

Education Issues Take Center Stage

Constituents tell lawmakers to increase teacher pay; ERA, \$15 minimum wage and more.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Teachers deserve a pay raise, and Virginia desperately needs to hire more school counselors. These were two of the most prevalent concerns voiced by constituents to members of the Fairfax County legislative delegation, the largest in the Virginia General Assembly.

During a marathon public hearing at the Fairfax County Government Center last weekend, lawmakers heard about everything from raising the minimum wage to reducing restrictions on solar power. But it was the coordinated push for education funding that remained a common theme, as one speaker after the next called on members of the House of Delegates and state Senate to invest an expected windfall of new revenue into the classroom.

"K-12 funding is again our top priority for this legislative session," said Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, speaking at her last public hearing before stepping down at the end of 2019 from a position she's held since 2009. "We have over 55,000 students receiving free or reduced price lunch, over 36,000 students learning English as a second language and over 26,000 students receiving special education ser-



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE GAZETTE

Speaking at her last legislative public hearing as chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Sharon Bulova told lawmakers her top priority is funding for schools.

VICES. We need adequate funding to provide services for these higher need students."

Gov. Ralph Northam has signaled that education funding will be one of his top priorities this year too, a move largely prompted by a \$300 million windfall of new revenue from the Trump tax cuts. Because changes at the federal

level create new incentives for high-income earners to take a standard deduction rather than itemizing, that means more state tax filers will be taking a standard deduction rather than itemizing — creating a new pot of money for lawmakers to spend. At the top of the agenda is a 5 percent raise for Virginia teachers.

"Obviously the governor's budget seeks to retain the best educator workforce," said Melanie Meren, a candidate for the Hunter Mill District on the Fairfax County School Board. "And that means pay increases for teachers."

AFTER THE PARKLAND shooting last year, Republican leaders in the House created a select committee on school safety to come up with recommendations to increase school safety. The group did not consider any new firearm restrictions, choosing instead to look at hardening school facilities and creating a new tip line allowing students to alert authorities about potential problems. One of the key recommendations of the committee is reducing administrative duties of school counselors, freeing

them up from duties like administering standardized tests. The committee did not recommend hiring any new school counselors though, even though Virginia falls far short of the recommended ratio of one counselor for every 250 students. That would cost about \$86 million, and Northam has a three-year plan to start moving toward that goal by spending \$36 million this year.

"Governor Northam recently said that our school counselors are the ears of the education system," said Laura Jane Cohn, a candidate for the Springfield District of the Fairfax County School Board.

"They are indeed the ears that hear about bullying and trouble at home."

Specifics of one of the governor's budget proposals that is troubling school officials here is to increase funding for a pool of money known as the "at-risk add-on," a way to increase funding for school divisions with a high percentage of students who live in poverty. Although Fairfax County has 55,000 students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch, that's only 29 percent of the student population — far below the state-wide average of 41 percent. So the governor's plan to add \$35 million to the at-risk add-on would not benefit Fairfax County.

"Because the at-risk add-on is based on division-wide percentages of poverty rather than our actual numbers of eligible students, Fairfax is disadvantaged by its overall size," said School Board Chairwoman Karen Corbett Sanders.

"The truth is that many working people across our community are struggling,"

— David Broder, President SEIU 512

HELPING LOW-WAGE workers was another theme to emerge from the five-hour hearing. Several speakers from the Service Employees International Union 512 spoke about raising the minimum wage to \$15

an hour, ensuring workers have access to paid family leave and removing what they see as unnecessary restrictions on workers who want to unionize. They also spoke in favor of making the Earned Income Tax fully refundable. Virginia is one of the few states that does not make its earned income tax credit refundable, which harms families earning less than \$50,000

SEE EDUCATION, PAGE 18



SEIU512 President David Broder asked lawmakers to support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and ensuring workers have access to paid family leave.

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First Hike Hits the High Points in Fairfax County

Event features fresh air and a photo contest.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

After the sun came up on New Year's Day and some of the Mount Vernon residents shook off the previous night's celebration, District Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) led a group of about 60 people on a 3.5-mile hike through Mason Neck Park as part of the Fairfax County Park Authority's First Hike event.

"This accentuates the beauty we have in the Mount Vernon District," Storck said. "It was a little muddy but it was a beautiful day," he said.

Mason Neck Park is off Gunston Road in the southern part of the Mount Vernon District.

According to the county, the Fairfax County Park Authority joined with America's state parks and Virginia State Parks for First Day Hike Programs to encourage everyone to start 2019 with an outdoor hike. "This is the third year for First Hike Fairfax, which began in 2017," said



Out at Mason Neck, the Mount Vernon hikers gather on Jan. 1.

park official John Berlin.

Fairfax County is using the event to kick off the Park Authority's "Healthy Strides 12 Steps for a Healthier 2019, a year of healthy living ideas." As in years before, the county uses it as an opportunity to let people get creative with their cameras for a photo contest.

"The First Hike photo contest captures amazing pictures of people, pets, wildlife and landscapes and highlights the richness of our park system," said Berlin. The pho-

tos are used in park publications throughout the year.

According to the FCPA, there are two winners for the contest: a "Judges' Choice" and a "People's Choice" winner picked by park attendees. Both winners will receive a free four-month RECenter pass valued at up to \$300.

In 2018 Patricia Strat's wintry photo of Riverbend Park was named the winner of the First Hike Fairfax Photo Contest. The frozen Potomac River was not to be found



The winning photo from 2018 featured ice on the Potomac River.

this year where the temperatures were nowhere near freezing. Last year, the Park Authority received more than 130 photo entries from people who hiked one of five designated Fairfax trails to celebrate the new year, according to the FCPA. The runner-up photo in 2018 was taken by Jane Durrett at Cub Run Stream Valley Park.

In Mount Vernon, Storck liked the comradery an event like this brings. "Participants connect with other people and the natural world," he said.

Democratic Legislators on Gun Violence: 'It's Common Sense'

Bills focus on gun safety.

BY KAYTLIN NICKENS
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Democratic state legislators said Monday, Jan. 7, that legislation aimed at reducing gun violence, including a proposal to fine gun owners who fail to report lost or stolen guns, are "common-sense" initiatives.

"None of this is anti-Second Amendment; it's a common-sense legislation," said Del. Cliff Hayes, D-Chesapeake, co-sponsor of House Bill 1644, which requires reporting lost or stolen firearms.

Under his proposal, failing to report lost or stolen firearms to law enforcement authorities within 24 hours would be punishable by a \$50 civil penalty on the first offense, and the fine would increase on subsequent offenses.

Hayes and Dels. Delores McQuinn of Richmond, John Bell of Loudoun, and Kathleen Murphy and Eileen Filler-Corn of Fairfax, all members of the Democrats' Safe Virginia Initiative, held a press conference to discuss their policy recommendations for gun safety.

"Numbers are heartbreaking ... I know this personally, having lost my own brother to gun violence," Murphy said, whose brother was murdered during a robbery.



Democratic legislators meet to discuss school safety and gun violence.

"We are right to be outraged."

Murphy said that following the Parkland, Fla. shooting in February, the Republican Party chose to ignore guns in its approach to school safety.

Murphy and Filler-Corn co-chair the Safe Virginia Initiative. The regional chairs include McQuinn, Bell, Hayes and Del. Chris Hurst of Montgomery County. House Democrats formed the initiative during the 2018 General Assembly session after the Parkland shooting.

"Overall, we recognize that guns are the issue," Murphy said.

Democratic legislators proposed several policies during the press conference.

They include requiring universal background checks to buy firearms and reinstating Virginia's law limiting handgun purchases to one per month. "This is an initiative that deserves bipartisan support and endorsement," McQuinn said.

Bell said better firearms training also deserves support from lawmakers. He said that currently, Virginians can get a concealed weapons permit merely by taking an online video quiz.

"We have to implement practical training

requirements to ensure that gun owners know how to use their weapons safely," Bell said.

In June, Hurst held an event in Lexington that focused on the prevalence of guns used in suicides. Hurst is the co-sponsor of HB 1763, a bill introduced again this session by Del. Rip Sullivan, D-Arlington, that would permit the removal of a firearm from someone who poses a "substantial risk." Such orders permit families and law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily suspend a person's access to firearms if there

SEE FOCUSING, PAGE 8

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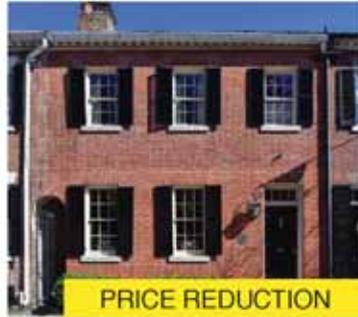


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Two in Custody for 2016 Homicide

Two Washington, D.C. men are in custody Jan. 3 after detectives linked them to the murder of Tarreese Sampson on May 20, 2016. Mount Vernon District Police officers were called to the 6000 block of Richmond Highway at 2:20 a.m. that day for a report of a man who had been shot. Sampson was found with a gunshot wound to the upper body and pronounced dead at the scene.

Detectives conducted a multi-year investigation that led them to two men.

Tre'Sur Hawkins, 19, was charged Jan. 3 with first degree murder. He will be booked at the Adult De-

ntention Center and held without bond. Charles Benson, 24, was arrested on Sept. 4, 2018 in Washington, D.C., for this murder with the assistance of the United States Marshal Service, the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force, and Metropolitan Police Department. Benson was extradited to Fairfax County on Oct. 17 and has been in custody since.

Detectives believe Sampson did not know Hawkins or Benson, and randomly encountered them on Richmond Highway where Hawkins and Benson were breaking into cars.

CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Mount Vernon District Police Station.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/TRESPASSING: 2600 block of Arlington Drive, between Dec. 5, 2018 and Jan. 3, 2019. An employee of an apartment complex reported that someone had entered a vacant apartment through an unlocked door or window. A window was broken but nothing else was missing or out of place.

ROBBERY: 3800 block of Laramie Place, Jan. 1, 1:44 a.m. A man reported to officers that while talking to a group of friends, unknown men attacked him by punching and kicking him to the ground. His phone and other property were taken. He was taken to a local hospital for his injuries.

ROBBERY: 6231 Richmond High-

way (Tobacco Colony), Dec. 31, 2:36 p.m. A cashier reported to officers that a man with a gun came into the store while customers were present and stole merchandise. No one was injured. The suspect was described as a black man, 30-35 years old, about 6'1", 190-230 pounds, wearing a ski mask, dark grey pants, dark shoes, and a black coat with a fur-lined hood.

JAN. 4 LARCENIES
2500 block of Parkers Lane, property from vehicle

6300 block of Richmond Highway, cell phones from business

6400 block of Virginia Hills Avenue, clothing from vehicle

STOLEN VEHICLES
6600 block of Dorset Drive, 2013 Chevrolet Cruze

JAN. 3

LARCENIES
3800 block of Needles Place, license plate from vehicle

2500 block of Parkers Lane, wallet and cell phone from residence

JAN. 2 LARCENIES

7200 block of Beechwood Road, earrings and cash from residence

5800 block of Cameron Run Terrace, license plate from vehicle

6600 block of East Wakefield Drive, documents from vehicle

8000 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business

DEC. 31 LARCENIES

SEE CRIME REPORT, PAGE 17



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OPINION

Wish List Things this session of the General Assembly, beginning Jan. 9., could/should accomplish.

Before this session, every year for the better part of a decade, the most profound wish for the Virginia General Assembly session was the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, which could provide healthcare to as many as 400,000 poor Virginians who otherwise were living without coverage. Partisan obstruction prevented those people from gaining coverage for many years.

But coverage began this month for 200,000 new enrollees after Medicaid expansion came to Virginia in the last session. It arrived with the November 2017 election and Democrats taking 15 additional seats in Virginia's House of Delegates. The prospect for more awaits in this November's election with all seats in the General Assembly, both the House of Delegates and the Senate, on the ballot.

So we'll begin this year's wish list with gratitude that the entire Commonwealth will be

healthier for providing healthcare to the previously uninsured. And a wish that we not complicate the coverage with work reporting requirements. Please.

So in the new era of new hope for action in the General Assembly, here are some (not so modest) wishes for this session, acknowledging that some may wait another year for serious consideration.

- ❖ Establish a nonpartisan redistricting commission. This is urgent, as the General Assembly would have to act in this session to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot in time for a commission to be ready for redistricting after the 2020 census.

- ❖ Greater transparency everywhere. Move to allow fewer, not more, FOIA exemptions. Require that a reason be given for any FOIA denial.

- ❖ End suspension of driver's licenses for non-payment of court costs and fines.

- ❖ Pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

- ❖ Fund Community Services Board budgets.

Expand Medicaid waivers; clear the waiting list.

- ❖ Fund education fairly, Northern Virginia needs more help.

- ❖ Restrict predatory lending.

- ❖ Think about reform and civil rights when considering votes on law enforcement.

- ❖ Involve local officials in fixing proffer regulation.

- ❖ Implement no-excuse absentee voting.

- ❖ Limit large campaign contributions.

- ❖ Prohibit personal use of campaign funds.

- ❖ Require reporting on solitary confinement.

- ❖ Push jails and prisons to adopt best practices for prisoners with mental health issues.

- ❖ Provide a tax credit for family caregivers, with income limits if needed.

Comments? Additions? Email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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— MARY KIMM

Spotlight on Three Important Bills

BY PAUL KRIZEK
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)



I am excited to be down in Richmond for this year's legislative session which officially begins on Wednesday, Jan. 9. Each week I have written about some of the bills I will be introducing but today I want to focus on important bills that will be introduced by my colleagues.

One of the more interesting final preparations before the General Assembly convenes is deciding which bills I should sign on to as a co-patron. A co-patronage is similar to an endorsement.

It says "I support this bill and plan to vote for it." Members may ask other members to sign on as co-patrons when they think it will help them strategically to pass their bills. Already, I have been asked to co-patron over 60 bills. Today, I want to highlight three really good bills that I will be co-patroning.

The first is a bill from Del. Marcia Price that adjusts the protocol of the Department of Emer-

gency Management. Currently, in the Virginia Code there is no language that instructs the Department of Emergency Management to have a concrete plan to help those with limited English proficiency. Delegate Price's bill states that the department shall develop an emergency response plan to address the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency in the event of a disaster. This includes interpretation services and the translation of documents. I applaud Delegate Price for this critical piece of legislation which will no doubt save lives in the event of a natural disaster.

The second bill is authored by Del. Sam Rasoul. The bill makes it illegal to smoke in a car when a minor is present. Currently, in the Virginia code it is illegal to smoke inside a motor vehicle when a minor under the age of 8 is present. Furthermore, it changes the violation of this code from a secondary offense to a primary offense. Meaning that without this law a police officer could see a parent smoking with a 4 year old in the car and legally would not be able to issue a citation unless there was another reason to pull over that vehicle. This legislation is one of those good government bills that will help protect the health of our children.

The third is a bill by Del. Karrie Delaney of the 67th district of Virginia. The bill adds a section to the code of Virginia relating to arbitration agreements and sexual harassment or sexual assault. In the proposed new section, any provision or agreement that has the purpose or effect of concealing details related to the claim of sexual harassment or assault will be deemed unenforceable. The only exception to this clause is if the victim proposes the concealment. This is a great piece of legislation to ensure that all assaulters and harassers are brought to justice and cannot use agreements to silence and intimidate victims.

These bills are just three examples of the many exemplary pieces of legislation being proposed by my Democratic colleagues this session. I have also signed on to bills raising the minimum wage (HB1850), penalizing those who fail to report the loss or theft of their gun (HB1644), and prohibiting an insurance company from denying coverage due to one's gender identity (HB1864). To view these pieces of legislation and others please make sure to visit lis.virginia.gov. I am excited to work with them and my Republican colleagues to improve our great Commonwealth during this legislative session.



Sharing Holiday Cheer

More than 40 freshmen from Mount Vernon High volunteered their time after school to make the winter holidays a little brighter for some local senior citizens. The students participated in three craft workshops to create winter-themed decorations including ornaments, paintings, and 3-D snowflakes. Ten of the students, along with Class of 2022 sponsors Erin Mahoney and Amanda Riemenschneider, traveled to the Sunrise Mount Vernon assisted living center and decorated the main gathering hall while sharing stories and laughter with the residents. The freshmen plan to return in February to create Valentine's Day crafts with the residents.

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Prison Reform Advocates Want Data on Solitary Confinement

Cited as a mental health issue.

BY DANIEL BERTI
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

The Virginia branch of the American Civil Liberties Union and a handful of Democratic legislators are urging the General Assembly to take steps towards limiting solitary confinement in the state's prisons.

They say that the practice is unregulated and inhumane and that prisoners may be spending unnecessarily long amounts of time isolated from human contact.

"It's an extremely severe practice that is irrevocably harming an unknown number of people," said Bill Farrar, director of strategic communications for the ACLU.

The ACLU called on Gov. Ralph Northam to ban solitary confinement entirely — something no legislator has yet proposed. But during its 2019 session, the General Assembly will consider three bills that would require the Virginia Department of Corrections to collect and report statistics on its use of solitary confinement:

Democratic Dels. Patrick Hope of Arlington and Kaye Kory of Falls Church are sponsoring House Bill 1642. It would require the Department of Corrections to track how many inmates are placed in solitary confinement, including their age, sex, mental health status and other characteristics. The department would have to report the information to the governor and General Assembly each year and post it online.

Sen. David Marsden, D-Fairfax, has submitted two proposals with a similar intent — Senate Joint Resolution 65 (carried over from the 2018 legislative session) and Senate Bill 1085 (filed last month). Marsden's bill, which has been referred to the Senate General Laws and Technology Committee, would require the prison system to report on its use of any "restrictive housing," which includes not only solitary confinement but also administrative and disciplinary segregation and protective custody.

The legislative sponsors say that solitary confinement is a mental health issue and that more transparency is a crucial first step in monitoring the well-being of prisoners in solitary confinement.

"There have been very clear studies that show the correlation between the time spent in solitary confinement and deteriorating mental health," Hope said. "Mental health

care treatment is not an optional treatment. It's mandatory just like cancer or a heart attack or anything like that. It's just as important."

The upcoming legislation comes on the heels of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice into conditions at the Hampton Roads Regional Jail in Portsmouth, Va.

The department's report, issued in December, concluded that the jail failed to provide constitutionally adequate medical and mental health care to prisoners and placed "prisoners with serious mental illness in restrictive housing for prolonged periods of time under conditions that violate the constitution."

Investigators wrote that the jail's restrictive housing practices discriminated against prisoners with mental health disabilities.

"I think this is a wake-up call for the entire state," Hope said.

Kimberly Jenkins-Snodgrass, vice chairperson of Interfaith Action for Human Rights, a prison reform group, said the Virginia Department of Correction should provide more information about how it uses solitary confinement.

Jenkins-Snodgrass said her son, Kevin Snodgrass, spent four consecutive years — from 2013 to 2017 — in solitary confinement at Red Onion State Prison in far southwest Virginia.

"As a mother who has a son who is serving time, who has served time in solitary confinement, I will say that HB 1642 is a first step in having transparency from the Department of Corrections, and transparency will give those behind the walls a voice," Jenkins-Snodgrass said.

Jenkins-Snodgrass will speak at the second annual Virginia Prison Reform Rally on Jan. 12 at Capitol Square in Richmond. The rally is organized by Virginia Prison Justice Reform Network, a volunteer-based coalition of prison reform advocacy groups.

Del. Lamont Bagby, leader of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus, has also come out in support of HB 1642. Bagby said the bill has the potential to reduce the number of prisoners spending time in solitary confinement.

"We have to start somewhere," Bagby said. "We'll at least know what we don't know, and that is information related to race, and information related to why individuals are placed in solitary confinement."

Lisa Kinney, a spokesperson for Virginia Department of Corrections, downplayed the need for changes to the DOC's use of restrictive housing. She accused the bills' supporters of being politically motivated.



Del. Patrick Hope of Arlington,

"Virginia is a national leader in limiting the use of restrictive housing," Kinney said. "It's disappointing but not surprising to see others trying to score easy political points and advocacy groups trying to fundraise off this issue."

Currently, 62 prisoners are being held in long-term restrictive housing, Kinney said. In 2010, that number was 511.

Starting in 2018, the department's quarterly report to the governor and General Assembly included the numbers of offenders in both long-term and short-term restrictive housing, but it did not contain demo-

graphic data or information about prisoners' mental health status.

Marsden agreed that the department has made strides to reduce the number of prisoners in "restrictive housing," but he said state officials should not "accept improvement as success."

Jessica Fraraccio, a former prisoner at Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, spent five weeks in solitary confinement in 2013.

Fraraccio, 22 at the time, described her experience in solitary confinement as "deprivation" torture.

"You just kind of lose track of time and concept of communication," Fraraccio said. "It starts to all drift away and you just feel isolated, like you can't connect with any realistic concepts of the everyday."

Fraraccio was released from prison in August 2018, after serving a five-year sentence for murder. She said that she hopes the proposed solitary confinement legislation will lead to better monitoring of the practice.

"Hopefully that'll do something to help humanize these people a little more," Fraraccio said, "and actually get the people who are working there to pay more attention to the people that live there."

Northam Touts Bills on Voting Rights and Campaign Financing

Local legislators sponsoring election-oriented bills.

BY OWEN FITZGERALD
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Gov. Ralph Northam introduced two legislative proposals at a press conference Monday, Jan. 7, aimed at improving voting access and transparency in the campaign finance system.

One proposal would allow Virginians to vote absentee without having to provide an excuse — legislation the governor said would reduce crowds at the polls on Election Day. The current law, which Northam called "arbitrary," requires citizens to give one of 20 reasons to vote absentee.

Northam said that voting in the days before an election is "just as American" as waiting in line at the polls and that similar proposals have been made since the 1990s. Sen. Mamie Locke, D-Hampton, is sponsoring the legislation in the Senate (SB 1035) and Del. Charniele Herring, D-Alexandria, is sponsoring it in the House (HB 1641).

The Democratic governor also endorsed legislation to repeal the Virginia law requiring voters to present a photo ID to be able to cast their vote.

"While photo ID laws are intended to reduce voter fraud, very little such voter fraud actually exists," Northam said. "Instead of fixing the problem, the photo ID law just makes it harder for people, especially mi-

nority voters or low-income voters, to lawfully vote."

This proposal will be sponsored by Locke and Del. Kaye Kory, D-Fairfax.

The Democrats also want legislation that limits campaign donations and restricts how candidates can spend political contributions.

Sen. Chap Petersen, D-Fairfax, is sponsoring legislation (SB 1146) that would limit individual donations to \$10,000 per candidate during a given election cycle. Virginia is one of only 11 remaining states that have no limits on campaign contributions.

"There's too much big money in politics," Petersen said. "We need some reasonable limits on what people can contribute in order to keep the process honest."

A second proposal to be sponsored by Del. Elizabeth Guzman would ban corporate and business campaign donations. It also would ban corporations or businesses from making direct contributions to their own political action committees.

"Our Commonwealth has an opportunity to reform campaign finance laws by banning direct corporate and business donations," Guzman stated. "Virginians want legislators who represent their interests, and this reform will foster more trust in the legislative process." Del. Marcus Simon, D-Fairfax, is the sponsor of a bill (HB 1699) to ban candidates from using campaign money for personal expenses.

A spokesman for the Republican Party said GOP officials would not comment on the legislation until they had read over the proposals in full.

Focusing on Gun Violence

FROM PAGE 3

is documented evidence that the individual is threatening harm to themselves or others.

Parker Slaybaugh, a spokesman for Republican Kirk Cox, the speaker of the House of Delegates, said in a statement Monday that the House Democratic Caucus "created

a campaign masked as focusing on school safety."

"With today's announcement, it's clear their group solely focused on ways to restrict Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens and not practical solutions to protect our students and teachers in the classroom," Slaybaugh said.

NEWS



Underway

Over winter break, crews began installing Hollin Meadows Elementary School's new playscape. It should be completed in the next couple of weeks, according to the HMES newsletter.

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.

UCM_FoodPantry_AmazonWishList. Email Assistant Food Pantry Manager Von at vonnetta.jones@ucmagency.org or visit at www.ucmagency.org.

DONATIONS NEEDED

UCM Needs Help. United Community Ministries (UCM), 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria. Inventory is low on disposable diapers especially sizes 4, 5, 6; canned tuna and other canned meats like chicken; and low-sugar breakfast cereals. Shop and donate with their Amazon Wish List at: bit.ly/

INPUT SOUGHT

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program. Fairfax County is developing a comprehensive Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program and would like to hear from residents. Each of six public information meetings will include a static display of unmanned aircraft followed by a presentation outlining the

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 17

RICHMOND HIGHWAY Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

Mount Vernon High School (Cafeteria)

8515 Old Mt Vernon Road, Alexandria, VA 22309

Open House 6:30-8:30 PM, Presentation 7 PM

(Snow date: February 13, West Potomac High School)



Fairfax County is implementing a bus rapid transit (BRT) system along North Kings Highway and Richmond Highway from Huntington Metrorail Station to Fort Belvoir. Please join us for this upcoming meeting to learn more and give your input!



fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/richmond-hwy-brt



fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts

("Richmond Highway BRT Project Updates")

Translation services for the meeting and meeting materials are available, free of charge, per request. To make a request, contact FCDOT at 703-877-5600, TTY 711, by January 18. Shuttle transportation is offered, per request, from Sacramento Neighborhood Center, South County Government Center, and Hybla Valley Elementary School, and on-site childcare is also available, per request, for children over the age of 3. Requests for transportation and on-site childcare are accepted until January 18 by contacting Maria Franco-Nativi at 703-704-6700, TTY 711, or by email at maria.franco-nativi@fairfaxcounty.gov.

FCDOT ensures nondiscrimination in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need this information in an alternate format, contact FCDOT at 703-877-5600, TTY 711. You may also mail project comments to FCDOT, Richmond Highway BRT Project Manager, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA, 22030.



The Richmond Highway BRT project is funded in part by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.



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Augustin Praised for Environmental Stewardship

Belle Haven Country Club Golf Course superintendent receives state association award.

Mike Augustin of Alexandria has been recognized by the Virginia Chapter, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (VGCSA) as winner of the VGCSA Environmental Stewardship Award.

The award is presented “in recognition of distinguished and meritorious service in the environmental stewardship of Virginia golf courses, and in grateful appreciation for unselfishly promoting the profession of golf course management, which led to the advancement of the association.” Augustin is the golf course superintendent at Belle Haven Country Club in Alexandria, situated alongside the Potomac River.

Augustin cultivated his interest in the game and entered the University of Maryland’s turf program, graduating with a four-year degree in turf urban agronomy. His first internship on a golf course was as an assistant at Indian Spring Country Club in Silver Spring, Md. working under Rhys Arthur. Then he became assistant

at Bethesda Country Club under Dean Graves in Bethesda, Md. Graves was a great mentor and Augustin also learned to treat the golf course as if it were his own. After three years at Bethesda, he was ready for the top job at Belle Haven Country Club — he has been there for 21 years.

When your club sits in a flood plain on the Potomac River, with an adjacent highway carrying thousands of eyeballs daily, that’s the definition of “pressure” for a golf course superintendent. Augustin said, “From day one, we had a mindset to be environmentally sensitive. You simply must do the right thing.”

Marrying a commitment to environmental stewardship with the demand for superior golf course conditioning is not an easy task. Programs such as buffering ponds, tree removal and tree addition all



Augustin

contribute to ensure aesthetics, playability and responsible golf course management.

“Our goal is for water to leave our property cleaner than it entered,” said Augustin. He has a Storm Water Management Plan to capture runoff in buffers before entering the floodplain of the Potomac. Combine that with the natural filtering characteristics of turfgrass which absorbs nutrients, and you can achieve this goal. And of course - inputs are expensive - so applications are set conservatively.

In 2002, Belle Haven undertook a major golf course renovation. This included pond improvements which incorporated best management practices for pond management. All water drains into the ponds first, where they can treat, allow sediment to settle, and then the nutrients to be absorbed. Pond aerators keep fish healthy and deter surface algae. Quarterly water samples are a key tool in maintaining pond health. The club agreed to keep extensive records as part of its water permit. The club added

a new pond at the clubhouse entrance as another environmental area. The club’s horticulturist created floating wetlands, featuring irises and other wetland plants with roots extending into the pond’s base. These floating wetlands help remove nutrients from the water which in turn helps mitigate unwanted nutrient release into nearby streams.

Like many courses, Belle Haven is prone to problems with Canadian geese. The club’s commitment to protecting wildlife often clashed with maintenance standards. Their humane solution was a combination of Border Collies and a laser light system that does not harm geese.

The club is a haven for wildlife. American Bald eagles and ospreys patrol the trees adjacent to the Potomac. On any given day, you might see blue herons, eastern bluebirds, mallards, wood ducks, Asian ducks, red tail hawks, tur-

“Our goal is for water to leave our property cleaner than it entered.”

— Mike Augustin

keys, deer, red fox, coyotes and more. Fish species include bass, bluegill, eels, carp and sunfish. Members may fish “catch and release” during non-golf times.

Augustin noted that the club has a special tree master plan. During the course renovation, the course architect collaborated with an arborist and added 1,500 trees. Now as trees are maturing, they are selectively removing weaker trees.

Green staff is trained to be responsible with defined areas of disposal of chemicals, being aware of buffer zones around water features. Staff is diligent to keep equipment clean and to eliminate unwanted discharge of leftover chemicals. With Belle Haven’s location on the Potomac River, pumping water sometimes becomes necessary, and they have to ensure it is clean water. “No one wants to be on the wrong side of their neighbors and community,” said Augustin. “Our members expect our staff to be good stewards.” Pesticides are not applied when there is a risk of runoff.

One unique feature of sustainability is the set of six beehives on the property. A local company is hired to tend to the hives, which produce honey used by the club chef and offered for sale in the Golf Shop. They started with just one hive, and the program grew. He notes the club’s commitment to pollinator protection.

The club also has vegetable and herb gardens under Augustin’s responsibility. The herb garden is near the clubhouse, so the chef can easily access it and offer an organic menu.

The past few years, there has been a push from the board on creating a sounder recycling program in the clubhouse and with trash going out of the property. This has created a trickle-down effect in the membership and employees about being more responsible stewards of the environment.

When asked what the award means to him, Augustin said, “It is an honor. I’m surprised to receive an award like this, because it recognizes things we should all be doing or already do. This would not be possible without a great staff and supportive membership.”

Article courtesy of the Virginia Chapter, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

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Beyond The Resolution

Keeping a home in order all year long.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

For those who resolved to keep a neater, cleaner home in the new year, the issue of how to keep it that way through December can be challenging. After the excitement of the fresh start that January offers, the reality of one's day-to-day life emerges. How to keep that newly purged closet neat when rushing to get to a meeting on time? By February, that cleaned-out sports bin might look a bomb went off at Modell's. From shredding or recycling unwanted mail each day to loading the dishwasher after each meal, adopting a few daily cleaning tips can help maintain that tidy home all year long.

"In general, I recommend keeping up with household duties on a daily basis so none of them become a bigger project," said professional organizer Susan Unger of Clutter SOS.

One of the most basic tasks is making one's bed first thing in the morning. "I think that kick starts you into cleaning and organizing mode and sets the tone for the day," said Preston Taylor of From Chaos to Order. "I also recommend keeping a dust cloth nearby so that you can give your dresser and nightstand a quick dust off so dust accumulation would be one less thing you have to worry about."

Piles of clothing, whether clean or dirty can accumulate quickly and send a home in into disarray. Dedicating five to 10 minutes every evening to rehanging clothes and separating items that need to

"If you start a load when you first arrive home from work, you will have time to dry and even fold it before you go to bed, so you're not faced with a mountain of dirty clothes at the end of week."

— Preston Taylor of From Chaos to Order



Wiping down bathroom showers, sinks and counters each day can help keep a home tidy all year long.

PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

be dry cleaned can help prevent a backlog. "Be sure to put all clothes away on a daily basis rather than leaving in a chair or floor," said Unger. "Clean clothes should be hung up or put in drawers and dirty clothes in the laundry basket."

Taylor recommends tackling laundry every evening if necessary. "If you start a load when you first arrive home from work, you will have time to dry and even fold it before you go to bed, so you're not faced with a mountain of dirty clothes at the end of week," said Taylor.

When it comes to the bathroom, brief, daily attention to detail can keep dirt from spiraling out of control. Rehanging towels, and then wiping it down one's shower each time you take a shower are suggestions from Carmen Garcia of CG Green Clean. "Keep a container of disinfecting wipes in your bathroom and wipe down your counters and sink before going to bed each evening," she said. "Also each night, add a squirt of toilet cleaner to your toilet bowl, wipe down the seat and then flush the toilet. It takes less than five minutes to do all of this but you'd be amazed at the difference it makes at the end of the week, especially in children's bathrooms."

After Holiday Visits, Some Questions

Recognizing signs, early detection empowers families to plan for the future.

Holiday visits with family members or friends not seen as frequently during the year may raise questions about their cognitive health. Although some change in cognitive ability can occur with age, serious memory problems are not a part of normal aging. The Alzheimer's Association encourages anyone who has a question or concern about the state of an aging family member or friend to call its free 24-hour Helpline, 800-272-3900. Recognizing the difference can help identify when it may be time for a loved one to see a doctor. The Alzheimer's Association has a check list of warning signs, along with examples of normal aging. Every individual may experience one or more of the warning signs in different degrees.

- ❖ Memory loss that disrupts daily life.
- ❖ Challenges in planning or solving problems. \

- ❖ Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.
- ❖ Confusion with time or place.
- ❖ Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.
- ❖ New problems with words in speaking or writing.
- ❖ Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
- ❖ Decreased or poor judgment.
- ❖ Withdrawal from work or social activities.
- ❖ Changes in mood and personality.

Although the onset of Alzheimer's disease cannot yet be stopped or reversed, an early diagnosis is an important step in getting appropriate treatment, care and support services allows people with dementia and their families. For more information, visit the Alzheimer's Association web site at alz.org or call their toll-free 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

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Mini-grants Available for Youth-led Anti-stigma Initiatives

Proposals due
Feb. 1, 2019.

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) is once again offering mini-grants for youth-led projects to reduce stigma among their peers, using funds from a suicide prevention grant from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

These mini-grants will fund youth-planned, youth-led projects within Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and Falls Church City.

Here are some ideas from previous years' grant awardees:

- ❖ Mountain View Alternative Learning Center conducted a project titled "I'm MINDING My Health," where 24 students participated in 2-3 days of student-led group activities around the theme of mental health awareness. The group planned for and participated in group activities facilitated by the school's psychologist, social worker and counselor. They discussed definitions of



Social media post from McLean High School with a photo of participants in Sources of Strength.



Bulletin board with "What is your hope" messages.

mental health and strategies they can use to help maintain positive mental health. Using funds from the grant, the students designed posters on that theme and a spe-

cial bulletin board was set up where students were encouraged to write statements of support for mental health awareness.

- ❖ The Community Preservation and De-

velopment Corporation met with 32 youth, from ages 6 to 18 years enrolled in the Summer Learning Loss Prevention Program in the Island Walk community center in Reston. The collective taught the youth how to stop, reduce and cope with stigma relating to mental health conditions. They also learned how to help someone with a mental health challenge and how to find resources for them.

- ❖ McLean High School ran a suicide prevention program, "Sources of Strength," and paid for training for 40 students to serve as peer leaders and 10 teachers to serve as adult advisors. Sources of Strength is an evidence-based mental health program shown to positively change school culture using an upstream approach to enhance the protective factors among youth, increasing the number of assets in students' lives. The program trains students as peer leaders and connects them with adult advisors at school and in the community. Proposals are due Feb. 1, 2019. Review the Request for Proposals to find out how to apply, and email csb-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov with questions.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Public Safety Drones? Public Input Wanted

The Fairfax County Unmanned Aircraft Systems program will provide an enhanced level of operational capability, safety and situational awareness for first responders, other approved participating agencies, and decision-makers with high quality imagery, data, and customized geospatial solutions using unmanned aircraft while continuing to maintain the public trust.

Fairfax County is developing a comprehensive Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program and would like to hear from residents on what they think. The county is hosting six public information meetings.

The draft program is designed to support a variety of government mission types including:

- ❖ Search and rescue
- ❖ Flooding assessments

- ❖ Pre- and post-disaster damage assessments

- ❖ Crash reconstruction
- ❖ Fire incident/scene management and investigations

- ❖ Hazardous materials responses
- ❖ Wildlife estimation

The draft UAS program would not be used:

- ❖ To conduct random surveillance activities

- ❖ To target a person based solely on individual characteristics, such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion or disability

- ❖ To harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group

- ❖ To conduct personal business or any other unauthorized use

Each public information meeting will include a static display of unmanned aircraft

followed by a presentation outlining the program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions from representatives of the Office of Emergency Management, County Attorney's Office, Police and Fire and Rescue Department. The formal presentation will begin at 7 p.m.

To find out more about the UAS program go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas. The draft public safety UAS program manual is located there along with a link to the email account.

Send feedback or questions to uas@fairfaxcounty.gov or through the link located on the UAS webpage. Written comments on the draft program must be received by the close of business Feb. 8, 2019 to be included in the official public record.

- ❖ Jan. 14, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Mason District Governmental Center (Community Room), 6507 Columbia Pike,

Annandale, VA 22003

- ❖ Jan. 16, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), South County Governmental Center (Room 221C), 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309

- ❖ Jan. 23, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), McLean District Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA 22101

- ❖ Jan. 24, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly, VA 20151

- ❖ Jan. 28, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Reston Community Center – Hunter Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston, VA 20191

- ❖ Jan. 30, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Braddock Hall – Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke, VA 22015.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

George Washington's Mount Vernon is Open.

George Washington's Mount Vernon, a private, non-profit organization that does not accept government funding, will remain open through the partial government shutdown. Mount Vernon visitors can tour the first president's Mansion, explore the gardens and grounds, and visit Washington's final resting place. The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center, Be Washington interactive theater, and the 4D Revolutionary War Theater offer visitors and immersive experience to learn about George Washington and the Founding Era. Specialty tours are offered daily for an additional cost. Visit mountvernon.org.

Art Exhibit: Bringing Words to Life.

Through Jan. 27 at VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital, 2660 Duke St., Alexandria. The exhibit is a part of Del Ray Artisans' Gallery Without Walls program in partnership with VCA Alexandria. The show pairs a line from an artist's favorite song, poem, book, or speech with the artist's visual interpretation of that quote. Patrons may view the artwork at VCA Alexandria during regular business hours and at the discretion of hospital staff. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww.

Exhibit: "Hard Wired."

Through Jan. 31 at Touchstone Gallery, 901 New York Ave. NW Washington, D.C. Tory Cowles of Potomac is represented by Touchstone Gallery, a resident artist in Studio 7 at Alexandria's Torpedo Factory, and an abstract painting instructor at Glen Echo Park's Yellow Barn. Her work evolves out of a spontaneous abstract expressionist process which depends on the rawness of the materials, the unexpectedness of the composition, and the mystery of how materials are transformed. Artist talk, Saturday, Jan. 19, 4-6 p.m. Call 202-347-3787 or visit www.touchstonegallery.com.

Art Exhibit: "Destroy the Picture."

Through Feb. 2, Wednesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m. at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. Beverly Ryan has been a resident artist at the Torpedo Factory Art Center since 2001 and has taught at The Art League School in Alexandria, Va., for 15 years. She has curated several shows of abstract painting, narrative painting and encaustic painting. Between 1949 and 1962, numerous painters including Alberto Burri, Salvatore Scarpitta and Yves Klein produced artwork that incorporated destruction in their processes. The book *Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void*, written and edited by Paul Schimmel describes the exhibition of these works in Los Angeles at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 2012-2013. In the spring of 2018, this work inspired Beverly Ryan to lead a group of her students to explore destruction and re-creation of artworks from previously unresolved paintings. Visit www.bethesda.org/bethesda/gallery-b.

Art Exhibit: "Lift Us Up, Don't Push Us Out."

Through Feb. 3, gallery hours at The Art League Gallery in Studio 21, Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Performing Statistics: a Project by ART180 and Legal Aid Justice Center – "Lift Us Up, Don't Push Us Out" asks the question, how would criminal justice reform differ if it was led by incarcerated youth? Connecting incarcerated youth at the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center with artists, legal experts, and



PHOTO BY JEREMY BRANDT VOREL

The dining room at the Majestic.

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week

For 10 days and two weekends (Jan. 18-27), 65 restaurants in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer a \$35 three-course dinner for one or a \$35 dinner for two. More than 35 restaurants will also offer lunch menus at \$15 or \$22 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Brunch lovers can enjoy brunch menus for \$15 or \$22 per person at 14 restaurants. Learn more about restaurant week at AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.



Mia's Italian Kitchen

advocates to reimagine Virginia's juvenile justice system, this exhibition provides the answer. Including virtual reality experiences, photography, murals, and interactive audio installations that use human touch to activate stories from youth in the system, their media campaigns and mobile exhibits have connected the dreams, stories, and policy demands of youth in the juvenile justice system with tens of thousands across Virginia and beyond. Visit www.theartleague.org.

Art Exhibit: It's Not All Black and White.

Through Feb. 3, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily (Thursdays until 9 p.m.) at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Studio 29, Alexandria. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery announces the opening of its juried show, *It's Not All Black and White*. It may be black and white (dreary) outside but Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery radiates with color. In addition to lovely neutral pieces, artists have warmed their space with colorful creations. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the

jurors. Non-themed work may also be exhibited. Free admission. Visit www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com or call 703-548-0935.

Exhibit: Fax Ayres, Photography.

Jan. 10-Feb. 24, gallery hours at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Fax Ayres' photography employs a 'lightpainting' technique to imbue his subjects with an almost surreal quality. He sets up still life vignettes in the dark and then carefully paints individual components with light, assembling multiple images together to create the final photograph. Fax Ayres lives and works in Charlottesville. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

THROUGH FRIDAY, JAN. 11

Science for Homeschoolers. 10 a.m.-noon at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Looking for a fun, hands-on way to supplement a home school science unit? Each session meets for six classes. The fee is \$108. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/.



Vermilion

small group training sessions. Visit www.getfitstudiova.com.

Opening Reception: "Lift Us Up, Don't Push Us Out."

6:30-8 p.m. at The Art League Gallery in Studio 21, Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Performing Statistics: a Project by ART180 and Legal Aid Justice Center – "Lift Us Up, Don't Push Us Out" asks the question, how would criminal justice reform differ if it was led by incarcerated youth? Connecting incarcerated youth at the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center with artists, legal experts, and advocates to reimagine Virginia's juvenile justice system, this exhibition provides the answer. Including virtual reality experiences, photography, murals, and interactive audio installations that use human touch to activate stories from youth in the system, their media campaigns and mobile exhibits have connected the dreams, stories, and policy demands of youth in the juvenile justice system with tens of thousands across Virginia and beyond. Visit www.theartleague.org.

Blues Night with Meigs Hodge.

7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. An evening of traditional and contemporary blues guitar and vocals. Meigs Hodge explores delta and Chicago styles through the music of Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, and others; as well as contemporary standards and original compositions. \$10. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

How Plants Move: a Talk by

Charles Smith. 7:30-9 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Charles Smith explores the ways plants disperse across land and water and discusses reproductive strategies, niche exploitation, plant community composition and what the future may look like considering the fragmented condition of our landscape and climate change. VNPS programs are free and open to the public. No reservations are necessary for lectures. Visit www.vnps.org/potowmack.

JAN. 10-FEB. 24

Photography Exhibit: Fax Ayres.

Thursday-Sunday, noon-4 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Fax Ayres' photography employs a 'lightpainting' technique to imbue his subjects with an almost surreal quality. He sets up still life vignettes in the dark and then carefully paints individual components with light, assembling multiple images together to create the final photograph. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

Americana Music by Leigh

Beamer. 6-8 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 South Washington St., Alexandria. Born and raised in Wytheville, Va., Leigh is one of the leading young vocalists in Southwest Virginia and a skilled interpreter of the old-time music of Appalachia. Beer and wine for sale; light refreshments available as well. Visit www.alexandriava.gov.

Opening Reception: "Destroy the Picture."

6-8 p.m. at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. Beverly Ryan has been a resident artist at the Torpedo Factory Art Center since 2001 and has taught at The Art League School in Alexandria, Va., for 15 years. She has curated several shows of abstract painting, narrative painting and encaustic painting. Between 1949 and 1962, numerous painters including Alberto Burri, Salvatore Scarpitta and Yves Klein produced artwork that incorporated destruction in their processes. The book *Destroy*

House of Hamill

Focus Alexandria presents The House of Hamill. Rose Baldino and Brian Buchanan are both accomplished traditional Irish style fiddle players and classical violinists, and despite being young, have over 25 years of writing and performance experience between them. Sunday, Jan. 13, 7 p.m. at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Tickets are \$18 in advance at www.focusmusic.org/buy-tickets and for FocusMusic and FSGW members, \$20 at the door.



Rose Baldino and Brian Buchanan



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ENTERTAINMENT

Some Days to Circle in January

BY HOPE NELSON

The holidays are in the rearview and a new year has dawned. What to do with all the extra time now that Santa has moved back to the North Pole and the party invitations have dwindled? Here are some of the city's top picks to keep the festivities rolling along.

Winter Restaurant Week, Jan. 18-27

Alexandria's showcase of its best and brightest restaurants returns mid-month for its winter edition. From old favorites such as Chart House and Evening Star Café to newer eateries such as Mia's Italian Kitchen and Sunday in Saigon, the city's food offerings run the gamut – for a reasonable price. In most restaurants, \$35 per person gets you a three-course meal showcasing the kitchen's array of offerings. Many eateries have lunch specials, too, which run the gamut and are often much more affordable than regular prices. Make reservations early; Restaurant Week dates tend to fill up quickly.

Government Shutdown Special at Diya Indian Cuisine, through Jan. 11

In a show of support to furloughed government employees, Old Town's newest Indian restaurant has opened its doors at lunch for free to those currently out of work. Flash your federal government ID and en-

joy Diya's lunchtime buffet for free through Friday. The buffet runs the gamut from vegetable dishes to more carnivorous fare, as well as a variety of rice dishes and, of course, dessert. 218 N. Lee St.

Oysters and Beer at Port City Brewing, Jan. 26

War Shore Oyster Company and Port City Brewing have teamed up to bring a pairing of mollusks and beer to the brewery. Eighteen dollars lands you a half-dozen oysters plus a pint of beer; each additional half-dozen oysters will set you back \$10. And in homage to the environment, shells will be recycled by the Oyster Recovery Partnership. 3950 Wheeler Ave. 3-6 p.m.

Pajama Party Bingo at Stomping Ground, Jan. 27

The holidays are over, a new year is upon us; it's time to kick back in comfy clothes and take the reins on a Bingo game or two. Del Ray's Stomping Ground is ready to host its next edition of game night with a pajama party and breakfast for dinner. Your ticket price includes the meal as well as Bingo cards; alcoholic beverages are available for purchase at the restaurant. 2309 Mount Vernon Ave. Dinner at 6 p.m.; Bingo starts at 7 p.m. \$25. Reservations recommended.

Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

the Picture: Painting the Void, written and edited by Paul Schimmel describes the exhibition of these works in Los Angeles at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 2012-2013. In the spring of 2018, this work inspired Beverly Ryan to lead a group of her students to explore destruction and re-creation of artworks from previously unresolved paintings. Visit www.bethesda.org/bethesda/gallery-b.

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry.

ASO Presents: Bach, Brandenburgers & Brews. 7-10 p.m. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. Members of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, led by Music Director James Ross, present this special evening of Brandenburg Concertos in the intimate setting of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Hear the ASO's rendition of concertos No. 2, 4 and 5 with principals from the ASO featured as soloists. Stay after for a reception in Norton Hall to mingle with the musicians and enjoy delectable German food and beer. Food provided by Port City Brewery, the German Gourmet and Pork Barrel BBQ. Tickets: \$40/adults; \$5/youth. Visit www.alexsym.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 13

Visit with President James Madison. 1-4 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St. Facetime with History is an ongoing series that allows guests to spend time with people from the past in an informal setting, much like meeting at the tavern to catch up with friends. Guests touring the museum are welcome to enjoy chatting with President James Madison now that he is retired. This event is sponsored

by Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society and included in the regular museum admission of \$5 per adult, \$3 per child under 12. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

Gardening Lecture. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. The Harry Allen Winter Lecture Series at Green Spring Gardens provides a wealth of information for when the weather starts to warm. The lecture costs \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

Opening Reception: Fax Ayres, Photography. 4-6 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Fax Ayres' photography employs a 'lightpainting' technique to imbue his subjects with an almost surreal quality. He sets up still life vignettes in the dark and then carefully paints individual components with light, assembling multiple images together to create the final photograph. Fax Ayres lives and works in Charlottesville. The exhibition runs Jan. 10-Feb. 24. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

Live Music: House of Hamill. 7 p.m. at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Focus Alexandria presents The House of Hamill. Rose Baldino and Brian Buchanan are both accomplished traditional Irish style fiddle players and classical violinists, and have over 25 years of writing and performance experience between them. Tickets are \$18 in advance at www.focusmusic.org/buy-tickets and for FocusMusic and FSGW members; \$20 at the door.

TUESDAY/JAN. 15

Federal Government Claims. 1-3 p.m. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society, Claire Prechtel-Kluskens, former Senior Archivist for the National Archives, will speak about researching Federal Government claims to gather genealogical information. Free, open to public.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

Visit www.hollinhallseniorcenter.org.

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Program. 7:30 p.m. At Fairlington Presbyterian Church, 3846 King St., Alexandria. The City of Alexandria will honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the community program, Dr. King: We Are All One Humanity: Where Do We Go From Here. It will be presented by the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Planning Committee and will include welcome remarks by Mayor Justin Wilson; a keynote address by Paul Glist, chairman of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly; and music by the Shiloh Baptist Church Men of Victory. This event is free and open to the public. Visit www.fpcusa.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 16

Antiques Club Program. 9:30 a.m. at Hollin Hall Center, Room 216, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Joyce Ramsey will present a program on collectable match holders at the Alexandria-Mt. Vernon Antique Club. She will show some of her collections and telling the history of tabletop and wall match holders. Visitors are welcomed and may bring any match holders they have to show and tell. Call 703-960-4973.

FRIDAY/JAN. 18

Traveling by Pullman. 7:30-9 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. The name Pullman is synonymous with first class rail travel. Join Kevin Tankersley for an overview of the Pullman Company, and learn how the D.C. National Railway Historical Society chapter interprets the Pullman experience by operating the Pullman car Dover Harbor today. Free. Visit www.dcnrns.org.

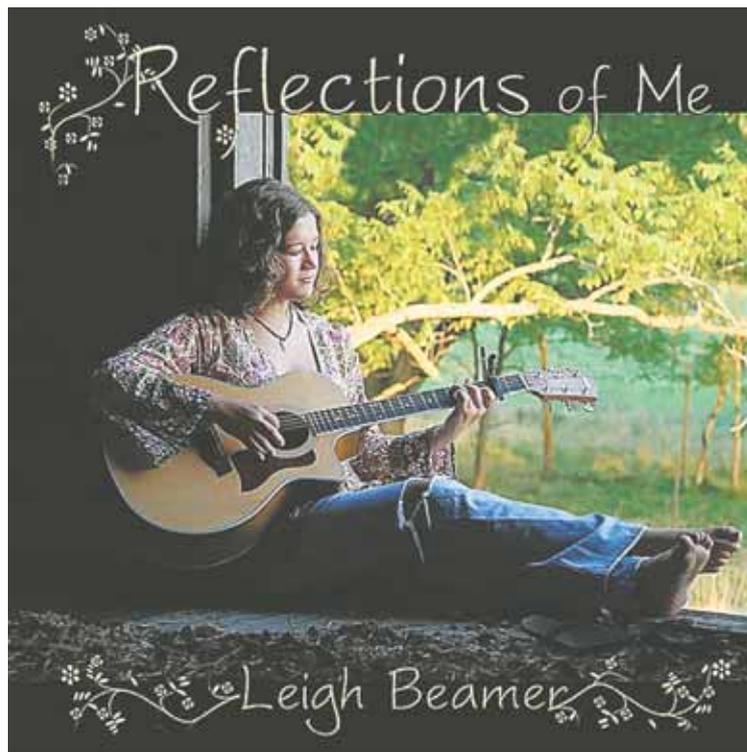
JAN. 18-27

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week. For 10 days and two weekends, 65 restaurants in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer a \$35 three-course dinner for one or a \$35 dinner for two. More than 35 restaurants will also offer lunch menus at \$15 or \$22 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Brunch lovers can enjoy brunch menus for \$15 or \$22 per person at 14 restaurants. Visit www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

Children's Program on Deer. 10-11 a.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. White-tailed deer are our largest mammal neighbors, and kids can learn all about these graceful animals in the "Dashing Deer" program. Children age 2-6 can join a park naturalist and learn to appreciate the wonderful life of a deer from fawn to doe or buck. There will be hands-on activities, songs and a guided walk in search of deer and their tracks. Participants will also create a craft to take home. Cost is \$10 per child. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Artist Talk: "Hard Wired." 4-6 p.m. at Touchstone Gallery, 901 New York Ave. NW Washington, D.C. Tory Cowles of Potomac is represented by Touchstone Gallery, a resident artist in Studio 7 at Alexandria's Torpedo Factory, and an abstract painting instructor at Glen Echo Park's Yellow Barn. Her work evolves out of a spontaneous abstract expressionist process which depends on the rawness of the materials, the unexpectedness of the composition, and the mystery of how materials are transformed. Call 202-347-3787 or visit www.touchstonegallery.com.



Americana Music

Born and raised in Wytheville, Va., Beamer is one of the leading young vocalists in Southwest Virginia and a skilled interpreter of the old-time music of Appalachia. Beer and wine for sale; light refreshments available as well. Friday, Jan. 11, 6-8 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 South Washington St., Alexandria. Visit www.alexandriava.gov.

SUNDAY/JAN. 20

What's Buggin' You? 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Bring your bug questions and stories for entomologist Nate Erwin who will present a colorful slide show about insects and their associated plants. Find out how to attract butterflies and fireflies or put a name to that curious bug in the garden last year. Cost is \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

FRIDAY/JAN. 25

Container Gardens for the Yardless. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Just because you don't have a yard doesn't mean you can't have a garden. Learn how to brighten your home with plants and flowers. Whether in flower pots, hanging baskets or window boxes, container gardens are beautiful, easy and rewarding. At this Garden Talk with Extension Master Gardeners, learn how to create a dazzling display with eye-catching perennials and annuals. Get information and inspiration to design your own container gardens. Cost is \$10. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chiquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring James K. Polk and William Ramsay Schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

SUNDAY/JAN. 27

Wild Women of Washington. 1-3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. From newspaperwomen and suffragettes to rebellious first ladies and socialites, the nation's capital has attracted

many unladylike ladies over the years. Hear their stories as author Camden Schwantes discusses her book, "Wild Women of Washington, D.C.: A History of Disorderly Conduct from the Ladies of the District." Reservations are required. \$42 for the program and tea; \$18 for the program only. To make reservations for tea, call 703-941-7987, or to learn more about the historic site, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

MONDAY/JAN. 28

Bullying and Lockdowns: Perspectives on School Security. 7:15 p.m. At The Hermitage Auditorium, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Part of the Agenda:Alexandria program, which falls on the fourth Monday of the month, begin at 7:15 p.m. Programs are \$5 each or free with your \$35 membership, payable online at www.AgendaAlexandria.org/sign-up page or at the door by check or credit. All are invited to a pre-program dinner if desired. Dinner is 6:45-7:15 p.m., prices starting at \$32 with reservations by the Friday prior to the program. Visit www.Agenda:Alexandria.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chiquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring Ferdinand T. Day and Samuel W. Tucker schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

"New Beginnings" Opening Reception. 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. See artwork created by reuse. These creations incorporate found objects, recycled materials or older works of art. The exhibit runs from Feb. 1-24. Exhibit details, plus information on four special workshops at DelRayArtisans.org/event/new-beginnings.

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Welcome to the Future

CES looks to the future of technology.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

If bigger is better, then CES 2019 is the place to be. Taking place Jan. 8-11 in Las Vegas, the world's largest technology show debuted a 219-inch MicroLED display from Samsung, the diminutive by comparison 98-inch 8k TV from Sony, and a flexible OLED screen from LG.

Early show buzz centered around concept vehicles like the Hyundai Elevate, a concept "walking car" that uses articulated legs to navigate off road, and the Bell Nexus, a concept design for a hybrid air taxi, while the battle between the artificial intelligence devices from Amazon and Google heated up.

"AI is opening up a lot of possibilities in accessible technology," said Alexandria resident Douglas Goist. Goist, who is blind, served for many years on the city's Commission on Persons With Disabilities, and uses technology to navigate a variety of daily tasks.

"From screen readers to artificial intelli-

gence and smartphone software, technology will continue to improve the lives of those with disabilities," he added. "I just arrived but am excited to see what is new in accessibility technology this year."

According to Gary Shapiro, president and CEO of the Arlington-based Consumer Technology Association, which produces CES, the technology trends to watch this year include AI, or artificial intelligence, Smart Home technology, digital health, Esports and sports technology, and Smart Cities resilience.

"The U.S. is beginning a transformation that will create lucrative business opportunities for many," Shapiro said in his opening remarks. "5G is coming, which will allow a fast data stream and incentivize new services that cross the bor-

ders of all tech sectors."

Shapiro noted that 5G, which is expected to become available in late 2019 and early 2020, will be the backbone for the smart city infrastructure that will help cities be



Alexandria resident Douglas Goist, right, checks out an Alexa-enabled communications handset from Richard Hall-Smith of SGW Global at the Showstoppers press event on opening day of CES 2019. The annual technology show runs through Jan. 11 in Las Vegas.

PHOTOS BY JOHN BORDNER/THE GAZETTE

more resilient in coping with unforeseen disasters.

"5G will also fuel the connected home, transform digital healthcare and create immersive experiences for global sports fans," he added.

Google Assistant unveiled its new Interpreter Mode, which translates live voices into different languages with a degree of accuracy that surpasses Google Translate. And while BlackBerry may be out when it comes to smartphone devices, it is leading the way in security and will license its BlackBerry Secure technology to smart device manufacturers in a bid to make smart speakers like Google Home and Amazon Echo, more secure.

"There's no place like CES to see what the future of technology looks like," Goist said. "It brings to reality previously unimagined possibilities that will improve the lives of people around the world."

Springfield Cab Driver Holds 3 Guinness World Records

Springfield resident is sixth-degree black belt in American Marine GoJu-Ryu Karate.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE GAZETTE

Ujjwal Sharma Thakuri, 44, is pretty famous in his native country of Nepal. The Springfield cab driver has been written about hundreds of times in Nepali newspapers for being a three-time Guinness World record holder and a sixth-degree black belt in American Marine GoJu-Ryu Karate.

Today, he lives on Leebrad Street in Springfield with his wife Priyanka and daughter Elizabeth, 11, and has driven cabs for D.C. Cab, USA Cab and now drives for Uber. He came to the U.S. 16 years ago after spending his childhood in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Strictly an amateur fighter, he receives no financial rewards for his hard work but holds more than 30 national trophies, medals, belts and cups for competitions inside the U.S.

For his Guinness World Records, he carries the world record for the most full-contact knee strikes in three minutes (226 on one leg), which he achieved in Toledo, Ohio, on Nov. 3, 2018. He also holds two world records for his Van Dam style weight lift — a split and weight lift (64.63 kg or 142.48 pounds) in Herndon, on Sept. 23, 2017. Athletes have to hold weights in their mouth and body and cross a 10-second mark; his world records were 28 seconds and then 18 seconds. The feat is named after Rob Van Dam, whose record he broke two times.

In challenging the Guinness World Records, he recorded his accomplishments by video in front of several witnesses at his dojo, or training sites in Herndon and Ohio.



Three-time Guinness World Record holder Ujjwal Sharma Thakuri of Springfield with his many trophies and awards.

HIS RECORDS include a World Championship Belt — the 2017 Kuro Bushi Martial Arts Organization Champion on May 13, 2017, in Concord, N.C. Another World Title Belt is from the Battle of Baltimore 2016 World Karate Championship. Another is a first-place Black Belt in Creative Form at the Americkick International Championship on March 24-25, 2017, in Philadelphia, Pa. He also received the Who's Who Legend Award from the American Martial Arts Association. In 2016, he earned two gold medals in the USA Masters Game.

Thakuri is an expert in American Marine

GoJu-Ryu Karate and he used to do Shito-Ryu Karate, which means karate with empty hands or no weapons.

"It's a traditional karate from Japan. Karate never teaches attack; it only teaches defense, respect, discipline, so what happens with empty hands is if somebody is in trouble, you are empty-handed. You are going to defend them with empty hands," he said.

There are four brands of traditional Karate that come from Japan. In addition to American Marine GoJu-Ryu Karate (in the U.S.), there's Shito-Ryu, Wado-Ryu, and Shotokan-Kai.

Thakuri said in the World Karate Federation, there is no contact. "Definitely we have a fight, not full contact but light contact and speed. It's very light contact. We have no violence. We don't hit. If I hit someone, I will lose the game," he said.

He added: "We have karate fighting stances and we score by close contact, not body contact. It's a three-minute game, and it depends on how fast you are and how expert your opponent is. The highest score is 14 points in one game, one three-minute game."

Thakuri started training 24 years ago and for his regime, he works out for an hour and 30 minutes every day, including time on a treadmill. "If you want to make a record, you need to train every day in different manners. You can do it in dojo or a home, too," he said. "To become a person with special skills, you have to learn every

day — you have to give it time. Let's say you want to be a fighter, you have to fight everyone. If you want to learn a special skill, you have to give it a time every day for that skill."

He said Karate is physically good for his body and it keeps his mind alert and focused. "The circulation of your blood makes you alert. So, if you do any kind of sport, you have to choose one specific game, and if you go in deeply, you'll be more of an expert. That's why I choose karate," he said.

When he does a split for a minute, he says it gives him new energy. "If you have a problem, that problem can be solved if you exercise. If I do a split for one minute, it changes my whole circulation. It is like a meditation for the body," he said.

HE ADMIRES the legendary Hollywood star Chuck Norris, who was famous for his kicks. "Chuck Norris had a great leg technique. He is a world champion. The fact is he was the world champion when Bruce Lee called him for the movies. If you see Chuck Norris movies, the way he kicks is the perfect kick. That's why I follow him and why my kick is good and my knee strike is good."

His teacher of seven years is 9th Dan American Marines GoJu Karate Master Garry Klaus (USMC Ret.), who lived in Quantico, and has since moved to Illinois. "He is like a father for me," he said. "He was a great, great Master for me — always an idol for me. He showed me the first North American Sports Karate championship — the U.S. Capital Classic in 2015."

In the future, Thakuri aspires to teach self-defense to school teachers in an adult education program.

Gorham Reappointed to Park Board

Mount Vernon Supervisor Daniel G. Storck reappointed Linwood Gorham to the Fairfax County Park Board as the representative of the Mount Vernon District. Action came at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Dec. 4, 2018.



Gorham

Gorham was first appointed to the Park Board in 2011 by then Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerald Hyland. He was elected treasurer of the Park Board in 2017 and currently serves on the Executive Committee, as well as holding multiple leadership positions:

- ❖ Chair, Park Operations Committee
 - ❖ Vice Chair, Park Services and Golf Committee
 - ❖ Vice Chair, Diversity and Succession Committee
 - ❖ Vice chair, Resource Management Committee
 - ❖ Member, Planning and Development Committee
- Gorham is a longtime resident of Lorton and lifelong resident of Fairfax County. He has served with regional and state park systems to promote and improve services and facilities.

Fairfax County Park Authority Board members are appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and set policy and establish priorities for the park agency. The 12-member Park Board has members representing each magisterial district, as well as three at-large members.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9
program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. The formal presentation will begin at 7 p.m. To find out more about the UAS program go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas. Send feedback or questions to uas@fairfaxcounty.gov or through the link located on the UAS webpage. Written comments on the draft program must be received by the close of business Feb. 8, 2019, to be included in the official public record.

- ❖ Thursday, Jan. 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Mason District Governmental Center (Community Room), 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale.
- ❖ Wednesday, Jan. 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at South County Governmental Center (Room 221C), 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.
- ❖ Wednesday, Jan. 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at McLean District Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean.
- ❖ Thursday, Jan. 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly.
- ❖ Monday, Jan. 28, 2019, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Reston Community Center – Hunter Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road.
- ❖ Wednesday, Jan. 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Braddock Hall – Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke.

THURSDAY/JAN. 10

Chamber Business Breakfast. 8 a.m. at Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Start the New Year with Power Networking. This annual breakfast is a fun and fast way to make lots of contacts. Be surprised at how easy it will be to meet new people. The Chamber has a new way to do power networking for a new year. \$30 for Chamber members, \$40 for non members. Visit www.mtvernon-leechchamber.org for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

Essay Contest Deadline. “What would our world look like if we never had a Dr. Martin Luther King?” is the title of an essay contest for Mount Vernon District High School students (public, private, parochial, or home schooled), sponsored by Ventures in Community, a group of faith communities and nonprofits in the Route 1 Corridor area. The top three

winner will receive prize money (\$250 for first place, \$150 for second, and \$100 for third) and will read their essays at VIC’s annual Martin Luther King Holiday Observance at 1 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 19 at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Road. Essays of 500 words must be submitted to venturesincommunity@gmail.com, subject line titled “MLK Essay.”

SATURDAY/JAN. 12

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.
- ❖ 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Mount Vernon district office, 2511 Parkers Lane, Mount Vernon.

TUESDAY/JAN. 15

Scholarship Application Deadline. The Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (VALHEN) is now accepting applications for the 2018-2019 Scholarship program. This scholarship program is dedicated to assist Latinx/Hispanic students to pursue higher education within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Scholarship awards are for one-year and will be paid directly to the recipient’s college or university to cover tuition, books, and/or fees. Email scholarships@valhen.org or visit valhen.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 16

Public Comment Meeting. 7 p.m. in Room 106 of the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The Fairfax County Park Authority has scheduled its annual public comment meeting on the agency’s proposed fee adjustments. The public is invited to share their perspectives on the proposals with the Park Authority Board either at the meeting, via correspondence or by email. The public meeting agenda includes a brief presentation on the fee process followed by an opportunity for public comment. Information outlining all proposed fee changes is available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/feemeeting, at the Park Authority’s main office in the Herrity Building and at staffed park facilities, including RECenters, golf courses, nature centers and historic sites.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

Town Hall Meeting. 9:30 a.m. at Walt Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. State Senators Scott Surovell and Adam Ebbin with Del. Paul Krizek will host a town hall. Individuals will have the opportunity to hear about progress in Richmond and ask questions about legislation as the legislative process happens.

Town Hall Meeting. Noon at Hayfield Elementary School, 7633 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. State Senators Scott Surovell, Adam Ebbin and George Barker with Delegates Paul Krizek and Mark Sickles will host a town hall. Individuals will have the opportunity to hear about progress in Richmond and ask questions about legislation as the legislative process happens.

TUESDAY/JAN. 22

Climate Change and Children’s Health. 6:30-8 p.m. at Frog Pond Early Learning Center, 7204 Harrison Lane, Alexandria. Mother Nurture Company presents a Community Forum on Climate Change & Children’s Health Samantha Ahdoot. Ahdoot is the Chair and Co-founder of Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action. Free. RSVP to mothernurturecompany.eventbrite.com.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 23

Public Information Meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Mt. Vernon High School (cafeteria), 8515 Old Mt. Vernon Road, Alexandria. Fairfax County will hold a public information meeting on the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit BRT project. The meeting will feature an interactive open house from 6:30-7, a presentation at 7 and a continuation of the open house until 8:30 p.m. Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) staff and project consultants will provide updates on the BRT project, discuss next steps, answer questions and take public comments from the community related to the planning and design of the BRT system. Spanish Translation will be available at the meeting. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/richmond-hwy-brt for more.

CRIME REPORT

FROM PAGE 5
2500 block of Parkers Lane, package from residence
2600 block of Arlington Drive, merchandise from storage units
7900 block of Richmond Highway,

license plate from vehicle
6100 block of Woodmont Road, purse from location
7600 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business
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The Road Very Much Traveled



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I haven't been down this road before, random though its occurrence may have been, but when schedules collide: 24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, every-three-week infusion, quarterly CT scan and semi annual brain MRI; and of course the follow-up appointment with my oncologist a week or so later to finish the fortnight-long festivities.

The daze leading up to that final Friday are hardly the stuff with which dreams are made. More like nightmares, actually; certainly sleepless nights.

But as you regular readers know from previous columns, there's no real point fretting about it. I mean, what's done is done (what's scanned is scanned) and though I may not want the chips to fall, for the moment, they've already fallen.

Not to be fatalistic, but sometimes, as a cancer patient, ceding control to the realities (you'll note I didn't say "inevitable realities") is part of the process; "going with the flow," as my wife, Dina would say.

At this point, all I can do is wait and hope. I can't do one thing about any of it. I'll know soon enough and if the news is discouraging, I'll deal with it then. I see no advantage in being miserable a week earlier than necessary.

Still, all of these diagnostic demands occurring simultaneously is a bit much. Unfortunately, there's nothing to be done other than to grin (a wry smile, really) and bear it. The calendar/schedule with which my life has become all too familiar (I'm also not saying "consumed"), can hardly be adjusted simply because I don't feel like it.

My life is at stake here. I can't treat it like a household chore. It needs to be adhered to. Wanting circumstances to be different serves no purpose. Accepting reality and integrating the cancer-patient responsibilities into your routine seems a more reasonable course of action.

A few years into my cancer treatment, I remember meeting some of the staff at an off-site cancer-centric function. After exchanging pleasantries, one staff member commended me as being a "very compliant patient."

Not being completely sure what she meant, I asked her to clarify. She said I made all my appointments inferring that some cancer patients don't. Incredulous, I asked further. She sort of half-smirked and said I'd be surprised, which of course I was.

She offered no statistics or anything empirical, but from her reaction, it was not an unusual occurrence. I remember thinking, how do you not be compliant when doctors are working to save your life? Seemed counter intuitive, almost.

So yes, I've been compliant. Extremely so, I'm proud to say.

After my initial diagnosis, I felt I had been given an assignment, so to speak; to save (at least extend) my own life, and I was going to follow doctor's orders accordingly. And even though over the years, I've integrated many non-Western alternatives into my routine, so far as my primary care team (internal medicine doctor and oncologist) was concerned, I've supplemented rather than replaced.

All of which leads me to where I am today: waiting to hear from my oncologist about last week's scans, while swallowing 60-odd pills a day, drinking alkaline water, standing in front of an infrared bulb, and trying to detoxify whenever possible in the hope that together, conventional and non-conventional pursuits will make my immune system stronger and create an environment less hospitable to the growth and movement of the cancer cells that have already been triggered somehow.

The only persistent problem I have is compartmentalizing the presumptive fact that since I was given a "terminal" diagnosis in late February 2009, how is it that I just keep on keepin' on?

Life goes on, generally, I realize, but that's not what I was told would happen. After nearly 10 years, I suppose I'm just a little road weary.

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

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NEWS

Education

FROM PAGE 1
a year.

"The truth is that many working people across our community are struggling," said David Broder, president of SEIU512. "The fastest growing jobs are often low-wage and lack basic benefits such as health care, paid leave and retirement plans."

Carpenter Jose Frias appeared before lawmakers to urge them to take action against wage theft. Virginia is one of the few states that does not allow workers who are victims of wage theft to receive lawyers fees, which harms low-wage workers who would otherwise have no way to pay for a lawyer. Maryland allows for triple damages, and D.C. allows quadruple damages plus legal fees. But in Virginia, people who have not received all the money coming to them have a hard time finding a lawyer willing to work for free.

"Pass laws that give us the right to private cause of action," said Frias. "We need these tools to defend our jobs and provide for our families."

SEVERAL SPEAKERS urged lawmakers to scale back recently passed restrictions on homeowners who rent out their houses short term through services like Airbnb.

Other speakers called for instituting universal background checks for people who purchase weapons at gun shows.

A handful of people arrived at the government center to ask lawmakers to "close the puppy mill loophole," a legislative effort to create new restrictions on businesses that sell animals.

One speaker urged lawmakers to reject efforts to fork over up to \$1.1 billion worth of incentives to Amazon.

"This deal was conducted without any public input, and so this deal has no mandate," said Helen Li, a Fairfax County resident who is part of a group known as For Us Not Amazon. "Please fight for a fair process instead of rubber-stamping a secret business deal that was made without Virginia residents in mind."

Lawmakers also heard from several speakers on both sides of the Equal Rights Amendment. After Illinois became the 37th state to pass the ERA last year, advocates for and against started targeting Virginia as the potential 38th state — the magic number needed to put the ERA over the top and add it to the Constitution.

Arthur Purves of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance raised concerns that the ERA might "make men's and women's bathrooms unconstitutional." Many more speakers, though, said it was long past time for Virginia to join the other states that have approved the amendment.

"We have a historic opportunity this year to ratify the ERA and get it passed and include women in the Constitution of the United States as equal," said Shyamali Hauth, a veteran who is active in Democratic politics. "I ask you to do the right thing and ensure equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex — those are the exact words of the Equal Rights Amendment."

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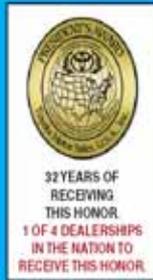
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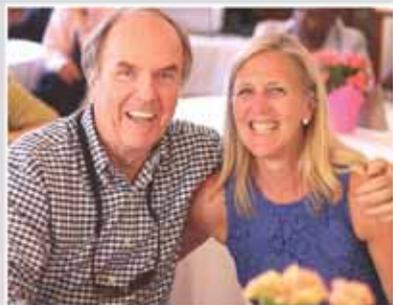
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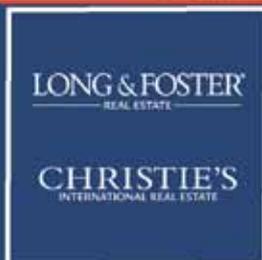


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