

Springfield CONNECTION

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HomeLifeStyle
PAGE 7

The ribbon is cut for the new clubhouse at Burke Lake Golf Course. In his Year in Review article, Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) cites new programs and facilities in area parks as some of the 'great things' of the last year in his district.



Some of the Great Things of 2017

COMMENTARY, PAGE 2

Citizens Shape
Assembly Agenda

NEWS, PAGE 3

Dancefest 2018 to Celebrate
Northern Virginia Dance

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10

YEAR IN REVIEW

Some of the Great Things of 2017

BY PAT HERRITY
SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

While Fairfax County continues to face significant challenges, there were many great things accomplished in 2017. Listed below are some of the common sense initiatives I was able to move forward as a minority member of the Board of Supervisors:

No Tax Rate Increase

Largely in response to the message that voters sent with the defeat of the meals tax, the Board passed a budget that did not increase the real estate tax rate after increasing taxes 24 percent in the preceding four years. I am glad the message on fiscal responsibility I helped deliver during the meals tax referendum defeat was received.

Pension Review Again Underway

I led the effort to reform the county's overly generous pensions in 2010, and again over the last two years. In 2017 I was successful in getting the Board to agree to take another look at pension costs. I hope

this time we will enact meaningful pension reforms for new employees. The county is currently paying county-funded social security payments on top of pensions that are more generous than surrounding jurisdictions to retirees as early as age 55. This competes with our ability to fund quality county services and hinders our ability to give our county employees and teachers much-needed salary increases – not to mention the fact that it is financially unsustainable.

Addressing the Opioid Crisis

While deaths from opioids increased in the county again in 2017, from 78 in 2016 to 108 in 2017, the increase was lower than that seen in the rest of Virginia. I have continued to carry the message on the dangers of this public health crisis which I discuss in every community meeting I attend because it is happening in all of our neighborhoods. In 2017, I successfully worked with Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) to add restrictions on opioid doses of more than seven days and we opened the first Fairfax County drug take back box pilot at the West Springfield Government Center. Much more is planned for 2018 to address this crisis.

Big Year for Golf, Baseball, 'Going Ape'

It was a big year for Springfield District parks as we cut the ribbon on a state-of-the-art covered and heated driving range and a new clubhouse at Burke Lake Park (with a new putting green on the way). The addition of four 90-foot baseball diamonds by Willow Springs Elementary School took several big steps forward and are expected to be under construction soon. We also opened an exciting public private partnership with Go Ape at South Run Park. This tree top adventure of ropes courses and ziplines is the first of its kind in Northern Virginia. Hidden Pond also received a facelift, with installation of a new shelter, new playground, and a rain garden.

Opportunities for Teens to get Jobs

In 2017 my office hosted four teen job fairs (two more than the previous year) – each of which attracted over 400 students. These job fairs offer teens the opportunity to speak with potential employers and many walked away with their first job. Partnering with the Connection Newspapers, several

Supervisors, and Fairfax County Public Schools helped make our 2017 job fairs a huge success. We will be expanding to six teen job fairs across the county this spring.

Sports Tourism Task Force

Sports tourism has become a growing \$9 billion dollar industry in the U.S. While Fairfax County has some of the best sports facilities in the country, they have not been clustered or designed to capture a share of the sports tourism market. With the Board's approval I have established a task force to look at how the County can capture a share of that market and at the same time meet the financial and sports facilities needs of our community. This task force brings together parks, schools, colleges, Visit Fairfax, the athletic council for the first time and is making exciting progress.

Library and Roads

A beautiful, newly-renovated Pohick Regional Library reopened to the delight of the community. We took another big step towards relieving the bottleneck on the Fairfax County Parkway at Popes Head Road and widening of Route 29 west of Fairfax.



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Jeanne Lavelle of Fairfax, with the assistance of interpreter Jessica Holt, addresses the Fairfax delegation to the General Assembly. Lavelle advocated for funding to ensure that deaf and hearing impaired children are not left “functionally illiterate” because they are not given the opportunity to learn language skills.



Theresa Sheipe of Fairfax was one of many members of the “More Recess for Virginians” group who either spoke or supported from the audience in favor of protecting and expanding recess in Virginia schools.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Citizens Shape Assembly Agenda

Fairfax delegation to General Assembly hears from public before heading to Richmond.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The 2018 Regular Session of the Virginia General Assembly convenes on Wednesday, Jan. 10. Before the state senators and delegates head off for Richmond, many of the Fairfax County contingent met with constituents in a Saturday, Dec. 6, public hearing at the County Government Center.

More than 100 registered speakers and their supporters braved single-digit temperatures for the opportunity to tell their elected representatives just what they hoped to see included in the upcoming legislative agendas.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova welcomed the delegation, and then began the hearing as “Speaker # 1,” representing the interests of the entire county.

Funding for the educational needs of the county was first on Bulova’s ask list — a theme that was often repeated during the marathon five hour-plus hearing. She followed that request with an appeal for funding for WMATA, citing that reliable and safe public transportation is critical to the economic health of the region.

THE GROUP “More Recess for Virginians” came out in full, green t-shirted force, asking the delegation to support legislation that would include recess as part of the “instructional hours” in elementary schools. Recess supporter Theresa Sheipe from Fairfax asked the legislators to provide the School Board more flexibility to better serve the children, and Shannon Hamilton, Ph.D., a neuroscientist from Alexandria, added “Science is on the side of recess. We hope you are, too.”

Other topics included concerns for the environment and climate change impact, with many arguing for renewable energy

sources, and several opposing what they consider the “influence of Dominion Energy” on Virginia policies. The Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, 350 Fairfax, and The Climate Reality Project put forth speakers representing their organizations, among the dozen or so individuals who also spoke on the issue.

Social services advocates were also well represented. Speakers from the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, The ARC of Northern Virginia, Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board, Northern Virginia Family Services, and Social Action Linking Together, along with numerous individuals, like Jeanne Lavelle with the Virginia Association for the Deaf, urged the delegation to consider the needs of the community’s less fortunate and the more vulnerable.

Several of the social service organizations also supported the expansion of Medicaid in the Commonwealth, as did speakers from the county government employees union, SEIU Virginia 512. State Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35) responded to the “expansionists” that they wouldn’t find many dissenters on that topic among the legislators on the dais.

Advocates for stronger gun safety laws, bipartisan redistricting and voter protection, the decriminalization of marijuana, banning solitary confinement in prisons, funding of judgeships, immigrant support, and providing more powers to the civilian police force review panel and auditor all had their turn



State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) meets with Bill Barfield, second vice president, Legislative Committee co-chair for the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations. Barfield, a mathematician who lives in Fairfax, and Tim Thompson, the Federation’s president, presented their representatives with a list of 11 legislative issues for consideration.

at the microphone.

In past years, citizens had more opportunity to talk with their representatives after the hearing, but the length of this year’s event saw several of the legislators called to other duties before the close, and even the majority of the citizen activists did not make it to the moment when Saslaw called “time.”

A HANDFUL of the delegation did linger, including state Sen. Chap Peterson (D-34), state Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), and Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86).

Petersen took a few moments to chat with his constituent Bill Barfield, who had testified and presented the legislative issues put forth by the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association.

Boysko will be sponsoring the Dignity Act this session, and supporting in-state tuition legislation, as part of her agenda.

Favola provided information on her 2018



State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) admits she has her work cut out for her in the 2018 Regular Session of the Virginia Legislature. She’s tackling Paid Family Leave, Gun Safety, Domestic Violence Prevention, Medicaid Expansion, K-12 education reforms and improvements, and Equal Taxing Authority for Counties, to name a few.

Legislative Agenda.

High on the list is working to get counties the same taxing authority as cities. “Counties are providing the same services as cities, and the discrepancy in taxing authority is really unfair,” she said.

Paid Family Leave, Gun Safety, K-12 Education reforms and enhancements are also in her sights. Favola admits that some of her proposed legislation requires taking some “big steps,” but that on many of the issues, “many small steps have already been taken, so there’s reason to be optimistic.”

To track what state senators and delegates are up to in the General Assembly, to contact them, or to track the progress of proposed legislation, visit www.virginiageneralassembly.gov.

Pulling Legal Status from Local Salvadorans

Bad for communities, bad for the economy, bad for the families, and no upside.

It's going to hurt right here in Northern Virginia.

As this administration continues its persecution against immigrants, it will move to end protected status for more than 200,000 Salvadorans, tens of thousands of whom live among us as neighbors, coworkers, friends, business owners, homeowners.

These neighbors, Salvadorans who came here in the wake of terrible natural disaster and political unrest, have been living and working here legally since 2001 at least. Temporary Protected Status was given to approximately 217,000 Salvadoran immigrants living in the United States at the time of the disasters.

Their families have added almost as many U.S.-born children. They are intertwined with naturalized citizens and other legal residents from their country, with the withdrawal of protected status affecting a community far larger than the TPS recipients. These communities are concentrated, intensifying the overall impact, and more live here in the D.C. suburbs than anywhere else.

On average, Salvadoran TPS recipients have been in the U.S. for 21 years; one-third have mortgages. These are people who have had legal work permits, who suddenly will not be able to work legally here. Their mortgages, and the mortgages of people who depend on them, will be at risk. Removing the ability of recipients to work legally will increase the risk of foreclosure, with negative economic impact across communities.

Salvadorans with protected status pay sales and property taxes. The communities they live in will be damaged. Their children will be more at risk. Our economy will be damaged.

THE SALVADORAN IMMIGRANT population is most concentrated in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, where 165,000 El Salvador-born residents make up 2.9 percent of the population.

Salvadorans in the United States sent \$3.6 billion home to El Salvador in 2012, 16.5 percent of that country's GDP.

Virginia has nearly 45,000 El Salvadoran TPS residents, almost all in Northern Virginia, and

concentrated in particular neighborhoods. Arlington has identified just four census tracts with more than 1,000 Salvadoran residents each (two with more than 1,400). In 2015, the most common birthplace for the foreign-born residents of Virginia was El Salvador, accounting for 96,515 Virginia residents. Fairfax County in 2010 was home to 43,566 Salvadorans.

Analysis shows that when Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian workers with TPS are removed from the labor force, the United States will lose \$45.2 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) over the next decade, according to Immigrant Legal Resource Center. When TPS holders lose their work authorization, it will result in a \$6.9 billion reduction to Social Security and Medicare contributions over a decade, as calculated by the ILRC.

All of that shows why this will damage communities and the economy. It says nothing about the harm to families. But the harm is great.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Sources: American Progress, Pew Hispanic, Center for Immigration Studies, U.S. Census, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, local government demographic data.

Here's What Makes America Great

BY ERIC WOLF WELCH

In the spring of 1937, my grandmother realized she and her family had to leave Germany. My aunt had just come home from school, her hair dyed black with ink and the words "Jew" written all over her clothes. This was the final straw. Within a matter of days, my grandmother, grandfather, aunt, and my mother (only 3 years old) snuck out of the little town of Dudelsheim, Germany, leaving everything behind and paying bribes to officials to obtain visas to exit the country. They boarded a ship to New York and were fortunate enough to have cousins who could sponsor their entry into America.

My aunt and mother were educated in America's public schools and universities. My mother became a teacher and my aunt a doctor. My grandmother worked for the Girl Scouts of America and my grandfather became a die-hard Yankees fan. They became Americans. They loved this country and had a deep sense of patriotism, which continues through their children and grandchildren today. They would not have lived and I would not exist without America opening her doors to my family.

I am a high school teacher in Fairfax County. I teach many students who remind me of my mother and my aunt. These students and their families also came to America to escape violence, poverty, and religious or political persecution. And just like my family, they are Americans (whether a document officially says it or not). They love the opportunity this country has provided to them and want to make the most of it.

Each generation, the American dream is re-

newed and continued, by the ancestors of previous immigrants and by new immigrants. What made America great, and what will make America great again, is immigration. The first European immigrants to America came with the hope of religious freedom and economic prosperity. How is this any different than a family today wanting to come to America from Yemen or Guatemala? John Winthrop, an early leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, said America needed to be a "city on a hill" whose light is a beacon. Leaders, such as President Ronald Reagan, have reminded and challenged us to live up to this vision that truly makes America exceptional among the nations of the world.

The current anti-immigration movement, spurred on by President Donald Trump suspending the DACA program, demanding a border wall be built, and calling for an end to so-called "chain immigration," is troubling because it attempts to move our country in a direction different than our past. "Chain immigration" is why I am alive. It's also why students from Iraq, Sierra Leone, and El Salvador are in my classroom, safely learning and thriving, rather than being killed or living in squalor. Should we stop being a beacon to these people?

Unfortunately, the anti-immigration movement is fueled by a belief that to allow others to have the opportunities we have as Americans is going to take away from our own wealth and prosperity. A prime example of this is the argument Virginia state Sen. Richard Black made against DACA students receiving in-state tuition, "Every time you give free stuff to people here illegally, you have to take it away from an American." This understanding of econom-

ics is misguided as well as selfish. History has proven that the contributions of immigrants to America improves our economy, increases our tax base, and creates more jobs and opportunities for all Americans. Our region's economy is a prime example of this. DACA students, and their families, are trying to live the American dream, and in doing so, they are contributing to, not taking away from, what makes America great.

From a moral argument, I am reminded of the story a Lutheran pastor recently told. He said imagine two rooms. One is well-lit and another right next to it is completely dark. When the door is opened, the light from the well-lit room enters the dark room and illuminates it. Yet, as that light spreads, the well-lit room continues to stay just as bright as it was before.

When America opens its doors, we do not lose our own wealth, prosperity, and well-being. Rather, we allow it to grow and spread and become greater than it was before. I urge you to remind Congress, our President, and all of us who make up this country to remember that immigration is what has and will continue to make America great.

The writer, an Arlington resident, is a social studies teacher at JEB Stuart High School and coordinator of the "AVID" program, an academic mentoring program to help students attend college, many of whom are the first in their family to attend college.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must include full name, home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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AREA ROUNDUPS

Valentine's Day Activities at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have railroad-themed activities and crafts with a Valentine's Day twist on Sunday, Feb. 4, 2018, from 1-4 p.m. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16

and older, \$4. Activities and craft supplies included in admission. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

Romance Comes to Gunston Hall

Celebrate the Valentine season with champagne and chocolates at historic Gunston Hall, the home of founding father George Mason. The Gunston Hall Docent Association will host its second annual fundraiser to benefit educational programs

at Gunston Hall on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 4-7 p.m.

The evening will feature champagne, small plate hors d'oeuvres and desserts, music by the Robinson High School String Quartet, and tours of the mansion by costumed historical interpreters. Participants may also bid on vacation getaways and other one-of-a-kind items. Tickets are \$50 per person. Space is limited and reservations are required by Feb. 3. Register at bit.ly/champagneandchocolates2018 or by sending a check payable to GHDA to Gunston Hall, Attn: GHDA, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton, VA 22079.

FAITH NOTES

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

The following is a list of events at Mount Calvary Baptist Church, 4325 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax:

- ❖ Adult Bible Study every Wednesday starting at 7 p.m., Youth Bible Study at 7:15 p.m.
- ❖ Full Praise and Baptism Service at 7 p.m., the last Wednesday of every month
- ❖ Sunday School at 9 a.m.
- ❖ Sunday morning service at 10 a.m., the 4th Sunday of every month
- ❖ Men's Ministry Bible Class, the Saturday before the 4th Sunday of every month
- ❖ Commonwealth Care Center ministry every first and third Thursday night. 703-273-1455.



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Alexandria Gazette Packet

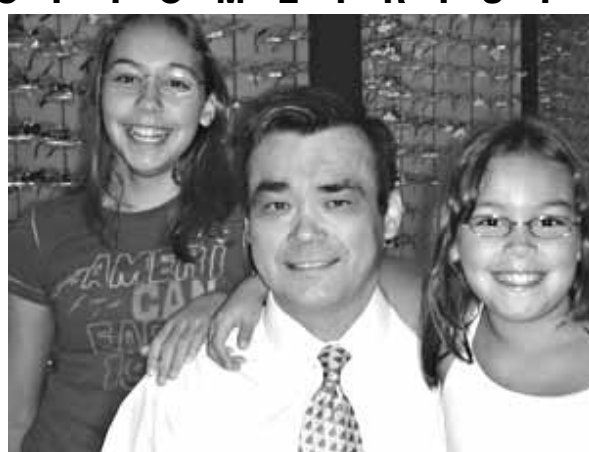
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HUNT VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Teacher: Ann Spring, Second Grade (Reprinting this page from Children's & Teens' Connection 2017 due to errors in matching students' names and artwork).



My Dog

My dog is a Schnoodle, a mix between a Poodle and a Schnauzer. Her name is Kylee. Her fur is blackish grey. Kylie is very fast. She beat my brother in a race and he's on the cross country team. He can run a mile in less than 6 minutes so she is very fast if she can beat him. When Kylie's running she looks like a rabbit. Once when it was snowing, we put little socks on her back legs. When we took her outside she did a handstand on the sidewalk because she did not like the socks.

—ADAM CARR, AGE 7



My Holiday Tradition

Ever since I was five I started a tradition. The tradition was I would go to my stairs, go down it a little, then peek around the wall and see if Santa Claus came. Once I saw Santa's foot. Then I go back to my room.

— JACKSON TIFFANY, AGE 8

My Pets

I loved my dogs because they were furry, silly, cute, and most of all kind. When I was a baby they snuggled up with me. My old dogs were King and Prince. They were both brown. When I was about one and a half they both died. But they're in my heart.

—SHAILA GREEN, AGE 8



My Pet

My dog is white with black dots. It is special because it is always near me when I am sad.

— MARISSA FALLERT, AGE 7



My Dream Cat

This is my dream cat. Her name is Violetta. She likes playing with yarn. She is a baby cat or kitten. She is soft. I like her soft violet fur. Her bed is pink though she is very small and cute and cuddly.

— AVA HARDER, AGE 7



My Two Cats

My pets are special because the first one laid on my sister's face at night and one time the second one put his face on my shoulder. But one time the first cat attacked the cat sitter but the other one was trying to save her. But he couldn't save the cat sitter. I love them because they're cute and cuddly. I love their whiskers and their purr. I love everything about my cats! I love the second one because he purrs really easily.

—ANNELEISE GAETA, AGE 8

My Holiday Tradition

I love Secret Santa! Secret Santa is when a family will put their names on paper then put it in a hat or cup. The family will pick names and whoever you get you will give them a present unless it is you. This year I got a V.R.

— MARCO PINEDA, AGE 7



2018 Color of the Year: Ultra Violet

Mixed reactions from local tastemakers who offer design ideas.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

It's a moment that interior designers anticipate all year: the announcement of the Pantone Color of the Year. Ultra Violet is the selection for 2018, and local designers are giving it a mixed reception.

"Interiors have gone so neutral, I look forward to suggesting... Ultra Violet, a color [that] can bridge warm and cool gray neutrals," said Moira Denson, interior designer and assistant professor of Interior Design at Marymount University.

"There's nothing subtle about Ultra Violet. It's one-dimensional and difficult to decorate with, except in very small doses," said interior designer Annie Elliott of Annie Elliott Interiors and Bossy Color. "I find the color loud. 'Look at me!' It screams."

The selection by Pantone, the self-described global authority on color, is intended to be a harbinger of the hue that will be on trend in the coming year. The organization's color gurus spend about nine months observing trends in industries ranging from film and entertainment to art and fashion.

This year's pick can add a burst of vibrancy to a home's interior in impermanent ways, advises interior designer Cathleen Gruver of Gruver Cooley. "Some quick easy ways to use the color are adding throw pillows, which are relatively inexpensive and easy to trade out," she said. "Accent plates on a dining table are an option for those who may not want to commit in their home."

"Use this color in extremely small doses," added Elliott. "If you really love this color, I suggest using it as part of a larger pattern. Don't buy a solid purple pillow; choose a pretty floral that has some Ultra Violet in it."

For those with less trepidation about Ultra Violet, interior designer Sarah Glenn of Braswell Design + Build in Alexandria, said, "The powder room is a great place to incorporate deep colors in interesting ways. Install a graphic violet wallpaper behind a bright white pedestal sink, or paint the ceiling a high gloss violet to reflect the decorative lighting in the room."

Dark and dramatic cabinetry, which Glenn says is trending this year, offers an-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOIRA DENSON

"Ultra violet sets a mood that allows all my landscapes to feel grounded," says artist Moira Denson, who is an assistant professor of Interior Design at Marymount University

other use for the Pantone pick. "Go bold and incorporate a deep violet island or base cabinets into a new kitchen," she said. "Incorporate a violet glass mosaic tile on your shower floor or as an accent stripe around tub walls. I especially love violet glass paired with the grey and taupe tones of

wooden white marble tile."

Some designers describe Ultra Violet as commanding, particularly when used inside a home. "This shade of purple is a powerful color and one that I would use as an accent," said interior designer Marika Meyer of Marika Meyer Interiors. "A little bit will go a long way. It is also a great color to pair with other colors, it is a very friendly complementary color."

"Good pairings include green and purple, a classic combination, but I've always liked red with purple," added Elliott. "Ultra Violet is a vivid color, so make sure you use equally strong colors with it so it doesn't dominate a palette."

Pair it with gold and yellow tones, suggests Denson, who is also an artist. "I paint skies all the time," she said. "It's what watercolorists do. To me, shades of the ultra-violet are the most pleasing sky. It works super well with what we traditionally think of skies: blue toned. It sets a mood that allows all my landscapes to feel grounded."

In announcing the selection, Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Color Institute described Ultra Violet as, "a blue-based purple that takes our awareness and potential to a higher level. Ultra Violet communicates originality, ingenuity and visionary thinking that points us toward the future."

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CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Senior Line Dancing. Mondays, 1 p.m.; Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. at Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8-week session. Email barbriba@hotmail.com or call 703-524-3739.

Fairfax Pets on Wheels New Volunteer Orientation. An orientation for new volunteers interested in visiting residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities with their approved pets through the Fairfax Pets On Wheels program is held the first Wednesday of every month starting at 7:30 p.m. Visit www.fpow.org for each month's location. Prior to attending, please complete the online application found at www.fpow.org/volunteer. www.fpow.org, 703-324-5424 or dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Carolina Shag. Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at 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.

FUN-Exercise Thursdays, noon-12:50 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. moorefitt@yahoo.com or 703-499-6133.

Exercise Program Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m. year-round at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. The exercises are for strength, balance and maintaining limberness. Contact SCFB office at 703-426-2824 for more information.

Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe). 7 p.m. 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.fairfaxva.com. 703-273-3638.

English Conversation Groups weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries Practice and improve your English. Day and start times vary. Visit: va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp

Funday Monday 10:30 a.m., every Monday at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There will be music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more. It is open to children of all ages, however especially for those who haven't yet started school. Programs are free and open to the public, donations are gratefully appreciated. There is ample free parking in the downtown area, and stroller access at the rear of Old Town Hall on Main St. 703-385-7858 www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

Art and Lunch. 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The Fairfax Art League will be hosting, bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Free. Visit www.fairfaxartleague.net or call 703-587-9481 for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com for more.

Bonita Lestina in Concert. 8-10 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. National Brass Quintet, part of the Old Town Hall Performance Series. Free. Call 703-385-7858 for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Family Irish Country Dancing. 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Live Music

Guest vocalist Kim Scudera will be on stage with Dave Anderson and Mike Wingo: Anderson-Wingo Duo on Friday, Jan. 26 at 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxarts.org.

at the Green Acres Center, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Free coffee, tea, and Irish soda bread, music by Shepherd's Pi. \$15, families \$25, GMU students \$5. Second Saturday each month. Call 703-273-6090 for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 14

George Washington Lecture. 2-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St. Illustrated talk by Dr. Peter Henriques, professor emeritus from George Mason University, called "I Can Not Tell A Lie: Myths About George Washington That Should Be Discarded." Free admission. Call 703 385-8414.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at the Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St. John Cox, who was a guide at the U.S. Capital Building will speak on the history of the building. \$10. Call 703-323-4788 or visit www.scfbva.org for more.

Friday Morning Music Club. noon-2 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Friday Morning Music Club, Inc. is a community of music lovers and musicians dedicated to promoting classical music throughout the metropolitan area. On the third Thursday of the month they host their performances at Old Town Hall. Visit www.fmmc.org for more.

Burke Toastmasters Open House. 6:30 p.m. at The Oaks Community Center, 5708 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Improve public speaking and presentation skills. Email pmagnuson@hotmail.com for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com for more.

Sherwood Family Movie. 7 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway. Featuring "Smurfs Lost Village." Participants may bring their own snacks. Britepaths will accept donations of non perishable food. Call 703-385-7858 for more.

Dance Fest 2018. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Harris Theatre at George Mason University, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Virginia Dance Coalition presents DanceFest 2018 Gala Performance highlighting 12 member companies. Visit www.virginiadancecoalition.org for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20

African American Museum. 1-3 p.m. at Kings Park Library, Large Meeting Room, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Dr. Johari Rashad will give an inside look at the new National Museum of African American History and Culture, located in Washington, D.C. Free. Visit <http://Sprann-va.aauw.net> for more.



Making History

Burke Historical Society is meeting Sunday, Jan. 28 at 8 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org, for more.

MONDAY/JAN. 22

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Movement Monday-Kids Zumba. Free. Call 703-385-7858 for more.

Qigong and Tai Chi Easy. 2-3 p.m. at King of Kings Lutheran Church, 4025 Kings Way, Fairfax. This six-week class will include Tai Chi Easy and other Qigong practices, with a focus on balance, flexibility and vitality — in all aspects of life. The class is suitable for all levels. Movements can be modified to suit individual needs. New students are welcome. Cost \$90. Pre-registration required. Call 703-378-7272 or email churchoffice@kofk.org. Questions about the class contact Pauline at reidpr@hotmail.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 25

Fall for the Book. 5:30 p.m. at the Great American Bistro, 10427 North St., Fairfax. Fall for the Book's New Pop Up Lit Nights invite the community to happy hour appreciations of literature and storytelling. Visit fallforthebook.org for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 26

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com for more.

Old Town Hall Concert. 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Dave

Anderson and Mike Wingo: Anderson-Wingo Duo with guest vocalist Kim Scudera. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxarts.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

Irish Dancing Show. 7 p.m. in the George Mason University Center for the Arts' Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. "Stepping Out" by Dublin Irish Dance, an exploration of the Celtic experience through the fast footwork of Irish step-dancers and an eight-member traditional Irish band. Call calling 888-945-2468, or visit cfa.gmu.edu for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 28

Railroad Story and Craft. 1:15 and 2:30 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have a day of fun for younger visitors with a railroad-theme story and a related craft. The Museum is open that day from 1-4 p.m. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2, 16 and older, \$4. Cost of activities included in admission. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Birdland All-Stars Concert. 7 p.m. in the George Mason University Center for the Arts' Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. With drummer Tommy Igoe for a high-energy performance. Call 888-945-2468 or visit cfa.gmu.edu for more.

Burke Historical Society. 8 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org, for more.

FRIDAY/FEB. 2

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com for more.

FEB. 2-4

Chocolate Lovers Festival. Various times in Historic Downtown Fairfax. Chocolate-oriented activities all weekend, including a Kiwanis Chocolate Chip Pancake Breakfast. The "love of chocolate" is the unifying theme. Visit www.chocolatefestival.net for a current schedule of activities or call 703-385-7858.

SUNDAY/FEB. 4

Railroad Story and Craft. 1-4 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have railroad theme activities and crafts with a Valentine's Day twist. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16 and older, \$4. Activities and craft supplies included in admission. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

MONDAY/FEB. 5

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There will be music, movement, story telling, performances, crafts for children of all ages. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts for more.

FEB. 7-MAY 9

Exercise Classes. 9-10 a.m. at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 6304 Lee Chapel Road, Burke. \$35. Call 703-323-4788 or visit www.scfbva.org for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 8

Art and Lunch. 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts for more.

Artist Reception. 7-9 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Come and enjoy refreshments, meet the featured artist and be a part of your local artist community. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts for more.

FRIDAY/FEB. 9

Bingo. 7 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com, or call 703-273-3638.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EARL ROBERTS

Earl Roberts is The Ringfinder in Fairfax.

Lost Ring? Call Ringfinder

Fairfax Ringfinder reunites lost items with owners; gets smiles in return.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

While at the backyard mulch pile, a Vienna resident was scattering some fruit scraps when the ring on her finger fell off, a family heirloom that had a lot of meaning. In came Earl Roberts, a City of Fairfax resident that is part of a loosely knit group called “The Ringfinders,” and found the ring after a few minutes. “I had her reenact the throw, within a couple of minutes I found the ring,” Roberts said. He could never forget “the smile on her face,” he said.



A ring from Fairfax that was reunited with its owner: Fairfax Ringfinder Earl Roberts reunites lost heirlooms with owners and gets many smiles in the end.

THE SMILES are one reason Roberts got involved with this craft, using his metal detector when all hope is lost for the jewelry owner.

Chris Turner from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, is the originator of “The Ringfinders,” which is an online directory of metal detecting specialists that will help people find their lost jewelry at beaches, parks, lakes and yards all around the world, as stated on their website. Although Turner has been involved with metal detecting since the 1970s, he started The Ringfinders in 2010. “My goal is to help get you reunited with your lost jewelry,” he said on his website. There is a “Book of Smiles,” section on the site, showing how happy folks get when their jewelry is found.

Although there are charges for this service, “the members listed on The Ring Finders directory all set their own rates and terms, and no recommendations, guarantees or endorsements are made regarding any of the individuals or businesses listed,” it states. There

are contacts all over the U.S., Canada, Hawaii and even as far as Peru, according to their map.

Many of the cases Roberts has been working involve yard work and the rings or jewelry comes off unexpectedly.

This was the case earlier in 2017 when a client in Fairfax was clearing out some ivy, put his ring in his pocket, and it came out during the day somehow. “There was a lot of ivy to search, right before dark I found it,” Roberts said.

He’s even been called to Maryland’s eastern shore in 2016 when a ring was lost in the surf at a beach. “We actually found the ring, it took two days, we had to wait for low tide,” he said.

Roberts is not one of those retirees at the beach who mans the metal detector at sunrise and spends a few hours with a sand sifter to find loose change from strangers, or a Civil War relic hunter. It started as a hobby when

he was in Okinawa with the Marine Corps and took his metal detector to the beach where there was a beach assault in World War II and found two or three knives, a bayonet, a helmet, uniform buttons and a set of dog tags. He even worked with a Japanese museum when he was over there.

TREASURE HUNTERS with metal detectors are shunned most times because of the damage they do while digging things up, like in the case with Civil War relics, but that isn’t the case, Roberts said. The jewelry is right on the surface, maybe under some leaves, but “it’s not six inches in the ground,” he said.

There is a Northern Virginia Relic Hunters Association, organized in February 1972 in Centreville, whose main source of relics is of the Civil War era, but they do not encourage relic hunting in parks and privately owned land. This is where the negative connotations of people digging around may come from. The NVRHA has supported various efforts whose ultimate goal has been the preservation of threatened historical sites, their information states.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Dancefest 2018 to Celebrate Northern Virginia Dance

Two-days of juried dance performances at GMU.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Two-days of juried dance performances from a wide range of local dance companies along with master classes and workshops taught by world renowned instructors, are coming to Northern Virginia. It is the Virginia Dance Coalition's (VADC) Dancefest 2018 at various George Mason University venues.

"We at the VADC strive to present the vast array of talent from different dance genres, and expose dancers to as much variety as possible," said Marilyn York, VADC President, and Director of Dancin' Unlimited Jazz Dance Company.

With a membership of about 40 dance companies, individual choreographers and dancers, "VADC works together to help each other," said York. "We are not competing against each other, but rather we're appreciating each other. Everyone has different styles of dance; even within genres. We challenge each other to reach higher levels of quality through this work, but don't get caught up in the competitive spiral."

VADC membership ranges from professional modern dance companies, to ethnic dance groups, and pre-professional ballet groups. Dance genres represented in the VADC include a variety of tap, jazz, theatrical dance and hip hop.

At Dancefest 2018, "the audience can expect to see an amazing demonstration of the colorful variety of dance genres represented in Virginia. The gala is a show that is in its essence entertainment, but also serves as a window into types of dance not normally seen together," said Caroline Frankil Warren, choreographer and former VADC president.

Demographics of Fairfax County are increasingly diverse. "Dancefest audiences and dancers alike will be exposed to companies and dance styles that they may not normally see and that they may want to continue to see," added Warren.

Dancefest 2018 is a partnership with the George Mason University (GMU) School of Dance. Susan Shields, the School of Dance director will be leading a Dancefest Master Class titled "Careers in Dance."

This year the VADC will award two scholarships for talented dancers from a member company



Nriyjanjali Dance Company in performance.

PHOTOS BY GLENN COOK/COURTESY VIRGINIA DANCE COALITION



Encore Dance Company in performance.

Where & When

Virginia Dance Coalition presents DanceFest 2018 at George Mason University (GMU), 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, on Jan. 19 and 21, 2018.

❖ Gala Performance at GMU Harris Theatre on Jan. 19, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$25.

❖ Workshops including master classes and seminars at GMU DeLaski Performing Arts Building on Jan. 21, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$40 for observer tickets for teachers and parents. Full two-day packages begin at \$125 for college students with ID, to \$140 for VADC member to \$170.

❖ Showcase performance of emerging talent at the GMU Harris Theatre on Jan. 21, 2018 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets \$20.

❖ For early bird rates, tickets, and registration go to www.virginiadancecoalition.org or call 703-409-7988

heading toward a professional career, or a college dance program. The scholarships are funded by the VADC and the Arts Council of Fairfax County. The scholarship winners will be announced at the Dancefest Gala performance held the evening of Jan. 19, 2018.

Inviting the public, Warren indicated that "the audience can expect to see an amazing demonstration of the colorful variety of dance styles that will serve as a welcoming window into types of dance not often seen together."

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

FY 2019 SCHOOLS BUDGET

FCPS Superintendent Scott S. Brabrand will present the **2018-19 school year (FY 2019) Proposed Budget** at the School Board meeting on Thursday, Jan. 11, at Jackson Middle School at 7 p.m. The School Board plans to hold a budget work session on Jan. 22, and a public hearing on the Proposed Budget on Jan. 29, with additional hearings on Jan. 30 and Jan. 31, if needed. Get more information on the FCPS budget at www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/budget/fy2019.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

Lee-Jackson Day

City government offices open; all services provided as usual. Call 703-273-1776.

General District Court will be closed. Call 703-385-7866.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Office Hours. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck will host Saturday office hours. Email mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov.

❖ 9-11:30 a.m. at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton.

❖ 12:30-3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon district office, 2511 Parkers Lane, Mount Vernon.

MONDAY/JAN. 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Schools Closed. All Fairfax County Public Schools will be closed. Classes will resume on Tuesday, Jan. 16. See the 2017-18 school year calendar at www.fcps.edu.

City government offices closed. Call 703-273-1776.

General District Court closed. Call 703-385-7866.

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center open. Call 703-385-8414.

Refuse and Recyclables Collection no service; regular Monday and Tuesday routes collected 1/16; yard debris collected week of 1/16. All city neighborhoods may experience atypical delays in yard waste collection this week. Leave items at curb until they are collected. Call 703-385-7837.

CUE Bus runs on modified weekday service. Call 703-385-7859.

TUESDAY/JAN. 16

Refuse and Recyclables Collection. Regular Monday and Tuesday routes collected. Call 703-385-7837.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 17

Women's Business Networking. 6-8 p.m. at Kendra Scott, 2920 District Ave., Fairfax. Awesome Women Entrepreneurs Fairfax will host its first meeting of the year at jewelry retailer Kendra Scott. The event will bring together women entrepreneurs from around the region, providing a friendly space to network and share some laughs with fellow women business owners. From 8-9 p.m., attendees will be able to shop for a cause — 20 percent of sales will be donated to Western Fairfax Christian Ministries. Visit fairfax.awesomewomen.org.

Public Meeting. 7 p.m. in Room 106 of the Herry Building located at 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The Fairfax County Park Authority will hold its annual public comment meeting on the agency's proposed fee adjustments. The public meeting agenda includes a brief presentation on the fee process followed by an opportunity for public comment. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/feemeeting for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St., Fairfax. **Are You 50 or Better?** Join in the next Lunch N' Life sponsored by the Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke. John Cox, who was a guide at the U.S. Capital Building, will speak on the history of the building. For reservations, call Bea Stephenson at 703-273-5730 **by Jan. 12**. The cost is \$10; checks payable to SCFB. If transportation is needed, call the SCFB office 703-323-4788. See www.scfbva.org for more.

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Litter Box Humor



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

We have five indoor cats: Biscuit, Chino, Twinkle, Sloan and Andrew, ranging in ages from 11+ years to 5+ years. We live in a two-story converted log cabin with approximately 1,750 square feet, closets not included. Closets in which you're bound to find cats, especially in the winter.

A few moths back, we contracted to have our two full bathrooms, one on each floor, renovated. Given that our house is over 250 years old, not likely a normal renovation. So far the renovation has taken months, as we were told, and as such, we wanted to employ some kind of strategy where we weren't constantly worrying about cats coming and going, sneaking outside, disappearing, and getting in the way of the workman and/or possibly suffering some kind of injury in the process. (Particularly true of Andrew and Biscuit who, uncharacteristic of many cats, are not the least bit put off by unknown people wandering about the house.)

And sure enough, after dinner on the first night FOLLOWING DEMOLITION, Andrew and his sister, Sloane, managed to break through some protective plastic surrounding the door blocking entrance to the upstairs bathroom where they managed to get into the house through an internal wall which had been torn down to the studs. It was their faint meowing which led to their discovery — in the downstairs attic above the kitchen. Their subsequent rescue confirmed that we would need to be extra vigilant to prevent further ado.

To secure the perimeter, we decided to segregate the cats on one side of the house on the first floor: including the kitchen, dining room and my office, with two sets of doors connecting to the living room and to the hall leading past the downstairs bathroom. This disconnect works perfectly because it prevents any escape and it enables the workman to walk in and out of the front door to ply their trade without needing any access to either of the three rooms where the cats are confined.

The cats food and water remains in its usual place in the kitchen. However there is one item (two actually) which has required a major move. You recall I said our cats are 'indoor,' right? And we're confining them to three rooms, right? Have I mentioned their litter boxes yet? Well, I am now.

Not a Herculean task by any means because once cats are shown their litter box's new location, they figure it out. But now their litter boxes which had previously been out of sight and sort of out of mind — one on each floor, have now been placed in two of the three rooms where they've been living most days and they are now most definitely in sight and on my mind.

One box was placed in the dining room where we rarely go at present since it's somewhat cluttered due to the renovation, and the other box was placed in my home office — which box seems to get the most use. (We sort of figured that the kitchen was out of the question.)

My office is approximately eight feet wide by 20 feet long, a space which separates the dining room from the outside wall. The litter box is on the floor at the far end of the room, not at all under foot, but neither out of sight nor out of smell. Where I sit, I am a well-positioned observer of the cats visits to their litter box.

As a consequence of this segregation - designed to secure their safety, and for the subsequent relocation of their litter boxes, in effect, I am now sharing a bathroom with five indoor cats.

All day long I am witness to their litter box proclivities; their arrival and departure, the sights, sounds and smells; their individual tendencies and habits, and of course, their comparative interest in visiting me on my desk before and/or after the paperwork is finished.

Soon we'll have to decide whether to return the boxes to their original location, and risk disrupting yet another new routine. Perhaps we'll leave well enough alone. After all, as any devoted cat owner knows: it's not about us, it's about them.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

12

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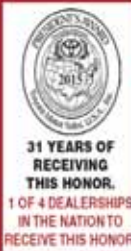
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