

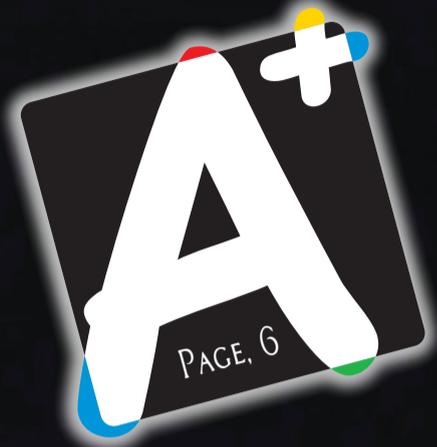
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JANUARY 17-23, 2019

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Virginians Are Split on Arming Teachers

Reflecting geographic differences.

BY SAFFEYA AHMED
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Virginians are divided on whether they would support legislation to train school teachers and administrators to be armed on school grounds, according to a poll conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University.

“It was almost split right down the middle,” said Robyn McDougle, director for the Center for Public Policy in VCU’s L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, which conducted the study.

The 2018-19 Winter Public Policy Poll asked a random sample of 805 adult Virginians: “Would you favor or oppose a state law allowing localities to train teachers and administrators to be armed in schools?”

About 47 percent of Virginians are strongly or somewhat in favor of such training while 49 percent are strongly or somewhat opposed, the poll found. The survey’s margin of error was 3.45 percentage points.

Republicans were far more likely than Democrats to favor the legislation. A little more than half of white people responded that they would support training teachers and administrators to carry weapons, compared with 34 percent of minorities. Residents of western Virginia supported arming teachers more than any other region in the state, with 63 percent strongly or somewhat favoring the proposed legislation.

McDougle said the results show that “the commonwealth is still very much a split state around the importance of Second Amendment rights.” She said Virginia is “not a state where we’re one side or the other — it’s still a hotly debated topic.”

The idea of arming school teachers most recently circulated after the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. The shooting killed 17 and injured 17 others. In 2018 alone, there were at least 24 school shootings resulting in 113 deaths, according to research conducted by Education Week.

Arming teachers and administrative staff at schools is not an idea unknown to Virginia. In August, Lee County, in southwestern Virginia, approved a plan to arm teachers in an effort to increase security. Attorney General Mark Herring denounced Lee County’s plan as illegal.

“But when Parkland happened ... the coach was shot while he was trying to protect his students,” Brian Austin, superintendent of Lee County Public Schools, told NPR. “We had the incident in Indiana, where the young teacher was trying to defend his students and got shot. And some school boards started issuing buckets of rocks and bats. And we thought we could do better than that.”

In addition to arming teachers, the poll also asked Virginians if they supported people carrying firearms at large public assemblies — such as concerts, protests or festivals. Sixty-two percent said they would favor maintaining public safety, even if it meant restricting people from carrying guns.



PHOTO BY BEN ZUHL

Dozens protest in front of the NRA headquarters in Fairfax on Monday, Jan. 14.

Dozens Brave Snow, Ice to Protest Gun Violence

Forty hearty souls and two snowmen protested in front of the NRA headquarters in Fairfax on Monday, Jan. 14. Neither snow, rain, heat nor ice has stopped this monthly vigil which began seven years ago immediately following the massacre at Sandy Hook, Dec 14, 2012. The vigil is held the 14th of each month in memory of the victims of Sandy Hook and of all the victims of gun violence. It will continue until there are

common sense changes like universal background checks, banning bump stocks and keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers.

Next vigil—Valentines Day, Feb. 14, 2019. Sponsored by: Reston Herndon Alliance to End Gun Violence, Concerned Citizens Against Gun Violence, Brady Campaign Northern Virginia, Virginia Coalition for Gun Violence Prevention and Coalition to Stop Gun Violence.

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‘It Can Be an Economic Driver for the City’

Northfax East/University Drive Extension moves along.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The purpose of the Northfax East/University Drive Extension project is to reduce traffic congestion in the City’s Northfax area. It will be accomplished by creating a new, north-south connection between Fairfax Boulevard and Eaton Place.

The new road is planned to be 850 feet long. Its components include a mini roundabout, turn lanes, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, some on-street parking, drainage improvements, traffic-signal modifications and landscaping.

It’ll be just north of University Drive and is completely federally funded via VDOT SmartScale funds. Estimated cost is \$9.9 million, with the bulk of that amount earmarked for right-of-way acquisition from five impacted, properties, plus utility work.

The Fairfax City Council recently held a public hearing at the project’s 60-percent-design stage. It provided an update for the residents on the latest details and also let them express their opinions and concerns.

“Northfax is bounded by Chain Bridge Road, Eaton Place and Fairfax Boulevard,” said Nick Soucie of the Timmons Group, the City’s consultant on this project. “But currently, there’s no connectivity, so this would divide that existing ‘mega-block.’”

It would also reduce traffic volumes at the Fairfax Boulevard-Chain Bridge Road intersection and provide an alternate route from University Drive, south of Fairfax Boulevard, to Eaton Place and beyond. And it would give that site the needed infrastructure for future Northfax redevelopment.

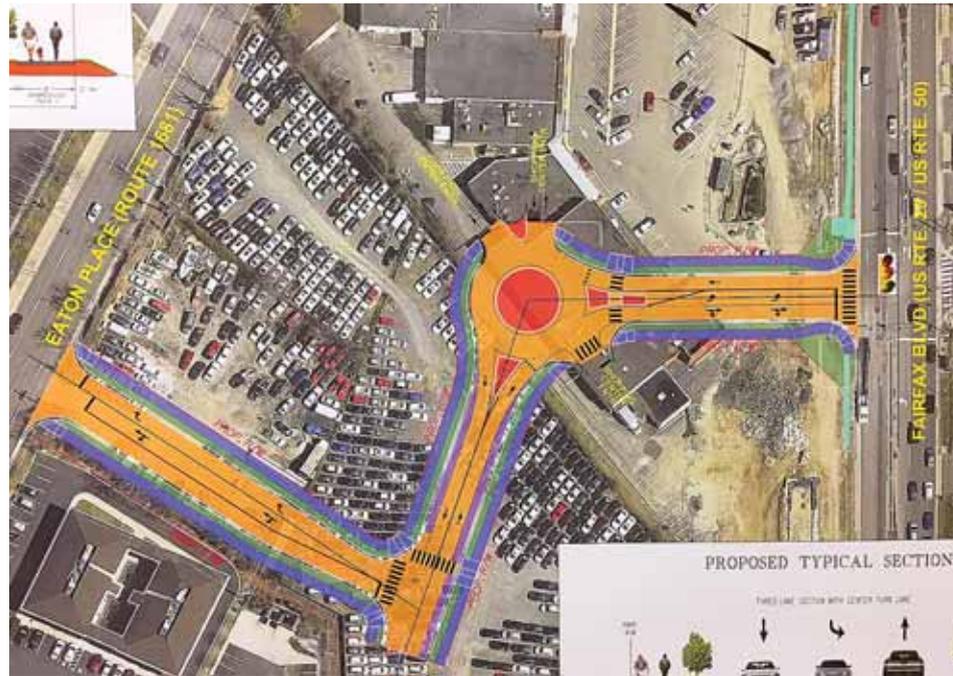
Soucie said a typical section of road would vary from three lanes with a center turn lane to two lanes with on-street parking. And since the project’s 30-percent design phase, a mini roundabout was added to promote lower speeds and reduce conflict points so motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists could travel more safely through this corridor.

FAIRFAX WANTS to promote green, active streets, so a shared-use path and landscaping are also parts of this plan. The 8-foot-wide path, similar to a sidewalk, is intended for use by both bike-riders and pedestrians. It would go on both sides of the corridor, with marked road crossings, and connect Fairfax Boulevard to Eaton Place.

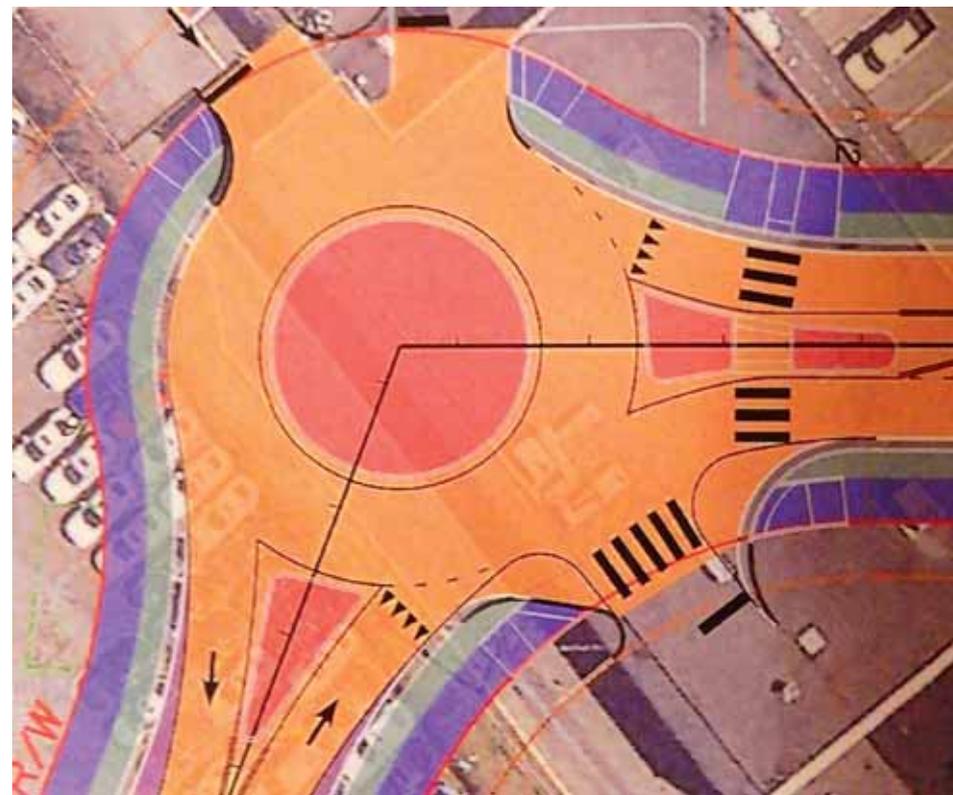
Landscaping would be in a 5-foot-wide planting strip and would be a combination of street trees, grasses and low-growth shrubs. Today, there are no trees or vegetation on that site.

The project schedule anticipates right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation this summer. Advertisement for construction bids would be in spring 2021, with the work beginning that fall.

At the public hearing, Transportation Di-



The proposed design of the Northfax East/University Drive Extension project.



A close-up view of the mini roundabout showing how large trucks would drive across the red, traversable islands.

rector Wendy Block Sanford said there’ll be “narrower lanes on University and the incorporation of on-street parking, where possible.” She also noted that Eaton would become a T-intersection.

Councilman Sang Yi asked how this roadway plan fits in with the development of that shopping center, and Sanford said they’ve already showed it to the shopping-center owner, and he’ll work around it. “We’re expecting approximately 20 on-street parking spaces,” she added. “And there’s full access to Fairfax Boulevard in

both directions from the shopping center.”

Councilwoman Janice Miller said the City should commit to doing four things: Develop a visioning plan for the Northfax area, meet with the landowners there to strategize about future development, completely adopt the [new] Comprehensive Plan and develop a stronger communication plan.

“Is there only one crosswalk on the east side of the intersection with Fairfax Boulevard?” asked Councilman Michael DeMarco. A City engineer said yes, and

Mayor David Meyer explained that, at this point, a crosswalk on the west side isn’t included in the design.

Next, the residents had their turn to speak. First was Douglas Stewart, representing Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth. “This street is essential for making Northfax a more vibrant, walkable and bikeable place,” he said. “These street-grid networks make you feel you’re in a particular place. We want pedestrians to want to go there, so we want traffic speeds no higher than 25 mph. And we’d like a crosswalk on the west side of University. But we definitely support this project.”

Doug Church, chairman of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, said, “Our offices are on University Drive and we’re in favor of this.”

Also speaking in support was John Figgle, who lives on University at the top of the hill. “This is a way for me to get to I-66 easier and with a couple options,” he said. “Could the mini roundabout have shrubbery or a tree without impeding cars’ vision?”

Michael O’Brien, vice chairman of the City’s Economic Development Authority, said both he and the EDA are in favor of this project. “This divides the neighborhood into a pedestrian-friendly development. It can be transformed into the heart of the City’s new downtown and can be an economic driver for the City.”

UNIVERSITY DRIVE resident Bob Kemp was pleased with the traffic-mitigation measures planned to slow down drivers there. Yet others contended the project would make things worse.

Amy Anspach, also of University Drive, said it “will send more traffic down University, and the residents on my street aren’t happy about that. We’re not going to get a Mosaic District there. We’re going to get a weird, jagged road and weird intersections that will only worsen traffic.”

“It’s not a traffic improvement,” she continued. “And there’s no need for the on-street parking. People on University can’t get in and out of their driveways and will be bothered by the noise the additional traffic will bring.”

Agreeing, Talya Schultz said, “The residents don’t want this, as evidenced by 350 signatures on a petition. And it’ll add more congestion than it’ll help. I think we could do better.”

“Is there some way the residents could get some information from the property owners about what they have planned for the other two parts of this three-part development?” asked Diane Henn. “It seems like more space is going into building roads than retail, there.” Besides that, she added, “There’ll be increased traffic on University Drive and Fairfax Boulevard. And it’s already tough getting in and out of Eaton Drive.”

After hearing all the comments, Meyer asked City staff to review and analyze all of them and “report back to the Council.”

Pay Attention, State Legislature Not Gridlocked

Thousands of bills considered over 45 days could have a big impact on your life, for better or for worse.

A week is already completed in the short (45-day) session of the Virginia General Assembly, and so many important things are in the works, in danger of happening or not happening, that no one can have a clear view of it all.

An example: The Senate Courts of Justice Committee voted for a bill 8-6 that would bar the execution of people with serious mental illnesses. Possibly you didn't realize that it is legal to execute someone with serious mental illness, because it makes no sense. But this bill failed last year.

Another success for the moment: increasing the minimum wage to \$15 over several years also cleared Senate committee.

Do you know who your Virginia delegate and senator are? Every resident of Virginia gets one of each. Enter your address here: <https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/> to find out all of your representatives, plus contact information. Call and tell them, or leave a message, about what matters to you. Send an email. Connect to them on Facebook and watch for live Q&A sessions.

Here you can search legislation by bill number or keyword, find video and streaming: <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/>

Last week's editorial, a long legislative wish list, <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2019/jan/08/opinion-editorial-wish-list-things-session-general/> still omitted many important actions, despite its length. One in particular made it into some editions and not others: To establish equal rights for LGBT Virgin-

ians, especially in housing and public employment.

Here are a few more important items:

The Virginia State Conference NAACP Criminal Justice Committee supports the passage of the following bills that are up for debate in this legislative session:

- ❖ HB 1651 - Raises grand larceny limit from \$500 to \$750 (Del Hayes)

- ❖ HB 1642 - Increases data collection on use of solitary confinement (Del Hope)

- ❖ SB 1013 - Repeals suspension of drivers licences for not paying fines (Sen Stanley; Del Kory)

- ❖ SB 1053 and HB 1745 - Makes juvenile offenders sentenced to life automatically eligible for parole after serving 25 years. (Sen Marsden; Del Lindsey)

- ❖ HB 2616 - Raises the minimum age a child can be tried as an adult from 14 to 16 (Del Guzman) (And this is still far too low.)

- ❖ SB 1551, HB 1685, HB 1873 and HB 1688 - Limits the scope of what School Resource Officers can get involved, prohibits students from being charged with disorderly conduct, and mandates data collection of use of force against students. (Sen Surovell, Del Schuyler T. VanValkenburg, Del Bourne; Del Mullin)

- ❖ SB 997 - Decriminalizes simple marijuana possession. (Sen Ebbin)

- ❖ SB 1008 - Bans mechanical devices designed to increase rate of bullets firing. (Sen Ebbin)

- ❖ SB 1013 - Repeals the requirement that the driver's license of a person convicted of

any violation of the law who fails or refuses to provide payment of fines be suspended. (Sen Stanley)

- ❖ SB 1034 - Prohibits any person who is not a licensed firearms dealer from purchasing more than one handgun in a 30-day period. (Sen Locke)

- ❖ HB 1991 - Labels violent hate groups as domestic terrorists (Del Price)

- ❖ HB 2472 - Adds gender, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation to the categories of victims whose intentional selection for a hate crime results in a higher criminal penalty for the offense. (Del. Kenneth R. Plum)

House Courts of Justice members: Robert B. Bell (chairman), Leftwich (vice chair), Kilgore, Gilbert, L.R. Adams, J.L. Campbell, Collins, Miyares, Ransone, R.R. Campbell, Watts, Toscano, Herring, Hope, Mullin, Bourne, Simon, Carroll Foy.

Senate Courts of Justice members:

Obenshain (chairman), Saslaw, Norment, Howell, Lucas, Edwards, McDougle, Stuart, Stanley, Reeves, Chafin, Deeds, Sturtevant, Petersen, and Peake.

Find contact information <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/>

See our website www.ConnectionNewspapers.com for many stories from the General Assembly from the Capital News Service, written by journalism students from VCU.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

General Assembly Agenda

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



COMMENTARY

In a recent social media post, I indicated that the annual General Assembly session would be underway very soon. AutoCorrect changed the text to be "underwater very soon." My son alerted me to the change, and I made what I thought was a correction. As the General Assembly session has gotten underway I am starting to wonder if AutoCorrect knew something that I am now coming to realize: The General Assembly may well be underwater! The session is scheduled to go until Feb. 22. Meeting five days a week means 38 actual days for work on more than 2,000 bills and resolutions. While I have highlighted big issues like redistricting reform, preventing gun violence and ERA ratification, there are many more issues large and small that make up the agenda for the session.

Virginia has always conformed its income tax policies to the federal system. With the massive changes that have been made in federal tax law, the General Assembly will wrestle with what we will do in Virginia. There will

be an effort to resolve the issue early in the session to accommodate taxpayers who want to file their returns early. Part of the tax policy debate will be making the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refundable as promoted by the Governor in a bill that I have introduced. The purpose would be to allow persons of low income to keep more of the money they earn and be more self-supporting.

As a Dillon Rule State meaning local governments have only the powers granted to them by the state, dozens of bills, called local bills, are introduced to extend powers some of which are very minor to a particular locality. Another group of bills is called housekeeping to make corrections or clarifications to legislation that passed in previous sessions. All these bills are important but add to the workload of a session.

Challenging environmental issues will be coming before the legislature many of which relate to energy. There are proposals to increase

the required uses of alternative and renewable fuels. Cleaning up from the past use of fossil fuels and the resulting growth in coal ash ponds will be taken up.

There is strong need to deal with the degradation of water quality in the Chesapeake Bay area. The Tidewater area is subject to recurrent flooding coming about with climate change that needs addressing now rather than later.

There are many bills dealing with criminal justice reform including bills intended to reduce the school to prison pipeline. The Governor has announced his support of decriminalizing possession of small quantities of marijuana. A bill that has been introduced would allow casino and sports gambling.

There will be a number of dog and cat bills that include high levels of emotion from interested parties. Being able to limit dogs running across the properties of land owners is a big concern in rural areas.

To review all the bills on the agenda of the General Assembly go to <http://lis.virginia.gov>

If you have not done so already, let me know your positions on issues by going to my website (www.kenplum.com). Click on Legislative Session Survey.



Chosen Presbyterian Has a New Home

City Council approves special-use permit.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Chosen Presbyterian Church has a new home. That's because the Fairfax City Council recently approved a special-use permit enabling the church to operate at 3843 Plaza Drive in an area zoned for commercial-retail uses.

The site is an existing, two-story building, with the upper level used for worship and fellowship, and the lower level also used for fellowship, plus offices. In the future, that spot is designated as business-commercial.

City staff noted that, on Sundays and during special events, the church will need to share parking with the nearby homeowners' association.

Appearing before the Council during the public hearing for this matter, Carol Kim, representing the church, explained why a new location was needed.

"We've been renting space in the

Little Run Elementary School for almost 13 years," she said. "But we feel it's important for our families to actually have a church site."

Then the public got to weigh in on the proposal, and reaction was mixed. Greg Modisett, who owns two units across from that spot, spoke in support of the church. "Having them there would help with security," he said. "And I think they'd make a good neighbor."

However, Dr. Michael Bassiri disagreed. "I own a dental practice next door, and I'm against it because we have another Korean association in our building that's turned into a disaster," he said. "The church is asking for more parking, and their overflow will take up my parking spaces."

Stressing that the current zoning is for professional uses, Bassiri said, "This church will keep growing and the zoning change will affect us badly." He also said that location has no handicap access and contended that Chosen Presbyterian could find another vacant site, instead.

But Howard Cunningham, who owns a unit in the next building, said, "The dentist is on the other side of the parking lot. There are 69 parking spaces – plenty of space. I have no objection to the church being there, and I want to see that building occupied."

James Wainwright, though, has an office in the Old Lee Plaza office complex and told Council members to deny the permit. "You're creating a dangerous precedent in this complex," he said. Referring to another Korean church across the hall from him, Wainwright said, "They've been loud with their piano, drums and chanting. It's a nuisance; I wanted a quiet office area."

Councilwoman Janice Miller asked if the City has received any complaints about that other church. And Brooke Hardin, director of Community Development and Planning, replied, "Not as far as I know." He also noted that a time limit could be placed on the special-use permit, to enable it to be reviewed before renewal, and

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Free Movie for Furloughed Government Employees

Mark O'Meara, owner and President of the University Mall Theatres is offering government employees an opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy a movie this Friday, Jan. 18, at 9:30 a.m. on him.

The theatre is located at 10659 Braddock Road in Fairfax. The University Mall Theatres are right across from George Mason University. There's plenty of parking and just show your government ID and enjoy the show. The movies will be shown at 9:30 Friday morning, Jan. 18.

Scholarship Applicants Sought

The Optimist Club of Central Fairfax is sponsoring the Optimist International Essay and Oratorical Scholarship contests. Both competitions are open to students under age 19 as of Oct. 1, 2018 and not enrolled as a degree-seeking student of a post-secondary institution.

Interested students should contact scholarship chair, Sharon DeBragga, at sharon.debragga@gmail.com for information concerning applications. The deadline for the Essay contest is Feb. 1. The Oratorical contest deadline is March 15.

said City staff would recommend one or two years.

"Is there any correlation between that other organization and the applicant's church?" asked Councilman Sang Yi. Hardin answered that he wasn't aware of any. Yi then asked Kim if Chosen Presbyterian is affiliated with the other church, at all, and she said no. She further explained that it's part of the Presbyterian Church of America.

Miller then made a motion to approve the permit, provided the church submits a shared-parking agreement between it and the nearby condo association and has no more than a maximum of 40 people there on weekdays. Hours of operation on Sundays are 8 a.m.-7 p.m., with a maximum of 82 attendees then and during special occasions. Yi then seconded the motion and the Council approved it unanimously.

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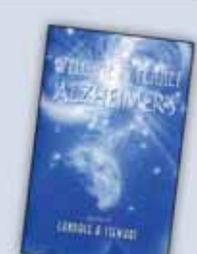
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IMAGE COURTESY OF PARTNERSHIP FOR DRUG-FREE KIDS

E-cigarettes come in a variety of forms.

How to Talk About Vaping

Approaching conversation about dangers of e-cigarettes.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Jessica DeBoer's 13-year-old son just returned to school after a six-day suspension because he was caught vaping in the boys bathroom of his elite private school. Until she received a call from one of the school's administrators, DeBoer was not familiar with the practice and never dreamed her son would partake in it.

"Now I feel like I might have been naive considering how widespread it seems to be," she said. "My son told me that many of the kids in his school have tried vaping and some even do it regularly."

Vaping is the use of e-cigarettes to inhale and exhale an aerosol, often referred to as vapor, which is produced by an e-cigarette or similar device. The term is used because e-cigarettes produce an aerosol that consists of fine particles, many of which contain varying amounts of toxic chemicals.

For parents like DeBoer, keeping the line of communication open is a key weapon in keeping kids away from e-cigarettes, says therapist Lisa Baguio, LCSW. "Before talking with your teen about vaping, or any sensitive issue for that matter, educate yourself and make sure you know what you're talking about," she said. "Kids know more than we give them credit for. Be prepared with unrefutable facts and scientific evidence because you can guarantee yourself that your kids will have their own set of facts, which are often false."

Once you have those facts, be prepared to share them during a conversation with your teen. "It's important that parents are open and honest with their

children," said child psychologist Laurie Jones, Psy.D. "You first have to tell them your expectations. For example, 'In our family, we have zero tolerance for e-cigarette or tobacco use of any kind.' You then should explain the dangers and risks involved and make sure that your teen knows that this is not your just opinion, but proven hazards."

A teen might be less likely to engage in vaping if they can connect it to negative consequences that affect them personally, advised marriage and family counselor Joyce McCarry, M.A. "One thing that teens value is their image among their peer group," she said. "If vaping a substance causes bad breath, that will deter a teen from using it. If getting caught vaping means that they are kicked off a sports team, that will be a deterrent."

A parent's best tactic is creating an environment where one's teen feels comfortable sharing information about vaping and working with them

collaboratively to find ways to avoid it, says McCarry. "You want your child to let you know if they're vaping or have friends who are doing it," she said. "You can also let them know that if they're ever in a situation where they're being offered an e-cigarette, real cigarettes or drugs or anything dangerous, that they can call you and you will pick them up immediately with no questions asked."

"You also want you to give your child a way to get out of a risky social situation without feeling embarrassed."

— Joyce McCarry, M.A.

"You also want you to give your child a way to get out of a risky social situation without feeling embarrassed," continued McCarry. "I have a patient whose parents tell him to text them a numerical code whenever he's in a precarious situation with friends. The parents know to call his cell phone and tell him that there's a family emergency and he needs to come home right away. This gives the child an excuse to leave without feeling embarrassed or like he'll be ridiculed for not engaging in risky behavior."

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SCHOOLS

Theatre Global Classroom Held at Robinson Secondary

School's drama department connects with partner program in China.

The Fairfax County Public Schools Theatre Program partnered with Chinese collaborators in the first Theatre Global Classroom Project which was held at Robinson Secondary School on Dec. 21.

"How do we create a space for students to build meaningful relationships within the Global Community? Robinson Secondary School's Middle School Drama Department in conjunction with the FCPS Global Classroom says we can accomplish this through the power of theatre," says theatre teacher Amy Hard. On Friday, Dec. 21 at Robinson Secondary School, Theatre and Chinese language students were invited to attend an interactive presentation introducing the partnership between the Robinson middle school theatre students, Luther Jackson Middle School, and students from China. Tara Taylor, FCPS Education Specialist for Theatre and Dance took charge of this project. The project was taught by FCPS Theatre teachers Amy Hard from Robinson and Stacey Jones from Luther Jackson. The Theatre Arts Program Director of the part-

ner program in China, Near West Group, is Mike Ludwick; he visited Robinson Secondary to share his personal and professional experiences about working in China as an educator, entertainer, and entrepreneur with the students.

Students were given the opportunity to collaborate with peers from around the world with The Global Classroom Project. They worked on authentic tasks and challenges through a variety of learning activities. The students were able to develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to be able to engage in collective action towards issues on the local, national, and global level. The partnership with Near West provides a pathway through theatre education for students in Fairfax and China to demonstrate these learning outcomes.

The students, teachers, and community members who were invited explored connections and collaborations between East and West using the power of theatre education. Throughout the day, students practiced fully immersive, improvisational, and interactive ensemble building movement



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMY HARD

Tara Taylor, Mike Ludwick, and Stacey Jones are working on the Theatre Global Classroom Project to collaborate with students around the world.

exercises that were led by Amy Hard. Hard wanted the students to explore team building and creating a common group energy to devise original theatre.

A focus of this project will be devised theatre which is performance art that is originally created through the sharing of collective stories and personal responses.

"We are thrilled to give our theatre students the opportunity to authentically create meaningful and honest art inspired by real human connections. It's our version of the 2019 pen-pal model, but in the end

these artists walk away with relationships, community, and art. The collaboration over space, time, and cultures is an extraordinary gift that we are honored to be a part of," notes Hard. "Theatre is a place that naturally invites stories and cultivates personal relationships while providing a safe space for self-expression and collaboration." "Students were able to discover and appreciate the commonalities and differences of being a teenager in China and the United States through their process of creating an original piece."

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

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Technology
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- Active Board technology is present in every classroom for hands on learning, which improves your child's cognitive abilities and critical thinking skills.
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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Founding Artists Exhibition.

Through Feb. 3 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Muse Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center presents a group exhibition highlighting Studio and Arches artists that have been a part of the organization for its 10-year span. In honor of their dedication and support, the exhibition will survey their works in various mediums including painting, sculpture, fiber, glass, precious metals, and mixed media. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

Exhibit: Purchased Lives. Through Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily (except major holidays) at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St., Fairfax. Purchased Lives is a traveling exhibition from the Historic New Orleans Collection. The exhibit examines a complex and divisive period of American history and educating about the far-reaching economic and heartbreaking personal impact of the domestic slave trade. Look for The Washington Home of the Philippine Suffrage Movement March 3-31. Call 703-385-8414.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

Bonita Lestina Performance Series.

8 p.m. in Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. Performer to be announced. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Free. Visit fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts or call 703-352-ARTS.

FRIDAY/JAN. 18

Family Movie Night: "Paddington 2."

Lights go down at 7 p.m. at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Enjoy a free, family friendly (movies are PG) movie night. Participants may bring their own snacks. An adult must accompany anyone under the age of 14. Britepaths will accept donations of non-perishable food until 9 p.m. Call 703-385-7858.

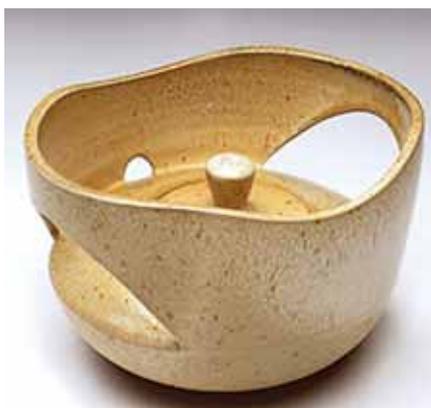
B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

Pet Adoption Event. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Pet Supplies Plus, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Find a new forever animal friend with the help of the City of Fairfax Animal Control and Animal Shelter. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/police/programs/animal-control/adopt-a-pet.

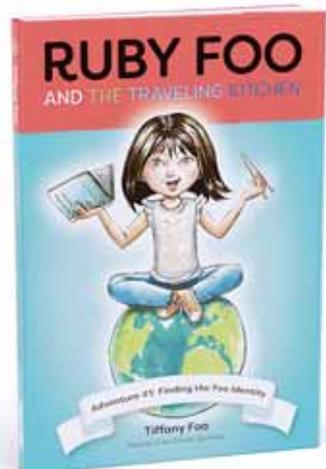
Country-Western Dance. 6-9:30 p.m. at Accotink Universalist Unitarian Church, 10125 Lakehaven Court, Burke. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance with lessons, 6-7 p.m. and open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members

Oval Peek by Joan Ulrich, 2014, Salt Fired Stoneware



Founding Artists Exhibition

Workhouse Arts Center presents a group exhibition highlighting Studio and Arches artists that have been a part of the organization for its 10-year span. In honor of their dedication and support, the exhibition will survey their works in various mediums including painting, sculpture, fiber, glass, precious metals, and mixed media. Through Feb. 3 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Muse Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Visit www.workhousearts.org for more.



Author Event: Tiffany Foo-Garcia

Tiffany Foo-Garcia will be holding a reading and signing for the first book of her new middle grade culinary adventure series, "Ruby Foo and the Travelling Kitchen: Finding the Foo Identity." Saturday, Feb. 3, Noon-3 p.m. at Barnes & Noble-Fair Lakes, 12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Visit rubyfookitchen.com for more.

\$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

3999 University Drive. With IONA Celtic Fusion. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Free. Visit fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts or call 703-352-ARTS.

SUNDAY/JAN. 20

Garden Gauge (G Scale) Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, Virginia, and Maryland Garden Railway Society will hold their annual Garden Gauge Model Train Show at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Big Band Concert. 4-5:30 p.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. The White House Band All-Stars will present a traditional Big Band, Bebop, Fusion, Swing and Latin concert. The group is made up of Service Band musicians who have performed at the White House. Free admission. Childcare provided. Reception to follow. Free. Call 703-455-2500 or visit www.standrews.net.

FRIDAY/JAN. 25

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

Bonita Lestina Performance Series. 8 p.m. in Old Town Hall,

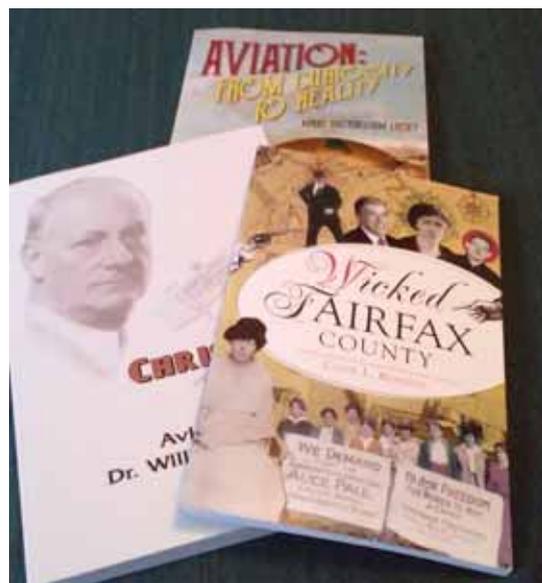


PHOTO BY D. DELOOSE

Burke Historical Society

Local authors, Mary Lipsey and Cindy Bennett, will share their experiences and tips on the process of researching, writing, and publishing a historical book. Tuesday, Feb. 5, 7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org for more.

presentation called "If These Walls Could Talk," examining the 19th-century history of Woodbury—also known as the Silas Burke House. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

MONDAY/JAN. 29

Fairfax Gratefulness Gathering. 7-8:30 p.m. at Richard Byrd Public Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. A program of Gratefulness.org Bring gratitude to life in the community, be present to opportunities always available; opportunities to learn and grow and extend oneself with care and compassion. Free. Email joanne.spahnrd@gmail.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 31

Adults' BYOG Night. 7-8:30 p.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. BYOG = Bring your Own Game – come to the library with your favorite board game or card game to share. Adults only. Free. Call 703-978-5600 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4741919.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/FEB. 2

Dog Park Grand Opening. 9 a.m. at the Fairfax City Dog Park, 11000 Berry St., Fairfax. City residents, both two-legged and four-legged, are invited to the grand opening ceremony for the Fairfax City dog park on the former Westmore Elementary School site. The new dog park will be open daily from dawn to dusk. All dogs with current licenses are welcome. The park will include a fenced exercise/run area (fence is a gift from Affectionate Pet Care), park benches, and trash and recycling receptacles. Waste bags and a receptacle will be provided at the dog

park. Call 703-385-7858.
Chinese New Year Festival. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church. The 12th Annual Chinese New Year Festival hosted by the Asian Community Service Center featuring live performances, including Dragon and Lion dances, Han Costume Fashion show, Asian food, the writing of Chinese names, language, craft and business booths, children world, and also a lunar new year dragon parade. Free admission. Visit www.ChineseNewYearFestival.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 3

Author Event: Tiffany Foo-Garcia. Noon-3 p.m. at Barnes & Noble-Fair Lakes, 12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Tiffany Foo-Garcia will be holding a reading and signing for the first book of her new middle grade culinary adventure series, "Ruby Foo and the Travelling Kitchen: Finding the Foo Identity." Visit rubyfookitchen.com.

Make a Valentine Card Craft. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have a Valentine's Day Make and Take event. Visitors will create their own Valentine's cards to take home with them. The cost of supplies is included with admission.. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

TUESDAY/FEB. 5

Burke Historical Society. 7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Local authors, Mary Lipsey and Cindy Bennett, will share their experiences and tips on the process of researching, writing, and publishing a historical book. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

TUESDAYS/FEB. 5-26

Try Girl Scouts. 6-7 p.m. at West Springfield Elementary School, 6802 Deland Drive, Springfield. Make new friends, learn about Girl Scouts, and meet the requirements for two new cybersecurity badges. \$25 for four weeks. Email cosborne@gscnc.org or call 703-372-4341.

FRIDAY/FEB. 8

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/FEB. 9

Animal Sweetheart's Dance. 2-4 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Dance, laugh, and learn at the social event of the winter season. Space limited, register online (tinyurl.com/y9nz9q48) or call 703-451-9588 to save a spot. \$9. Email casey.riley@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-451-9588.

Winter Wonderland Family Dance. 5-8 p.m. at Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Bring the whole family for an evening of magic and wonder with dinner, special guest characters, crafts, dancing and more. All families are welcome. \$30 per adult, \$20 per child. Visit fairfaxva.gov/parksrec or call 703-385-7858.

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY CHARLES AZZOPARDI/COURTESY MOMIX

MOMIX's "Fans" to be performed at Center for the Arts on Jan. 25, 2019.



PHOTO BY EDDY FERNANDEZ/COURTESY MOMIX

MOMIX's "Men with Poles" to be performed at Center for the Arts on Jan. 25, 2019.

'Unbelievable Visual Splendor'

MOMIX's desert themed 'Opus Cactus' at Center for the Arts.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

The mysteries of the American Southwest landscape with its many animals and sounds will come alive as the sculpted bodies of MOMIX dancers perform on the Center for the Arts stage. It is an evening with "Opus Cactus" aiming to be "an artistic bridge across the country traveling over dusty trails" from the chill of winter in Northern Virginia to the warmth of the Sonoran desert," said artistic director and MOMIX founder Moses Pendleton.

The talent-laden MOMIX performance of "Opus Cactus" will include eye popping precision movements of a single dancer or a group of dancers contorting into the looks of a desert reptile, the rays of sun or local flowers while attired in dazzling costumes and

original music. The performance is meant for the whole family.

According to Pendleton, "the audience does not need to know modern dance concepts to enjoy the performance." The conceptions behind "Opus Cactus" are not so much of logic but of feelings and impressions that the audience takes in and reacts to."

Pendleton said he wants the audience "to be drawn into the physicality and emotions of the performance, to open their eyes wide to it."

What can audiences expect to see? The performance will abound with human bodies becoming towering cacti or slithering Gila lizards, beautiful images of fan shapes or dancers perpendicular on tall poles. Each created by a group of athletic human beings. It will be surreal and utterly imaginative. "Opus Cactus" is a full evening-length work that includes

Native American music and music from other desert areas of the world.

MOMIX has earned an international reputation for its inventive, artistically crafted, and physical beauty. As a special treat for Center for the Arts audiences, there will be post show cocktails and conversation with MOMIX company members. The very same

Where and When

George Mason University/Center for the Arts (CFA) presents MOMIX at 4400 University Ave, Fairfax. Performance: Friday, Jan. 25, 2019 at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$50, \$43, \$30. Half-price tickets are available for children and youth through grade 12. Call 888-945-2468, or visit www.cfa.gmu.edu. Note: Cocktails and gathering with MOMIX company members in the CFA lobby after the performance with "Questions & Answers" conversations.

dancers seen on the CFA stage performing the unexpected.

"MOMIX is constantly pushing the boundaries of physical theatricality and never disappoints in providing audiences with unbelievable visual splendor. ... Getting lost in

MOMIX's tribute to the southwestern United States will be the perfect antidote to a cold winter night here in Northern Virginia," said Adrienne Bryant Godwin, Programming Manager, College of Visual and Performing Arts.

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PHOTO BY CHARLES AZZOPARDI/COURTESY MOMIX

MOMIX's "Gila" to be performed at Center for the Arts on Jan. 25, 2019.

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Family Night - Wednesday 7:15 PM
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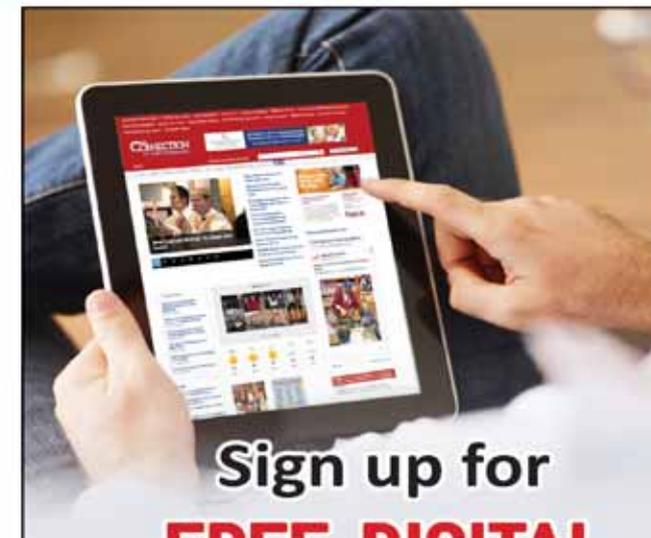
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NEWS

Advocates Seek Laws to Help Immigrants Drive, Study

BY SAFFEYA AHMED
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Immigrant rights advocates urged legislators Wednesday, Jan. 9, to provide driving privileges, wage theft protection and in-state tuition to immigrants who reside in Virginia without documentation.

The Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights — composed of more than 20 immigrant justice organizations — laid out its legislative agenda on behalf of the state's estimated 270,000 residents without legal permission to live in the U.S.

Some advocates, including Haziel Andrade of the Virginia Intercollegiate Immigrant Alliance, shared personal stories about why issues such as college tuition and the ability to drive affect Virginia's immigrant communities.

"As I share part of my story," Andrade said, "I'd like anyone listening to look at me as a human being, not by my immigration status."

Andrade arrived in the U.S. from Colombia at 3 years old. Currently a temporary resident under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, she studies computer science at Virginia Commonwealth University. Andrade asked legislators to let Virginians lacking proper documentation pay in-state tuition rates.

"Now more than ever, I'm being targeted because of my immigration status. And I feel as though no one cares about my education," Andrade said. "What makes my education any different from any other Virginian student?"

Of the 270,000 Virginians residing in the U.S. without permission, at least 12,000 were minors who qualified for DACA in 2017, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. But not everyone believes DACA recipients should receive in-state tuition.



PHOTO BY SAFFEYA AHMED

Steve Yoo, campaign coordinator for The National Korean American Service & Education Consortium, spoke about his experiences as an immigrant illegally residing in the U.S.

Ira Mehlman, media director with the Federation for American Immigration Reform, called subsidizing tuition for those living in the U.S. illegally a "zero-sum game."

"Money that is given to subsidize college educations for people who are in the country illegally is money that is not given to someone else," Mehlman said. He said the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights wants "to allocate scarce public resources to benefit a group of people who are in the country illegally, and it's coming at the expense of other people who need those benefits."

BESIDES IN-STATE TUITION, members of the coalition discussed the need for legal permission to drive a motor vehicle. Elena Camacho told her story in Spanish, translated by VACIR Executive Director Monica Sarmiento.

"The first example I'll list is an undocumented friend I have who has a special needs son," Camacho said. "She needs to drive her son to and from the doctor's office. ... She has this daily need, but she isn't able to fulfill it."

But Mehlman said driving privileges are just that — a privilege.

"The idea that you are in the country illegally — you have no legal right to be here — [and] you should be awarded the privilege of driving ... it simply doesn't make much sense," Mehlman said. "The state of Virginia should not be facilitating people violating federal immigration law."

Camacho described driving as a need, not a want.

"The ability to have driving privileges is absolutely essential," Sarmiento translated. "Some people see a basic necessity as being able to have food, to have health care. Driving privileges should be seen in that particular way because it is an access to all those avenues."

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.

Prescription Drug Take Back Box Program. Fairfax County announced the expansion of the Prescription Drug Take Back Box Program Countywide. The boxes are available 24/7/365 at each district police station for any person to anonymously and safely dispose of their prescription medications 24/7/365 - no questions asked. It is important to get unused medicines, especially opioids, out of your medicine cabinets to prevent accidental or illicit use. Several Fairfax County pharmacies also take back unused prescription drugs. For a current list, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news2/4-ways-to-safely-dispose-of-

[unused-medications/](#).

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Interested in local Civil War or Railroad History? Consider volunteering at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. The Museum is also seeking an individual to coordinate the scheduling of the volunteer staff. Training will be provided for all positions. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 for opportunities. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. It is open every Sunday, except holidays, from 1-4 p.m. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke needs volunteer drivers for trips to medical appointments (Monday - Friday) and companion shopping (Tuesday, Friday) within the Fairfax-Burke area and in the

South County area (west of Route 1, Alexandria). Office volunteers are also needed to work in the SCFB (Olley Glen) office to schedule rides. Bilingual volunteers (English and Spanish) are needed as drivers and office volunteers. Email Shavaun Wall at recruiter@scfbva.org or call 703-323-4788.

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 program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. The formal presentation will begin at

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

Free Meals for Furloughed Workers

To help furloughed workers having a difficult time making ends meet, Christ Church is providing free, Wednesday night dinners for them and their families until the furlough is lifted. The next one will be Jan. 23 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Christ Church is at 7600 Ox Road in Fairfax Station. For more information, contact Associate Pastor Ryan LaRock at rlarock@christchurchva.org or call 703-425-3580.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

- 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.
- 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.

TUESDAYS THROUGH FEB. 19

- Workshop Series: Mind in the Making.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 – Room 100, Dunn Loring. Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs by Ellen Galinsky, encompasses an evidence-based list of life skills that are essential for children to succeed socially, emotionally and intellectually in the short and long term. Participants may register for one or all of the workshops and do not need to attend the previous class. Registration is limited. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.
- Tuesday, Jan. 22 – Communicating (part 3)
 - Tuesday, Jan. 29 – Making Connections (part 4)
 - Tuesday, Feb. 5 – Critical Thinking (part 5)
 - Tuesday, Feb. 12 – Taking on Challenges (part 6)
 - Tuesday, Feb. 19 – Self-Directed, Engaged Learning (part 7)

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 16

Park Fees, 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.

FRIDAY/JAN. 18

Conversation with Kerry Hannon. 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. "A Conversation with Kerry Hannon: Empower Yourself Personally, Professionally and Financially." Richard Byrd Library is partnering with the Life Planning Network to present Hannon, a best selling author and an expert on career transitions, personal finance, entrepreneurship and retirement. Free. Call 703-451-8055 for more.

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What To Right About



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Today, Jan. 12, 2019 is National Glazed Donut Day and the day after my most recent post-scan appointment with my oncologist. A day when, if I'm lucky – as I have been for the past 10 years – my world will change for the better (donut consumption notwithstanding). However, the 'world' to which I refer is one fraught with danger and offers no more guarantees than I've been accustomed to.

To invoke the late, great Rod Serling: I am now entering "The Immunotherapy Zone."

Yes, a brand new – for me – treatment protocol: new drug, new side effects, new frequency, new lifestyle/fewer hassles (potentially), and most importantly: shrinkage (possibly), of my tumors, especially my "Adams Apple" tumor, as I've come to nickname the mass just below my Adams Apple (which is sort of bothering me, if you want to know the truth).

The nature of cancer treatment as I've experienced it – and learned from my oncologist is – if the drug is working, you continue it until it isn't (sounds simple I know). When it stops working, you change as the cancer has figured out the drug's intent. (Cancer cells are smart that way.)

Generally speaking, the cancer drug doesn't start working (shrinking, stabilizing) after it has stopped working (growing). Over my nearly 10 years, I have switched drugs upwards of a dozen times.

Now, I am switching again: to Opdivo, an immunotherapy drug, a class of drugs that didn't even exist a decade or so ago when I was first diagnosed, and one that has only been approved for the treatment of lung cancer since 2015. A drug that, to quote the television advertisement: "offers a chance at longer life."

And so, Team Lourie, two-thirds of it anyway, made the decision to switch and fight. Starting this Friday, I will be infused into the great unknown.

From what my oncologist explained yesterday, aside from the possible benefits, Opdivo has some potentially unpleasant side effects. However, continuing with my present infusion drug, Alimta, now that there's been some growth, is also likely to produce some unpleasant side effects: growth and movement.

And more growth/movement is the worst side effect, relatively and comparatively speaking. So we chose a definite over a maybe. If we continue with Alimta, there will be growth – definitely (that's how cancer works). If we opt for Opdivo, maybe there won't be growth, and maybe there might even be some shrinkage (the good kind).

As for lifestyle changes, there are, according to my oncologist, some quality of life improvements as well, or at least, more weeks in the month when potentially I'll be less impacted by my disease/treatment. Which along with my quality of life has always been a concern of my oncologist.

And, without getting into the details, I'm ready for a change.

Combined with the possibility of tumor shrinkage and fewer/different side effects (some patients report few side effects from Opdivo), I wouldn't say switching to an immunotherapy drug was enticing/a "no-brainer," but it does offer an alternative of sorts. And given where I've been treated from and where I'll be treated now, I am ready for something different.

Changing drugs is always a risk though; it could improve my life or it could make matters worse, a 'worse' from which quite frankly I might not recover (do you remember my yo-yo down-the-stairs visual from a few columns ago?). And I am familiar, unfortunately, with some less-than-encouraging accounts of patients not faring so well.

I just hope there's not a hole in my thinking. Oh wait. That's a hole in my donut. No worries. I'm happy to buy the donut and I never complain about the hole. That's the trade-off. I'm hoping, given the potential benefit of Opdivo, I can likewise live/trade-off with side effects.

My philosophy has always been to take the good with the bad – and vice versa, and after almost 10 years of rolling with the punches, I see no reason to change now.

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

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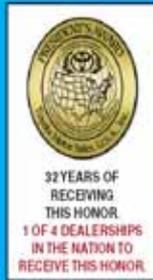
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