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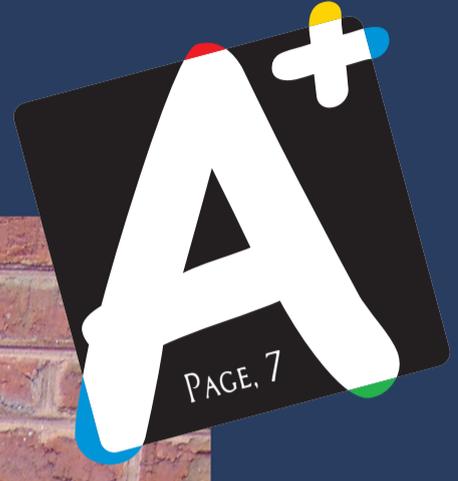
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# Great Falls CONNECTION



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New Langley High Principal Kim Greer. Former AP at Marshall High has 25 years as an educator.

## Langley High Welcomes New Principal

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### Wexton to Take On Comstock

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### When the Community Comes Together

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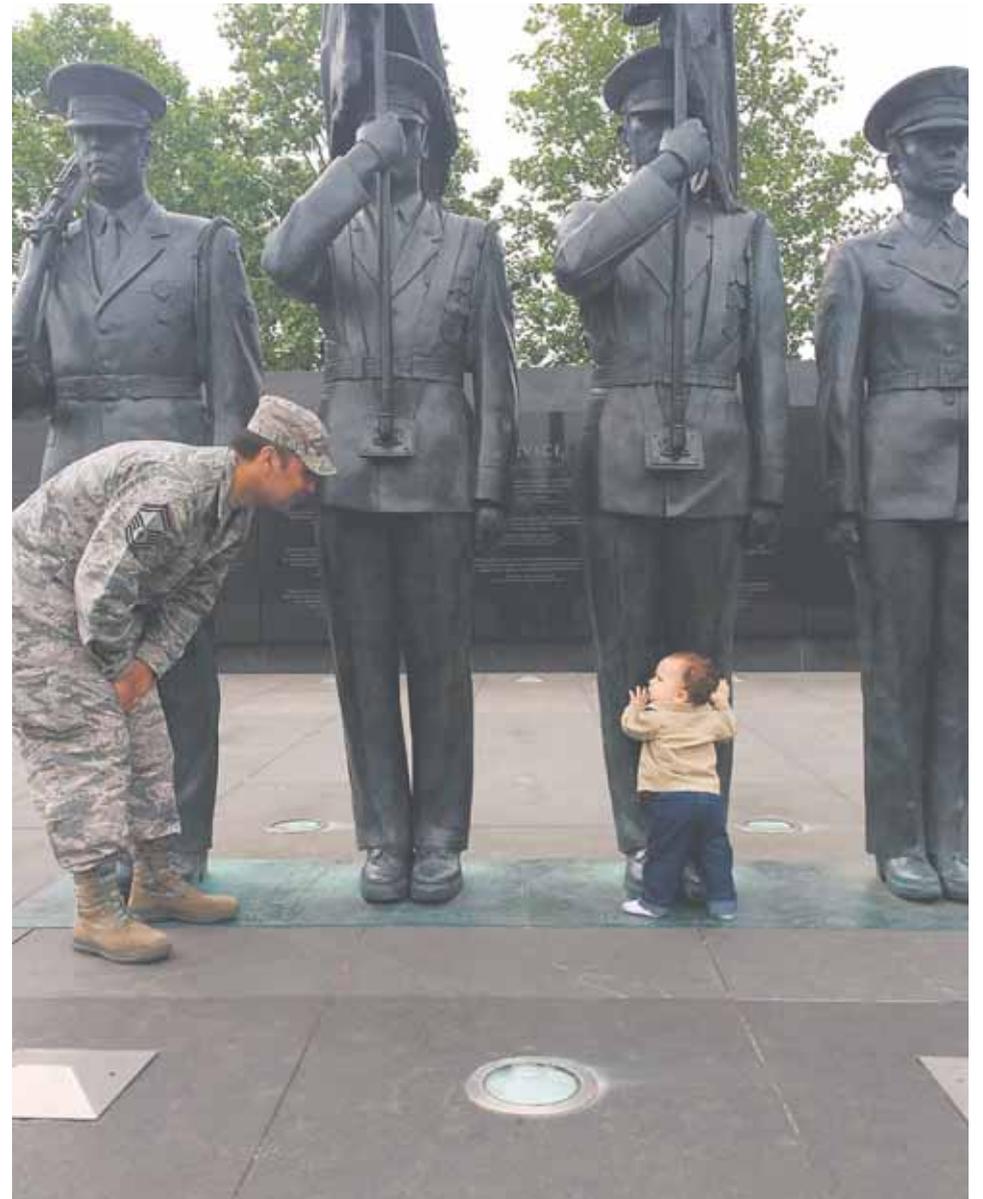


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SMSgt. Ron Brandt and his son Dominic Brandt, 1, of Great Falls, visiting the Air Force Memorial following Ron's reenlistment with the Air Force Reserves. Combined with his active duty time, SMSgt. Brandt is marking 20 years with the Air Force. Photo taken on May 20, 2018.

# Wexton to Take on Comstock

Moderate state senator did not get pulled to the left in primary.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

State Sen. Jennifer Wexton (D-33) made a name for herself in Northern Virginia as a tough-as-nails prosecutor, including one case that grabbed national headlines involving a woman who persuaded her boyfriend to kill her father with a samurai sword. During her campaign for the Democratic nomination in Virginia's 10th Congressional District, she never lost that sense of law-and-order grit, refusing to be pulled to the left as other candidates were calling for President Trump to be impeached.

"We are now on a mission to bring real representation to Northern Virginia and to remove Barbara Comstock from office," said Wexton in a statement shortly after securing the nomination. "Barbara Comstock has worked to strip healthcare from millions of Americans, proudly touts her A rating from the NRA, and is so out of touch with this district that she hides from her constituents and has never held a single town hall."

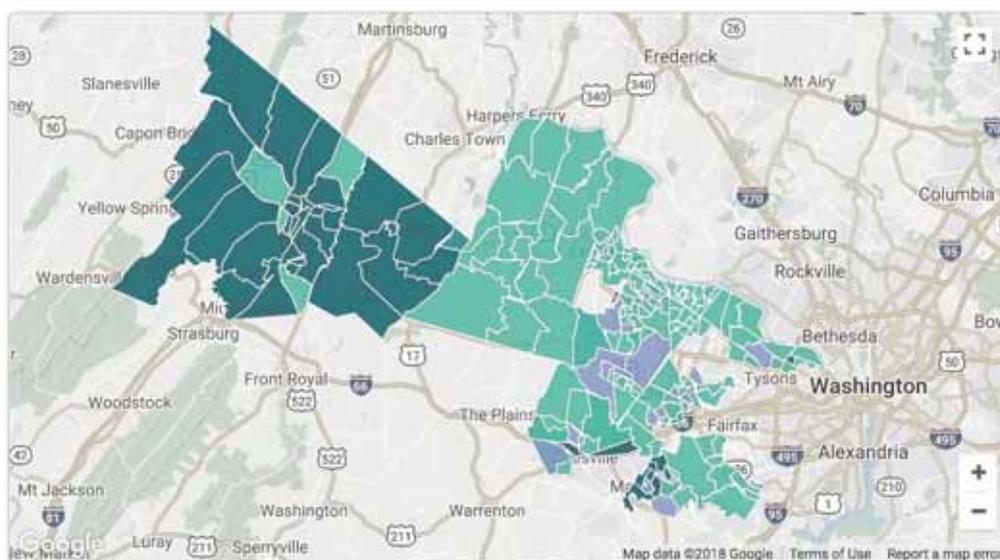
Comstock is the only Republican incumbent in Virginia to be defending a district that Trump lost in 2016, which puts this particular race at the top of the agenda for Democrats this fall. Two years ago, Comstock won 53 percent of the vote against Democrat LuAnn Bennett. But Hillary Clinton also won the district with 52 percent of the vote. Since that time, Comstock has tried to position herself as a centrist looking out for the interests of her constituents while taking an arms-length approach to some of Trump's more conservative rhetoric.

"She is the only candidate in this race who has voted to cut our taxes and increase our take home pay and grow jobs," said Susan Falconer, campaign manager for Comstock, in a written statement after her primary victory against Republican challenger Shak Hill. "She is the only candidate in this race to have passed two MS-13 anti-gang bills on a bipartisan basis that the president has already committed to sign."

**LAST YEAR'S BLUE WAVE** election has given Democrats hope that they're entering a midterm election season with the wind at their back, and they're targeting three incumbent Republican House members in Virginia. Aside from Comstock, incumbents who find themselves in the crosshairs include U.S. Rep. Dave Brat (VA-07) and U.S. Rep. Scott Taylor (VA-02). The House Ma-

Jennifer Wexton ✓	22,394	41.88%
Alison Friedman	12,289	22.98%
Lindsey Stover	8,561	16.01%
Dan Helmer	6,709	12.55%
Paul Pelletier	2,010	3.76%
Julia Biggins	1,512	2.83%

Click on a precinct for details



10th District map.



Barbara Comstock

**"Barbara Comstock has defeated a Jennifer Wexton-type candidate before, and she'll do it again in November."**

—Maddie Anderson, spokeswoman for the National Republican Congressional Committee.



Jennifer Wexton

**"Together, we built momentum and enthusiasm that will ensure Democrats can unseat Barbara Comstock this November."**

—Lindsey Stover

## 211 OF 211 PRECINCTS REPORTING (100.00%)

Jennifer Wexton	22,394	41.88%
Alison Friedman	12,289	22.98%
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Dan Helmer	6,709	12.55%
Paul Pelletier	2,010	3.76%
Julia Biggins	1,512	2.83%

## 211 OF 211 PRECINCTS REPORTING (100.00%)

Barbara Comstock*	28,274	60.71%
Shak Hill	18,301	39.29%

[HTTPS://WWW.VPAP.ORG/ELECTIONRESULTS/20180612/USHOUSE/](https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/20180612/USHOUSE/)

majority PAC is supporting Democrats in all three of these races, hoping to turn these red parts of Virginia blue.

"These candidates will stand up for Virginia families and fight for an agenda that lifts up the middle class while their Republican opponents have made it clear that they aren't looking out for the hardworking Virginia families they're supposed to represent," said Charlie Kelly, executive director of the political action committee. "These Republicans have enabled a toxic GOP agenda that raises taxes on hardworking Virginians, imposes a devastating age tax and takes away health care from millions of Americans."

**WEXTON** was able to beat back a crowded field of Democratic challengers, including two former Obama administration officials. One, Alison Friedman, was able to pump \$1 million into her own campaign and remained a constant presence on television ads. The other, Lindsey Davis Stover, became a constant presence at community meetings and town halls over the last few months. In the end, neither was able to match the name recognition that Wexton has built.

"From the moment it began, this campaign has been about putting people back into the center of our politics," said Stover in a concession statement, thanking the other candidates in the race. "Together, we built momentum and enthusiasm that will ensure Democrats can unseat Barbara Comstock this November."

Friedman was able to win seven precincts in Fairfax County and nine precincts in Loudoun County. And Stover had a strong showing in Frederick County, Manassas and Winchester. But Wexton was able to run up the numbers in Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William County for a comfortable margin of victory. Republicans say they're ready to take on Wexton this fall.

"The nasty and divisive Democratic primary forced Nancy Pelosi recruit Jennifer Wexton to lurch to the far-left, rendering her unelectable," said Maddie Anderson, spokeswoman for the National Republican Congressional Committee. "Barbara Comstock has defeated a Jennifer Wexton-type candidate before, and she'll do it again in November."

# Kim Greer is New Langley High Principal

Former AP at Marshall High has 25 years as an educator.

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

**K**im Greer of Fairfax, who has 25 years in education, was named new principal of Langley High School, effective July 2. She will be replacing Fred Amico, who is retiring. Greer will be leading 1,800 students and a staff of 157 teachers at the only high school in Fairfax County that offers a Russian and Japanese immersion program.

As part of the Langley Pyramid, the ethnic breakdown of students at Langley High from 2016-17 stats includes: white, 64.59 percent; Hispanic, 5.07 percent; Black, 1.12 percent; Asian, 23.59 percent; and Other, 5.63 percent. There are 95.18 percent of students in the General Education program.

"It's going to be a school where it's less diverse than most in Fairfax County, but it's a high-achieving school. It's a supportive community where everyone wants to make sure the students have the skills necessary to be successful post-secondary," she said.

She added: "When you look at the fact that you have a school where most of the students come from a higher socioeconomic level or background, that provides resources



PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION  
**New Langley High Principal Kim Greer.**

to students who are highly motivated to do well, I think, and get a lot of support from the community," she said, adding. "For me, it's about meeting the needs of the whole child. While these kids might have a lot of financial and physical resources, at the end of the day, they're still kids. So, we need to make sure we're able to take care of all of their needs."

**"The Langley High School community will quickly learn how much Kim cares about students, teachers, staff, parents and the community at large."**

—Marshall High Principal  
Jeffrey Litz

Built in 1965, Langley High, which is completing a schoolwide renovation, already has a business partnership with Deloitte of McLean. Greer is looking to strengthen it and make it a two-way partnership. "I'm looking to provide many opportunities to our students through the partnership," she

said. Deloitte employs 245,000 people in 150 countries and provides audit and assurance, tax, legal, risk and financial advisory and consulting services.

**AS FAR AS CHALLENGES**, she's looking forward to getting to know the Saxons community, the kids and the families of Langley. "There's a very strong contingent of teachers who have been there for many years, so I want to continue to meet the needs that they may have as well as finding ways to be innovative in our teaching and learning practices," she said. One of her goals is to build relationships and trust with key stakeholders, she added.

What she loves about her job is "being able to ensure that the needs of every student and teacher are being met. That's what really gets me up in the morning," she said.

While working with the school's PTA, she wants to "make sure I recognize that right now there's a strong relationship between the school, administration and PTA, so I want to continue that relationship to use the organization for a resource for the school and a way for us to be able to meet the needs of all of our learners," she said.

According to Marshall High Principal Jeffrey Litz who worked with Greer: "Kim Greer is an extremely competent administrator who I am sad to lose at Marshall High

SEE LANGLEY HIGH, PAGE 5

## When the Community Comes Together

On July 4, Great Falls celebrates hometown.

**J**ulie Casso is a prominent member in the Great Falls community and for good reason. A local resident since 1997, she has made herself invaluable to many different charitable and volunteer organizations.

While leading groups in her neighborhood early on, one of her biggest impacts has been on the July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities. Casso initially just helped out as needed, but since 2003 directed the parade and green events.

"The July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, green activities, and the fireworks ... that tradition is our small town, hometown celebration. The parade is going to happen



**Julie Casso**

whether we're there or not. The people know what to do. The same man is there every year, early in his car and everyone else just lines up behind him." Casso enjoys all aspects of the event, especially the people watching. "The best part is running into your neighbors, seeing the familiar faces. I love seeing the older residents that come just to watch; they don't have kids around anymore, but they still show up."

She took on even more when she

joined the board of Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) as Vice President of Membership a year ago. Casso shared, "Joining GFFN has been a different volunteer role because the focus is not on kids but on meeting new ladies and building new friendships in a club that is civic, social and philanthropic. I guess this was the next natural step in my life."

Missy Perkins, the President of

the GFFN, appreciates the addition of Casso. "I have known Julie for about two years. One of our Nominating Committee members, Erin Lobato, invited Julie to be on the board as Membership VP. Julie's engaging personality and warm smile, along with her organizational skills and business and marketing expertise, have been a welcome addition to the GFFN Board."

Casso continues her role as Executive Director of The Arts of Great Falls located in the Village, and welcomes artists and lovers of art to the studio. Explore the many classes, workshops, and exhibits given at <http://www.greatfallsart.org/>. You can join the team of July 4<sup>th</sup> volunteers at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084cada92b0-2018>.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GFFN

**Julie Casso (fourth from left) with the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Board members.**

# NEWS

## Langley High Welcomes New Principal



**New Langley High Principal Kim Greer.**

STEVE HIBBARD/  
THE CONNECTION

FROM PAGE 4

School. At the same time, I am very happy for her. She has been working very hard and has earned the opportunity to be principal of such a great school. Kim strongly believes that every child is an individual and that we, as educators, need to reach each child by name and by need. The Langley High School community will quickly learn how much Kim cares about students, teachers, staff, parents and the community at large. I am confident Kim will be a wonderful principal and continue what has been a strong career.”

Added Helen Anderson, special education teacher at Marshall High: “Langley is so fortunate to have such a strong administrator as their principal. (Kim) is an expert in all things FCPS. She is fair, progressive, and open-minded. My favorite thing about Mrs. Greer is that she hires the best and most qualified teachers, and then she stands back and allows us to do our jobs. She has never micromanaged us. As a special education teacher, I have faced many challenging students and situations, but Mrs. Greer has always been incredibly supportive, and she has an intimate knowledge of Virginia’s Special Education laws.”

Ellen Reed, learning disabilities

teacher at Marshall High, added: “Kim Greer leads with grace, confidence, and poise. Her example of leadership is pristine and she exudes respect for her staff. Kim has been instrumental in my personal development as a leader, consistently mentoring and supporting me in my journey. I’ve gained invaluable skills from being under her leadership, and she is going to be greatly missed.”

**GREER GREW UP** in Lenoir, N.C., and received her bachelor’s degree in middle grades education from UNC Greensboro; a master’s in curriculum and instruction from Virginia Tech; and an Administrative Endorsement through George Mason University.

She started her teaching career at Key Middle School where she taught English; then Hayfield Secondary where she taught civics and U.S. history (teaching for a total of 12 years); then held assistant principal jobs for 11 years at Westfield High, South Lakes High, and Marshall High schools. She is already transitioning over to Langley High.

At Marshall, Greer is known for saying: “A bad day at Marshall beats a good day anywhere else,” which she says (with a smile) she’ll be using at Langley, too. Greer is married and has three children ages 17, 15, and 12.

## Great Falls Student Awarded in National History Day Competition

In the National History Day program held at the University of Maryland, College Park June 10-14, Jane Carskaddan, a tenth-grader from Great Falls, and a Langley High School student, received the Virginia Outstanding Senior Entry Award for her research paper, “444 Days in the Dark: The Iran Hostage Crisis.” Her paper advanced to the final round of judging and was among the top ten of ninety-seven Senior paper entries. Founded in 1974, the National History Day Contest was created to inspire students to conduct original historical research. Since its creation, the contest has grown into an international competition with more than half-a-million participants and thousands

of dollars in scholarship awards and prizes annually. According to an independent study in 2011, students who participate in the National History Day Contest are better prepared for college, careers, and citizenship. They also outperform their peers in areas including communication, planning, research and perseverance. Many of the fifty-nine Virginia students who competed at the National Contest have already turned their attention to next year’s theme: Triumph and Tragedy in History. They will have until next February and March to put their final touches on new exhibits, documentaries, papers, performances, or websites – before the 2019 competition season starts anew.

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# The Art of a Deal with the Devil

BY GERRY CONNOLLY  
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (D-11)



Against the backdrop of American and North Korean flags, the world finally got a glimpse into the negotiating skills of the so-called “Master of the Deal.” After much fanfare more appropriate for a reality television show than a historic diplomatic summit, the president emerged empty-handed. Trump gave the North Korean dictator everything he’s longed for — international legitimacy, an audience with an American president, and the cancellation of military exercises with our South Korean ally. And President Trump got nothing.

There is great danger in a president more committed to the optics of a getting a deal than the substance within it. Trump’s on-again, off-again agreement to a nuclear summit with Kim Jong Un was a high-risk gambit that squandered valuable leverage and gained no concessions in return. With little preparation and guided by his “feel” that within the first minute he would know if a deal is possible, the president rolled out the red carpet for Kim, ignoring that the devil is in the details.

Kim got the propaganda he needs back home, while concrete commitments from the North Koreans to denuclearize remain elusive. The administration’s oft-repeated language that de-

nuclearization must be “irreversible” and “verifiable” was not even mentioned in the joint statement, nor any reference to North Korea’s egregious human rights violations and Kim’s illegal imprisonment of more than 100,000 people in gulags. And the president’s weakness and naiveté signals to nuclear threshold states that they too should adopt the North Korean

model of extreme brutality, threats and endless provocation.

Even more troubling, this summit follows President Trump’s shameful behavior with our closest allies at the G-7 summit. While we repay our allies’ loyalty with misguided tariffs and disrespect, the president is cozying up to one of our greatest foes, cementing the worldview that America is retreating again.

The Korean peninsula is a dangerous global flashpoint and we must remain open to diplomatic engagement with the North, but not at any cost and not without assurances that such an endeavor is guided by steady hands. We can’t have amnesia about the past. North Korea has previously made denuclearization commitments in 1994, 2005, and 2012, only to renege on each in 2002, 2009, and 2012, respectively. But Mr. Trump cares little about substance, history or strategy.

We had a model that worked. In response to illicit Iranian nuclear activities, the international community established a robust sanctions regime that drove Iran to the ne-

gotiating table. Before agreeing to formal talks, the United States extracted specific commitments from Iran to freeze portions of its nuclear program. But it was the promise of relaxed sanctions and increased international trade that convinced Iran to reverse its nuclear program and adopt the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with which it is in compliance to this day. Articulating incentives for denuclearization, commensurate with strict and verifiable nuclear dismantlement, should have been an essential component of any diplomatic engagement with North Korea.

When the president tore up the Iran nuclear agreement, simply because it was signed by his predecessor, he set his own standard for North Korea: absolute denuclearization, absolutely verifiable. Anything less than that is a failure by his own admission. Following the summit, we are not even close to the goal of a denuclearized North Korea.

The consequences of a nuclear North Korea are real and rushing to a bad deal could prove catastrophic on a global scale. The president needs to step back and recognize that substance and details matter. You are negotiating with a manipulative, erratic, and murderous dictator. Proceed with great caution, because this isn’t real estate. You can’t just walk away. Millions of lives hang in the balance if you agree to a deal on Kim Jong Un’s terms.

*Connolly is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.*

COMMENTARY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Disappointed By Changes

To the Editor:

The following statement was issued regarding the Fairfax County School Board’s vote on its Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum.

While I am pleased that the Fairfax County School Board has voted to retain clergy among the list of people our youth ought to consider trusted adults, I am nevertheless disappointed to see the board has chosen ideology over biology in introducing such terms as “sex assigned at birth” in place of “biological sex” in the schools’ Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum. It is also distressing to see students receiving information about the drug regimen PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) while at the same time not learning that abstinence is the only 100 percent effective way of preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). As a community committed to proclaiming the truth about human life, dignity and sexuality, the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Arlington will continue its efforts to educate the

public regarding the content of the FLE curriculum and encourage parents to exercise their God-given right to “opt-out” their children from those lessons that distort the truth and are morally offensive.

**Bishop Michael F. Burbidge**

Catholic Diocese of Arlington

## Board, in 10-0 Vote, Approves More Inclusive Policies

To the Editor:

On June 14 at its regular meeting, the Fairfax County School Board approved updates to the Family Life Education Curriculum which are more inclusive of transgender students and family members, and a provision which will teach about ways to help fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic and inevitably save some of our students from infection.

Many members of the LGBTQ community and many allies came to the School Board meeting wearing purple, outnumbering those

opposed by more than two-to-one. School Board members Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon), Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee), Megan McLaughlin (Braddock), Jane Strauss (Dranesville), Dalia Palchik (Providence), Pat Hynes (Hunter Mill), Sandy Evans (Mason), Karen Keys-Gamarra (at-large), Ilryong Moon (at-large) and Ryan McElveen (at-large) spoke eloquently and clearly in support of these provisions. Sully representative Tom Wilson and Springfield representative Elizabeth Schultz spoke against them, but were in fact away from the table for the final vote; it was unanimous at 10-0.

As president of FCPS Pride (a social welfare organization for LGBTQ employees, parents of LGBTQ students, and LGBTQ parents and allies in Fairfax County Public Schools), I would like to express my gratitude for the citizens who came to support, and to the elected officials who responded to those community members. We look forward to contributing, canvassing and voting at the elections in 2019.

**Robert Rigby, Jr.**  
President, FCPS Pride

## Deafening Silence

To the Editor:

Once again Barbara Comstock’s silence is deafening. It should be remembered that Representative Comstock failed to speak up quickly in the wake of President Trump’s ill-thought out and discriminatory Muslim Ban. These past few weeks, Comstock similarly has failed in her duty to represent not only her district but the values that should guide and limit American policy. Separating kids, including babies, toddlers, and others who cannot possibly understand such separation, is unbelievably cruel. Separating children and then detaining them is reminiscent of some of the lowest moments in our history. Although hard-liners justify such actions using the language of national security and even, in the case of Jeff Sessions, the Bible, we have done similar things in the past, such as Japanese internment, to our shame. Republicans finally are joining Democrats in calling for an end to this cruelty. Just this week

SEE LETTER, PAGE 11



# Talking to Children about Suicide

Creating safe environment is key to opening a discussion.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The recent high profile deaths by suicide make it inevitable that children will ask questions and express a curiosity about the topic. However, some parents might feel a sense of uneasiness about answering those questions. Local mental health educators say that the steady increase in death by suicide each year since 1999 makes those conversations vital.

Parents can begin by creating a safe environment for an age-appropriate dialogue, says Linda Guly, Ph.D, professor of psychology at Marymount University. "As always, reassure young children that you are there for them no matter what," she said. "Don't feed into the anxiety. Teens understand it 100 percent, probably more than you realize."

"Encourage children to ask questions and answer them honestly," added Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University. "Parents should state that they will help their children handle any bad feelings or problems that happen."

Suicide can be a frightening topic for children and a difficult subject for parents to explain, advised Short. "Explain that people die in different ways and suicide means that people hurt themselves and died from it," he said. "A more detailed explanation is that our thoughts and feelings come from our brain, and sometimes a person's brain is sick. People feel alone, believe they are a burden on others, and are hopeless that it will change. Some people cannot stop the hurt they feel inside by themselves, but they can get help."

Parents should have a general understanding of suicide rates, signs and methods of preventing before embarking on a conversation with their children about the topic, advises Monica Band, Ed.D., assistant professor of counseling at Marymount University, who recommends the National Suicide Prevention and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention as sources of information. "I would also recommend parents challenging their misconceptions and preconceived notions of [those who] who attempt and think of committing suicide because it is an issue that has an impact across cultures."

Some children might not understand the difference between feelings of sadness and clinical depression. "Explain that we all get sad and have good days and bad days," said Guly. "Usually we feel better. But kids who commit suicide are so sad that they don't know what to do to feel better. But the truth is there is a way to feel better, and there are very helpful adults in school and at home who are great to talk to."

However, some children might have difficulty grasping the concept of mental illnesses like depression. "Sad is normal, sad is part of life, and usually we feel sad when something outside of us happens,

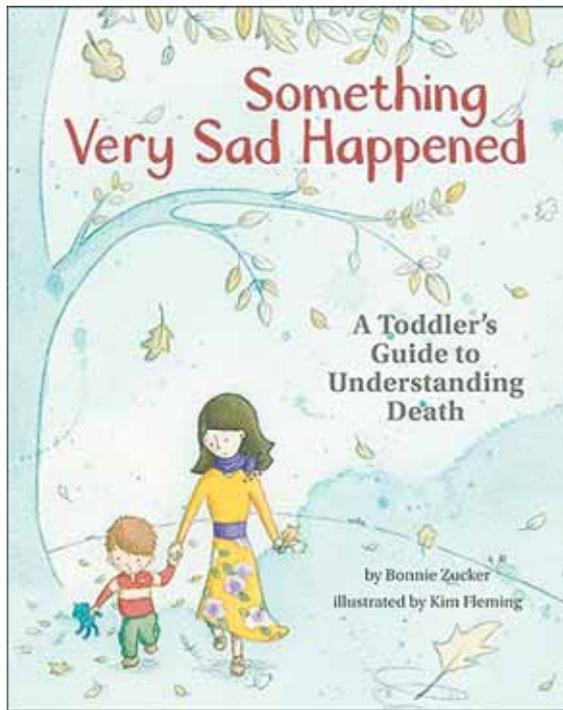


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Books like "Something Very Sad Happened: A Toddler's Guide to Understanding Death" by Bonnie Zucker can help parents explain concepts of mental health to their children.**

like when a friend moves away. And we know that we will feel better," said Guly. "Depression is when someone feels hopeless that he or she won't be sad anymore. And that makes them not want to do fun things, or take care of themselves."

An awareness of warning signs of mental illness and the fact that depression is not a normal phase of adolescence are two factors that Guly underscores. "[Depression] is a serious mental health disorder for which there are effective treatments," she said. "Parents need to be aware of kids isolating themselves from others, especially peers. Other signs [include] not taking care of your physical appearance, consistently performing poorly in school, substance abuse, eating disorders, excessive or inadequate rest."

If a parent notices any of these symptoms or suspects that their child might be depressed, Guly advises a straightforward approach. Don't be afraid to ask your teen directly, "Do you think you are depressed?" or "Have you been thinking about hurting yourself?", she suggests.

Teaching a child healthy help-seeking behaviors will give them an invaluable tool when facing mental health issues, advised Monica P. Band, an assistant professor of counseling at Marymount University. "If parents raise the child to have specific religious or spiritual beliefs, this could be a way to begin the discussion of how one finds

strength, resilience, or peace in times when they feel like they're not in control," said Band. "Regardless of one's religious or spiritual beliefs, it is worth it if parents have an understanding and awareness of mood shifts or changes with their children and set an example and expectation with how to address these issues when things aren't feeling right or normal for their child."

## Resources

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>  
**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

<https://afsp.org/about-suicide/risk-factors-and-warning-signs/>

### BOOKS:

**"Something Very Sad Happened: A Toddler's Guide to Understanding Death"** by Bonnie Zucker

**"Depression: A Teen's Guide to Survive and Thrive"** by Jacqueline Toner and Claire Freeland

**"Danny and the Blue Cloud"** by James M. Foley

**"Why are You So Sad, A Child's Book About Parental Depression"** by Beth Andrews

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# CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

**“Swimming with Whales.”** Through June 24, Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.; Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m.; and Sundays at 2 p.m. at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. This world premiere production invites audiences into a world of healing, compassion, and renewal. While Visiting his family’s secluded cottage on the shores of the Atlantic ocean, Owen, a typically urban 15-year-old boy, and his fisherman father clash until an unlikely and healing communion with an injured whale awakens in Owen a forgotten boyhood and connection with the sea. General admission, \$33; senior (65+), \$30; student and military, \$15. Closed captions and audio description will be offered for select performances. Purchase tickets at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) or 703-854-1856.

**Photography Exhibit: “Nature’s Palette.”** Through June 30, at Katie’s Coffee House, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Cindy Dibbs takes every opportunity to enjoy and photograph nature whether hiking in Great Falls National Park, Glacier National Park or strolling along the beach. Her photos reflect the beauty of nature and she hopes the images will inspire others to protect and treasure the valuable gift of nature. Visit [www.cindydibbs.com](http://www.cindydibbs.com).

**Vienna Art Society Exhibition.** Through late June at North County Government Center, 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston. Visit [viennaartsociety.org](http://viennaartsociety.org).

**Fishing Rod Rentals.** Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Rentals available during Visitor center hours. Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental (2 hour max). Valid driver’s license required. Rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required for those 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/).

## WEDNESDAY/JUNE 20

**Summer Stories, Songs, and Sprinklers.** 1 p.m. on the lawn of the Freeman Store, 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. Young children and families are invited to listen to a story, tune into some favorite songs, then have a little casual fun with water sprinklers at 1 p.m. Wednesdays, through Aug. 8 (except July 4). Free and appropriate for all ages. Visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

**Shoot the Moon.** 2-3 p.m. at Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. In “Intro to Astronomical Photography,” students will study photographic techniques for capturing images of the sun and moon. Discover how to shoot the moon in daylight and safe methods for capturing images of the sun. Designed for participants age 10 to adult. Bring a digital camera with a telephoto lens. \$8 per person. Call 703-324-8618 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm).

**Learn Why the Sky is Blue.** 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Come to Observatory Park for “Rainbows, Haloes & Glories” to learn about these and other open sky phenomena. The program will cover sunrise and sunset phenomena, too, such as the green flash and purple light. Also discover why the sky is



**Tim Kubart and the Space Cadets perform in McLean Central Park on Sunday, June 24, 5 p.m. (new date). Tim Kubart and the Space Cadets are helping The Alden welcome summer back to McLean. Their Grammy award-winning album, “Home,” weaves together childhood memories with pop tunes, which is sure to turn the park’s gazebo into a dance party.**

blue and sunsets are orange. For participants age 6 to adult. \$8 per person. Call 703-324-8618 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm).

## WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/ JUNE 20-21

**Studio Ghibli: Nausicaa.** Wednesday, 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Thursday, 11 a.m. (English dubbed) at Angelika Film Center – Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. The Angelika Mosaic will feature animated films from the celebrated Studio Ghibli praised for their originality, stunning animation, and ambitious storytelling. All tickets are regular admission. Visit [www.AngelikaFilmCenter.com](http://www.AngelikaFilmCenter.com).

## THURSDAY/JUNE 21

**Live Music: Ciaran Lavery.** 7 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Jammin Java presents local, regional and nationally touring acts seven nights a week in an intimate, enjoyable setting. \$12 advance, \$15 day of. Visit [ciaranlavermusic.com](http://ciaranlavermusic.com) or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## JUNE 21-OCT. 31

**Row by Row Junior.** Local quilt shop proprietors like Jinny Beyer Studio (776 Walker Road, Great Falls) are welcoming children participating in Row by Row Junior to their shops. It’s the junior version of the summertime travel event for quilt making fans known as Row by Row Experience. Kids visit shops in person, collect a free sewing pattern, and find inspiration in colorful, creative world of sewing. At home, families can find free tutorial support and activities online by visiting [www.rowbyrowexperience.com](http://www.rowbyrowexperience.com) or [jinnybeyer.com](http://jinnybeyer.com) for local quilting.

## FRIDAY/JUNE 22

**Tyson’s Concert Series: Mandisa.** 6:30-8 p.m. on the Plaza at Tysons Corner Center. Tysons Corner Center’s 5th annual free Summer Concert Series offers a variety of musical guests and has proven to be a popular event for families, couples and teenagers. The Plaza is located off of The Tysons Corner Metro Station of the Silver Line. Guests are encouraged to arrive early. Visit [www.tysonscornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018](http://www.tysonscornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018).

**Summer on the Green: Wayne Tympanick Trio.** 6:30 p.m. area residents can catch a new and diverse musical act at the Town Green or at Chillin’ on Church. Bring blankets and chairs, but please leave Fido and

any other pets at home. The concerts are free and open to the public. Visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

**Opening Reception: “Exploring Colors & Textures.”** 6:30-9:30 p.m. at IACC, Pars Place, 2236-C Gallows Road, Vienna. A solo painting exhibition by Ramin Abraham. Adults only. Email [info@iacommunitycenter.org](mailto:info@iacommunitycenter.org) or call 703-314-7240.

## JUNE 22-JULY 31

**Art Exhibit: “Exploring Colors & Textures.”** Gallery hours at IACC, Pars Place, 2236-C Gallows Road, Vienna. A solo painting exhibition by Ramin Abraham. Email [info@iacommunitycenter.org](mailto:info@iacommunitycenter.org) or call 703-314-7240 gallery hours.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 23

**Used Book Collection.** 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at SunTrust Bank, 515 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. Used books, CDs, DVDs, software, children’s books, records, and recent books will be accepted. No encyclopedias, VHS or audiotapes. The Book Sale will be held on Aug. 31-Sept. 2 at the Spring Hill Recreation Center. The sale proceeds benefit scholarships for women. Questions: [aauwbookfair@gmail.com](mailto:aauwbookfair@gmail.com) or 703-527-4206.

**Riverbend Trail Day.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Riverbend Park Nature Center, 8700-8814 Jeffery Road, Great Falls. Explore the forest with family-friendly trail activities. Go on a scavenger hunt, make a windmill, identify bird calls, learn about local wildlife and meet the animals in the Riverbend Nature Center. Free. Call 703-759-9018.

## SUNDAY/JUNE 24

**Vegetable Plant Clinics.** 4-6 p.m. At Nottoway Park, 9601 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Focus will be on garden diseases. Fairfax County Master Gardeners will add a focus on vegetable gardening to their Plant Clinic program. Sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension. Contact the VCE Fairfax County Master Gardener Help Desk at 703-324-8556.

**Alden Summer Concerts: Tim Kubart and the Space Cadets.** 5 p.m. in McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd. Free parking at Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. The Alden’s 2018 Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park expand this year to include a “welcome, summer” concert, and then seven

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

concerts from July 1 through Aug. 12. Visit [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

**Concerts on the Green: The Alan Scott Band.** 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Centre Green. Sundays throughout the summer, bring a picnic and chairs for an evening of free, live music. Visit [www.celebrategreatfalls.org](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org).

## MONDAY-FRIDAY/JUNE 25-29

**Touch Rugby Camps.** 9 a.m.-noon. Children ages 5-14 learn touch rugby this summer from USA Rugby certified coaches. Details online through Great Falls Rugby Club and Falls Church Parks and Rec. Great Falls Camp runs June 25-29; Falls Church Camp runs Aug. 6-10. Cost is \$90-\$120 per week. Contact Ed Bracken at [ed.bracken@apsva.us](mailto:ed.bracken@apsva.us) or call 703-585-3063. Visit [www.greatfallsrugby.com](http://www.greatfallsrugby.com) and [www.fallschurchva.gov/452/Recreation-Parks](http://www.fallschurchva.gov/452/Recreation-Parks).

## WEDNESDAY/JUNE 27

**Summer Stories, Songs, and Sprinklers.** 1 p.m. on the lawn of the Freeman Store, 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. Young children and families are invited to listen to a story, tune into some favorite songs, then have a little casual fun with water sprinklers at 1 p.m. Wednesdays, through Aug. 8 (except July 4). Free and appropriate for all ages. Visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

**Wagon Ride.** 4:30-6 p.m. at Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Bring the family for a wagon ride through the woods to Poohsticks Bridge. Listen to Winnie the Pooh's story and play Poohsticks on the bridge. Age 2-adult. \$7 per person, and children must be accompanied by an adult registered for the program. Call 703-759-9018 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend).

## WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/ JUNE 27-28

**Studio Ghibli: My Neighbor Totoro.** Wednesday, 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Thursday, 11 a.m. (English dubbed) at Angelika Film Center - Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. Visit [www.AngleikaFilmCenter.com](http://www.AngleikaFilmCenter.com).

## FRIDAY/JUNE 29

**River Fishing by Boat.** 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Get an introduction to boating and fishing basics. Fish for smallmouth bass and sunfish from a canoe or jon boat. Previous experience rowing or paddling is not required. Boats, personal flotation devices (PFDs), fishing rods and bait are provided. \$16 per person, ages 5-adult. Maximum of three people per boat, one of whom must be age 16 or older. Everyone must register. Call 703-759-9018 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend).

**Tyson's Concert Series: A Great Big World.** 6:30-8 p.m. on the Plaza at Tyson's Corner Center. Tyson's Corner Center's 5th annual free Summer Concert Series offers a variety of musical guests and has proven to be a popular event for families, couples and teenagers. The Plaza is located off of The Tyson's Corner Metro Station of the Silver Line. Guests are encouraged to arrive early. Visit [www.tysonscornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018](http://www.tysonscornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018).

**Summer on the Green: Shenandoah Run.** 6:30 p.m. area residents can catch a new and diverse musical act at the Town Green or at Chillin' on Church. Bring blankets and chairs, but please leave Fido and any other pets at home. Free, open to



City Choir Director Robert Shafer



## Summer Stories, Songs, and Sprinklers

The Town of Vienna, in partnership with Historic Vienna, Inc. brings a little summer respite, for both parents and little ones. Young children and families are invited to listen to a story, tune into some favorite songs, then have a little casual fun with water sprinklers. Free and appropriate for all ages. Wednesdays, June 20-Aug. 8 (except July 4), 1 p.m. on the lawn of the Freeman Store, 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. Visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov) for more.

the public. Visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

## SATURDAY/JUNE 30

**Celebrate Independence Day.** 7 a.m.-fireworks finale at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Gates open at 7 a.m. Beginning at 10 a.m., splash and slide at the Water Mine water park. From 11 a.m.-3 p.m., rent a boat on Lake Fairfax. Look for food vendors near the park's main office. Fireworks begin when the sun goes down. Fireworks rain date: Sunday, July 1. Parking: \$10 per car. Call 703-471-5414 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax).

## SUNDAY/JULY 1

**Concert: City Choir of Washington.** 4:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Catholic Church McLean, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Concert of repertoire to be performed on July tour of England, including Faure Requiem, two works by Sir John Tavener and two by director Robert Shafer. Free. Call 571-206-8525 or visit [www.citychoir.org](http://www.citychoir.org).

**Alden Summer Concerts: Black Masala.** 5 p.m. in McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd. Free parking at Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. The Alden's 2018 Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park expand this year to include a "welcome, summer" concert on Sunday, June 3, and then seven concerts from July 1 through Aug. 12. Visit [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

**Concerts on the Green: Emma Bailey.** 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Centre Green. Sundays throughout the summer, bring a picnic and chairs for an evening of free, live music. Visit

## City Choir of Washington

Concert of repertoire to be performed on July tour of England, including Faure Requiem, two works by Sir John Tavener and two by director Robert Shafer. Sunday, July 1, 4:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Catholic Church McLean, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Free. Call 571-206-8525 or visit [www.citychoir.org](http://www.citychoir.org) for more.

[www.celebrategreatfalls.org](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org).

## TUESDAY & THURSDAY/JULY 3 & 5

**Studio Ghibli: Porco Rosso.** Tuesday, 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Thursday, 11 a.m. (English dubbed) at Angelika Film Center - Mosaic, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. Visit [www.AngleikaFilmCenter.com](http://www.AngleikaFilmCenter.com).

## WEDNESDAY/JULY 4

**Journey to the Potomac River.** 10:30 a.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. This 90-minute program includes a wagon ride through the woods and along the river. Learn about Riverbend Park's wildlife and the American Indians who once lived there. \$7 per person. Children must be accompanied by an adult registered for the program. Call 703-759-9018 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend) to register.

**Sprinklers and Sparklers.** 2-4 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Children can enjoy a makeshift waterpark on the Vienna Community Center grounds that offers a variety of water-based and other amusements. Water slides, slip 'n slides, snow cones, balloon twisting, and more are teed up for a good time. Be warned: participants will get wet. Visit [viennava.gov](http://viennava.gov).

**Fireworks and Festivities.** 7:15 p.m. at Yeonas Park, 1319 Ross Drive SW, Vienna. Celebrate with live music by Mars Rodeo. The Vienna Little League concession stand will be open for business. Fireworks blast off at approximately 9:30 p.m. Bring chairs and blankets to enjoy the show, but no alcohol or pets please. Visit [viennava.gov](http://viennava.gov).



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# Free Concerts

Select Sundays this summer at 5 p.m. in McLean Central Park Gazebo. 1468 Dolley Madison Boulevard, McLean, Va.

**June 24**  
**Tim Kubart & the Space Cadets**  
A "Welcome Summer" indie pop dance party for all ages!

**July 01**  
**Black Masala**  
Balkan and funk-music inspired brass band.

**July 08**  
**Backtrack**  
Impressive a cappella, creating covers of pop music for all ages.

**July 15**  
**Oh He Dead**  
Classic R&B influences with poignant lyrics to move your soul.

**July 22**  
**Hip-Hop Meets the Music of India**  
Hindustani classical music and acoustic hip-hop and D.C.'s go-go.

**July 29**  
**The English Channel**  
The British invasion tribute band.

**August 05**  
**Kara & Matty D**  
An acoustic duo making beautiful, top-notch vocal harmonies just for the kids.

**August 12**  
**Morgan Taylor's "Music of Gustafer Yellowgold"**  
Tasteful, smart and FUN songs for families.










**Interested in fun for everyone?  
Come to our family friendly concerts  
this summer!**

Presented by The Alden at the McLean Community Center in McLean Central Park, located at the corner of Old Dominion Dr. and Dolley Madison Blvd. (Route 123), in cooperation with the Fairfax County Park Authority and Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust. Schedule subject to change.

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made in his subject and how to avoid them.  
-Werner Heisenberg

## Announcements

## Yard Sale

**Huge Church Yard Sale**  
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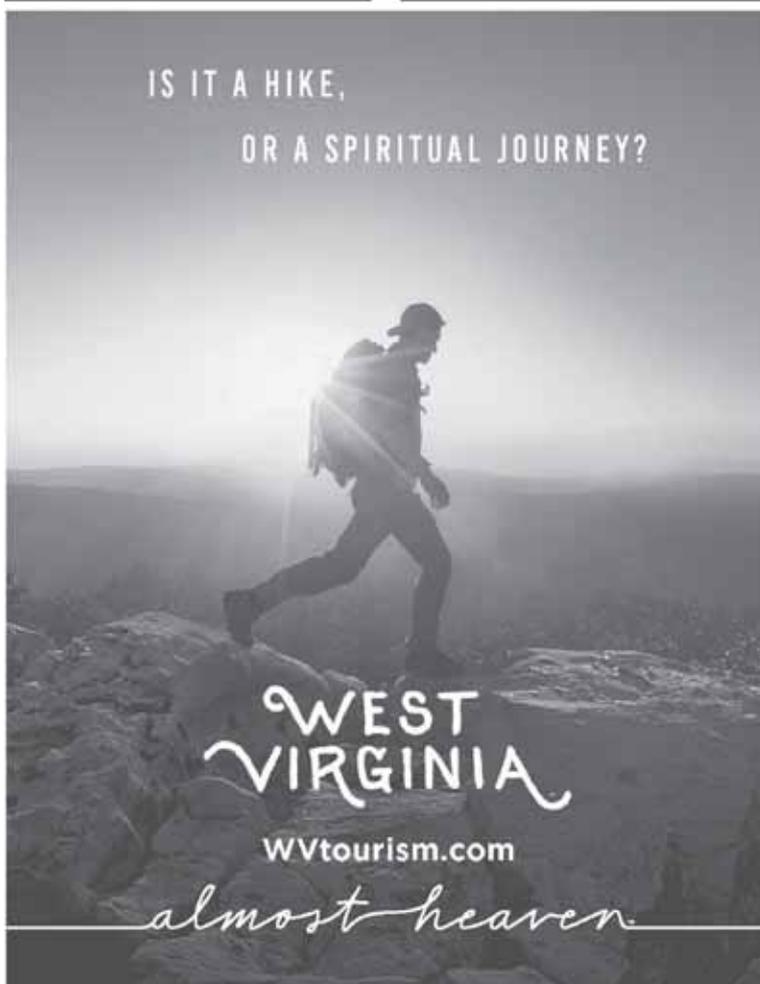
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## Announcements

## Announcements



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## NEWS

### Taste of Reston 'Savors the Flavor of Reston'

The Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce once again produced Taste of Reston, the largest outdoor food festival in the area. Now in its 35th year of production, Virginia Living Magazine named it Northern Virginia Best Food Festival for the past six years. According to organizers, the event held June 15-16 on Reston Town Center's internal streets and its carnival component at Lake Fairfax drew a reported crowd of approximately 40,000 people.

—MERCIA HOBSON

**Taste of Reston produced by the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce is the favorite summer food and music event of the Reston community.**



**Lucia Drake, 2, seems a little shy about having her face painted by Faith Carlson, member of the Vienna Singing Princesses at Taste of Reston 2018.**



### SoberRide Offered on Independence Day

Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), more than 40 percent of all U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers, free Independence Day Lyft rides will be offered to deter impaired driving throughout the Washington-metropolitan area beginning Wednesday, July 4.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2018 Independence Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 4 (Independence Day) and continue until 4 a.m. on Thursday, July 5, as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

During this nine-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a SoberRide code in the app's "Promo" section to receive their no cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's July 4 SoberRide promo code will be posted at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 4 on www.SoberRide.com.

Last year, 513 persons in the Washington-met-

ropolitan area used WRAP's Independence Day SoberRide program rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Halloween and the winter holidays.

Last year, WRAP announced a partnership with the ridesharing service Lyft to provide WRAP's SoberRide service in the Washington-metropolitan area. SoberRide, the free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, is now solely available via the Lyft mobile app ridesharing platform.

"Over 40 percent of all U.S. traffic fatalities during the Independence Day holiday in 2016 involved drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's president. "Worse, two-thirds of those killed in drunk driving crashes during the 2016 Independence Day period had BACs of .15 or higher."

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 72,377 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide initiative can be found at www.SoberRide.com.

# BULLETIN

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

## FRIDAY/JUNE 22

**Bike to Market Week.** 8 a.m.-noon at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The Fairfax County Farmers Markets will be celebrating Bike to Market Week at select locations in collaboration with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. Bring family and friends along and receive a free bike map and giveaways. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets) or call 703-642-0128.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 23

**Women's Summit 2018.** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at Hyatt Regency Dulles, 2300 Dulles Corner Blvd., Herndon. Network NoVA presents their second Women's Summit to continue the grassroots momentum of building coalitions across the state to flip Virginia's Congressional delegation blue in November. This weekend event for women and men will feature speakers, workshops, an advocacy fair, congressional row, and most importantly, network opportunities. \$65. Visit [networknova.org](http://networknova.org) for more.

**Community Workshop.** 9 a.m.-noon in the McLean High School cafeteria, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. The study focuses on the 230-acre area that's called the McLean Community Business Center in the county's Comprehensive Plan. More commonly called downtown McLean, this is the area centered around the intersection of Chain Bridge Road and Old Dominion Drive. This workshop will focus on community immersion and understanding. Residents who plan to attend are encouraged to RSVP, visit [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com), search McLean CBC.

## MONDAY/JUNE 25

**Great Falls Trailblazer Meeting.** 7-8:30 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9839 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls Trailblazers are having a general meeting at the library. All HOA and neighbors are invited to talk about trails in the community, help in identifying trails, clearing and maintenance. Maps will be available. Help also needed for the July 4th 5k run. Visit [www.GreatFallsTrailBlazers.org](http://www.GreatFallsTrailBlazers.org) for more.

**Future of Retail-Non-Office Building Repurposing.** 7 p.m. at Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Rooms 9/10, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. A public informational meeting on Plan Amendment 2017-CW-6CP - Non-Office Building Repurposing. The meeting provides an opportunity to learn how retail markets are changing and discuss how alternative uses may be used to fill existing retail spaces. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/plan-amendments/non-office-building-repurposing](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/plan-amendments/non-office-building-repurposing) or contact Michael Lynskey, DPZ, at 703-324-1204.

## LETTER

FROM PAGE 6

Laura Bush wrote a powerful op-ed highlighting the "immoral" nature of Trump's family separation policy. I suspect Comstock eventually will go on record opposing these policies—the power of images of kids ripped out of their parents' arms, trapped behind chain-link fencing, and relegated to sleeping on the floor of former Wal-Mart spaces or in tents in the Texas heat is just too great to be denied politically—perhaps even before this letter is published. But the fact that Comstock simply waits, that she lacks courage and conviction even in the face of obvious evils done by the Trump administration should not be lost on voters.

Regardless of one's feelings about immigration, we should expect more from our representatives.

**Ezra Rosser**  
Great Falls

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<p>Find us on Facebook and become a fan! www.Facebook.com/connectionnewspapers THE CONNECTION Newspapers &amp; Online The Connection to Your Community www.connectionnewspapers.com</p>	<p>An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them. -Werner Heisenberg</p>

## Watching Some More and Wondering No Less



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Recently, I bought my wife, Dina, the "Limited Edition, Downton Abbey, The Complete Collector's Set." Twenty-two discs, all the episodes, bonus features, etc. Now we can finally delete the saved content off our DVR; that should open up about half the available storage. Storage that we've happily used and accessed many times.

In its prime though, we did not miss a Downton Abbey episode when it was first broadcast on PBS (starting Jan. 9, 2011 and ending Jan. 3, 2016) and we've been recording, saving and watching ever since. We are two, of millions, who couldn't get enough viewing time of this period drama then and still can't to this day.

Ergo, the purchase. Now we are in control. If anything happens to our cable box – and it needs to be replaced/upgraded, we will not – as previously happened, suffer a potentially tragic loss of content in the exchange. Eliminating that worry alone has made the purchase worth the very reasonable price we paid.

Having the complete set in hand, Dina and I have decided to re-watch the series from start to finish. Heretofore, we had watched episodes in sequence, but not necessarily in chronological order – meaning season one, episode one through the final episode of season six. As a result of this decision, we have gotten reacquainted with story lines which had somewhat faded over time as there are some episodes we hadn't seen in years. We had saved many, but not all (when it was free to do so; now, the there's a cost, \$2.99 per episode to buy, I believe).

So far, we're through season two and we've thoroughly enjoyed the people, places and things – and the many nuances we may have missed or forgotten. However, this passage of time has caused Dina and I to rethink some of our opinions of characters and story lines.

There are two primary reassessments that oddly enough, Dina and I share.

One concerns Dr. Clarkson, the local/family doctor who runs the Downton Cottage Hospital. The other concerns Patrick Crawley (the cousin/original heir who was thought to have died when the Titanic sank in 1912) who reappears in season two as a convalescing Peter Gordon, a.k.a. P Gordon. As much as we like Dr. Clarkson, and are amused by his straddling the line between himself and the aristocracy, we have decided that we don't like some of his medical opinions: his hesitancy to even consider the treatment for dropsy for Mr. Drake that "cousin" Isobel (an experienced nurse) had proposed; his judgment of the possible psychological consequences of transferring the patient with gas blindness (with whom Thomas had developed a rapport) who subsequently killed himself – presumably rather than accept being transferred; and finally Matthew who suffered what Dr. Clarkson described as a transection of his spine when he and William were injured in battle which turned out to be a bruise.

An injury that he said would prevent Matthew from ever walking and – as later realized, fathering children either. In all three instances, Dr. Clarkson was proven to be wrong. As a consequence, if Dr. Clarkson was diagnosing my cancer, I'd ask for a second opinion.

As for Peter Gordon/P Gordon/Patrick Crawley and the story line concerning his reappearance as heir/heir pretender so many years after the family thought he had died – I would love to ask Julian Fellowes (writer and creator of "Downton Abbey") if this element was fact or fiction or simply a mere diversion for affect.

It all seemed so contrived, especially after "P" Gordon (who says he got his "name from a liquor bottle") leaves a note for the heartbroken Edith before there's any resolution. I mean, was he the heir or wasn't he? Did he leave because he felt the jig was up and the ruse was likely to fail? Or did he feel so betrayed and disrespected by his family (the Crawleys) that he felt his present and/or future could never be what he envisioned?

Consequently, there are two questions I'd like answered: was Peter Gordon actually Patrick Crawley and where did Dr. Clarkson get his medical training?

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

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