From left, Jasmine Hellmer, Sam Pomajevich, James Jones and Lane Stone from the Burke site of Nation’s Capital Swim Club competed in the 2016 USA Swimming Olympic Trials held in Omaha, Nebraska.

All Out for Omaha

Burke Children Take Summer Reading Challenge

Burke Resident Charged with Supporting, Attempting to Join ISIS
Burke resident Haris Qamar, 25, was arrested Friday, July 8 and charged with attempting to aid the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, in the form of providing material support and resources. Qamar was scheduled to appear in front of a Magistrate Friday afternoon in Alexandria’s federal courthouse, a release from the U.S. Attorney’s office said.

The criminal complaint affidavit includes numerous recorded instances in which Qamar expressed his support for ISIS and the terrorist organization’s mission and methods to a confidential witness with the FBI.

Some of those discussions include Qamar sharing ideas about possible targets in and around Washington, D.C. for lone wolf attacks, showing excitement for the extreme violence ISIS employs and explaining how he tried to join ISIS himself in 2014 but his parents held his passport and prevented him from leaving.

If convicted, Qamar could serve up to 20 years in prison.

—Tim Peterson
School Board Receives New Transgender Regulations

Discussion moves to a work session

By Tim Peterson
The Connection

Friday afternoon, July 1, Fairfax County School Board members each received an email containing new operating regulations regarding transgender and gender nonconforming students.

The previous board voted on May 7, 2015, to add “gender identity” to the school system’s nondiscrimination policy. They then hired a private consultant to help staff develop regulations for how that policy change would be formally enacted in schools day to day.

At the time, at-large Board member Ryan McElveen asserted that the policy change would effectively not change anything in the way transgender students and employees are treated from a school system standpoint. But the consultant would also review Fairfax County Public Schools practices as compared to best practices in other school systems and the formal guidelines would be reflective of that study as well.

THE SIX TYPED PAGES of guidelines begin with definitions the school system will use when referring to concepts including sex assigned at birth, transgender, transition and gender nonconformity.

They also call for the creation of support teams for students who identify themselves as transgender, transitioning or gender nonconforming, that can involve the parents or guardians, teachers, administrators, school psychologists or other staff members as appropriate.

A support plan then develops a plan around their evening business meeting.

To decide the nature of the board’s review, they initially scheduled a forum on July 14 at Luther Jackson Middle school, around their evening business meeting.

Then on July 12, FCPS spokesperson John Torre said Hynes decided there was sufficient support from other Board and community members to take the regulations to a work session and forego the forum.

Monday, July 18 is the next scheduled all-day work session, beginning at 10 a.m. at FCPS headquarters on Gatehouse Road in Merrifield.

When the policy change was passed more than a year ago, there was successful follow-on motion calling for the board to review the regulations, as Hynes said. What the motion didn’t say was what form that review would take.

According to Hynes, it would be sufficient for members to simply read over the email and sign off. She called the regulations “well done” and “pretty comprehensive.”

A second option is for the board to convene a work session and discuss in a more in-depth manner. There could also be a legal advisory meeting for addressing specific legal questions. In the area of transgender regulations, Hynes acknowledges laws are still in flux.

“In my opinion,” she said, “this complies with our policy for nondiscrimination — the law, as the law now exists.”

If the board members collectively agree the new regulations are not fully in line with the policy, they can direct FCPS Superintendent Karen Garza and staff to amend them.

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The race to embrace doesn’t help any side,” Schultz said. “There’s been no presentation to the board about what we’re doing well, best practices, what we’re not doing well, recommendations that we change. There’s nothing.”

Schultz, Hough and Sully District member Tom Wilson submitted a series of questions regarding the pending regulations to staff prior to finished product being sent to board members.

“How do you fundamentally implement any of this policy?” Schultz said. “[The regulations are] extremely limited. They don’t even begin to cover the length and breadth of what we’ve submitted.”

SCHULTZ CITED the regulations not addressing transgender employee issues, how conscientious objector teachers would be dealt with, or whether medical professionals were involved in creating the document, adding their expertise on if the guidelines were truly helpful.

“They are the nuances no one’s thinking about,” she said. “Itrequires really thoughtful discussion. To be authentic, you still have to have integration in the process, allow the process to work the way you told the people it was going to work.”

Robert Rigby, a teacher at West Potomac High School and leader of the LGBT employees group for Fairfax County Public Schools called FCPS Pride, plans to attend the July 14 forum.

So far, Rigby, who has been advocating for LGBT nondiscrimination since 2000 is pleased with the regulations. He was pleasantly surprised, he said, by the inclusion of support teams and the definition for gender nonconformity.

“It doesn’t put kids into boxes,” he said, “say you have to be — you can be yourself. It accommodates and recognizes that.”

Regarding the support teams, Rigby said Fairfax has been doing a version of that for a while. “It’s a developed program,” he said. Even if it hasn’t been codified until now.

“My colleagues who’ve worked on this say it’s been a process — helping people out, making sure things work right. They’re really pleased and impressed by how it’s worked.”

Rigby said a bigger challenge for LGBT students is still those who don’t have support from their parents. His hope is with the new regulations and surrounding discussion and shared information, there will be more understanding.

“No one can make people support their kids,” he said. “But you can educate the wider community so there’s more of a chance.”

FCPS has not posted the regulations online yet, however, Hynes has been sharing the document with anyone interested in reviewing them. Her contact information is pmhynes@fcps.edu.

Park Discovery Trail Leads Children to Presidential History, Prizes

Which U.S. President made a daring escape from the enemy through Riverbend Park? What does the House at Hidden Pond Nature Center have in common with the White House? Which Commander-in-Chief saved Sully Historic Site from demolition? The answers to these questions and more can be found in this year’s Fairfax County Park Author-

ity Discovery Trail Map – Presidential Edition.

Now in its third year, the free Discovery Trail Map summer fun activity encourages students age 17 and younger to explore 12 distinctive parks and explore their unique features and connections to U.S. Presidents or their administrations. Students who visit eight of the 12 featured sites will receive tickets to more park fun valued at nearly $90 and will be entered into a drawing for one of three bicycles and helmets donated by Spokes, Inc. through the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

Discovery Trail Maps will be available at any staffed Fairfax County park, RECenter, nature center, historic site and golf course (while supply lasts) and any Fairfax County Public Library (while supply lasts).

Instructions for participating in the activity are included on the map. The promotion runs through Monday, Sept. 5, 2016. Parents/guardians of the bike winners will be notified by e-mail and/or phone. Bike winners will be publicly announced in September. For more information contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com
City of Fairfax Police responded to the incident, as demonstrators in the roadway were illegally obstructing the free passage of others, a city ordinance.

Four Arrested at Natasha McKenna Protest

Racial justice group calls for Sheriff Kincaid to fire deputies.

Four demonstrators were arrested Monday morning at a protest outside the Fairfax Courthouse for the February 15 in-custody death of Natasha McKenna. The protest organized by the Northern Virginia Chapter of the national organization Showing Up for Racial Justice had some 20 protesters. It coincided with members from SURJ delivering a petition to Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid demanding the termination of the deputies who handled McKenn’s extraction from the jail, where she died during the process.

McKenna, who was 37 at the time of her death, was diagnosed with mental illness in her youth.

AS DEPUTIES attempted to prepare her for transport to the Alexandria Jail, they forced her to the ground, then restrained her limbs in a chair and eventually covered her head with a spit hood. One deputy used a taser on McKenna four times over the course of the incident. McKenna lost consciousness and was transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital, where she later died.

Cat Clark of Alexandria, an activist and organizer with SURJ, said the petition was delivered, but not acknowledged by Kincaid’s office.

When asked to respond to the demonstration and petition, Sheriff Kincaid released the statement: “Everyone has the right to protest lawfully and peacefully and also petition on issues that matter to them. I hope that regardless of where each of us stands on the issues of the day, we listen and learn from each other.”

Because of how they viewed the petition’s reception, Clark said the demonstrators decided to spread across Chain Bridge Road from the Courthouse to draw more attention.

“When a naked woman who is mentally ill is shackled to a chair, bag over face, basically tased to death and there are no repercussions of any kind,” Clark said, “people need to speak up, hold her name in the light, stand up for her.”

Commonwealth’s Attorney Raymond Morrogh completed an investigation of the incident and concluded there were no grounds for criminal charges. The Sheriff’s Office has completed its own administrative investigation but has not said whether any of the deputies faced discipline.

Demonstrators chanted and held signs reading “Black Lives Matter,” “Justice for Natasha McKenna” and “You promised you wouldn’t kill me”—which McKenna can be heard saying on a video Kincaid released of McKenna’s transport from the jail to the hospital.

City of Fairfax Police responded to the incident, as demonstrators in the roadway were illegally obstructing the free passage of others.

Police warned the protesters they would be arrested if they didn’t leave the street, spokesperson Sgt. Natalie Hinesley said.

AARP Campaign Office Opens in Springfield

On Wednesday, July 6, delegates Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) and Dave Albo (R-42) helped kick off the opening of the American Association of Retired Persons’ “Take a Stand” Campaign Headquarters in Springfield. The campaign is an effort to make Social Security, which provides vital income to more than 1.4 million Virginians, stronger for future generations.

“Take a Stand,” demands on behalf of all voters that presidential candidates take a stand on their plans to update Social Security. The campaign will spread its message through advertising, social media, grassroots outreach and publications. At the new campaign headquarters, AARP Virginia volunteers will be making calls to discuss with voters the need to update Social Security and encourage candidates to take a position on keeping this program solvent for future generations. Filler-Corn and Albo both participated in a ceremonial ribbon cutting in front of the office.

Filler-Corn and Albo, along with AARP Virginia’s State Director Jim Dau spoke at the event. Filler-Corn said that Social Security must be strengthened for the future, pointing out that one in six Virginians receive a monthly check from the program. “Every American deserves a secure, healthy and dignified retirement,” Filler-Corn said. “Social Security must be kept strong for seniors, people with disabilities, and future generations."

Dau told the crowd gathered at the ribbon-cutting of the Take a Stand Springfield office that Virginia voters – key in the upcoming presidential election – want to hear the candidates talk more about Social Security on the campaign trail. “AARP Virginia and our more than million members here in the Commonwealth think doing nothing is not an option, and we’re here to do something about it,” he said.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law in 1935. The program will celebrate 81 years of existence this August. “Social Security is the most successful anti-poverty program in American History. We must do all we can to protect it,” said Filler-Corn.
From Page 2

We are pleased to welcome Leonard “Len” Clark, Jr. to the Union commercial team. Len’s focus will be expanding Union’s commercial real estate portfolio in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and District of Columbia. In addition, he is responsible for developing and managing the new affordable housing and community development transactions in Northern Virginia.

Len offers over 35 years of commercial real estate lending experience, community development and affordable housing projects. His experience also includes expanding various commercial real estate portfolios in Virginia, District of Columbia and Maryland as well as wealth management in these locations.

When you’re ready to put Union’s commercial lending strength to work for your business, visit Len at Union’s West Springfield location at 5803 Rolling Road or feel free to call him at 703-564-8676.

Be Part of The Pet Connection in July
Send Your Photos & Stories Now to editors@connectionnewspapers.com or complete our online form at connectionnewspapers.com/pets
Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, and identify all people and pets in photos. Submission deadline is July 20.
Summer Is Here: Time to Visit State Parks

By Scott Surowell

State Senator (D-36)

Eighty years ago this month, Virginia created the first state park system in the United States. With 35 miles of Potomac River frontage in the 36th Senate district, our community is lucky to have access to many natural resources, including our state parks.

Our state park system has its origins in the Great Depression. In 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Civilian Conservation Corps built numerous park and recreational areas throughout the nation, as well as in Virginia. My grandfather grew up in Franklin County, Virginia, a county with no public high school so he had an eighth-grade education and when he turned 22 in 1933, no job.

He enrolled in the CCC and was directed to report to the Arlington County “countryside” (yes, countryside). Every day, he walked through farm fields to construct trails and plant trees on Anacostan Island in the Potomac River, which had recently been renamed Teddy Roosevelt Island next to Rosslyn. The CCC also helped build the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Channelling FDR’s CCC energy, Virginia opened its first six state parks to the public on June 15, 1936 — Hungry Mother, Staunton River, Westmoreland, Douthat, Fairy Stone and Seashore (now called First Landing).

Thirty years later, Virginians have 38 state parks, and three of them are right here in the 36th District. Coupled with the National Park Service’s George Washington Memorial Parkway, Pohick Bay Regional Park, Bu- reau of Land Management facilities (Meadowood Recreation Area) on Mason Neck, three federal wildlife refuges along the Potomac River and Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge on Fort Belvoir, 36th District residents have the best access to low-cost, outdoor activities and opportunities to enjoy nature.

In Fairfax County, the 1,825-acre Mason Neck State Park opened in 1985 after local citizens, led by Mount Vernon area resident Liz Hartwell, galva- nized support to fight development threats on the Mason Neck peninsula. The park has numerous river views, trails and picnic sites and is an excellent spot to view Potomac River wildlife.

Make sure you get outside and take advantage of some of these assets. As a taxpayer, you own them. To add more support, you can join one of our local “friends” groups that part- ners with these public lands.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need any further information at scott@scottsurowell.org. It is an honor to serve as your state senator.
Misinterpretation and Misdirection

To the Editor:

This is a response to Mr. Storm’s specious letter, (“What Was the Founding Fathers’ Intent?” Connection, July 6-12, 2016) and the broader leftist propensity toward historical misinterpretation and misdirection regarding the 2nd Amendment.

Mr. Storm applied a selective “Founding Fathers” taxonomy (limited to the 56 signers of the Declaration) to assert that it’s not possible to determine the Founders’ intent behind the 2nd Amendment because they were “hardly involved” in authoring the Constitution, save the six men who signed both.

With this logic, readers are presumably supposed to feel compelled to forego an originalist hermeneutic and submit to the latest progressive assault on individual liberties. Not so fast. This is a distinction without a difference.

Whether the authors and signers of the Constitution are binned as “Founders” or not has almost no bearing whatsoever on one’s ability to discern their intent, or on their authority when it comes to interpreting what they wrote or agreed to. Besides, the more widely accepted taxonomy for the “Founding Fathers” is one that includes the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, a taxonomy to which our own National Archives subscribes. And irrespective of how narrow or broad one’s definition of “the Founding Fathers” is, the historical record is replete with compelling evidence that those men recognized and sought to protect an individual right to bear arms, as the Supreme Court reaffirmed most recently in Heller, and in so doing, serve as a check on the abuse of federal power.

So, when your readers hear things like Representative Connolly’s call for reinstatement of the 2nd Amendment, a taxonomy to which our Convention delegates contributed, they should not fall for it.

Jonathan Clough
Springfield

Congressman Champions Environmental Cause

To the Editor:

As the headlines on the devastating impacts of climate change in our country and worldwide are hitting the media, we wonder whether our legislators are doing enough to address this issue. It is comforting to know that we have such a champion in our Congressman Gerald Connolly. Here are some of Gerry’s environmental activities:

- Co-chair of the House Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition (SEEC) – 54 members active on environmental, sustainable and renewable energy issues.
- As Chairman of Fairfax County, he helped adopt the County’s first comprehensive environmental plan and adopted the Cool Counties initiative.
- He is an original cosponsor of Congressman Chris Van Hollen’s Healthy Climate and Family Security Act, which is a cap and dividend proposal similar to what Citizens’ Climate Lobby (CCL) advocates.

Gerry has visited 98 countries and has witnessed the pains inflicted on people by hunger, poverty, and political and religious repression. The burning desire to help Americans preserve our great democracy has led Gerry to pursue a career of public service on Capitol Hill. He has devoted his time to helping his constituents on all issues ranging from a small business matter to legislative efforts on climate change. His open-door policy in welcoming constituents to express their concerns is managed by a staff who are committed to helping them in finding a satisfactory solution.

Coming from a war-torn country that was shattered by political instability and poverty, we have learned to appreciate the value of peace and democracy. It is exactly the type of representation and leadership found in someone like Gerry that we can count on to fight for social justice and to keep our democracy strong. Gerry is known for his tenacity and candor in speaking up and fight for a cause. He is competent, caring and accessible.

Vietn Cam, Ph.D.
Founder & CEO
Vietnamese American Coalition
Dr. Cam is a consultant on climate change.

—Tim Peterson

West Springfield Police Investigating Firearm Brandishing in Burke

Criminal investigators are still looking into reports of a 49-year-old man pointing a gun at several people near the 6600 block of Bestwick Court in Burke.

The incident took place Saturday, June 11, with officers from the West Springfield Police District responding around 8:13 p.m., Fairfax County Police said in a release.

Earlier, they said, there was a verbal confrontation on the street.

Once officers were at the scene, they had been called on the incident on June 13. That led officers to a suspect’s residence, where they arrested him for brandishing the firearm.

A Fairfax County Adult Detention Center magistrate then determined there was not enough probable cause to issue an arrest warrant for him.

Officers de-arrested the man and drove him back to his home in Burke.

—Tim Peterson

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Week in Burke
Bright White

White kitchens are a trend with staying power.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

The clean, crisp look of a white kitchen has staying power and versatility, according to the National Kitchen and Bath Association. The organization reports that white cabinetry is the top choice for 67 percent of its members. In fact, the percentage of homeowners requesting white kitchens has increased by 20 percent over the past two years.

The trend is also apparent locally, said designers. When a family of five first moved to the Washington, D.C. area after spending 30 years in the U.S. Foreign Service, they purchased in 1986. They declined to give the home a makeover because, after being a rental for many years, it felt dated and dingy.

The family felt that the kitchen was designed by Bruce Wentworth of Wentworth Inc., the new kitchen is sunny and spacious. It includes white cabinetry and an island with dark gray granite countertops. A large stainless steel, dishdrawer, pull-out trash and bookcase for cookbooks make the island functional. Facing the dining room is a shallow cabinet with mullioned glass doors.

Granite tops the counters in the remainder of the kitchen and white cabinetry houses a sub-zero refrigerator, microwave drawer, small prep sink and a gas range with a stainless steel range hood. White cabinets with glass mullioned cabinet doors (view depth and make space feel larger),” said Wentworth.

When the owners of an Arlington home decided to replace their dark and dated kitchens, they opened the space to the living room and added natural lighting and white cabinetry. The result was a room with a crisp and airy aesthetic. The new space concept allows the homeowners to host intimate family and friends.

The family wanted the new large space to be free flowing and light-filled. They also wanted to incorporate some of their existing furniture, such as an antique table and chairs.

The kitchen was designed by Anthony Wilder Design Build Inc. in a cabinet with mullioned glass doors facing the dining room.

“By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

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Summer has begun, and with it, the Fairfax County Public Library’s 2016 Summer Reading Challenge. Burke Centre Library hosted their Summer Reading Program kick-off event on Saturday, June 25 to celebrate.

The library’s meeting room hosted origami, craft making, coloring, decorating bookmarks, refreshments, an opportunity to play mini corn hole and a little play area for toddlers.

Burke Centre Library Youth Services Coordinator Nancy Klein watched as children answered the question on the whiteboard: Where is your favorite place to read?

“It’s our biggest program of the year,” said Klein, who is one of several librarians who visit local schools to promote the summer reading program, bringing with them books of a variety of grade levels and genres. “It’s so nice to see them appreciating what the library has to offer and they get so excited to win the coupon booklets.”

COUNTYWIDE, the program runs from June 23 to Sept. 3. Those who complete their book log before the event on Saturday, June 25 to celebrate.

Burke Centre Library Take
Summer Reading Challenge
Burke Centre Library hosts kick-off event for Summer Reading Challenge.

“IT’S OUR BIGGEST PROGRAM OF THE YEAR,” SAID KLEIN, WHO IS ONE OF Several librarians who visit local schools to promote the summer reading program, bringing with them books of a variety of grade levels and genres. “IT’S SO NICE TO SEE THEM APPRECIATING WHAT THE LIBRARY HAS TO OFFER AND THEY GET SO EXCITED TO WIN THE COUPON BOOKLETS.”

COUNTYWIDE, THE PROGRAM RUNS FROM JUNE 23 TO SEPT. 3. THOSE WHO COMPLETE THEIR BOOK LOG BEFORE THEN, BASED ON THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THEIR GRADE LEVEL, RECEIVE A COUPON BOOKLET. READINGLOGS CAN BE OBTAINED ONLINE AT fairfaxcounty.gov/library or at the nearest public library. Books can be chosen based on the child’s reading level, and library recommendations can also be found at fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

Children from pre-kindergarten to third grade must read 15 books (have these books read to them), fourth through sixth graders must read 10 books and seventh through 12th-graders must read six books.

Most of the children in attendance had just picked up their library books and their book logs at Burke Centre Library’s kick-off event. One such young boy was Ethan Luu, whose recent mythology unit in English class sparked an interest in Rick Riordan’s series, such as Percy Jackson and the Olympians. In his quest to finish his reading log, he plans on reading another one of Riordan’s series, the Kane Chronicles.

“Reading is the one thing I’ll let him stay up late to do,” says his mom Teri Luu.

Another mom loves to see her children’s reading levels improve even as they learn. Edda Coleman is excited for this summer especially because her three-year-old daughter, Bailey, can now be more active in choosing her books even as her older daughter, Peyton, has moved on to chapter books.

“I love to watch their imaginations soar when they read,” Coleman said as she tucked their books into her bag.

LIBRARIAN Sheila Shoup loves the program because of the enthusiasm for reading at all ages.

“It mixes fun and information for a whole family experience,” she says, because in fact, Burke Centre Library also offers a summer reading challenge for adults.

See Summer Reading, Page 11

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**BURKE CENTRE LIBRARY Take Summer Reading Challenge**

Burke Centre Library hosts kick-off event for Summer Reading Challenge.

By Elaina Taylor The Connection

Children and parents alike had the opportunity to color at the Burke Centre Library’s kick-off event for the summer reading program.

Enoch Sanders proudly shows off the coupon booklet he received after finishing the summer reading challenge, while his friends photobomb!

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**CALENDAR**

Send notes to the Connection at connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/ or call 703-779-0416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the publication at least two weeks prior to the event.

**ONGOING**

Evenings on the Ellipse 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays through Aug. 25. Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Fun music and good company. Paradise Springs and The Winery at Bull Run will be offering complimentary tastings of their premium reds and whites. If it rains, concerts will be moved inside to the Government Center Forum. http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances.

Storytime in the Park, Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. 703-385-2712.

Rock the Block! 6:30 p.m. Every Fourth Friday through Oct. 28. Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Free. Come any way you can—walk, run, ride your bike or drive! You don’t want to miss out on this brand new concert series! Food is available for sale. Bring chairs and or blankets to sit on. Kids – wear swim suits and bring towels. Enjoy the new spray pad. No pets allowed except service animals. Fairfax.gov.

Redder Blood. Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. July 8-31. New School of Northern Virginia, 1934 Silver Ring Court, Fairfax, Virginia 22031. A premiere co-production between the Hub Theatre and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, written by Helen Parfumi. Follows character Sadie, a woman who hears the voice of God. $20-$30. www.jccnv.org. 703-537-3000.

Color Me Happy 7-8:30 p.m. Mondays July 18, Aug. 15. Kirk Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Discover your inner Picasso. Coloring pages from books designed especially for adults. Coloring pages, pencils and markers provided. Free. 703-978-5600.

**SUNDAY/JULY 3**

Joy Ike 8 p.m. Epicure Cafe, 11213 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Cherry. Philadelphia-based independent artist Joy Ike’s music, voice, and writing have drawn comparisons to female musicians such as Corinne Bailey Rae, Regina Spektor, Norah Jones, and Fiona Apple. But her percussive piano-playing and soaring vocals give homage to her African upbringing. epicurecafe.org. 703-352-9193.

**WEDNESDAY/JULY 20**

Curious George’s Hunting Adventure 7-8:30 p.m. Burke Library, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax. Join the Adventure. $5 in-county, $6 out of county. 703-240-7124. 

**WEDNESDAY/JULY 20**


Reptile Survey 7 p.m. Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax. Assist a naturalist with a reptile survey. Learn the habits and habitats of the aggressive but misunderstood water snake as we search for them and document their size, gender and location. Wear shoes that can get wet. Ages 8-Adult. Children must be accompanied by an adult registered in the program. 1 hour. $6 in-county, $8 out of county. http://parktales.fairfaxcounty.gov/
ENTERTAINMENT

"The Last Five Years" stars David Jarzen from West Potomac High School and Robinson Secondary's Madyson Hanton.

The Rambunctious Theatre Company Presents ‘The Last Five Years,’ July 14-23

The Rambunctious Theatre Company is teaming up with Beyond the Page Theatre Company to bring you “The Last Five Years” starring David Jarzen from West Potomac High School and Robinson Secondary’s Madyson Hanton. The show will be presented July 14 - 23 at West Potomac High School. All shows are 7 p.m. with a special 2 p.m. matinee on July 23. Tickets can be purchased at www.robinsondrama.org.

"The Last Five Years" is an emotionally powerful and intimate musical about two New Yorkers in their twenties who fall in and out of love over the course of five years. The show's unconventional structure consists of Cathy, the woman, telling her story backwards while Jamie, the man, tells his story chronologically; the two characters only meet once, at their wedding in the middle of the show. Jason Robert Brown's Drama Desk winner “The Last Five Years” has been translated into a handful of languages and was named one of Time Magazine's 10 best shows of 2001. A testament to the show's longevity and spurred by the show's regional popularity, “The Last Five Years” enjoyed an Off-Broadway revival at Second Stage in 2013. A film adaptation was released in 2014 starring Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan.

Summer Reading

From Page 10

adults. After reading six books and completing the adult reading log, one can receive a coupon for the library's ongoing and future book sales.

But who’s to say parents don’t love the kid’s books? Mother Valerie Sanders also happens to enjoy one of her daughter’s favorite authors at the moment, Mo Willems.

"He's goofy but insightful," she says. Both her daughter Chloe, and son Enoch have already finished the summer reading challenge and received their coupon booklet, as well as put their names up on the designated window in the back for the challenge finishers.

"The whole program is great because the kids get to binge on books instead of Netflix," she laughs.

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Burke Connection  ❚ July 14-20, 2016  ❚ 11

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All Out for Omaha

By Tim Peterson
The Connection

1:01.19. For the last year, Oakton resident Jasmine Hellmer has gone to bed looking up at “1:01.19” written on a Post-It note stuck to her ceiling. That time represented the rising Flint Hill School junior’s greatest goal to date: the time standard to qualify for Olympic Trials in the 100 butterfly.

Now 16, Hellmer began swimming seven years ago. Though she said she “tries to have a balance” in her life, she’s progressed in the sport to a high level of commitment in the service of her goals. Hellmer’s group trains at the Burke Swim and Racquet Club eight to nine times per week in the water, plus a handful of on-land workouts for additional strength and flexibility work.

The facility is one of more than a dozen sites for the Nation’s Capital Swim Club, of which Olympic champion Katie Ledecky is one of the more decorated athletes. “Social life is obviously difficult,” Hellmer said. “I always have to say I have swim practice.”

But in March at a National Club Swimming Association championship meet, the young swimmer’s dedication and specific focus on the 100 fly were rewarded. She got the cut.

Hellmer was one of four swimmers from the same group, coached by Fairfax Station resident Pete Morgan, to compete in USA Swimming’s Olympic Trials held in Omaha.

IT WAS THE FIRST trials experience for her teammates, as well, who included Burke resident and recent Robinson Secondary School graduate James Jones, Springfield resident and recent West Springfield High School graduate Lane Stone and Stonewall Jackson rising junior Sam Pomajevich, who lives in Manassas.

Overall, Nation’s Capital fielded a team of 25 at the trials, the most qualifiers of any club in the country. And if making the qualifying times wasn’t difficult enough, in order to actually make the team, swimmers must emerge as one of the top two finishers in each event out of a field of between 150 and 180.

“From top to bottom it’s the fastest meet in the world every four years,” said Coach Pete Morgan. “The depth better than you see in the Olympics. I’m very proud — as a country, what goes on in the process.” Pomajevich advanced the furthest of the foursome from Burke, placing 22nd in the 200 butterfly. In the process, he was chosen to be part of the National Junior team and compete in August at the Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Hawaii.

“I’m pretty happy with how I swam,” he said. “And I have time to improve for the end of the season.”

Morgan said for each of his swimmers, they talked prior to the meet about maximizing their experience, understanding it was highly unlikely they would make the National team in their rookie meet. “It’s no easy thing,” Morgan said. “What’s their reality? For most, it’s a timed final experience.”

Hellmer didn’t go a personal best time in her race. But her coach was quick to remind her, “OK, you got here,” she remembers Morgan saying. “We talked about the whole, pinpointed what I did wrong. Then he said, ‘This is where you learn, where you get to watch.’”

Aside from their own races, the athletes were able to spend time warming up and down around stars in their sport, such as Ledecky, as well as living legends including Michael Phelps.

Pomajevich said the bigger names mostly kept to themselves. He said he didn’t have any starstruck moments either, keeping the mindset that they were his competition.

AT ONE POINT Hellmer found herself in the same recovery pool lane as Phelps himself.

“Oh my God don’t get in this lane,” she remembers thinking. “I just stopped at the wall and let him pass. It was really cool. I got to see how he trained, how he got ready for his races.”

James Jones, a standout on the reigning Virginia state champion Robinson men’s swim and dive team, competed in the 50 freestyle and raced a time trial 100 freestyle, effectively a competition warm-up.

One highlight he said was swimming in the same preliminary heat as eventual Olympics qualifier Anthony Ervin.

Though making the meet was a huge milestone towards each of the foursome’s ultimate goal of making the Olympic team, they also felt tuned in to the energy of so many others fulfilling their dreams at the same time.

“It was awesome to watch,” Jones said. “Achieving everything they’ve been working for.”

The arena in Omaha seated around 14,000 spectators for the advanced rounds of the meet.

“Once the stands were filled, it was even more amazing,” Heller said, “and even more nerve-wracking. The arena was full of emotions, tears of joy for those having reached their goals and achieved their dreams. And tears of sadness if you came in third — they were really devastated.”

In four years, each of the swimmers from Burke expects to return to trials, facing potentially devastating near-misses, or tears of joy.

Girls Soccer Team Champions Heads to National Championship

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Creating ‘Little Dresses for Africa’

Fairfax Academy’s Fashion Design class helps Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority provide dresses for African girls.

By Alexandra Tecco
The Connection

The Falls Church Chapter, Chi Beta Omega, of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority collaborated with the Fashion Careers class at Fairfax Academy for Communication and the Arts to exceed their chapter goal of dresses sewn for the nonprofit Little Dresses for Africa. Although this is one of the many AKA community projects, it is their first time collaborating with the Academy.

The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority was founded at Howard University in 1908. It’s the first sorority founded by and for women of color, to help and serve all mankind” said Lynn Perry, chapter president.

As a service sorority they work in the community and world through a variety of projects. The target areas their service focuses on include “Educational enrichment, health promotion, family strengthening, environmental ownership and global impact,” said Perry.

AKA chapters from across the nation will bring their chapter’s completed dresses to Atlanta for the national conference in July.

Among the places in Africa the dresses will be packaged and shipped to are Southern Africa, Zambia and Botswana, said chapter Vice President Teri Reaves. Chi Beta Omega’s goal was each of their 29 members sewing a dress, Perry explained. Their collaboration with the Fashion Design class has helped them to exceed that goal. Chi Beta Omega will contribute 50 dresses towards AKA’s national goal of 20,000.

The dresses themselves are a fairly simple pattern, said Jin-A Chang, the Fashion Careers teacher. The dresses are made from brightly colored pillowcases and ribbon. Even with no sewing experience it can probably be completed in three days, Chang said.

Consequently for the students, who spent the year developing their technical skills designing high fashion from concept through creation, the chance to create dresses from pillowcases made the “students happy, because the dresses were easy,” in comparison, said Jin-A.

Chi Beta Omega provided the class all the materials for the 20 dresses. Thirty-five students in the Fashion 1 and 2 classes worked on the dresses, which they completed in 5 days.

“I was so impressed with the students’ excitement and their commitment to the project. I really felt that they felt a sense of accomplishment,” said Reaves.

To thank the students Reaves visited them with a cake expressing Chi Beta Omega’s gratitude in pink frosting. Reaves talked to the students about the AKA and the sorority’s dedication to service. She spoke about the girls in Africa that would ultimately receive the dresses. “They may never know the impact, the effect on those little girls,” Reaves said, “how the simple dresses the students made will help the girls… boost their self-confidence… show that they can be somebody.”

Reaves hopes that this is the start of Chi Beta Omega’s relationship with Fairfax Academy for Communication and the Arts. The diversity of skills and talent the school has would be useful in many of the upcoming projects, Reaves said. “Many of our service projects are public… we want the community involved,” Reaves said.

The base schools represented by the 35 students who worked on the dresses include a variety of high schools: Fairfax, Oakton, Robinson in Fairfax, Woodson in Fairfax and Centreville, Chantilly, Falls Church, Herndon, James Madison in Vienna, Marshall in Falls Church, McLean, South Lakes in Reston and high schools in Springfield and Chantilly.