

2016
Virginia
PRESS
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Award Winning
Newspaper

Fairfax CONNECTION

EASTER FUN

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HomeLifeStyle

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Blue Tango entertains the crowd at the Crime Victims Tribute at Fairfax Corner. In front are photos of local victims.

'From Our Pain May We Heal'

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NEWS

Anti-Semitic Graffiti Painted At Jewish Community Center

The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia (JCCNV) was the target on Tuesday, April 11, of anti-Semitic graffiti. Swastikas and derogatory language were painted on the exterior of the building, marquee, and fence surrounding the playground. The JCC called Fairfax County police and the FBI immediately, and law enforcement is investigating. Police have confirmed that the crime took place overnight while the building was closed. A local powerwash company was called to remove the graffiti Tuesday.

In responding to the heinous act, JCCNV Executive Director Jeff Dannick said, "During Passover, when the Jewish community around the world is celebrating a time of freedom for our people as well as those who are affected by hate today, a crime like this heightens the reason that organizations like

our own exist to bring communities together through messages and actions of peace, acceptance and inclusion. We are disheartened and deeply disturbed by the anti-Semitism our campus has experienced today. We will not be deterred from our mission of being an open and welcoming place for people of all backgrounds as we continue our operations as normal.

"We are grateful to the local and federal law enforcement officials who are working to identify and bring to justice the person or persons who committed this crime. As always, our community's safety will be our priority as we remain committed to fulfilling our daily mission as a community center."

The JCCNV plans to continue its current security measures and asks the community to remain alert and vigilant.

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Portion of Sidewalk on Fairfax Boulevard Closed

The City of Fairfax is recapping the stone wall on eastbound Fairfax Boulevard between Rebel Run and Plantation Parkway,

which necessitates the closure of portions of sidewalk adjacent to the stone wall during construction.

Crews are scheduled to work on the wall at Draper bridge from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 7-28. The eastbound sidewalk on Fairfax Boulevard will be closed between Rebel Run and Draper Drive. (Work schedule is sub

SEE WEEK IN FAIRFAX, PAGE 12

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'From Our Pain May We Heal'

County honors National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

No one expects to become a crime victim. But when it happens in Fairfax County, there's a whole network of people and services ready to help both victims and their families overcome the trauma and cope with the aftermath.

And on Sunday, April 2, at Fairfax Corner, the county Police Department's Victim Services Section marked National Crime Victims' Rights Week – April 2-8 – with the 5th Annual 5K Walk and Crime Victims Tribute. Victims, survivors, family members, friends and the community participated to raise awareness of victims' rights in Northern Virginia and show support for all crime victims.

Many victims, survivors and their advocates even wore superhero capes as a sign of solidarity with all victims of crime. Large photos of some local victims were displayed in front of the stage, and the event began with a moment of silence for them. Then came several speeches before the candlelight walk.

As the county's former police chief, Dave Rohrer said he's worked with some "truly wonderful" people. "We're here today to honor and remember the victims and survivors of serious, violent crimes," he said. "But the dispatchers, police officers and detectives, firefighters, paramedics and advocates in Victims' Services and the court system, we honor you, too, for your caring, passion and commitment to serving."

Noting the event's theme of "Strength, Resilience and Justice," Rohrer said, "Most of us came here to make a difference, and we will never forget the strength and resilience that you have and have taught us. Justice refers to the legal rights victims have."

Furthermore, he said, "Safety is not just a legal right, but also a basic human right – to be free and safe in our persons, regardless of who we are, where we come from, what we look like or our status." Then, acknowledging all those "who've done so much to serve and support," he added, "We live and work in an extremely caring and empathetic community." Rohrer is deputy county executive for public safety.

Current Police Chief Ed Roessler said Fairfax County is the safest jurisdiction of its size in the U.S. To the victims, he said, "You give us the strength and resilience to pursue justice and you're not alone. We'll help heal not just yourself, but our community, and we extend our blessings upon you."

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Jessica Greis-Edwardson said it's humbling to



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Some of the crowd at the Crime Victims event at Fairfax Corner.



Deputy County Executive for Public Safety Dave Rohrer



Fairfax County Police Chief Ed Roessler

(From left) Joe Samaha listens while Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) proclaims National Crime Victims' Rights Week.



work with the victims and survivors of violence. "It makes me want to be a better prosecutor," she said. "Their stories are astounding

and take your breath away. And it's a pleasure to be a part of helping you as you move forward."

THE GUEST SPEAKER was Joe Samaha, whose daughter Reema – a Westfield High grad – was one of the 32 people killed in the April 16, 2007 mass shooting at Virginia Tech. She was a freshman, just 18, when a gunman ended her life.

Her parents established scholarships in her name, and her father became an advocate for the VTV Family Outreach Foundation, promoting increased school and college-campus safety and trying to prevent tragedies caused by gun violence. Its Campaign 32 worked to have all states participate in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and another Campaign 32 (www.campaign32.org) is beginning, continuing the advocacy for campus safety and security.

When the Virginia Tech tragedy occurred, said Samaha, "There were no alert systems then for students there, or push bars on the doors to prevent their chaining [by the assailant]. Now there are more-immediate lockdowns and active-shooter drills, plus legislation helping those in need of mental-health treatment for suicidal thoughts.

"In my opinion, there were 33 victims, because I believe the shooter could have been helped [before he killed people]," continued Samaha. "On Dec. 13, 2006, he'd signed up for a [counseling] appointment, but didn't show up. He was screaming out loud for help, silently, but was not given help."

Samaha then had the crowd hold hands while he read "Reema's Inspiration," which he wrote: "From our pain, may we heal; from our fear, we seek comfort. From our grief, we are blessed; from our solitude, we seek serenity. From conflict, we find harmony; from our anger, we seek peace."

Then, to those working in Victims' Services and public safety, he offered a prayer from St. Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life."

Speaking from the heart, Samaha said, "On April 16, 2017, it'll be 3,653 days since the Virginia Tech shooting. My daughter's spirit still lives and inspires and comforts me every day. After the tragedy, I took the political path and my wife Mona took the spiritual path – but we took that journey together.

FOLLOWING THE MASSACRE, he said, "There were no victims' advocates; they were turned away. The traumatized were

SEE VICTIMS, PAGE 5

Balancing the City's Wants and Needs

Department heads pitch their budget requests.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

With the City of Fairfax's FY '18 budget slated for adoption on May 3, department heads have been making their funding pitches to the City Council. During a recent Council work session, they represented Human Services, the Fire and Police departments, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Economic Development.



Money to replace the playground equipment in Ratcliffe Park is in the Parks and Recreation Department's proposed budget for FY '18.

enjoy doing what we do."

Her department is responsible for overseeing 27 City parks and numerous open spaces. And, said Salgado, "We're working on additional events for Old Town Square, including Hometown Thursdays in the summer and an artisan, Holiday Market in December."

However, she said CIP expenditures aren't keeping up with actual needs, which results in deferred maintenance and necessary replacements. Additional funds are needed for playground replacements, trail maintenance and larger, long-term needs.

CIP projects proposed for FY '18 funding include Thaiss Park field renovation, \$25,000; design and construction of a dog park, \$50,000; replacement of playground equipment in Ratcliffe Park, \$155,000; and the annual replacement of the synthetic turf at

Fairfax High, \$137,248. The dog park idea was a big hit with Councilman Dan Drummond. "As the proud owner of a 1-year-old dog, I'm thrilled to see a dog park included [in the funding requests]," he said.

Noting the big-ticket, CIP items of Fairfax High's turf and Ratcliffe Park's playground equipment, Meyer said, "This is a significant investment in our City."

Human Services

Human Services Coordinator Louise Armitage said there's not a significant difference in the Social Services portion of her budget, except in Court Services. However, she's proposing making her position full time and eliminating two temporary positions, effective next spring.

The City works hand-in-hand with Fairfax County in the realm of Human Services, and Armitage said there's been an "overall increase in the number of people living at or below poverty level. And we've seen a significant surge in domestic-violence and sexual-assault cases."

In state-supervised Social Services, such as family services and services provided to at-risk youth and families, she said, "We've seen an increase in the age and diversity of children, which provides challenges. There's also been a 6-7-percent increase in adult protective services [needed], including for people with disabilities."

City Manager Bob Sisson noted that Armitage interacts with nine or 10 different agencies in the county and is well-respected. And Mayor David Meyer said the Council "appreciates the depth and breadth of her work."

Fire Department

City Fire Chief John O'Neal said his proposed FY '18 budget is "mostly at FY '17 levels, with a few exceptions." For example, there's an increase in funding for travel and training for International Fire Service accreditation, "providing the best training to keep our firefighters and paramedics safe," said O'Neal.

He's also requesting more money for merit and cost-of-living raises, plus \$75,000 to hire one, new, full-time employee – an assistant fire chief. "This slot has been vacant since 2009," said O'Neal. "It's to help us keep up with our current and projected workloads to keep our City safe, This per-

son would be inspecting current and new construction."

He noted, as well, that the Fire Department has proposed a new fire station for FY '19, but might need some funding from the upcoming budget for preliminary design work.

Police Department

The Police Department's proposed FY '18 budget is \$12.9 million, and City Police Chief Carl Pardiny said salaries and benefits account for 90 percent of it. Overall, the budget represents about a 5.5-percent increase over last year's total, or about \$670,000. One increase, in the amount of \$2,700, is for the contract with the Virginia Peer Support Assn. for an on-call, police psychologist and critical-incident debriefing. An extra \$2,500 is needed for equipment for the Emergency Services and Crisis Negotiations Team. And an \$8,000 hike is requested for computer maintenance agreements and software updates. Pardiny explained that "Using virtual servers, we've saved the city about \$50,000, so this maintenance contract is very important."

Public Works

Public Works Director David Summers is asking for a 5-percent increase in his department's operating budget. He said construction bid prices continue to rise, as do the costs of maintenance and repairs to the City's aging infrastructure – most of which is at least 50 years old. For example, the Jermantown Road evaluation and repairs will cost an estimated \$220,000. "Sub-surface water flow causes the road to deteriorate quickly, and we need to determine what it needs to maintain structural stability," said Summers.

In addition, the Storm Fund CIP (Capital



Cathy Salgado

Improvement Program) requests \$150,000 for neighborhood drainage projects, especially along McLean Avenue, to address flooding issues. Summers's budget also contains \$130,000 for year three of a 10-year program to monitor the city's wastewater system, "especially as we get new construction and residents," he said. Summers also bud-

getted \$300,000 for cameras to look at the system.

Transportation

Transportation Director Wendy Block Sanford discussed some transportation projects that are funded completely with transportation tax funds, such as the University Drive improvements south of Fairfax Boulevard. But the City is applying for funding for some other projects, such as multimodal transportation improvements.

Regarding the Transit Fund, Sanford recommends continuation of the program providing free bus fares to middle- and high-school students in the City. "It's been tremendously successful, and it's become 3.3 percent of our total ridership," she said.

Then, after she spoke about the projected increases in Metro funding the City will have to pay in FY '19, Mayor David Meyer said things are fine during the current budget cycle. "But in FY '19 and '20, we'll be facing hard choices," he said. "We'll have serious challenges to balance transportation funding with a reasonable tax rate."

Parks and Recreation

For FY '18, Parks and Rec Director Cathy Salgado is requesting about an 8-percent increase in funding. "We provide services to the community, and we believe we enhance the quality of life here," she said. "People enjoy going to our events and we

Economic Development

Chris Bruno became the city's Economic Development Director last May. Since then, he said, "We've launched a commercial-marketing campaign for downtown and re-invigorated the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce. We've started Rock the Block after Dark and are considering incentives to attract new businesses." There's also a new focus on working with the Mason Enterprise Center. Bruno also recommended adding a full-time employee to his office, and Councilman Michael DeMarco was amenable to the idea. "If we're serious about economic development, we need some more dedicated resources to support the Economic Development Office and the Economic Development Authority [EDA]," he said. "So I'd like us to at least think about it as part of this budget." Agreeing, Meyer said, "We have a lot of retail that's vacant and we need to have enough bench strength to address it. I'd characterize it as an investment in moving forward." Councilwoman Janice Miller then suggested a meeting – prior to budget adoption – with Bruno and the EDA to look at finding additional resources for economic development.

Meyer concurred and wanted to learn how much an additional employee would cost and when that person would come online. Drummond said they should also see "what other jurisdictions our size are doing regarding their economic-development personnel."

Victims Seek Truth, Accountability and Apology

FROM PAGE 3

helping the traumatized, and that wasn't good. Now, unfortunately, I'm kind of an expert on mass shootings." He then told the crime victims and survivors in the audience what he's learned: "You are the strongest and most resilient people I know," said Samaha. "You are heroes; and in a different way, we are all family and find strength in that support – the village. As victims, we seek the trilogy – truth, accountability and apology – knowing we may never receive the full truth, complete accountability or a sincere apology. "As victims, we learn to deal with the healing of broken bodies, broken hearts and broken minds. We learn to cope with our trauma. As victims, we have been to war and yet we find strength, not to succumb to our grief, but to take action. As victims and survivors, we honor, remember and create a living legacy for those we have lost, and those injured, to feel and enjoy the essence, the aroma and the touch of their love. "As victims, we are resilient: We can live again, we can laugh again, we can breathe again, we can trust again, we can love again and believe in God again. And may the greatest gift given to you be forgiveness. That's what enabled me to go on to do the work I do." Supervisor Jeff McKay



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Jessica Greis-Edwardson

(D-Lee) then gave Samaha a plaque proclaiming April 2-8 National Crime Victims' Rights Week. And after the walk, the Rev. Allan McCullough of Grace Hill Church gave a benediction.

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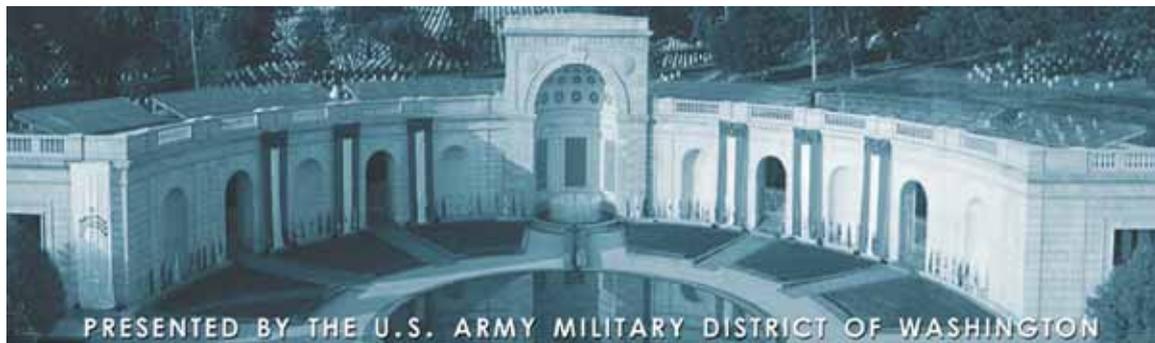
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OPINION

Your Award Winning Papers

Richmond Times-Dispatch (daily) and the Mount Vernon Gazette/Local Media Connection (non-daily), win the VPA's highest awards.

Virginia Press Association's highest award, the VPA Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service, went to Local Media Connection/Mount Vernon Gazette for coverage and editorials throughout 2016 relating to police reform in Fairfax County.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch won in the daily category for its series about the death of a mentally ill prisoner, Jamycheal Mitchell, in a Portsmouth Jail.

The judges noted, "The Mount Vernon Gazette covered the complex issue of police reform from February through December 2016, sparked by the shooting of an unarmed man by a Fairfax County police officer. ... The Gazette focused community attention on the case, particularly on the efforts of citizens and representatives of law enforcement agencies working together on reforming police practice. This led to the creation and implementation of a Civilian Review Panel to provide oversight of police policy, procedures and activities. ... The approach of the Gazette in this matter provides a good illustration of the positive role a community newspaper can play when it takes an activist approach to issues of importance to its readers." Editor Mary Kimm and reporter Tim Peterson accepted the award.

Virginia Press Association honored its 2016 award winners on Saturday, April 8, 2017 in Richmond at its annual dinner. The Connection papers, including the Alexandria Gazette Packet, garnered more than 35 awards in many categories, including investigative reporting, education coverage, headline writing, photography, column writing, sports writing, obitu-



PHOTO BY ROBIN MOGLE

Local Media Connection writers and photographers won 37 Virginia Press Association awards for work in 2016, including the Virginia Press Association Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service. Pictured here from left, John Bordner, Mark Mogle, Mary Kimm, Shirley Ruhe, Tim Peterson, Vernon Miles, Eden Brown, Andrea Worker and Jeanne Theismann.

aries, environmental writing, food writing, graphics, and more.

Shirley Ruhe was the top award winner, earning seven different awards including two first place awards, one for investigative reporter for her series on sex trafficking.

Other first place award winners include photographer Mark Mogle, who also won two first places; Bonnie Hobbs for General News for her coverage of the rise and fall of the mayor of the City of Fairfax; Eden Brown for Education writing; Tim Peterson for Public Safety writ-

ing and for Sports writing; Joan Brady for Feature Series on foster care alumni success stories; Jeanne Theismann for headline writing; Alexandra Greeley for food writing. Steven Mauren, editor-in-chief, won first place for Editorial Pages in Alexandria Gazette Packet, along with Mary Kimm, cartoonist Steve Artley, and designers Geovani Flores and Laurence Foong.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES

Mary Kimm and Tim Peterson accepted the Virginia Press Association Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service.

- Cartoon, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Vernon Miles**, 3rd Place, Feature Writing Portfolio, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Jon Roetman**, 3rd Place, Sports Writing Portfolio, McLean Connection
- ❖ **Jean Card**, Laurence Foong, Renee Ruggles, 3rd Place, Informational Graphics, Guide to the Parks, Mount Vernon Gazette
- ❖ **Tim Peterson**, 3rd Place, General News Writing, Mount Vernon Gazette
- ❖ **Laurence Foong**, 3rd Place, Informational Graphics, Real Estate Map, Great Falls
- ❖ **Mary Kimm**, 3rd Place, Editorial Writing, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Ken Moore**, 3rd Place, Education Writing, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Ken Moore**, 3rd Place, Feature Writing Portfolio, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection

2016 Virginia Award Winners

- ❖ Virginia Press Association Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service, the association's highest award, went to **Local Media Connection/Mount Vernon Gazette** for coverage and editorials relating to police reform in Fairfax County.
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 1st Place, In-Depth or Investigative Reporting, Arlington, Investigative Series-Sex Trafficking
- ❖ **Mark Mogle**, 1st Place, General News Photo, Wreaths Across America, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Eden Brown**, 1st Place, Education Writing, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 1st Place, Column Writing, People at Work, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Jeanne Theismann**, 1st Place, Headline Writing, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Steven Mauren, Mary Kimm, Steve Artley, Geovani Flores and Laurence Foong**, 1st Place, Editorial Pages, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Mark Mogle**, 1st Place, Picture Story or Essay, "Plaid Tidings," Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Tim Peterson**, 1st Place, Public Safety Writing, Burke Connection
- ❖ **Bonnie Hobbs**, 1st Place, General News Writing, Fairfax Mayor Caught in Sex-for-Meth Sting, Fairfax Connection
- ❖ **Joan Brady**, 1st Place, Feature Series or Continuing Story, Great Falls Connection,
- ❖ **Alexandra Greeley**, 1st Place, Personal Service Writing, Food Features, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Tim Peterson**, 1st Place, Sports Writing Portfolio, Springfield Connection
- ❖ **John Bordner**, 2nd Place, General News Photo,

- Kluge Farewell, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 2nd Place, Feature Series, Homelessness, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Kemal Kurspahic and Staff**, 2nd Place, General Makeup, Fairfax Connection
- ❖ **Marilyn Campbell**, 2nd Place, Personal Service Writing, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- ❖ **Jon Roetman**, 2nd Place, Sports Writing Portfolio, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 2nd Place, Column Writing, In the Kitchen, Mount Vernon Gazette
- ❖ **Jean Card, Laurence Foong, Renee Ruggles**, 2nd Place, Informational Graphics, Guide to the Parks, Fairfax Station Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 2nd Place, Personality or Portrait Photo, Vienna-Oakton Connection
- ❖ **Ken Moore**, 2nd Place, Health, Science & Environmental Writing, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Kemal Kurspahic, Andrea Worker, Donald Sweig, Ken Moore, Geovani Flores, Laurence Foong**, 3rd Place, Front Page Design, Reston Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 3rd Place, Personal Service Writing, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Steven Mauren, Geovani Flores, Laurence Foong**, 3rd Place, General Makeup, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 3rd Place, General News Photo, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Eden Brown**, 3rd Place, General News Writing, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Jeanne Theismann**, 3rd Place, Personal Service Writing, Obituaries, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Steve Artley**, 3rd Place, Illustrations, Editorial

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OPINION

County Ready for Next Phase of Diversion First

BY SUPERVISOR JOHN C. COOK
(R-BRADDOCK DISTRICT)



COMMENTARY

Fairfax County continues to make substantial progress on a program called “Diversion First.”

This program provides treatment instead of incarceration for people with mental health issues or developmental disabilities who come into contact with law enforcement for low-level offenses. With Diversion First, an officer can identify a suspect as needing supportive services, and can bring him or her to the Community Services Board (CSB) instead of making an arrest. Instead of making an arrest, officers bringing low-level offenders to the CSB saves the County money, time, and resources. Last year, 375 people were

diverted from arrest into treatment- which represents a huge accomplishment. This is not the only opportunity for diversion, however. The County is now pursuing the next phase of the Diversion First program, with a focus on making diversions after this initial contact with law en-

forcement.

Imagine you or I were arrested for a low-level crime, such as trespassing or disorderly conduct, on a Saturday night. We may be held until Monday or Tuesday. We could then probably post a bond for a few hundred dollars and be released. People with mental illness or developmental disabilities, however, often have troubled employment histories, and do not have that money. They

are often detained for months awaiting trial.

During this time, the County is paying approximately \$200 per day to hold them, all while their mental state is deteriorating. By their next hearing date, these individuals have often spent as much or more time in jail awaiting their day in court than if they had been found guilty of the original charges, resulting in a release based on “time served.” They leave in a worse condition than when they entered. Eighty percent of the time, they will repeat their criminal behavior.

Diversion First breaks this cycle. It provides judges with a treatment alternative at the bonding hearing, when the judge can offer “supervised release” instead of bail. Supervised release requires mandatory treatment, with supervision by a trained probation officer. The person gets treatment and can recover. Then they can be released

from criminal charges later if treatment is successful.

Studies show this treatment alternative can reduce the reoccurrence of criminal activity to as low as 20 percent. That means a 60 percent reduction in crime (from 80 percent to 20) from this population. Literally hundreds of crimes can be prevented each year. With jail costing around \$200 per day, and treatment only a few thousand dollars per year, over time the County will save significant funds.

This program is a win-win. Treatment improves lives. Crime will be reduced. Taxpayers will save long-term money. We must continue the progress of Diversion First by implementing these new avenues for diversion. This will allow the County to direct resources more efficiently, allow the Police to save time, and help people with disabilities improve their lives.

Past Time for Pension Reform in Fairfax County

BY PAT HERRITY
SUPERVISOR (R-SPRINGFIELD)



COMMENTARY

Most of our residents are in complete disbelief when they learn that Fairfax County offers, and continues to offer, a pre-social security supplement benefit — also known as the second pension. County employees that

started working for Fairfax County right out of college can retire from the County as early as age 55. In addition to their regular pension benefits, which are more generous than surrounding jurisdictions, County employees get a second pension benefit that provides the employee a County-paid benefit equal to social security payments until they reach social security age. Unlike actual social security payments, which saw no increase last year, the County’s second pension recipients received a guaranteed 3 percent increase. Serious pension reform in Fairfax County is past due and it starts with elimination of the second pension benefit for new employees.

Here are just some of the reasons I believe we need to eliminate the pre-social

security supplement for new general county and school employees:

❖ **This benefit does not help recruit or retain employees.** Compensation plans should be designed to recruit and retain employees — this benefit does neither. The benefit is not

valued as much as salary by the employees we are trying to recruit. Because the benefit is not paid unless you retire, it encourages employees to retire earlier.

❖ **Fairfax County is the only county in Virginia to offer this benefit.**

❖ **It is an expensive benefit that adds 6 percent to the cost of every payroll dollar.** This benefit cost the County \$30M and the school system \$75M in FY 2016.

❖ **The cost of providing this benefit continues to grow and is unsustainable.** As people live longer, the cost of providing this benefit continues to grow and continues to crowd out important County and school programs.

❖ **The cost of this benefit is unpre-**

dictable. Because this is a defined benefit, poor market returns can significantly increase the cost of the benefit.

While pension reform starts with eliminating the pre-social security supplement, we must also address the County’s retirement plan and the school system’s supplemental pension plan (ERFC). This includes changing the retirement age, eliminating the County’s DROP program (allows for retirement payments prior to retirement), reducing the high costs of administering the benefit plans, and investigating the conversion to a hybrid plan like the rest of the counties in Virginia have done. We need to keep our promises to our current employees, but must move our compensation programs into the 21st century for new employees.

Our hard working County employees continue to ask for salary increases to get them to market averages and some of our teachers’ salaries are below market averages. Unfortunately, too many of our compensation dollars are going to pension benefits which competes with the ability to fund employee and teacher raises and attract high quality candidates for openings. The cost of benefits for county and school employ-

ees range from 60 percent to 80 percent on top of each payroll dollar, compared to 25 to 35 percent for most private companies. Growing pension liabilities also compete for funds with the high quality services that our residents expect.

I have been working to address the County’s overly generous and unsustainable pension costs since 2010. I spoke about the County and school pension issues repeatedly during the meals tax debate as a prime example of where the County needs to get spending prioritized and under control. Largely as a result of the meals tax discussions, several of the County’s civic associations and community groups have joined me in the call to reform the County’s pension benefit programs.

The goal of these reforms cannot just be to make our pension benefits sustainable and affordable, but to change our total compensation packages so that we can do a better job of attracting, retaining and rewarding a quality workforce. Despite a delay in discussing our pension costs, it appears that the Board is finally prepared to look at pension reform. My hope is that we will implement comprehensive and meaningful reforms.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We’ll Miss Our Neighbor Dave Albo

To the Editor:

It felt like a punch in the gut when news of Del. Dave Albo’s retirement popped up on my phone. As a long time Republican activist and community volunteer, I have gotten to know Dave over the years, and his style of common sense policies, and straight talk are what stand out. In the age of heavily

voted policy positions and press releases, Dave was a breath of fresh air. He shoots from the hip, adds in a little humor, and gets his point across to even the most disagreeable. I recall him telling a town hall crowd that if policies can’t be explained to a fifth grader, they’re probably not worth enacting.

Dave is not just a great Delegate when he is in Richmond, he is a great Delegate the other 11 months of the year too. His constituent services are unparalleled. He is always out in the community attending meetings, sponsoring events, and

listening to what his constituents tell him. No matter who is speaking to him, Dave listens and cares. He is the embodiment of his campaign slogan “Our Neighbor.” As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. We will be sad to see Dave return to life as a private citizen, but he does so after having made the community a better place. Fairfax County and Northern Virginia will surely miss our neighbor, Dave Albo.

Kyle McDaniel
Springfield

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
The Connection
1606 King St.
Alexandria VA 22314

Call: 703-917-6444.

By e-mail: south@connectionnewspapers.com

HomeLifeStyle

Remodeler David Foster (left) talks with a homeowner browsing in the recently-opened Design and Selection Center, which is holding an Open House on April 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Open House will feature three seminars, access to representatives from major home improvement product manufacturers, a raffle and chef-prepared hors d'oeuvres.



Major vendors and manufacturers participating in the Design Center have increased substantially. Options for cabinet facings, plumbing fixtures, surface materials, tile and flooring are part of the permanent display. Foster designers are regularly exposed to new products and materials.

Design Center Educates Homeowners with Remodeling Plans

Open House, April 22, will feature three seminars, industry experts and new showroom.

BY JOHN BYRD

Foster Remodeling Solutions will launch its new 3,270-square-foot Home Design and Selection Center in Lorton with an open house on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The event will include seminars on a variety of topics ranging from kitchen and bath design to “How to Plan a Successful Remodeling,” to steps entailed in introducing “Aging-in-Place” modifications into the home. Seminar presenters are recognized experts in their respective specialties. Representatives from top manufacturers will also be on hand to answer questions about specific products, appliances and emerging technologies. Several manufacturers also will be contributing new products as raffle items.

Visitors can arrive as early as 10 a.m. and browse the newly-expanded Design and Selection Center. Chef-prepared hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served



Three full-size kitchen displays are now on view in the Lorton showroom. The 3,270 square foot Lorton showroom is one of the largest home improvement product expositions in northern Virginia.

throughout the day.

There will be several full-sized kitchen and bathroom designs on view, vignettes featuring cabinets, vanities, flooring and lighting, even a full-sized outdoor courtyard which spotlights break-through materials and styles being applied to roofing and siding.

“Our goal is to make it easy for attendees to find answers to an array of home improvement questions in a single day,” said David Foster, who has operated Foster Remodeling Solution for over 34 years. “We encourage attendees to come prepared with ques-

tions, drawings and photos, and to bring interested friends and neighbors. All of the offerings are free and open to the public.”

Design and Selection

There are three design consultation rooms that allow homeowners to review in-progress design details of a home improvement on a flat screen television.

“Home improvement is a very dynamic industry,” Foster said. “You have to stay ahead of changing technologies and evolving practices. We’re expanding methods for



A home laundry with mudroom features has proven popular in northern Virginia homes.

PHOTOS BY SUZY FOSTER

bringing ideas to homeowners that have already proven successful. ... This Open House will be more of an exposition than we’ve offered in the past; we’re building on what we’ve learned about local homeowner interests.”

The three one-hour seminars will be held at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. so that interested parties can attend all three without conflict.

❖ Design consultant Sean McLarty, a veteran remodeler with 33 years of professional experience, will provide tips on “Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling” at 11 a.m.;

❖ Dory Clemens, a space planning specialist, will conduct a seminar at 1 p.m. on “Aging-In-Place” applications. The session will focus how to assess which modifications to your home are most appropriate for near-term and foreseeable needs;

❖ At 3 p.m., Chris Arnold, whose 25 years of remodeling experience embraces every facet of the industry, will discuss “How to Plan a Successful Remodel,” including best options for financing a project.

Interested parties can register for the show room opening and for individual seminars online at www.fosterremodeling.com, or by calling 703-350-1371.

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com) has been writing about home improvement for 30 years.



The April 22 event will feature three seminars: Kitchen and Bath Design, Aging-in-Place Strategies for the Home and How to Plan a Successful Remodel.



Easter Table Design Ideas

Local tastemakers offer spring table setting and centerpiece ideas.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The arrival of spring offers fresh inspiration for table setting and home décor, say local designers. “What’s really beautiful about spring is that there is such natural beauty outside,” said Amanda Mertins, co-owner of Patina Polished Living in Old Town Alexandria. “Everything comes to life in spring. It’s all so fresh, you don’t have to do anything too contrived because decorations present themselves naturally with lovely daffodils and hyacinths. Pastel colored eggs are also part of the scene. You can combine the natural elements with the givens like eggs and bunnies.”

“Trim a few branches from a flowering bush or tree,” said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke, Virginia. “If you have tulips or daffodils, harvest some and make your own bouquet or place single stems in bud vases.”

“You can’t beat the amazing color display that’s going on outside right now,” added Anne M. Walker of Anne Walker Design in Potomac, Maryland.

“The deep magenta blossoms of the Redbud trees combined with the chartreuse color of the budding

tree leaves and new grasses makes my heart skip a beat. Bring these vibrant greens and purples into your house any way you can: fresh flowers, throw pillows, candles. A little touch of coral is welcome now and is a wonderful harbinger of the warmer days ahead.”

For a simple Easter centerpiece start with a tray, advises Thomas. “Cover the bottom with Easter grass or faux moss,” she said. “Place a potted plant or bouquet in the center with decorative Easter eggs nestled in the grass around it. Add a bunny or two and you have a cohesive centerpiece that is easy to move if necessary.”

Small accent pieces can have a big impact on table settings. “Make the table more festive by having place cards at each setting,” said Kelley Proxmire, principal at Kelley Proxmire, Inc. “Make each setting a little bit more special by putting individual small flower arrangements, or perhaps an Easter candy at each place.”

To create a sophisticated display, Walker advises forgoing traditional pastel colors and Easter eggs in lieu of vintage white décor. “[Home accessory stores] will all have decorating treasures, and they should be at deeply discounted prices this week,” she said.

Mertins creates an “Easter tree” decorated with hand-blown, hand-painted eggs. “They’re from Austria and they’re really like works of art,” she said. “You can hang these eggs from budding branches like those in a Forsythia [shrub] with green leaves and buds.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLEY PROXMIRE, INC

Designer Kelley Proxmire uses individual small flower arrangements to personalize the table setting in this Vienna, Virginia home.

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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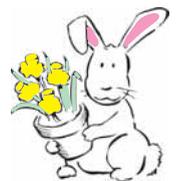
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CALENDAR

Send notes to the Connection at connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/ or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication at noon. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

ONGOING

Easter Bunny in Springfield.

Through April 15, Monday through Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, Lower Level, Grand Court, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Visit the Easter Bunny in the Mad Hatter Garden. Visit springfieldtowncenter.com/ for more.

Easter Bunny in Fairfax. Through April 15, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Fair Oaks, 11750 Fair Oaks, Fairfax. Adventures in Bunnyville and photos with the Easter Bunny at Fair Oaks. Visit www.shopfairoaksmall.com/ for more.

"Cherry Blossom Kimonos."

Through April 30 at the Workhouse Arts Center, Building 9, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The kimonos show is part of a campus-wide celebration of cherry blossom events in the region, titled "Late Bloomers." Visit www.workhousearts.org/event/exhibit-late-bloomers/ for more.

Storytime in the Park.

Tuesdays through May 30, 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Square, Fairfax. Visit fairfaxva.gov/parksrec or call 703-385-7858.

Senior Line Dancing

1-2 p.m. Little River Glen Senior Center 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Cost: \$5. 703-524-3739 barbriba@hotmail.com

Carolina Shag.

Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. nvshag.org.

Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).

Wednesdays. 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na'ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. RSVP.Naama.Gold@jccnv.org.

Smoke Free Bingo.

7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot (with breaks for smoking friends). www.fairfaxvd.com. 703-273-3638.

Stories From Strawberry Park

10-11 a.m. Tuesdays in Mosaic, Strawberry Park, 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Enjoy a live interactive performance each week. For ages 10 and under. Held outside in Strawberry Park. In inclement weather and October through April, storytime will be held in Angelika Film Center. Visit www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-district/2326/.

APRIL 14-MAY 7

"The Late Wedding."

Various times at the John Swayze Theatre at the New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. A play by Christopher Chen that is both a spy thriller and a sci-fi love story. Visit www.thehubtheatre.org for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 15

Pancakes and Egg Hunt.

8:30 a.m. at St George's United Methodist Church, 4910 Ox Road, Fairfax.

SATURDAY/APRIL 15

Pancakes and Egg Hunt.

8:30 a.m. at St George's United Methodist Church, 4910 Ox Road, Fairfax.



Springfield Town Center hosts a pre-Easter tea party in the mall's grand hall on April 12.



Lilly Brinkley of Franconia has her face painted at the Springfield Town Center pre-Easter tea party.

Ready for Easter at Springfield Town Center

As she attached the grass green pipe cleaner to her two-dimensional wicker Easter basket, Taylor Morgan of Franconia lamented that it wouldn't be able to hold "real Easter eggs." Morgan and her mother Sabrina had just come from having a photo taken with the very Easter Bunny itself, who she said she asked — Santa-style — for a Hatchimal, one of last Christmas' hottest toys.

They sat at one of dozens of tables set up for crafts and coloring, as part of a multidimensional (secular) pre-Easter event hosted on April 12 at Springfield Town Center. The mall's marketing director Kim-



Front, from left, Christopher and Katelynn Johnson, and Gabrielle Martinez, all of Alexandria, meet the Mad Hatter and Alice of "Alice in Wonderland" at the Springfield Town Center pre-Easter event on April 12.

berly Baldy said they had more than 500 people registered in advance, and that was just counting email addresses of parents, not including children.

In addition to the furry photos and crafts, the event tied in an Alice in Wonderland tea party theme as well as face painting. Tea — non-caffeinated, Baldy specified — for the party was supplied by Teavana.

The Mad Hatter, Queen of Hearts and Alice herself roamed and mingled in the grand hall area of Springfield Town Center, while the March Hare was otherwise occupied.

— TIM PETERSON

There will be children activities to go along with the breakfast and egg hunt. Free. Call 571-218-9972.

Holy Saturday Silent Retreat.

9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Free. Spend a day in noble silence, meditating and creating a space to be still and listen. Call 703-281-1767 or register online at unitysilentretreat.eventbrite.com.

APRIL 15-16

Bonsai Show and Demonstration.

9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Sponsored by the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society (NVBS). Visit nvbs.us or email info@nvbs.us for more.

APRIL 18-JUNE 10

Spring Art Lessons for Youth

Classes. 5:15-6:15 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor for children 8 and older. Visit www.czartlessons.com or call 703-250-6930 for more.

Spring Drawing Plus Color Class.

6:15-7 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing and watercolor for children 5-8 years. Visit www.czartlessons.com or call 703-250-6930 for more.

TUESDAY/APRIL 18

Early Fairfax Archaeology.

7:30-9 p.m. at the Fairfax Courthouse, 4000 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Chris

Sperling, Senior Archaeologist, Fairfax County Park Authority discusses "Beginning from a White Oak Tree in Fairfax County" Native American/European exploration and settlements. Visit www.eventbrite.com for more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 19

Civil War Forum.

7:30 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax. Bernard Kempinski, writer of articles and books on railroading, will present the Civil War Forum, "Introduction to the Railroads of the Civil War." Visit www.fairfax-station.org for more.

THURSDAY/APRIL 20

Quilt Restoration.

10:15 a.m. at the Fairfax Antique Arts Association, Green Acre Senior Center, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Presentation and samples provided by Clara Sue Ashley and Chris Young of the Quilt Shop of McLean on the varying processes that can be used with extraordinary results. Members are encouraged to bring in family pieces. Call 703-273-6090 for more.

Artists Talk.

7:30 p.m. at George Mason University, School of Art, Room 1007, 4400 University Drive, MS 2F5, Fairfax. "Radcliffe Bailey: The Great Dismal Swamp," on view from April 21 through Aug. 18. Visit cfa.gmu.edu for more.

APRIL 21-MAY 9

Spotlight on the Arts Festival.

Various times at Old Town Hall,

3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The 32nd Annual Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival starts on April 21st with a glittering evening at Old Town Hall celebrating three decades of arts in the City of Fairfax. Opening Gala, is 7 p.m., Saturday, April 29. Visit www.fairfaxspotlight.org for more.

APRIL 21 AND APRIL 22

Wild Horse and Burro Adoption.

noon-5 p.m. at Meadowood Special Recreation Area, 10406 Gunston Road, Lorton. Preview animals and submit applications. Animals will be available for \$125 to approved adopters on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit BLM.gov or call 866-468-7826 for more.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

ECHO Yard Sale.

8 a.m.-noon at St. Bernadette Catholic Church Gymnasium, 7600 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Collectibles, accessories and housewares to benefit Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO). Call 703-239-1678 for more.

Earth Day Clean Up.

10 a.m.-noon at Daniels Run Elementary School, 3705 Old Lee Highway. Park at the school and walk over to Daniels Run Trail to help clean the trail, make bird feeders from recycled products, decorate reusable bags, learn about waste reduction. Call 703-385-1695.

Family Fun Challenge.

11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3720 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax. GMU Women's basketball team leads activities to promote community through children's

activities, hands on science, face painting, Yoga, inflatables, and family sports challenges. At the event, we will have a Homeless Shelter Party drive to collect small gifts for children and families in need: balls, dolls, books, gift cards, jump ropes, and frisbees. Visit parties2inspire.org/ for more.

"Resilience" in Community.

7-10 p.m. at the Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax. Juried art show with works by local artists for sale, live music by local Latin-Jazz band Batida Diferente, a live charity auction, appetizers, wine and beer tastings. The event supports Britepaths' work to provide services to working families in the Fairfax County area who are struggling to make ends meet. \$45. Visit britepaths.org, email info@britepaths.org or call 703-273-8829.

SUNDAY/APRIL 23

"Peter and the Wolf."

2-4 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. The Washington Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Jun Kim will perform Sergei Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" Visit www.fairfaxva.gov for more.

A Film Celebrating Earth Day.

4-6 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Documentary "The Anthropologist" views anthropology through the lens of a pair of female anthropologists and their daughters. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov for more.

FOOD

Foods and Flavors of India

Choolaah Indian BBQ opens at Mosaic District.

BY ALEXANDRA GREELEY
THE CONNECTION

If you love Indian food; shopping and eating in the Mosaic District; or simply grabbing a cup of coffee, you must tailor your visit to include a stop at this splendid, spiffy Indian eatery called Choolaah Indian BBQ.

Not everything comes from a smoky barbecue pit, of course, but everything is made fresh and to order. Best of all, the kitchen staff, under the direction of CIA-trained managing partner Thomas McNulty, never freezes anything. (By the way, that CIA translates to the Culinary Institute of America, the primo destination for anyone wanting culinary training.)

Just to clarify, Choolaah is not a regular sit-down restaurant with waitstaff. Instead, it is an innovative “fast” food restaurant—that is, order up front, take a seat, get served shortly—that relies on the use of its immense tandoori ovens to do the major part of the meat-and-bread grilling. The owners’ goal is simply this: to make the complex flavors of traditional Indian food easily approachable and delicious. They have succeeded.

And, to get a real visual kick out of your meal here, nab a seat near to the open kitchen window and watch how cooks slap circle of raw bread dough (naan) onto the sides of the tubby ovens, or hang hooked skewers over the edges to cook the meat cubes. You may even get the treat of watching a cook toss the circular dough in the air, much like a pizza cook does, to round out the dough.

The foods and flavors are the real draws here, however. Options vary, of course, from barbecued items—chicken, lamb salmon, tofu, and veggies—served over a bowl of brown or white rice and accompanied by white or whole wheat naan; salads, tandoori wraps to specialties and street snacks. And what, you may wonder, are some top dishes? Well, according to your tastes, they all rank as worthy.

You should kick off any meal with an order of samosas or the *pav bhaji*, a soft bread roll that comes



The foods and flavors are the real draws at Choolaah Indian BBQ.

with a bowl of spiced vegetable/lentil curry. It appears that that is a vegetarian version of a Sloppy Joe.

Then let’s start with the roasted lamb meatballs, packed with flavor.

These are arranged on a bed of rice, and accompanied by a piece of naan. You can add extra flavor by going to the condiments stand (for utensils and napkins there, too) and select from among some spicy and not-too-spicy sauces. The spicy mango sauce is fabulous, but other choices include mint yogurt; tamarind ginger; choolaah ranch; raita; and choolaah lava, which is probably searing hot.

Perhaps one of the most unusual dishes, however, is the salmon tikka masala. The fish is so fork tender and flavorful that patrons must quickly lap this dish up with pieces of naan. Served with rice, and accented by your choice of sauce, this dish is a masterpiece. And for a composition of rice with chicken or vegetables and presented with a naan crust topping, try the biryani, an Indian classic.

For drinks, the thick mango lassi is a perfect cooling treat, though you may wish for a delicate ginger-mint lemonade. Both help wrap up the meal as you spoon through the ice cream choices: mango (!!!) and cardamom.

Before you leave, be sure to admire the wall art, commissioned artwork by several painters who captured the spirit of a modern Indian eats place. Sure to make you smile, especially the composite elephant.

Choolaah Indian BBQ, Mosaic District, 2911 District Ave., Suite 100, Fairfax. Phone: 571-357-3923. Hours: Lunch and dinner daily.

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THEATER PREVIEW

“I Ain’t Made That Way”

Play about family in Keokee, Va., which gathers to celebrate its favorite son.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The Shoestring Theatre Company is presenting “I Ain’t Made That Way” on April 22 and April 23 in Fairfax as part of the Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival 2017. The play tells the story of what happens when the coal-mining community of Keokee, Va. gathers to celebrate the accomplishment of its favorite son who has just earned two master’s degrees. Resentments, potato salad, and banana pudding fly when the family’s secrets come to light.

“The theme of the play is about community and family and the perceptions and misconceptions that people bring with them and the biases that they have against one culture or another,” said director Amelia Townsend of Oakton.

DJ Neace of Washington, D.C., plays the role of Harlan, a well-educated man who has a temper, especially in dealing with members of his family. “He was injured in a mining accident when he was younger. He’s dealing with his family who wants to take care of him,” he said. “His wild side is brought out a lot more when his brother-in-law and sister try to control him and tell him what to do.”

He said, “One of the main reasons I wanted to do this show is that I wanted people to see that there are some stereotypes that are based in truth. You see stereotypes about the Appalachian characters, but in this show there are well-educated people there and jerks there just like in every community across the country, and it’s important that we showcase that.”

SHARON CARBALLO of Clifton plays the older sister Mary. “Mary is all about her family; her family is her whole world,” she said. “She’s very protective of Harlan; she wants to take care of him. There’s a territorial struggle between me and his wife. Mary can come across as controlling or overbearing; she also has this sense of humor that comes through too.”

She said the challenge in her



Mary (Sharon Caraballo, right) teases her husband, Matthew (Dan Braswell) in a scene from “I Ain’t Made That Way.”



Harlan (DJ Neace, left front) twirls wife Sherry (Laura Baker, right front) around the room as Munch (Bob Cohen, left), Sherry (Sharon Caraballo, middle) and Matthew (Dan Braswell, right) enjoy the party in a scene from “I Ain’t Made That Way.”

role was that Mary’s emotions are at the surface. “So if Mary is not happy, you are going to know that; she has no filter, so that’s a little bit different from my life,” she said.

Geoffrey Baskir of Alexandria plays the dual roles of Mule Train and Virgil, two pillars of the community. “They are considered to be senior members of the mining community; they are respected role models and they are the ones who have seen Harlan and Matthew throughout the time they’ve been in mining so they know some of the dynamic,” he said.

Bob Cohen of Manassas plays the role of Munch who is Harley’s college roommate who comes to Keokee to celebrate Harlan’s two master’s degrees. “He comes in with prejudice and preconceptions and through the course of the play,

he comes to realize that they’re not so different — that people are people,” he said.

Dan Potter of Alexandria plays the role of Dub who took off for Hollywood and made it as a successful director. “So he’s back to celebrate this occasion, but is coming back having lived in ‘off,’ which is slang for not local,” he said.

Tess Rowan of Reston plays the role of Trinity, who is very bold with a bit of an attitude. “She is one of the only people who stands up to her dad; she’s also very headstrong and strong-willed,” she said.

As far as audience takeaways, she said: “I hope that [audiences] realize the people in Southern Virginia are not the stereotypical people of the South; they’re just normal people, and like in every family, there’s love and argu-



PHOTO COURTESY OF OPERATION HOMEFRONT

Mary Kate Cooper, 17, Fairfax, a junior at W.T. Woodson High School (center), receives the Operation Homefront 2017 Coast Guard Military Child of the Year Award. Presenting the award are, from left, Air Force Brig. Gen. (ret) John I. Pray Jr., President and CEO of Operation Homefront Adm. Paul F. Zukunft, Commandant of the Coast Guard; Keynote Speaker Mrs. Ellyn Dunford, the wife of Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Air Force Lt. Gen. (ret) Brian Arnold, Chairman of the Operation Homefront Board of Directors.

Fairfax Teen Named Military Child of the Year

Mary Kate Cooper, 17, Fairfax, a junior at W.T. Woodson High School, received the Operation Homefront 2017 Coast Guard Military Child of the Year Award during Operation Homefront’s Ninth Annual Military Child of the Year Awards Gala on Thursday, April 6. Six recipients earned the 2017 Military Child of the Year, which came with a \$10,000 cash award, based on the armed forces branch in which a parent either serves or has served — Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and the National Guard. Those recipients were selected based on their scholarship, volunteerism, leadership, and extracurricular involvement. Additionally, one recipient earned the Military Child of the

Year Award for Innovation presented by Booz Allen Hamilton, which was presented to the child who best demonstrated the power of innovative thinking, such as an invention, improvement to existing technology, or creation of a new non-profit. In addition to the \$10,000 cash award, the Innovation award recipient will receive a mentorship by Booz Allen Hamilton employees to scale or to advance the recipient’s project. United Technologies Corporation was the presenting sponsor for the 2017 Military Child of the Year Awards Gala. Other gala sponsors were Booz Allen Hamilton, Murphy-Goode Winery, La Quinta Inns & Suites, MidAtlanticBroadband, Veterans United Home Loans, and the Military Times.

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

FROM PAGE 2

ject to change in case of inclement weather.)

Pedestrians will be directed to use the sidewalk on westbound Fairfax Boulevard during that time. The Public Works Department will post signs to direct pedestrians across the street via crosswalk at traffic lights for the

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THE SHOESTRING THEATRE COMPANY is presenting “I Ain’t Made That Way” on April 22 and April 23 at 10427 North Street, Fairfax, in the Old Pacers Running

portion of sidewalk currently under repair. Vehicle traffic will not be affected by this project.

About 965 linear feet of the existing wall between Rebel Run and Plantation Parkway is deteriorating due to infiltration from the top and from freeze-flow damage. For more information, call 703-385-7810.

Store, in Fairfax. Show times are April 22, 2017, at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and April 23, 2017, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15/advance; \$20/door. For more information, visit www.fairfaxspotlight.com or Shoestringtheatrecompany.com.

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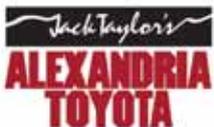
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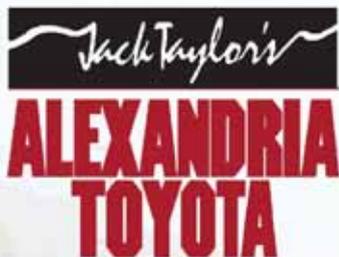
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21 Announcements

According to the Lease by and between James Mott Community Assistance (of unit 1057) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: computers, tables, chairs, ladder, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday April 21, 2017 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

According to the Lease by and between Michael Jordan (of unit 2069) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: beds, furniture, books, clothes, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday April 21, 2017 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

According to the Lease by and between Lina Chovil (of unit 4075) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: luggage, boxes, tubs, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday April 21, 2017 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

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Notice is hereby given that on Monday, May 1, 2017 commencing at 10:30 AM, at 5801 Rolling Road, Springfield, Virginia 22152, in order to enforce the warehouseman's lien for storage and related services, we will sell by Public Auction the items in the accounts of: Judith Boston, Salim Cadet, William Cammett, T.J. Dunlap, Douglas B. Hitt, Daniel Lester, New Vision Engineering Group, Thomas Pauls, Patricia Bradley, Timothy R. Doremus, DJ McMulloch, Donald Munford, Eric Fedewa, Fried & Rosefelt, Lorenzo Parker, and Sam Ponniah.

Those effects are stored with any of the following: Ace Van & Storage Co., Inc.; Boxcart Inc.; Interstate Moving & Storage, Inc.; Interstate Moving Systems, Inc.; Interstate Relocation Services, Inc. dba Ambassador International, Ltd; Ambassador Relocations, Inc.; Ambassador Worldwide Moving, Inc.; or Interstate Van Lines, Inc., at 3901 Ironwood Place, Landover, Maryland; 22455 Powers Court, Sterling, Virginia; or 5801 Rolling Road, Springfield, Virginia. All parties in interest please take notice.

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

Pursuant to Section 50-33, 50-35 and 50-36 of the Code of the City of Fairfax, the City of Fairfax Police Department will be disposing of the below listed unclaimed property, by public auction conducted by an independent auction service, converted to department use or generally disposed of. Any person who feels they have a legal claim, with reasonable proof of ownership, should contact MPO Lynn Coulter of the City of Fairfax Police Department at 703-385-7829 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays until close of business Friday, April 28, 2017. Below is a summary list of all items. For a complete list, please go to the City of Fairfax website: <http://www.fairfaxva.gov/unclaimedproperty>
27 - Assorted Cell Phones
20 - Assorted Electronics
30 - Miscellaneous items
24 - Bicycles

21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

Public Hearing

Springfield Community Business Center Commuter Parking Garage
Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
Thursday, April 20, 2017 7:00 p.m.

Key Middle School Cafeteria, 6402 Franconia Road, Springfield, VA*

The Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services will conduct an open forum public hearing on the design of the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) Commuter Parking Garage project. The proposed project would include 6 parking levels with about 1,100 parking spaces, a bus transit center with 7 bus bays, 12 commuter spaces, and a short term parking area for drop off and pick up. A pedestrian bridge connecting Springfield Plaza to the parking garage is also proposed. Other features include bicycle storage, passenger waiting areas, a community area on the ground floor and on the roof top. Project schedule information will be discussed at the public hearing.

Preview the project information, environmental documents, and preliminary plans prior to the public hearing at the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, VA 22035, (tel. 703-324-5800). Please call ahead for staff availability.

Give your written comments at the hearing or submit them by May 4, 2017 to Mr. Deepak Bhinge, Project

* New Location

Manager, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, at the same address. You may also email your comments to Deepak.Bhinge@fairfaxcounty.gov. Please reference "Springfield CBC Parking Garage Comments" in the subject heading.

Fairfax County ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all county programs, services and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. State Project #0644-029-175, P101, R201, C501; Federal Project #CM-5A01 (742).

ACCESSIBILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: This hearing is being held at a public facility believed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Any persons with questions on the facility should contact Mr. Deepak Bhinge, Project Manager, Fairfax County Department of Public Works, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax VA, (tel. 703-324-8770). Persons needing interpreter services for the hearing impaired or those with limited English proficiency must notify Mr. Deepak Bhinge no later than Thursday, April 13, 2017 so appropriate arrangements can be made.

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Together We Will Northern Virginia hosted a meet and greet event with Democratic candidates for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: (from left) Justin Fairfax, Susan Platt and Gene Rossi.

Meeting Democratic Candidates for Lt. Governor

On April 2, the group Together We Will Northern Virginia hosted a meet and greet event with Democratic candidates for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Justin Fairfax, Susan Platt and Gene Rossi.

members and voters about their policy positions in the Cellar Room of the Auld Shebeen in Fairfax.

The Primary Election will be June 13. For more information, visit www.togetherwewillnova.org.

The candidates spoke to community

—TIM PETERSON



Community members gathered in the Cellar Room of the Auld Shebeen for a meet and greet with Democratic candidates for Lt. Governor.

BULLETIN BOARD

Send notes to the Connection at connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/ or call 703-778-9416. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

APRIL

Coffee for Campers. April is the Month of the Military Child, and to honor our nation's littlest heroes, the National Military Family Association is asking if you'll give up your coffee shop coffee and donate that extra \$5 a day to send a military kid to Operation Purple Camp. Visit www.militaryfamily.org/get-involved/donate/coffee-for-campers.html for more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 12

NARFE Chapter Meeting. 12:30-3 p.m. at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway. National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Coach Ed Linz will be the speaker at the Springfield Chapter 893 meeting. Call 571-422-0451 for

more.

THURSDAY/APRIL 20

Public Hearing. 7 p.m. at Key Middle School Cafeteria, 6402 Franconia Road, Springfield. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation and Department of Public Works and Environmental Services are conducting a design public hearing for the Springfield CBC Commuter Parking Garage. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/springfieldgarage.htm for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 15

Fibromyalgia Fight Club. 2-4 p.m. at City of Fairfax Regional Library Meeting Room, 10360 North St., Fairfax. CFS NOVA and Fibromyalgia Fight Club welcome Linda Tannenbaum, CEO/President, Open Medicine Foundation, to speak on research in ending Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and related diseases. Free. Email nanczryan@gmail.com, call 703-785-2525 or visit www.openmedicinefoundation.org for more.



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Terrific home on private .61 acre lot in quiet, conveniently located community near transportation, schools, shopping & more. Updated kitchen & baths, walk-out LL, light/bright throughout!



Burke Centre - \$695,000

Perfect home inside & out! Professional interior designer/owner. 5 Bedrooms, updated Kit & Baths, walk-out LL, Rec Rm & so much more! Location can't be beat - backs to parkland, moments to all amenities including the VRE!

Find More Information at: www.Hermandorfer.com



KIM McCLARY
703-929-8425
kimm@Inf.com
Life Member NVAR Top Producers



Alexandria/Ft. Hunt \$439,900

Just Listed.....Condition and Location Says It All!!
Run, don't walk to the best value in this sought-after area—just off the GW Parkway, and a quick hop to Old Town Alexandria, Reagan National Airport, Metro, 495, schools, shopping, area amenities—this home is everywhere you want to be! Just renovated to a tee to include: stunning white kitchen with granite counters, stainless appliances, custom tile flooring, totally remodeled, timeless white baths, refinished hardwoods, custom, soft paint colors, and more! Make this beauty #1 on your list to visit! For a private tour, please call Kim McClary on 703-929-8425



JUDY SEMLER
703-503-1885
judys@Inf.com



Fairfax \$375,000

Beautiful 2 level end townhome in the Fair Lakes area * Wood floors throughout * Fire-place in living room * Upgraded kitchen with granite & SS appliances * 3 bedrooms * 2.5 baths * Laundry room on bedroom level * One car garage *



Fairfax Station \$1,175,000

Stunning custom home with exquisite architectural details & exceptional craftsmanship on 5 acres in a country setting but close to all of your needs. This home features a high-end gourmet kitchen, banquet sized dining room, 2-story family room with floor to ceiling stone fireplace, 3 finished levels, temperature controlled wine cellar and so much more.



DIANE SUNDT
703-615-4626
Military Relocation Specialist



COMING SOON Centreville \$399,900

Beautiful 3 BR/2.5BA end unit townhome located in Sully Station. Bright & Cheery!! Freshly painted, new carpet. Eat-in kitchen. Fireplaces on main & lower level. Walk out basement. Rough in for bath. Large deck for entertaining. Fantastic neighborhood. Call Diane at 703-615-4626.



John & Jennifer Boyce
703-425-JOHN (5646)
jennifer.boyce@longandfoster.com
www.425JOHN.com



Gainesville \$660,000

Gorgeous estate home on premium golf course lot w/ wooded buffer in 55+ community, 6600+ total SF (\$500+ fin). Main level master bedroom. Eat-in kit w/lots of counters & cabinetry. Huge finished lower level. 3 car garage. Amazing community amenities.



DAVID & VIRGINIA
Associate Brokers
703-967-8700
www.BillupsTeam.com



BURKE

\$494,900

Gorgeous water views! Luxury garage townhome features 9' ceilings, gourmet kitchen with granite island and SS appliances. 3 BR, 3.5 BA. Hardwood floors, master suite with 2 walk-in closets, garden tub & separate shower. Robinson HS! Close to VRE!



FAIRFAX STATION

\$899,900

Rare find! Contemporary design with over 5K SF of living space, 3 car garage, gourmet kitchen w/ granite, soaring ceilings, heated pool, jetted hot tub, pool table, home gym. Exquisite 5 acre wooded lot with private pond! www.8705MountainValley.info



Sheila Adams
703-503-1895
Life Member, NVAR Multi Million Dollar Sales Club
Life Member, NVAR Top Producers



Fairfax Club Estates

\$634,900

Gorgeous Colonial home backing to parkland. Cul-de-sac location. 4 huge bedrooms. Gleaming hardwood floors in Kitchen, Family Room, Foyer, and steps. New carpeting. New stainless steel appliances. Sheila Adams 703-503-1895



Dana-Jean LaFever & Claudia Callis
703-609-3479 • 703-620-2790
"Working for & Listening to YOU"



Oakton

Just Listed

\$698,800

Fabulous 4 levels on large, flat, wooded 3/4 acre lot backing to parkland. Updates include windows, roof, new carpet in living, dining rooms, and upstairs bedrooms. Kitchen has 42 in. cabinets & corian countertops. 2 fireplaces, large deck, 2 car garage. Close to shopping, Rt 50, and I66.



Carol L. Manning, Associate Broker
NVAR Multi-Million Dollar Club | NVAR Top Producer
703.517.1828 Email: ContactCarol@LNF.com



Exceeding Your Expectations is my #1 Priority

2 Fabulous Landmark Mews Properties In Alexandria!
OPEN SUNDAY \$675,000
Outstanding, Close-in Location!
COMING SOON \$615,000
Renovated Townhome!

- Rarely Available Spacious End Unit with an **Elevator!**
- 2 Large Master Suites with baths & walk-in closets
- 3rd Bedroom / Office / Loft with storage room
- Private Slate Patio with Landscaping



- 3 BRs; 3 Full & 2 Half BAs
- Main Level with gorgeous hardwood flooring
- Kitchen with granite counters, new stainless steel appliances
- Gas Fireplace
- Walkout Lower Level to Backyard with Patio and New Deck
- 1-Car Garage

Call for Details



Kathy O'Donnell
REALTOR



Let's Work Together

703-338-7696
Kathy.odonnell@LNF.com



Catie, Steve & Associates
Direct: 703-278-9313
Cell: 703-362-2591
Life Members, NVAR Top Producers
Multi-Million Dollar Sales Club



Fairfax \$649,900

Super Star! Drop Dead 4 bedroom/2.5 bath Middlebridge Colonial. Sited on a beautiful corner lot, this home comes with a fabulous Sun Room; gleaming hardwood floors, a huge Living Room, a charming Dining Room, Family Room w/gas fireplace, updated baths. A "House Beautiful" kitchen with all the bells & whistles, finished basement & a deck & patio come too! Not to be missed, make this house your home today!



"Committed to Earning the Loyalty of Our Clients by Providing Unparalleled Professionalism and Exceptional Service While Supporting Our Community."



Looking for a Change? Maybe it's time for an Update!
Call Foster Remodeling 703.672.2249



- Kitchen Remodels
- Bathroom Remodels
- Home Additions

- Whole Home Remodels
- Entertainment Areas
- and much more!



Northern Virginia's First Choice for Home Remodeling Services

Are there too many cooks in your kitchen and not enough workspace? Is your bathroom vanity covered with lotions and potions because there's no storage? Maybe it's time for a change! Foster Remodeling Solutions is a full-service Northern Virginia Remodeling and Design firm with over 30 years of experience.

We specialize in additions, kitchens, bathrooms and whole home remodels. We are client focused and committed to providing you with personalized service, upfront communications, and expert design and craftsmanship.

Call Today 703.672.2249 or online at FosterRemodeling.com



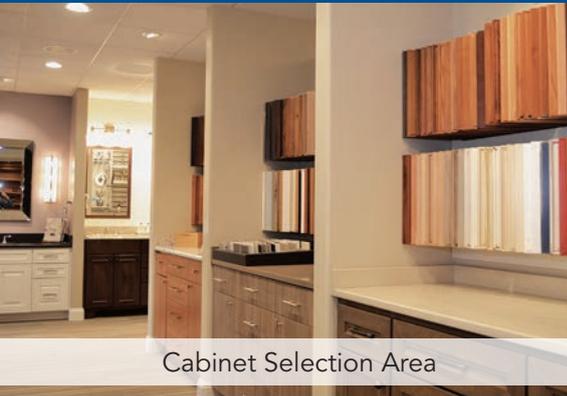
GRAND RE-OPENING OPEN HOUSE

Please Join Us!

7211-H Telegraph Square Dr.
Lorton, VA 22079



**Saturday, April 22nd 2017
10:00am to 5:00pm**



Cabinet Selection Area



Tile and Flooring Selection Room



Outdoor Selection Area

Seminars

We will be providing 3 free educational seminars throughout the day. Our Design Consultants will give you tips and guidelines about remodeling.



11:00am

Sean will be providing you with information and tips for Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling.



1:00pm

Plan for every stage of life, Dory will discuss Aging-In-Place Remodeling.



3:00pm

Are you thinking about remodeling but don't know where to start? Do you need lending options? Come to Chris's seminar on How To Plan a Successful remodel.

Please join Foster Remodeling Solutions at our Open House for our newly remodeled and expanded Design and Selection center.

We now feature custom vignettes. You'll see full kitchens and bathrooms on display as well as an inspiring outdoor area featuring a patio with a deck, windows, and roofing. We also have plenty of the latest materials and products for your home.

Guests will have the opportunity to browse through our showroom, attend seminars and talk to the industry experts.

**Please rsvp to 703.672.2249 or sign up at
FosterRemodeling.com**

- Come see our newly remodeled and expanded Design and Selection Center
- Enjoy some chef prepared hors d'oeuvres
- Win Raffle Prizes
- Attend a Remodeling Seminar
- Q&A with our Design Consultants
- Browse through thousands of products for your home