor Brennen Guillory and soprano Joni Henson perform Wagner's "Prelude and Liebestod," Tristan und Isolde and Prelude to Act 3, Lohengrin; Verdi's Overture to La Forza del Destino, Overture to I vespri siciliani, Love Duet Finale Act I Otello, "Dio ti giocondi, O Sposo" Otello, "Dio mi potevi, scagliar" Otello, Willow Song Otello and "Libiamo," La Traviata. \$25-\$55. 703-563-1990 or [www.fairfaxsymphony.org](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org).



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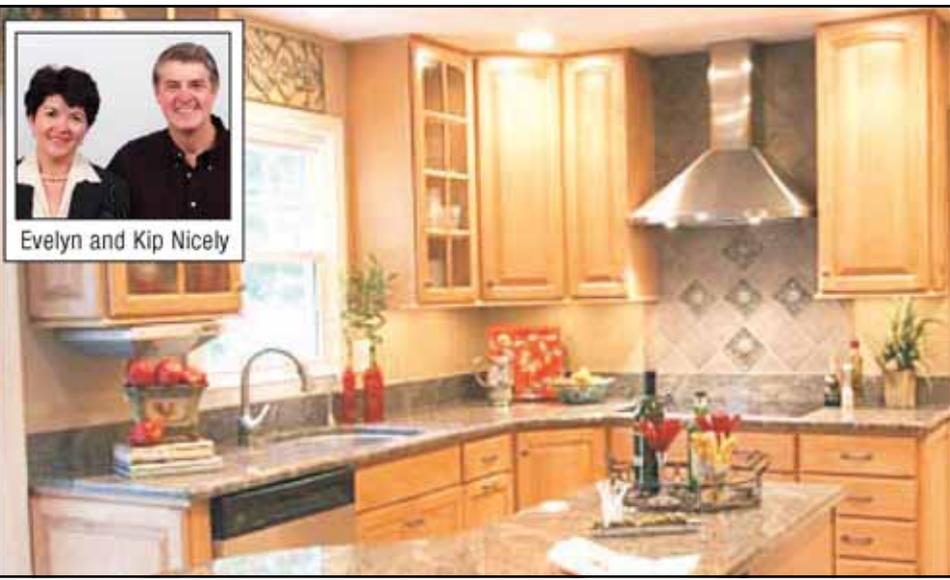
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# FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

## How the Powerless Access

Immigrants make significant gains in influencing political system.

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Final part of the series.

**O**n Election Night Nov. 6, Keisy Chavez's nerves were frayed.

The Fairfax single mom had been campaigning hard for Democrats since the official launch of Latinos for Obama last April.

She filmed a commercial for Senate candidate Tim Kaine in September, worked phone banks, door-knocked during 104-degree heat, stuffed envelopes, delivered yard signs, and seized every opportunity to talk to friends, neighbors and strangers about the importance of the 2012 election.

Her daughter, Cinthya Qureshi, 24, likes to tease her mom about her willingness to talk to anyone when it comes to politics.

"If my mom is pumping gas, and sees someone next to her, she will start a conversation about politics," she said.

"I've been organizing for President Obama and Governor Kaine since the launch of their campaigns, and everyone I talk to in the Latino community gets fired up to help spread the message of everything they have done for us," said Chavez.

Chavez was ecstatic over of Kaine's and Obama's victories in Virginia. "It was such a powerful feeling. I can't really describe how happy and relieved I felt," she said. "It shows that you can make a difference. It's a big motivation to realize that you can have an impact on something bigger than you, something that touches so many people."

Like many Latinos this election cycle, Chavez made certain her voice was heard. According to exit polls, recent immigrants, not just Latinos, voted overwhelmingly, 73 percent, for Obama in Northern Virginia.

Data from the Pew Research Center also shows that Asian Americans have shifted more to Democrats since 2008 than any other minority group. Representing just 3 percent of the national voting population, they are the fastest growing demographic in the United States, and their influ-



**Keisy Chavez, a Latino activist with Latinos for Obama, and daughter Cinthya Qureshi at their business in Herndon.**

ence is being felt beyond traditionally blue states, like California, Hawaii, New York and New Jersey, into swing states like Virginia and North Carolina.

"This area, particularly Fairfax County, is teeming with immigrants, from South America, India, Vietnam, South Korea and elsewhere," said Frederic Bemak, director of the Diversity Research and Action Center at George Mason University. "I can't imagine many of them swooned at Romney's incessant China bashing, or talk of self-deportation for the undocumented."

"The tectonic plates are shifting on immigration," said Frank Sharry, a McLean resident and executive director of America's Voice, an advocacy group for immigrants. "The fact that leading conservative voices are joining Republican leaders in calling for immigration reform that includes relief for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in America is a major development that will open up space

for the GOP to do the right thing and help pass sensible reform legislation."

Sharry said political leaders should consider the response from 2012 voters to this question asked in the network exit polls: "Should most illegal immigrants working in the United States be offered a chance to apply for legal status or deported to country they came from?"

"By a whopping 65-percent-to-28-percent margin, Americans support the 'apply for legal status' option," Sharry said.

Chavez said the 2012 election was a "reality wake-up call."

"I think it has finally hit some Republican politicians and policymakers that if you don't embrace immigration you will go nowhere. If you really want your party or your candidate or issues to be addressed, you need to embrace the mix of people in this country. Everyone has something to bring, regardless of whether you're Latino, Asian, or Irish."



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

**Brian Moran, former chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia with U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8) and Fred Shwaery of Vienna, a member of the Arab American Democrats of Virginia, at the 24th annual Arab American Candidates' Night Dinner held at the Tysons Corner Marriott on Sept. 30.**

### Voting: How the powerless begin to access power?

Political affiliation aside, research shows that immigrants, especially when they organize and vote, are influencing the political discussion overall, not just electing Democrats.

According to immigration experts, the right to vote is a key motivating factor when immigrants choose to become citizens, instead of just holding on to their green card.

Andrew Eade, who grew up in England, has been working in the U.S. for 16 years. In May, Eade was one of 75 new citizens who took the Oath of Allegiance during a special naturalization ceremony at the Fairfax County Government Center.

A resident of Herndon for 16 years, Eade said he wanted to become a citizen so he could "fully participate in the system and vote."

"I've been paying taxes for all these years, and I thought it was time to vote. You want to feel like you are getting your voice heard," he said.

Tam-Anh Lam, 23, called Tammy by her clients at the Four Seasons Nail Salon in Oakton, pulls out a creased photo of her 4-year-old daughter, Leah-Anh, to show a client.

Lam came to the United States

with her parents when she was 2 years old. Lam lives with her parents in Reston, who help take care of her daughter.

She became a citizen when she turned 18, but did not vote until this year. Lam said she wants her daughter to grow up with self-confidence and the higher education she lacks.

"I never paid much attention, but this year there was so much in the news that concerned me." Lam said news about immigration, education and healthcare struck a chord with her, and she decided she would vote this year.

"I wanted to vote because it gives you power. It's the American way. . . . I wanted my daughter to know that we're Americans too, and she can do anything. If I can't do it, maybe she can. Who knows, she could be a doctor someday," Lam said.

Community-based organizations, according to a 2009 Urban Institute study, play a key role in encouraging immigrants to enroll in citizenship programs so they can participate in the electoral process.

"A significant aspect of immigrant integration is civic participation," said Richard Eldridge, the Citizenship volunteer manager at Hogar Immigrant Services, a Fairfax County program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington. "We have a strong component of helping people become new citizens, of empowering immigrants through the benefits of

# Power



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

**Andrew Eade, wife Stephanie and son Greyson, 21 months, of Herndon. Eade, from England, was one of 75 candidates who took the Oath of Allegiance during a special naturalization ceremony May 25 at the Fairfax County Government Center.**

citizenship.”

“Our goal is for immigrants to achieve self-sufficiency and participate fully in the greater community,” said Brooke Hammond Perez, education services and group manager. Hogar, which was founded in 1981, offers a combination of legal consultation, English-language instruction and citizenship classes.

While the majority of Hogar’s immigrant clients live below the poverty level, their determination to become engaged, active citizens is inspiring, Hammond Perez said.

But few have touched Hammond Perez personally as much as client Alhaji Alpha Bah, an 82-year-old immigrant from Sierra Leone. In 1992, Bah was a shop-keeper in the West African nation when civil war broke out. During a decade of brutal civil war, when tens of thousands of people died, Bah was forced from his home, living as a refugee in Guinea for seven years before coming to the United States in 2003.

“He was accompanied to the U.S. by four of his nine children,” Hammond Perez said, adding that his other children had to stay behind in Guinea and Sierra Leone. “Even now, he doesn’t know the whereabouts of three of those five children.”

Bah came to Catholic Charities in 2010. He did not have any formal education, did not speak English and was not able to find consistent work. Despite these obstacles, Bah, accompanied by Hammond Perez, was officially sworn in as a U.S. citizen on Oct.

14, 2011. When asked what he wanted to do as a new American, he said he wanted to register to vote as soon as possible. “I feel proud. I feel big. You are a citizen. Welcome to America,” Bah said in video interview discussing his experiences. (To see the video, visit [hogarimmigrantservices.org](http://hogarimmigrantservices.org).)

## Immigrants Gaining Political Influence

In Virginia and at the national level, immigrant voters are changing the political landscape in unprecedented ways, and hold increasing influence across the political spectrum.

“From a political perspective, the way the demographics are shifting, those who would demonize and attack new immigrants and Latinos do so at their peril,” said Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49), the first Latino Democrat elected to the Virginia General Assembly.

Latinos have a long history of political involvement through organizations which give them access to elected officials, according to the Urban Institute.

In contrast, the Urban Institute study says, Asian and African immigrant communities are newer and lack long-serving, established leaders to spearhead and encourage participation and advocacy. While Asians comprise 17.4 percent of Fairfax County’s population, compared to 15.6 percent

SEE IMMIGRANTS, PAGE 10

PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION



**Del. Mark Keam (D-35)**

## Immigrant Success Story

### Delegate Mark L. Keam.

*Del. Mark Keam (D-35) is the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly. In November 2009, Keam was elected to an open seat in the House of Delegates and re-elected in November 2011. Keam, 46, currently serves on the House Education and Finance Committees, and is co-chair of the Legislative Tourism Caucus. Keam sat for a series of interviews with Connection reporter Victoria Ross in his Vienna office in December. Here is Keam’s story, mostly in his own words.*

**F**or new Americans, life is hard, but once they overcome those barriers, they are stronger, and they contribute so much because they fought so hard to get here. I’m proud of my background. The policies I advocate for are from the perspective of an immigrant, something which is sorely missing in Richmond. As an immigrant who came here with nothing, I’m able to have everything I ever wanted, to give my children incredible opportunities.

Let me put it this way, unlike most people whose immigration stories are fairly simple, (for example, they move from one country to another country), I lived in four different countries and several different cities. I guess you could say I was the result of global circumstances beyond my control.

My parents met in the late 1950s. They had lost their parents during the war, so I didn’t know any of my grandparents. My mother had an older sister, who was a devout Christian. She didn’t like my father.

My parents were like street kids after the Korean war. My mother didn’t finish school and my father was sort of a rogue. The only way my aunt would let him approach my mother was to prove he was upstanding citizen, so he became a minister.

*In 1961, there was mandatory conscription in the military, so Keam’s father was sent to Vietnam as a chaplain.*

My father would come back at least once every two years. My brother was born in 1962, my sister was born in 1964 and I was born in 1966. In 1969, he came back to Seoul, and he wanted to set up a church. But Korea was still very run-down post war. Imagine Afghanistan, imagine that scenario. Korea was like Afghanistan times two. No running water, all the buildings were bombed, everything was devastated, being run by dictators. It’s only 50 miles from DMZ. That was the world I was born into.

**THE WAR IN VIETNAM** was at a standstill, a lot of countries started establishing ties in South Vietnam, so they asked my father, who had studied Vietnamese language and culture, to establish a Korean church and community center. We lived in the church, and I remember the building well.

This goes directly into how I got into politics. From the time I was 4-years-old, I can’t remember one meal we had with just the five of us. Our meals were with whoever was at the church. For the 5,000 Koreans who lived in Vietnam in the 70s, every one of them came to our church because it was also the only community center. It was the hub of all Korean activities. From the time I woke up until I went to bed, there were always people around us.

When I was a small kid, I freaked out because we had caskets. I remember there’d be a wedding in the morning, a funeral in the middle of the day, and another wedding at night. You’d see the same people dressed up for a wedding and then back for a funeral, because they knew each other. I lived in that world with the idea that community helps each other. It was ingrained in me such a natural way that I think, to this day, that’s the core of my being. What made me who I am and what made me think the way I do and act the way I do every single day was molded in my childhood. More importantly, because of my father, I saw it was incumbent upon us to be leaders in our community. Family is important, but community is just as important. So that has led me to do what I’m doing today.

*When Keam was 9-years-old, in April of 1975, he recalls his family fleeing the church compound during what historians call the Fall of Saigon. The capture of Saigon by the People’s Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front, marked the end of the Vietnam War and the start of a transition period leading to the formal reunification of Vietnam into a communist state. The fall of the city was preceded by the evacuation of almost all the American civilian and military personnel in Saigon, along with tens of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians associated with the southern regime. The evacuation culminated in Operation Frequent Wind, which was the largest helicopter evacuation in history.*

That’s the most traumatic thing that’s ever happened to me. We were playing in the room, and I just remember my mother coming in saying we have to pack up and go.

We had seen a lot of things. Whenever I see war-

SEE BARRIERS, PAGE 10

## FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

# Immigrants Gain Influence in Virginia

FROM PAGE 9

who are Latino, Asians speak many different languages and come from a wide variety of cultures, making it more difficult to politically mobilize the population as a whole.

Regardless, political leaders are increasingly tuned in to the concerns of immigrants, and the number of immigrant community-based organizations is increasing. In 2000, according to the Urban Institute, there were 90 such organizations in Fairfax County; in 2009, the number was up to 149.

"The number of organizations devoted to the interest of members of the immigrant community has been increasing just as the number of immigrants has been increasing," said Del. Ken Plum (D-36). "I try to attend as many meetings of groups with immigrant members to demonstrate to them that they can have a say in government and that there are those in elective office who value the contributions."

At the 24th annual Candidates' Night Dinner, hosted by the Arab American Republicans and the Arab American Democratic Caucus of Virginia on Sept. 30, nearly every Fairfax County Democrat running for office was there, courting voters, including Kaine, U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8) and U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11). Former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, (R), who served eight terms in Congress, was Mitt Romney's surrogate.

Launched in 1987 by the Arab American Institute (AAI), the event is a forum for campaigning politicians, and a place where the Arab-American community can engage in the political process.

"Candidates' Night, by admission of most politicians attending the forum, has been praised as one of the best ethnic political forums," said event co-chair Saba L. Shami. "It's become an institution, bringing candidates together with the Arab American community as an integral part of the American political process."

Del. Mark Keam (D-35), the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, said Asian immigrants are beginning to see unprecedented growth in both population and political clout.

"In 2000, I was the convention chair of the National Asian American Bar Association. It was held in D.C., and we broke all records. We had 500 lawyers getting together in the same town, and we had a budget of over \$300,000. We thought that was big time," Keam said.

"In 2012, same town, same convention, but this year the event drew 1,700 lawyers and had a budget of \$1.6 million," Keam said. "What that tells you is something about both the physical growth and the economic clout of Asians, because of the money spon-



Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49) at the Democratic Committee Headquarters in Annandale.

PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

sors were willing to spend targeting our community."

Lopez pointed out that since 2000 Latino voter participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia has gone up between 1 and 3 percent every election cycle. Currently, there are 683,000 Latinos in Virginia, and approximately 183,000 of those are eligible voters, according to the State Board of Elections.

According to the 2010 decennial census, between 2000 and 2010, Latino voter registration increased by 75 percent in Virginia, one of highest increases in country.

"This is something that really blew me away," Lopez said. "The average age of the Latino citizen is 15 years old. Think about what that means in two years and four years and eight years. You're going to see a huge increase in Latino registered voters."

Lopez said the increasing percentage of Virginia's Latinos and immigrant voters make him hopeful that the political polarization regarding immigration reform will diminish.

"There's something huge about what's happening in the Commonwealth," Lopez said. "The demographic shifts coming to Virginia will wipe out the effects of the short-sighted anti-immigrant politicking we see now."

Chavez said it's just smart—politically and economically—to create a pathway to citizenship for young immigrants. "We're relying on their talent and skills. It's not just a Latino concern. . . . It helps the economy and makes America stronger for everyone."

"Like the program says 'it's the new normal.' Get used to it. Embrace it," Chavez said.

## Overcoming Barriers

FROM PAGE 9

torn scenes of Libya or Syria, it brings back flashes of memory. I never saw actual tanks roll in, but we heard bombs going off. There were times when we would go through the markets of Vietnam, and we had seen Buddhist monks self-immolating in political protests—just awful.

After seeing things like that, it wasn't real to us until that day my mom said pack up.

The families at the compound got in the cars, and drove to this little airport. As we're leaving in the helicopter, we look back and I see my dad standing behind the chicken-wire fence.

**KEAM SAID HE EVENTUALLY** reconstructed what happened to his father through relative's stories and his father's testimony.

My father was stranded on the rooftop, and he was arrested by the Viet Cong. He had two marks against him. One was that he was a religious leader in a communist country. Another mark was that he served in the South Korean military, even though he was a chaplain.

We were taken back to Seoul, and there were so many rumors. We heard that my father was killed, or that he was in prison, or that he made it but he's not coming back. We had absolutely no way to understand this. . . .

When we arrived back in Korea, we had zero, nothing. No one was doing well. My mother found a one-bedroom apartment in Seoul. My mom had never finished high school let alone college. As a woman, she had no way of having meaningful employment, being a single mother with three kids. . . . So my mother went to churches and to ex-military friends and it was those people who supported us, not the government. I never asked her, and she never talks about it, but I believe the only way she fed us every single day, is that she begged and went to charities and welfare groups. That was the year I became an adult and lost my childhood innocence.

**KEAM SPOKE ENGLISH AND FRENCH,** but not much Korean. Back at school in Seoul, he was bullied and treated as a special-needs student. He said that terrible year transformed him in ways that make him the person he is today.

I preach this all the time, discrimination is discrimination no matter who is doing it to whom. My life's mission is to fight against discrimination. I am also passionate about literacy. I serve on the board of Virginia Literacy Foundation, a nonprofit founded by former Virginia First Lady Jeannie Baliles to ensure that everyone has essential reading and writing skills they need to succeed.

After what Keam considers the worst year of his life, assuming his father was never coming home, feeling out of place in his native country, his family got another surprise. His father returned home, showing up on their doorstep out of the blue.

"That's a story for another time, how we eventually got here," Keam said.

**THE REST OF THE STORY, ABRIDGED:** After reuniting with his father, Keam's family then moved to Australia, where his father established another church before eventually moving to California.

Keam received a political science degree from the University of California at Irvine, and had a chance to live in Falls Church while working as a college intern. After receiving a law degree from Hastings College of the Law, Keam returned to Virginia where he met and married Alex Seong Keam, also an attorney. The Keams have two children, Tyler, a Cub Scout, and Brenna, a Brownie. Both children attend Mosby Woods Elementary School in Fairfax.

As a part-time citizen-legislator, Keam, who is known as the most prolific member of the General Assembly on Twitter @markkeam, maintains a year-round office in Vienna in addition to his Richmond office. When the General Assembly is not in session, Keam serves as senior advisor for strategic affairs at Verizon; he has worked at Verizon since 2007. Before that, for six years, he served as chief counsel to the Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Before working on Capitol Hill, Keam worked at the Small Business Administration, and had also served as an attorney with the Federal Communications Commission's Wireless Bureau.

# Teaching Health and Holiday Culinary Traditions

**Nutrition experts say moderation, not deprivation, is key.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he holidays start with a saucepan of mushrooms—usually portabella, crimini or oyster—sautéing in olive oil. Next, sliced onions sizzle in a bath of bubbling butter and wine until they're caramelized.

This is how Bonita Lillie starts her yuletide feast. Under the guidance of her deft hands, such rank and file produce become mushroom soup. Fresh minced pork and cheddar cheese become a recreation of her mother's sausage rolls. She doesn't measure ingredients, count calories or add flavor-depleting substitutes. Only real food makes the cut in her Alexandria kitchen.

"I go with my gut and what feels right. I don't use recipes," said Lillie, a registered dietician and nutrition instructor at Marymount University in Arlington. "If you're cooking a family dish that you look forward to every holiday and you substitute a fat-free version of something, it won't taste right and you won't satisfy your memory of that dish."

During a time of year when it is not uncommon to wash down Bûche de Noël with eggnog or to pile one's plate with slices of crown roast beef drizzled with merlot cream sauce, Lillie and other local nutritionists, food enthusiasts and health gurus say don't engage in self-deprivation. They emphasize that moderation, minor modifications and keeping it real are the keys to maintaining family traditions in ways that are healthy.

"Fat, per se, is not evil," said Nichole Ferrigno, culinary director for Tiny Chefs in Great Falls, Alexandria, McLean, Oakton, Springfield, Arlington and Potomac. "It really becomes about the type of fat one is consuming. When we think of . . . eggnog, peppermint cake and gingerbread, I would tell folks to have just a little bit of the real thing. I do not ever, ever recommend substituting real foods with processed look-a-likes."

**READ LABELS** and examine the contents, say experts, or better yet, buy foods that don't require labels. "[I]t is definitely better to eat real food," said Joel Martin, Ph.D., a professor of kinesiology at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Our bodies have been used to eating real food for thousands of years and only recently have artificial ingredients been introduced into our diets. In the long run, regularly eating these substitutes may cause numerous undesirable effects."

Ferrigno, a former restaurant chef, suggests swapping imitation for moderation. "Even when it comes to holiday indulgences, one can partake and still do so within the parameters of a healthy diet," she said. "The key . . . is to stick with whole, unprocessed foods. By consuming the real thing, your body is satiated with just a small amount. When we consume artifi-



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE CONNECTION

**When faced with a wide array of yuletide treats, dietician Jennifer Kay Nelson advises against "mindlessly grabbing cookies [and] candy . . . here-there-everywhere."**

cial ingredients, it takes much, much longer and many, many more calories to reach the same level of satiety."

Replacing one natural ingredient with another is a flavor-preserving option. "You could substitute . . . an alternative sweetener like honey or agave nectar" for sugar, said Lenora Lawson, a chef instructor at The Art Institute of Washington's International Culinary Schools in Arlington.

In fact, minor ingredient tweaks can pack powerful taste bud punches. "When you're baking a cake, sometimes you can replace oil with applesauce in some cakes, and often it tastes better," said Lillie. She cautions, however, that "when you take out the fat in any dish, you have to replace it with herbs or other seasonings so that you don't lose the taste."

**ESCHEWING LARGE** cookie cutters for their bite-sized counterparts and baking pies with graham cracker crusts instead of traditional fat-laden shells are tactics that Vienna-based culinary instructor Christine Wisniewski employs during the holiday season. "There are lots of ways to go about healthy-ing up the holidays," she said. "If the filling is the star of the dessert, fill and bake individual ramekins for a crust-free dessert and significant calorie and fat savings."

Most importantly, when faced with a dizzying array of yuletide treats on a tray or table, think before making a choice. "Be mindful, be appreciative and aware of what you are eating," said Jennifer Kay Nelson, director of clinical dietetics and an associate professor of nutrition at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. "Mindlessly grabbing cookies, candy, nuts here-there-everywhere often end up in unexpected pounds."

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**Fundraiser in Honor of Ryan Lopynski**

**O**n April 26, 2009, Ryan Lopynski was a freshman at Virginia Tech with his whole life ahead of him. A 2008 Robinson Secondary grad, he'd come home to Clifton's Hampton Chase community to see his family and look for a summer job.

But while showering before going to see his sister's basketball game, he suffered a fatal heart attack. The specific cause of his death is still unknown, although it was discovered posthumously that Ryan had an enlarged heart.

His loss devastated his family; but since then, they established The Ryan Lopynski Big Heart Foundation to honor him and to increase public awareness of Sudden Cardiac Arrest through education and action. SCA claims the lives of 30 young adults a week in the U.S., and the foundation's goal is to reduce the occurrence of SCA and save lives.

Toward that end, the "Every Heart Counts" fundraiser is slated for Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013, from 7-11 p.m., at the Westfields Golf Club, 1940 Balmoral Greens Ave. in Clifton. The event includes an international wine-tasting sponsored by the Clifton Wine Shop, live and silent auctions, food and dancing.

Money raised will purchase EKG machines to provide free EKG screenings for Fairfax County high-school students during their annual athletic physicals. These screenings will offer a critical new level of heart testing that is currently unavailable—and they can potentially identify a heart abnormality before it is too late.

To register for the fundraiser, go to [www.ryanlopynski.org](http://www.ryanlopynski.org).

—BONNIE HOBBS

**FAITH NOTES**

Send notes to the Connection at [south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

**Kirkwood Presbyterian Church**, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield, offers a 5 p.m. family service featuring performances from the Handbell choirs and soloists and concluding with the traditional candlelight singing of Silent Night accompanied by handbells. To follow is an 8 p.m. formal candlelight service with violins, choir and trumpet. The service includes Renaissance works

and Polish Music with violin and organ and a modern composition with percussion accompaniment; the service concludes with traditional candlelight singing. The nursery is open for both services. 703-451-5320 or [www.kirkwoodpress.com](http://www.kirkwoodpress.com).

**The Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church**, 10125 Lakehaven Court, Burke, holds a Winter Solstice service honoring the Earth on Sunday, Dec. 23 at 10 a.m.; a Holiday Pageant on Monday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m.; and at contemplative candlelight service at 7 p.m. All are welcome to each of the open events.

**St. Leo the Great Church** in Fairfax offers a program for Catholics who are away from the church, struggling with church teachings or who would like to more fully practice their faith by returning to the Sacraments; the program, Welcome Home, is offered on Sundays, Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24 and March 3 and 10 at 7 p.m. in the St. John Room, 3770 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. [csmith@stleofairfax.com](mailto:csmith@stleofairfax.com).

**Franconia United Methodist Church** invites you to worship for Advent on Sunday, Dec. 16 and 23 to prepare and wait for the birth of Lord Jesus Christ. The church is handicapped accessible and assisted listening devices are available. The church also offers new Bible studies including "Buzz Bible Study for Children" on Sundays at 9:30 a.m., "Fireproof Your Marriage" starting Jan. 6, and "Quiet Strength Bible Study" for men starting Saturday, Jan. 19. Learn more at [www.franconiaumc.org](http://www.franconiaumc.org) and call 703-971-5151 or email [dce@franconiaumc.org](mailto:dce@franconiaumc.org) for more information.

**Christmas Eve Services** are held at 7:30 p.m. and 11 p.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Rd, Alexandria on Monday, Dec. 24. Come join for candlelight and communion services. Located at the corner of Beulah and Franconia, next to the Franconia Elementary School, convenient to the Fairfax Connector routes 231, 232 and 310, the church is handicapped accessible and assisted listening devices are available. 703 971-5151 or [admin@franconiaumc.org](mailto:admin@franconiaumc.org). <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

On Tuesday, Dec. 25, a **Christmas Eve Candlelight Holy Communion Service** takes place at 6:30 (family) and 8:30. All are welcome—come to celebrate the season! 703-352-1421. <http://www.livingsaviorlutheran.org>.

**New Year's Eve Watch Night Service** is a time for giving thanks for the blessings of the outgoing year and praying for divine favor during the upcoming year. Join at 11 p.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria on Dec. 31. 703 971-5151 or [admin@franconiaumc.org](mailto:admin@franconiaumc.org). <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

**Fairfax Baptist Temple**, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a Bible Study Fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service. Nursery care and Children's Church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, [www.fbtministries.org](http://www.fbtministries.org).

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# SPORTS

**Robinson's Greyson Olimpo, top, defeated Chantilly's Reaves Arnold via tech fall during a dual meet at Oakton High School on Dec. 13.**



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/ THE CONNECTION

## Robinson Wrestling Beats Chantilly, Oakton

The Robinson wrestling team won a dual meet against Chantilly and Oakton on Dec. 13 at Oakton High School. Robinson defeated Chantilly, 67-12, and Oakton, 62-9.

Against Chantilly, Robinson won 12 of 14 weight classes, including nine by pin. Ralph Mpanu (120), Dane Roberts (132), Avery Henry (138), Jack Bass (152), Zak Despasquale (160), Ronald White (170), Dan Mika (182), Maksym Sears (195) and Jake Pinkston (285) each had a pin for Rams.

Robinson also won 12 of 14 weight classes against Oakton, with four victories coming via pin. Mason Rockman (120), Robbins (132), Jack Bass (152) and Zak Despasquale (160) had pins for the Rams.

Robinson 138-pounder Dallas Smith is a state

champion and three-time state finalist. Bass (152) and Pinkston (285) are two-time state finalists. Mika (182) has a region runner-up finish under his belt and Robbins (132) is a two-time European Department of Defense Dependents Schools champion.

Greyson Olimpo (106) has qualified for states and Despasquale (160) was injured last year but placed at the 2011 state meet. Head Coach Bryan Hazard wrote in an email that Joe White (170) is also a top wrestler for the Rams.

Robinson will compete against Herndon and Kettle Run in a dual meet at Herndon High School at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 19, and will compete in the Beast of the East tournament at the University of Delaware on Dec. 22.

## Lake Braddock Boys' Basketball Beats West Springfield

After suffering back-to-back losses against Robinson and Herndon, the Lake Braddock boys' basketball team responded with a 43-40 victory against West Springfield on Dec. 14.

The win improved the Bruins' record to 3-2, including 1-0 in the Patriot District, and dropped West Springfield to 0-6.

According to stats from the Washington Post's Web site, junior forward Will Gregorits led Lake Braddock

with 21 points. Sophomore forward John Cronin had 14 for West Springfield.

Lake Braddock hosted Lee on Tuesday, after the Connection's deadline. The Bruins will travel to face Woodson at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 21.

The Spartans faced Annandale on Tuesday, after the Connection's deadline. West Springfield will travel to face South County at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 21.

## West Springfield Girls' Basketball Improves to 6-0

The West Springfield girls' basketball team remained undefeated with a 48-36 victory against Lake Braddock on Dec. 14, improving the Spartans' record to 6-0.

According to stats from the Washington Post's Web site, West Springfield's Amy Berglund led all scorers with 24 points. Lake Braddock's Natalie Butler scored

13 points and Marcia Altman added 11.

West Springfield hosted Annandale on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Spartans will host South County at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 21.

Lake Braddock, which fell to 2-3, faced Lee on Tuesday, after the Connection's deadline. The Bruins will host Woodson at 7:30 p.m. on Friday.

## Strong on Defense

**Robinson boys limit rival Lake Braddock to season-low 41 points.**

After a loss to Woodson on Nov. 30, Robinson boys' basketball Coach Brian Nelson said the Rams played the kind of defense of which they're capable for just one quarter. The result: a 17-point loss.

Facing rival Lake Braddock on Dec. 7, Robinson put forth its most complete defensive effort to date. The result: Rams fans rushing the court in postgame celebration and hoisting point guard Nate Hackett in the air.

Robinson limited Lake Braddock to a season-low point total and the Rams won, 55-41, on Friday at Robinson Secondary School.

"Our defense won us that game. There's no question about it," Nelson said. "We didn't shoot the ball particularly well, we didn't rebound well at all, but we never quit on the defensive end. We did



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/ THE CONNECTION

**Robinson senior Keegan Ruddy, left, scored a team-high 16 points against Lake Braddock on Dec. 7.**

what we have to do to be successful, and that's being consistent at the defensive end.

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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or call 800-552-3200.

## 21 Announcements

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(410) 850-0404

The Corrective Action Plan will be submitted to the Northern Regional Office of the DEQ on December 21, 2012. If you would like to review or discuss the proposed Corrective Action Plan with the staff of the DEQ, please feel free to contact Kurt Kochan at (703) 583-3825 after the date of the Corrective Action Plan submittal. The DEQ Northern Regional Office will consider written comments regarding the proposed Corrective Action Plan until January 21, 2013 and may decide to hold a public meeting if there is significant public interest. Written comments should be sent to the DEQ at the address listed below. The DEQ requests that all written comments reference the tracking number for this case; PC# 94-1362.

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