

# Great Falls CONNECTION

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Philanthropy Group presented a donation check on Friday, May 21, 2021, for \$3000 to the Friends of Riverbend Park (FORP). (From bottom left) Kristi Robson, Hugh Morrow, June Kelly, Diane Lahey, (From top left) Silvie Kiser, Judie Keithley, Eve Loudenback, and Karyn Ryan.



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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION

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(From bottom left) Silvie Kiser, Karyn Ryan, Diane Lahey, (from top left) Michelle Ouellet, Eve Loudenback, Judie Keithley, June Kelly, Hugh Morrow, and Kristi Robson



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MERCIA HOBSON /  
THE CONNECTION

# Friends of Riverbend Park Receives Donation

**Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Philanthropy Group supports charitable organization.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**G**reat Falls Friends and Neighbors Philanthropy Group presented a donation check on Friday, May 21, 2021, for \$3000 to the Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB). It is a non-profit organization. June Kelly, Vice President of Philanthropy on the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Board of Directors said that the group was pleased to provide the funds to Friends of Riverbend Park.

“As a women’s club of Great Falls, we focus on supporting charities for women and children. Our emphasis is on helping those in need within our community and Fairfax County,” said Kelly.

To raise funds for the year’s three charities to support, Artemis House, GFFN Scholarship Fund, and Friends of Riverbend Park, the group held two events last year, the Harvest Tea in October of 2020 and the Eagles and Bluebells Walk in April of this year. Despite the pandemic, both events reached maximum capacity generating much-appreciated funds. The group also sold official White House ornaments.

On behalf of the Friends of Riverbend Park, Hugh Morrow III, President, said that the organization was “extremely grateful to Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) for their very generous donation of \$3,000 this year.”

According to Morrow, GFFN has been a strong supporter of FORB and Riverbend Park for many years, but this year’s contribution was the most significant amount ever received by FORB from GFFN. “The organization plans to use the donation as it continues to support environmental education, awareness, and stewardship for the young, a primary goal at Riverbend Park,” Morrow said.



(From bottom left) Karyn Ryan, Diane Lahey, (from top left) Silvie Kiser, Hugh Morrow, June Kelly, Judie Keithley, Eve Loudenback, and Kristi Robson.

“FORB plans to fund the cost of the interns who will help Riverbend Park staff run its summer camps and programs, which are aimed primarily for ages under 18. We will also continue to support Field Trip Scholarships for Title I school children, thereby enabling kids who might not ordinarily have experiences in nature the chance to do so. Finally, FORB will continue to support Boy Scout Eagle Scout projects and Girl Scout Gold Awards programs... carried out at Riverbend Park. All of these activities and programs are focused on educating and creating environmental protection, awareness, and stewardship in the next generation of the Park’s caretakers,” said Morrow.

Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit citizens group dedicated to the responsible stewardship and preservation of the undisturbed natural beauty at Riverbend Park on the Potomac River and to safeguarding this Park as a natural “classroom” for the inspiration, enjoyment, and education of all park visitors. Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hill Street, Great Falls. Visit Riverbend Park | Park Authority to learn more about its programs, facilities, rentals.



PHOTO BY SUZANNE BLACK

Park Naturalist Mo Swirsky holds a cicada buddy during her discussion of “Cicadas Around Us” at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.

# Cicadas Around Us in 2021

**Program offered by GFCA and Riverbend Park**

**A**t 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 22, children and families from the Great Falls area were treated to a program discussion of “Cicadas Around Us” at Riverbend Park by park naturalist Mo Swirsky. Sponsored jointly by the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) and Riverbend Park, approximately 30 residents attended the informative program held outdoors at the park’s Nature Center.

The Brood X cicadas emerge from underground only once every 17 years in the Mid-Atlantic area and parts of Ohio. From now through mid-July, millions of these insects will morph from underground nymphs into black cicadas with large, brilliant red eyes. GFCA and Riverbend Park offered the educational and hands-on program so younger residents would understand the life cycle of this magnificent miracle of nature.



PHOTO BY SUZANNE BLACK

Children and adults enjoy the informative program “Cicadas Around Us” held at Riverbend Park on May 22, 2021.

# Convention Done, Primary Ahead

Republicans get a head start in the general election; Democrats still fighting each other.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

The way Democrats talk about Donald Trump, you'd think he was on the ballot in 2021. And in many ways, he is.

The former president may be out of the White House and kicked off of social media, but he's still eager to see himself as a kingmaker. Shortly after wealthy businessman Glenn Youngkin secured the Republican nomination in a multi-location convention, Trump endorsed Youngkin and reinserted himself in the conversation. Democrats did not miss a beat, launching a tour of the commonwealth they call the "Where Trump Leads, Glenn Follows" Tour.

"He is just like Donald Trump," said House Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn this week when the tour arrived in Old Town Alexandria. "He will stand for the same policies and same initiatives that Donald Trump has stood for."

The contours of a fall campaign season are starting to come into focus as Republicans and Democrats stake out positions on everything from criminal-justice reform and abortion rights to voting access and preventing gun violence. Republicans get a one-month head start, giving them the ability to move from a divisive convention into a general election strategy for the fall campaign season. Democrats, meanwhile, are still attacking each other as the June 8 primary approaches.

"We're running in every corner of the commonwealth, in more seats than we've contested in a half century," said House Republican Leader Todd Gilbert. "I'm more confident than ever that voters will return a Republican majority to the House of Delegates in November."



REPUBLICAN PARTY OF VIRGINIA  
The Republican stateside ticket, from left: Jason Miyares for attorney general, Glenn Youngkin for governor and Winsome Sears for lieutenant governor.

27 percent of the undecideds broke for one candidate, McAuliffe would still be in the lead with \$8.5 million cash on hand.

"This gubernatorial field is the most diverse in the history of the commonwealth, and that has drawn a great deal of interest in the race," said Rebecca Bromley-Trujillo, research director for the Judy Ford Wason Center at Christopher Newport University. "So we're seeing that in the field but we're not seeing that in the leaders in these races, at least for governor and attorney general."

Despite the lopsided nature of the polling and the fundraising, the primary has not lacked for drama. During a televised debate, Fairfax said when he was accused of sexual assault, McAuliffe treated him like Emmet Till or George Floyd.

businesses, who are struggling, and who want to provide the leave to their employees, sick leave, paid family medical leave, and they need our help to do it."

THE JOB OF lieutenant governor is often overlooked, although it plays a key role in breaking ties in the Senate. That responsibility is more important now than it's been in recent memory because Democrats have such a thin majority and the body has a handful of conservative Democrats. Republicans have chosen firebrand conservative former Del. Winsome Sears (R-90), who appears in campaign photos with an assault rifle to show her support for gun rights. She pulled ahead of the pack of other candidates after Sen. Amanda Chase (R-11) and former lieutenant governor candidate E.W. Jackson endorsed her. As an immigrant from Jamaica, she's made opposition to critical race theory a cornerstone of her campaign.

"The Democrats, they're not helping us," said Sears at a candidates forum. "They're pitting the races against each other. You've heard the constant Black, white. Now it's Asian, they're speaking against Thomas Jefferson kids and their successes. They want quotas."

The Democratic primary for lieutenant governor is the most wide open. Polling has Del. Sam Rasoul (D-11) slightly ahead, and he's raised more money than any of the other candidates.

But Del. Hala Ayala (D-51) has the endorsement of Gov. Ralph Northam, who is attempting to play the role of kingmaker on his way out the door of the Executive Mansion. The crowded field of candidates also includes Norfolk City Councilwoman Andria McClellan, Fairfax NAACP president Sean Perryman, NFL player agent Xavier Warren and Del. Mark Levine (D-45). Levine is in the awkward position of trying to defend his House seat from a primary challenger while also competing statewide.

SEE CONVENTION, PAGE 11

## Democrats On the Ballot June 8

In order as they appear on the ballot  
Some voters will also have a delegate race on their ballots.

### Governor



Terry McAuliffe



Jennifer McClellan



Jennifer Carroll Foy



Lee Carter



Justin Fairfax

AT THE TOP of the ticket, voters will be choosing between Youngkin and the nominee Democrats pick as their nominee for governor on June 8. Public polling and campaign finance records show former Gov. Terry McAuliffe has a decisive lead heading into the election in an extremely strong position. Other candidates in the race for governor are Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax, Sen. Jennifer McClellan (D-9), former Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy (D-2) and Del. Lee Carter (D-50). A Wason Center poll last month showed McAuliffe with 47 percent support while all the other candidates were in single digits. Even if all

Carroll Foy has been all over the airwaves, thanks in part to \$600,000 from Clean Virginia Fund. And Carter has moved the field of candidates to the left by talking about issues like using tax revenue from marijuana sales to create a fund for reparations to account for the slave trade. McClellan has repeatedly pointed out that she has more state government experience than anyone else in the race.

"Unlike past recessions, we cannot simply focus on luring other companies here to Virginia," said McClellan. "We have got to stabilize and grow the small businesses, particularly our women and minority owned

### Lieutenant Governor



Hala Ayala



Sam Rasoul



Andria McClellan



Elizabeth Guzman



Sean Perryman



Mark Levine



Xavier Warren

# Call for School Board Member's Resignation Fosters Heated Conversation

Amid division, voices seek to be heard.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

With Ramadan's ending on May 13 and on May 14, Fairfax County School Board (FCPS) Member At Large Abrar Omeish posted what some considered controversial statements on her personal Twitter and Facebook accounts. The Twitter page qualified posts were her views. Omeish is a Libyan American Muslim. The timing of her posts coincided with airstrikes and rocket attacks. Civilian casualties mounted on the Gaza Strip, and Hamas launched barrages of rockets overwhelming Israel's Iron Dome of defense system.

On May 13, Omeish posted: "Eid Mubarak! Congrats on 30 days of worship! Hurts my heart to celebrate while Israel kills Palestinians & desecrates the Holy Land right now. Apartheid & colonization were wrong yesterday and will be today, here and there. May justice + truth prevail. #EidWith Palestine," - Twitter-Abrar Omeish@Abrar.

The following day, Omeish posted: "War is terrible for everyone. I hear those hurting. I continue to be here for each of you. People of all faiths deserve Holy Land peace. All forms of hate are unacceptable. Ensuring justice & honoring the humanity of everyone remains as urgent as ever. I look ahead to robust & empathetic engagement with Jewish leaders and all allies. Let's build together." - May 14, Abrar Omeish [Facebook].

What followed in the eight days after Omeish's posts were death threats to her, calls for her resignation, emails, and demonstrations. Events came full circle on May 20 during the FCPS School Board Hybrid Meeting held at Jackson Middle School. 3020 Gallows Road in Falls Church. It publicly convened shortly after 7:30 p.m.

**SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR** Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District) opened by reading a statement, "...The School Board understands that the increased violence in the Middle East over the past weeks causes a range of emotions, including grief, anger, and fear... The Fairfax County School Board does not have a role in resolving geopolitical conflicts. However, we recognize that our students and families are hurting and are fearful of what is happening abroad and locally with increased acts of aggression against our Jewish and Muslim communities... In this, and every moment, it is important that we reject Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia."

Omeish is one of the 12 School Board members elected for the four-year term 2020-2024. Out of the 12 members, she is one of three elected county-wide who serve at large, representing all 1.2 million residents of the County rather than the popula-



Abrar Omeish Fairfax County School Board Member At Large speaks without notes during the FCPS School Board Meeting on May 20, 2021, saying, "I want to listen...because that is how we move forward, and that is how we grow."



Chairman Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District) Fairfax County School Board says, "Our students and families are hurting and are fearful of what is happening abroad and locally with increased acts of aggression against our Jewish and Muslim communities."



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Demonstrators in support and those against Abrar Omeish, FCBS School Board Member At Large.



MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Omar Elbaba, 15, of Vienna said, "The Fairfax GOP is trying to remove her [Omeish] from office. That is affecting the entire community and not just her."



MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Leslie Sandler of Fairfax Station says that Fairfax County Public Schools is not the place to have political rhetoric.

tion of one of the nine magisterial districts. She is an FCPS 2013 graduate, Yale 2017 graduate, Georgetown Law Juris Doctorate/Master of Public Policy candidate, and Blume fellow.

Omeish's social media posts resulted in a barrage of daily reactionary posts, live media interviews, and press releases by individuals and organizations who called for her to apologize, resign from her position as a school board member, or be recalled. Re-posting these statements occurred, including speakers' interpretations and perspectives of Omeish's views, ultimately resulting in death threats against her.

May 14, fellow school board member Melanie Meren (D-Hunter Mill) @HunterMillFCPS, posted: "As a S.B. Member I'm aghast at the alienation @AbrarOmeish's sentiment has cast on many in our community, including myself, & am appalled at the setback this puts in @FCPSEquity work. Rebuilding of relationships will need to happen. JCRCgw @VOICEVirginia ADAMS (not on Twitter),"

May 15, "Blasting the 'hateful screeds' of Abrar Omeish — and calling for the school board member's resignation," stated Press Release, Fairfax GOP Blasts "Israel Hater" on County School Board - Fairfax County Republican Committee issued by Fairfax Republicans. "Fomenting hatred and division," said Fairfax GOP Chairman Steve Knotts in the Press Release.

May 17, "I don't necessarily support recall efforts unless there's something egregious, and I think in this case there is ...and I will share it publicly," said Fairfax County Board Supervisor Pat Herry (R- Springfield), in the interview on The Larry O'Connor Show.

May 18, "Anti-Semitism and religious intolerance," said Gary Aiken, 2019 Republican candidate for Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Mason District, in a WMAL interview.

May 19, "The JCRC [The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington] has cancelled its decision to honor at its annual meeting to be held tomorrow, May 20, ... She has not taken down her tweet, she has not taken affirmative steps to try to stem the vitriolic, hateful rhetoric on social media triggered by her remarks," said Ronald A. Paul, MD President, JCRC and Ron Halber Executive Director, JCRC, in their joint statement.

Underpinning a selection of the posts and statements against Omeish was the call for FCPS to focus on core education. "The focus seems to be on everything but...You know, anti-racism, equity agenda...We need to take them [Fairfax County Public Schools] back and get them going in the right direction," said Herry in his interview on The Larry O'Connor Show.

While posts and media attention resulted in calls for Omeish to resign, they also triggered support on multiple fronts and for various reasons, including the May 20 demon-

## 'Maxine's Garden' Photography Exhibit by Dee Leggett at the TD Bank, Great Falls

"Maxine's Garden" is a photography exhibit honoring Maxine Turner, 98-year-old gardener in Great Falls, portraying a wide-variety of beautiful flowers in her garden. She lives on Georgetown Pike east of Utterback Store Rd and has magnificent flower gardens that stretch the full width of her lot, parallel to the Pike. Anyone who drives that portion of the road has probably enjoyed seeing the flowers and maybe has seen Maxine at work. About ten years ago Dee Leggett stopped by when Maxine was out working in her garden and asked if she could photograph Maxine's flowers. A fast friendship developed and Dee has been photographing her flowers ever since.

Maxine came to the Washington area from Missouri at the beginning of World War II when she was recruited out of college to work for the Federal government. She was a senior stenographer. She met her husband, Gibson, a Virginia native, on a blind date. He was in the Army and served in many locations throughout Europe and North Africa. A few years after he returned from the war, they bought the property on Georgetown Pike. Maxine began her Great Falls gardening career, while raising children and working for the Fairfax County School System.

The display of flower photographs on exhibit shows the diversity of the shapes of flower petals and the variety of colors.

Flowers and her gardening keep Maxine going



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED  
Maxine Turner and Dee Leggett in front of the display of Maxine's flower photographs at TD Bank in Great Falls.

strong. At 98 she admits to having limitations with all the work the garden requires (she grows vegetables also), and greatly appreciates the help her son Paul provides.

Leggett has been photographing nature for over ten years, both in the Great Falls area and around the world. She is a member of Great Falls Studios.

To see more of her work contact Leggett at 703-861-3335 or DeeLeggett@aol.com

Visit her website at [Etsy.Com/Shop/CreationPraises](https://www.etsy.com/shop/CreationPraises)  
TD Bank is open every day, located at the corner of Walker Rd and Georgetown Pike in Great Falls.

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PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Concert Orchestra sophomore violinists Faris Madani and Michael Mill play “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey.



PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Violinists Cate Poliquin, Claire Fulton, Olivia Lin, and Alyssa Kim of the Senior Orchestra perform “I Will Survive” by Gloria Gaynor.

# Orchestral Greetings and Farewells

BY ERIKA LI  
JUNIOR, LANGLEY HS

For many Langley High School Orchestra students, adjusting to a year of online rehearsals and virtual concerts has been difficult. In regular years, concerts have been the highlight of the school year, with the culmination of months of practice ending in putting on a performance for the whole community to enjoy, not only as a musical experience but as a social gathering: a chance to connect with friends and family.

With the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts generously opening its venues to local high schools and with social gathering restrictions lifting, Langley Orchestra was able to perform in front of a live audience for the first time since March of 2020, in a venue where they had never played before.

As one of the first local high schools to resume in-person musical performances, Langley Orchestra aimed to present a meaningful and memorable concert for their audience. The theme of the evening was “Sounds



PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Langley Orchestra director Dr. McCormick conducts the Philharmonic Orchestra in person for the first time since March of 2020.

of Hope,” a resounding reminder that even through adversity, music will prevail. With an audience of student family members and former orchestra students, the performance

was truly a testament to the unity that music can create, even after a year of separation.

LANGLEY ORCHESTRA had been practicing

## Langley High School Orchestra returns to the big stage.

almost entirely virtually before the performance, meaning that for many students, this was their first time playing the pieces side by side with other Langley Orchestra members. But after a few short rehearsals, the orchestras were able to overcome this barrier and put on memorable performances.

For Langley Orchestra’s director, Dr. Scott McCormick, the performance represented something bigger than a typical concert. “After spending an entire year talking to my students over a computer screen, to actually see them live, to see them interacting with each other and the energy that results, and the improvement from taking just a brief rehearsal, meant the world.”

Keeping with the Langley Orchestra tradition of playing popular music pieces at end-of-school year concerts, the performance exuded a casual and welcoming atmosphere, celebrating the beginning of a return to normalcy.

SEE LANGLEY ORCHESTRA, PAGE 7



PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Symphonic Orchestra freshman Claire Kim and sophomore Nicolas Kristensen perform “Dream On” by Aerosmith.



PHOTO BY RANIA RAZEK

In a Langley Orchestra first, students were able to perform at Wolf Trap’s Meadow Pavilion, playing a slate of both celebratory and comforting pieces for a live audience.

# Great Falls Rotary Announces Music Winners

BY EILEEN CURTIS

Rotary District 7610, which serves the top half of Virginia, made a daring decision during this year of the pandemic: it decided to start a music contest for high school students. Rigorous safety measures were invoked. Students had to present a five-minute video without accompaniment on a private YouTube channel. Then the organizers waited to see if anyone would take on the challenge.

Amazingly, they did, especially Langley High School. The school's music department recognized the special opportunity the contest provided for students sharing their music in a too-silent world. Langley produced half of the entire District's applicants, sending in a wide variety of talent spanning strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion and voice. The Great Falls Rotary then put together a team of independent judges. They evaluated the students on tonal quality, rhythm, style, creativity, and difficulty of the music.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

First place went to Langley High senior Alyssa Kim

Three top winners emerged. In third place was Lily Chopus, a sophomore. She sang "Burn" from Miranda's Broadway megahit Hamilton. Second place went to another sophomore, Sankrith Ramani. He offered up Rachmaninoff's Melodie in E for piano. First place went to senior Alyssa Kim, performing the opening movement from Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto.

Kim began violin in third grade and has studied with DC teacher Lya Stern for the past seven years. She is a member of the American Youth Philharmonic, currently serving as co-concertmaster of their most advanced group. Kim ranked #1 in the 2021 All-Virginia State Orchestra. She went on to win third place in the Rotary District's competition.

Rotary District 7610 started the music contest, joining it to their high school speech contest and middle school essay contest, as another vehicle for reaching and celebrating the achievements of our youth.

# Langley Orchestra Spreads 'Sounds of Hope'

FROM PAGE 6

Opening the performance was Langley's Concert Orchestra, performing a rendition of "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey (arr. Moore). The classic 80s rock hit reflects a message of finding meaning and hope within darkness.

The Symphonic Orchestra then took the stage, performing an orchestral version of the rock ballad "Dream On" by Aerosmith (arr. Ryan). The iconic guitar riffs of the original were replaced by violin playing, giving the piece a melancholy yet intense feel.

Next, the Philharmonic Orchestra performed "Difficult Year" by British rock band Keane (arr. Hunter). While the song was released back in 2019, the lyrics seemed most fitting for the past tumultuous year, with the lyrics of the original song closing off with the words "it's been a difficult year, I just wish we'd been together to face it." The orchestral version of the song carried similar tones, with a comforting and uplifting feel.

Afterwards, Langley's Senior Orchestra performed "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor (arr. Reed). Senior musicians celebrated their determination and perseverance after a year of virtual learning and missing out on typical senior year experiences. It was a bittersweet performance, as it marked both the

first and last live concert that seniors would play in for the year. For many seniors however, the concert ended the school year on a high note. "It was great to have the opportunity to perform in person one last time" noted Chris Ross, a senior violist in the Philharmonic Orchestra.

**FOLLOWING** the Senior Orchestra's performance, as a surprise for Dr. McCormick, the senior class performed an original piece as part of their senior gift. Composed and arranged by senior cellists Keon Parastaran and Misha Somogyi, the senior class performed "A Tribute to Doc" with the surprise appearance of Mr. Adam Willett, Langley Orchestra's former Assistant Director, who conducted the piece. For seniors, the piece was both reminiscent and comforting, bringing back fond memories of their time in Langley Orchestra.

The whole slate of performances projected a message of hope, perseverance, and unity.

The performance was a welcome breath of fresh air for student musicians, after being cooped up at home for so long. "It was so much fun to have a concert and see my orchestra friends after the past year of virtual

SEE LAHGLE Y ORCHESTRA, PAGE 9

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Kathleen J. Murphy, Candidate for the 2021 Democratic Primary, Member of the House of Delegates District 34, resides in McLean.



Jennifer Adeli, Candidate for the 2021 Democratic Primary, Member of the House of Delegates District 34 resides in Great Falls.

# Candidates in the 2021 Democratic Primary for HD34

## Meet Jennifer Adeli and Kathleen J. Murphy (Incumbent).

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Voting began for the 2021 Democratic Primary on June 8. That includes candidates for Member of the Virginia House of Delegates District 34 that encompasses McLean, Great Falls, and parts of Vienna and Loudoun County covering 22 precincts.

Incumbent Kathleen J. Murphy and Jennifer Adeli are running in the Democratic primary for Virginia House of Delegates District 34 on June 8, 2021.

In a request for comment by the Connection, Murphy said that she had been the Delegate representing the 34th District for the past seven years. "I'm not doing this to or for myself. I am committed to representing the issues important to the people who live here, and I am proud of my record of achievement," she said.

According to Murphy, she has been involved in politics almost her whole life. She was married to a member of Congress and fought for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She worked on local and presidential campaigns as well as working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Charlie Wilson.

She handled legislative affairs at The United States Agency for International Development, an independent agency of the United States federal government primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

**MURPHY** served as a Senior Advisor on international trade issues at Commerce during the Clinton Administration. She is the Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus.

Discussing the top three issues of importance Murphy hears from District 34 constituents, she said, "Transportation, gun safety and education. I have been a leader in the House on all three issues. For me, this is a full-time job. I make it my business to be out in the communi-

ty talking to the people who live and do business here."

According to Murphy, her brother was murdered, so she started the Gun Violence Prevention Caucus. She said, "I will continue to be a leader on gun violence prevention measures.

Murphy added that she would continue to focus on transportation issues, support the business community as they recover, and "make sure we deal with the challenges our schools and children face as we fight to recover from COVID."

To learn more about Kathleen Murphy, including all bills she sponsored, visit Kathleen J. Murphy (Virginia) - Ballotpedia.

**JENNIFER ADELI** in a request for comment by the Connection, said she is a small business owner and government consultant. Supervisor John Foust appointed her to Fairfax County-Falls Church Community Services Board, and she is serving in her second term. She chairs the Fiscal Subcommittee overseeing the department's \$200M+ budget.

Adeli started her career on Capitol Hill for the late Congressman Bob Matsui (D-Sacramento). She developed a passion for constituent services, focusing on education and student loan legislation. After obtaining her MBA from Georgetown University, Jennifer returned to government service and worked for Arthur Andersen and Booz Allen Hamilton. She consulted with federal agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, delivering high-quality customer service to Medicare recipients.

Adeli is the immediate past Chair of the Dranesville District Democratic Committee. There she spearheaded the modernization of fundraising and communications.

Discussing the top three issues of importance she hears from District 34 constituents, Adeli said, "Criminal justice

SEE CANDIDATES, PAGE 9

# Just Can't Wait to Get Back on the Road Again

**Vaccinated Seniors plan vacations, trips to reunite with family.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Shifting through photos of rafting trips through Labyrinth Canyon on the tranquil waters of the Green River and hiking in the Needles district of Utah's Canyonlands National Park, Arlene Richter recalls her past travels as she begins planning for new adventures. The adventure-loving Bethesda mother of two adult children is fully vaccinated and ready for her next trip.

"Travel is a great way to explore," said Richter. "I'm always curious and love to learn about the world and people."

Now that nearly 85 percent of those 65 and older in Montgomery County and almost 70 percent in Fairfax County, Arlington County and Alexandria are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, seniors such as Richter have less trepidation about resuming their travels. From trips to visit children and grandchildren to hiking in national parks, after a one year or more of near confinement because of their high risk due to the pandemic, seniors are ready to travel.

Travel advisors and tour companies have seen a dramatic uptick in requests of seniors who are planning to travel.

"When vaccines became available, the number of calls to our call center doubled from February to March. Nearly all of the programs we're operating this summer are filled to capacity," said Chris Heppner, spokesperson for Road Scholar [www.roadsscholar.org](http://www.roadsscholar.org), a not-for-profit educational travel organization for adults. "We require people to be fully vaccinated to participate. We have surveyed our participants and nearly 100 percent either have been vaccinated or plan to be."

One of those seniors is 76-year-old Tanya Levine, a widow from Arlington. She's heading to Chicago in June to visit her daughter and grandchildren.

"It's been so hard not seeing my family in person and missing certain milestones," she said. "We're going to celebrate all of the birthday parties, baptisms and graduations that we missed during the pandemic. The thought of it all is so overwhelming. I'm beyond elated. I know that tears of joy will be flowing the entire trip."

Most vacation requests have tended to be stateside and popular destinations are those that offer outdoor adventure.

"While we wait for the international world to fully open, senior travelers are looking toward domestic



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARLENE RICHTER

Travel enthusiast Arlene Richter, pictured here in the Needles district of Utah's Canyonlands National Park, is fully vaccinated and ready to resume her travels.

**"The National Parks are, without doubt, incredibly popular. Seniors are incredibly excited and just want to get back out there and make up for lost time."**

— Frank Marini

travel and exploration of the West in areas like Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming," said Adrienne Saxton, a Falls Church-based travel advisor and curator. "Domestic river cruises exploring the Mississippi, the Pacific Northwest and wine cruises are also high on the requests. These areas have been booking fast and furiously."

"The National Parks are, without doubt, incredibly popular for us," added Frank Marini, president of Amtrak Vacations. "Seniors are incredibly excited and just want to get back out there and make up for

lost time."

Vienna couple Barrie and Jane Taylor became fully vaccinated in March and are heading to San Diego to visit their son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter who was born last November. Their family visit will be followed by a trip to Glacier National Park.

"This will be the first time meeting our granddaughter. Zoom calls can in no way make up for being able to hold her in our arms," said Jane. "My husband and I usually take four big trips a year and at least two of those are international. We won't leave the country this year and we'll still wear masks and practice social distancing."

The freedom to travel is one of the best rewards of being vaccinated, said Richter. "I've been all over the place and hope to continue going to new places."

## CALENDAR

### NOW THRU MAY 31

Dinosaur Drive-Thru Experience. The Dinosaurs are ready to return from extinction. The drive-thru dinosaur exhibit is the first of its kind at the Bull Run Events Center in Centreville. The Museum quality exhibit, with more than 75+ animatronic and static dinosaurs, runs May 14 through May 31. Tours are available Wednesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Visit [www.drivethrudinos.com](http://www.drivethrudinos.com) or call 800-830-3976.

### THURSDAY/MAY 27

Asian American Pacific Islander Celebration. 7 p.m. May is Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, and The Alden in McLean is celebrating these rich cultures through the art of words. AAPI poets Regie Cabico, Gowri Koneswaran and Jenny C. Lares will be featured in a virtual performance, "Celebrating AAPI Heritage Month through Poetry." The poets will share their work, take audience questions and host an open mic segment for anyone who identifies as AAPI. The event is free, and preregistration is required. Those who wish to participate in the open mic segment may indicate so when they register. To register or for more information, visit [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

### SUNDAY/MAY 30

Cowboy and Western Music. 7:30 p.m. Online. Hear authentic, heartfelt singing about the vanishing American West in a free, online concert. After the concert, join in a sing-around with the performers. Free; Suggested donation: \$20 per listener. (If you feel generous, a higher amount will help support the performers.) Contact Charlie Baum, [cbaum@fsgw.org](mailto:cbaum@fsgw.org). Register at <https://www.fsgw.org/Concerts>, to get the concert link.

### STARTING JUNE 1

"Duck Harbor" Web Series. 8 p.m. Sponsored by 1st Stage in Tysons Corner. Duck Harbor is a web series about a long-distance love in later life. The piece is brought to audiences through a creative series of short scenes in which the actors, just like the characters, are meeting for the first time. Audiences will get to experience the magic of the theater and the excitement of new love between these two lonely hearts reaching out from charming small towns on opposite sides of the country. Every week, each of the two actors, who live on opposite coasts, will be given only their half of the script and will experience the other side of the story with a sincere and genuine freshness,

"on stage," in front of our audience. Performances will take place every Tuesday, beginning on June 1 and ending on August 17. Get your tickets today at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org).

### SUNDAY/JUNE 6

U-2: Still Essential. 2-3 p.m. On Zoom. Sponsored by the Cold War Museum, 1734 Farm Station Road, Warrenton. You Need to See What's Happening in That Hot Spot. But the Bad Guys Know When the Satellites Are Coming Over. Who You Going to Call? It's still the U-2. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/still-essential-the-enduring-legacy-of-the-u-2-tickets-146513940139>

### JUNE 8 TO JULY 4

Paintings by Rich Moore. At the Loft Gallery, 33 Mill Street, Second Floor, Occoquan. "The skies proclaim the work of His hands." Psalm 19:1 showcases the artistry of versatile landscape oil painter, Rich Moore as he endeavors to reveal a unique glimpse into the magnificence and wonder of the "handiwork of God." Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, Noon-5 p.m. Online Facebook Live Artist's Reception: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:00 pm <https://www.facebook.com/loftgalleryoccoquan>.

### SUMMERFEST AT TYSONS CORNER CENTER

Tysons Corner Center announced its line-up of this season's socially distant happenings. 'SummerFest 2021,' which kicked off this month and will run through October 2021, is filled with six months of activations and events, such as live music, art, fitness, festivals, and more.

Movie Nights, in partnership with AMC Theatre Tysons Corner

First Saturday, Monthly at Sundown

Bingo Night - presented by DC Fray and Barrel and Bushel Third Thursday Monthly, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Art on the Plaza

Final Thursday, Monthly -- Join Tysons Corner Center, Barrel & Bushel, and AR Workshop for a monthly crafting event. Each event will feature seasonal art projects along with applicable retailer pop-ups and an extended happy hour.

The Plaza Live

Thursday-Sunday Weekly starting May 6; 4:00-7:00 p.m., Thursday & Friday;

2:00-7:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday. Each week on The Plaza the center will welcome local musicians to perform as well as other live entertainment such as caricature and balloon artists, face painters, etc.

# School Board Member's Post Ignites Pro & Con Reactions

FROM PAGE 4

stration outside Jackson Middle School. Starting at 5 p.m., FCSB held a closed meeting inside the school, part of its Hybrid Regular Meeting. Two polarized protest groups formed outdoors in front of the school.

Earlier that day, the cease-fire took effect to end the violent 11-day conflict. Associated Press reported: "At least 230 Palestinians were killed, including 65 children and 39 women, with 1,710 people wounded, according to the Gaza Health Ministry... Twelve people in Israel, including a 5-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl, were killed."



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION  
Protestors outside of the FCPS Board Meeting on May 20, 2021

**UNDER THE EYES** of Fairfax County school officers, organizers occupied the dual-walled entry with a wide staircase leading to the cordoned-off and protected front doors to the school and its adjacent patch of grass. At times, the larger group in support of Omeish grew dense, numbering upwards of 100 individuals. Mostly masked, they rallied together with signs signs that read, "Abrar is

an equity champion" and "Melanie Meren, you do not represent us." They chanted following the lead of Mariam Abou-Ghazala of Fairfax and others who yelled into megaphones, "Freedom of Speech. You cannot impeach."

The smaller group, many challenging Omeish and opposing critical race theory (CRT), numbered approximately 30 individ-

uals with a handful wearing masks. Waving U.S. flags, they played loud music attempting to drown out the other demonstrators' chanting. At times, they advanced in unison up to and into the larger group supporting Omeish.

"The Fairfax GOP is trying to remove her [Omeish] from office. That is affecting the entire community and not just her. We're trying to create a platform to raise awareness for our issues," said Omar Elbaba, 15, of Vienna.

"This is clearly an Islamophobic smear campaign to delegitimize her [Omeish's] position... and what she brings to the table ...What a world we live in where an elected official cannot pray for her people," said Shayma Al-Hanooti, FCPS graduate and Arlington Public School teacher.

"This is freedom of speech," said Hala Abdelaal of Fairfax, Class of 2015 Thomas Jefferson High School. "This is our Constitution." After multiple failed attempts to get comments from the smaller group, Leslie Sandler of Fairfax Station agreed. "Fairfax

County Public Schools is not the place to have political rhetoric. We're here for our children," she said.

School Board member Omeish was one of the last to comment at the Fairfax County School Board Meeting. Omeish said she took pride in a community where all come to the table and can have a dialog, a place to "confront courageously the differences that come to the table."

"I understand that for many Jewish families, my constituents, that they share a deep and sacred relationship with Israel... I've been able to listen and dialogue with, and I want to continue to listen. The loudest thing I want to be heard today is that I want to listen...because that is how we move forward, and that is how we grow."

"Anti-Semitism is a real and growing threat that must be addressed in our schools, our country, and our world. And conflating the criticism with that only harms those of us seeking to advance justice and diverts our focus," said Omeish. "We must choose to step up and to ensure that we don't allow those seeking to sow hate and division to capitalize on our disagreement... We can and must fight these things together, anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia and especially that which is couched as a response to oppression of all kinds together." Video FCPS School Board Meeting 5-20-21 3:19:40-3:29:43.

## Candidates

FROM PAGE 7

reform, increased teacher pay, and protecting the environment." She added, "Many voters are not aware that there is a Democratic primary, so our objective is to spread the word about how important it is for voters to have a voice as we pick our party nominees."

Asked what issues she plans to bring to the Virginia legislature that constituents may not be aware of change-need, Adeli said that with her Master's in

Business Administration and background in government consulting, she is focused on what no longer serves us in the post-COVID recovery and what to make permanent.

"I am very focused on supporting workers during the recovery, such as enabling W-2 employees who work from home to deduct their expenses from their state tax returns," she said.

For more information on Jennifer Adeli, visit Jennifer Adeli - Ballotpedia.

## Langley Orchestra

FROM PAGE 7

learning," said Bianca Harris, a junior violinist in the Symphonic Orchestra. "The concert was amazing and it was great to get to play for an actual audience."

For Langley Orchestra students and audience members alike, the performance was an unforgettable experience, marking

the beginning of hopefully many more live performances as normalcy begins to return. As for the graduating seniors of Langley Orchestra, the concert was one last farewell and a sendoff to their bright futures ahead. Ultimately, Langley Orchestra left a resounding message: music truly is the sound of hope.

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# Convention Done, Primary Ahead

FROM PAGE 3

## Attorney General

“When a candidate runs for two offices at the same time, they’re sending two messages,” said Stephen Farnsworth, political science professor at the University of Mary Washington. “One, I want something better than what I have, and two, I’m not sure I’m going to be able to get it.”

VOTERS WILL ALSO be choosing between Del. Jason Miyares (R-82) and the winner of the Democratic primary, which features incumbent Attorney General Mark Herring and challenger Del. Jay Jones (D-89). Herring was first elected in 2013, and he’s seeking a third term in office. During his time in office, he’s created a new Office of Civil Rights as well as a new conviction integrity unit and a new worker protection unit while also reorganizing the consumer protection section. Jones has criticized Herring for waiting until election season before making some of those changes, and he attacked Herring for wearing blackface at a college party in the 1980s.

“I sat in the room two years ago with the Black Caucus when you disclosed that you wore blackface just days after you called on Governor Northam to resign,” Jones said during a televised debate. “I was there when you took that paper out of your jacket, smoothed it out on the table and read us a



Jay Jones



Mark Herring

statement with no empathy, no compassion.”

Herring hasn’t been shy about criticizing Jones either. During a televised debate earlier this month, Herring brought up a bill Jones introduced that could have created a loophole for predatory lenders. The bill would have allowed for loans of 36 percent plus a daily fee that could amount to 320 percent a year. Jones never withdrew the bill, although it was left in committee. Jones ended up voting in favor of a different bill, one that Herring made a rare personal appearance to support in committee.

“When I was working to crack down on dangerous predatory lenders, Delegate Jones was actually supporting the predatory lenders and authored a bill that would have allowed them to charge 350 percent interest,” said Herring. “These are hard-working, struggling Virginians just trying to get by.”

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### WEDNESDAY/MAY 26

Holy Happy Hour. 6 p.m. Virtual at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. This concert will feature LeeLee Hunter on classical guitar. Currently in doctoral studies at the University of Arizona, Ms. Hunter holds degrees from the Peabody Conservatory. She has participated in several international competitions and in masterclasses with distinguished artists. She will perform music of South American composers. A recommended wine pairing for the post concert reception is an Argentinian Malbec which can be purchased at any local wine store. If you wish to be added to this list, send an email to [LPCCommunications1724@gmail.com](mailto:LPCCommunications1724@gmail.com).

#### JUNE 1 AND 15

Caregivers Support Group. Tuesdays. Virtual via Zoom. Sponsored by the Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA). SC hosts a support group for caregivers of adult family members with dementia the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Their virtual, facilitated meetings are from 10:00 to 11:30 am. Contact facilitator, Jack Tarr, at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) for details on joining the meeting via zoom or to see the SC web site flyer: [https://www.scno-](https://www.scno-va.org/caregivers-support-group)

[va.org/caregivers-support-group](http://va.org/caregivers-support-group).

#### NOW THRU JUNE 10

Adventures in Learning Mini Semester - a Program of the Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia. Thursday Virtual via Zoom. Shepherd’s Center is launching a new mini version of their Adventures in Learning Spring semester. Cost for this 4-week semester is \$30. Upcoming topics include How to Successfully Age in Place, Screening for Diseases, Hiking in Switzerland, Retirement Wellness Checkup, The Unraveling of Syria, and Balancing Federal Labor Relations and Efficient Government. To learn more, please visit <https://www.scnova.org/ail>. Or, call 703-281-0601 to register and provide credit card information.

#### NOW THRU JUNE 23, WEDNESDAYS

Virtual Active Aging Exercise Classes. (Virtual via Zoom). Sponsored by Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA) 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Exercise classes for older adults focusing on offering balance coordination, stretching and improved mobility. Class meets for 1 hour, once a week, for eight weeks.

Cost: \$50 for 8 week session - payable to Sun Fitness LLC. To register or for more info, contact Casey Tarr at 703-821-6838 or [eileentarr1@verizon.net](mailto:eileentarr1@verizon.net). After registering, you will be contacted with payment instructions and will be provided with an invitation link to connect to the Zoom virtual class.

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## Philosophically Meandering



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I discussed a few weeks back, having all this time off/apart from cancer-related activities is unsettling in a peculiar way. I’m not in remission. I’m certainly not cured, and I’m still receiving regular treatment: a bone-strengthening shot every four weeks at the Infusion Center and of course, my daily lenvima pill. Given the nature of what symptoms/side effects I experience, it’s only after my quarterly CT scan and recently added, a bone scan, followed-up by a post-scan video visit with my oncologist and endocrinologist (combined with my semi annual brain MRI) that I have an accurate/real-time sense of whether I’m coming or going, if you know what I mean?

The result of these intervals and intermittent visits is that I, not the doctors, have my best sense of self. Though I can - and am encouraged to do so, email my doctors and/or call an advice nurse at all hours to discuss whatever ails me, realistically, on a daily, hourly and/or minute-by-minute existence, I’m the one that I have to talk to, and most likely, listen to. And though I think I know myself pretty well, a cancer diagnosis creates a prism through which all of our thoughts are filtered. Sometimes, what initially passes through is not identical to what comes out. Cancer is in control, sort of like the producers of “The Outer Limits” said they were in control of your television during the two years: 1963 and ‘64, when “The Outer Limits” was nearly must-watch television. They controlled more than just the horizontal on your television. They controlled the information going into your head. What you did with that information was entirely up to you. Only then, you were in control.

Much has changed in the almost 60 years since “The Outer Limits” was controlling television sets. And so too, much has changed for those diagnosed with cancer. However positive and hopeful, and effective the evolution of a cancer diagnosis and treatment has become, when “The cancer” (as “Forrest, Forrest Gump” called it) appears on your scan or marks your blood, you are no longer “the master of your domain.” In fact, your domain has shrunk considerably and quite precipitously. Whatever you thought was going to be happening in your life now takes a back seat to everything your oncologist says needs to happen. Integrating into your life all the unexpected, life-changing advisories will be a task unlike any you’ve previously ever undertaken. Pondering your cancer-patient future will not result in one gulp, it will result in a series of gulps. As a consequence of your diagnosis/prognosis, you’ll become an expert in gulps, morning, noon and night, when you’re alone or with others.

And as you are gulping, you are forever trying to find your place in the universe. As a diagnosee, you join an immense club, the kind of club Grouch Marx said he “wouldn’t join, if they would have me as a member.” Ignoring your new reality seems totally irresponsible, but focusing 24-7 on your less-than-ideal circumstances seems like overkill (pardon the double entendre). This focus likely emboldens the cancer while weakening your resolve. I mean, your situation is bad enough, you don’t need to make it worse by having it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Having it once and a while, like a snack is more than enough. The weight of a premature death (any death is premature, right?) is simply too great a burden to bear without making it heavier. I’m not suggesting one ever acquiesce and give into their cancer. Instead, I’m suggesting, find a place for it in your life where it’s sort of along for the ride, rather than it being the driver.

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



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