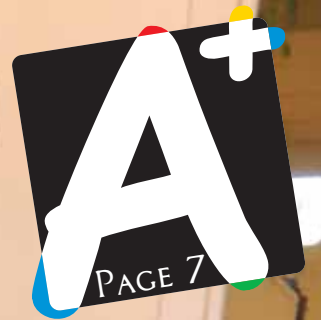


# Frey Decides Not To Run For Reelection

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Michael Frey in his office with his dog, Boomer.

## Serving in the People's House

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## Francis, Scanlon Help Westfield Pull Away from Herndon

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

# 'You Reach a Time Where Change Is Appropriate'

## Supervisor Michael Frey not running for reelection.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION



**Michael Frey at his desk in the Sully District Governmental Center.**

PHOTO BY  
BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**A**fter giving his State of Sully address Monday night, Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully) said his next words almost matter-of-factly.

"Regarding the upcoming elections in November, I will not be seeking reelection," he said. "You reach a time where change is appropriate, and that time has come for me."

Frey – who's been the Sully District's one and only supervisor ever since the Fairfax County magisterial district was created in 1992 – was speaking before the Jan. 19 quarterly meeting of the West Fairfax County Citizens Association.

WFCCA Land-Use Chairman Jim Katcham thanked him for his service, saying, "We appreciate all you've done for the district and each of the communities."

Despite his achievements over the years, Frey replied, "I didn't do any of it by myself; it was a collaborative effort."

As for his decision not to run again, he said it wasn't because he's at all worried about the outcome. In fact, said Frey, 58, "I think I would have gone unopposed."

Unlike many others on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, being a supervisor is his full-time job. And although his constituents haven't always agreed with him on every decision, overall, he's been popular with them.

**IN THE LAST ELECTION**, for example, in November 2011, area residents renewed their faith in Frey by returning him to office with 70.5 percent of the votes cast.

"I feel good; the response I got all day was great," he said afterward. "People came up to me at the polling places and told me, 'You helped with my church,' or a drainage problem or youth sports. It was very humbling and gratifying to hear." He said he didn't expect to win by quite as big a margin. "But I've worked hard and people know me," said Frey. "They know I'm accessible and try to be fair."

Now, though, the longtime resident of Centreville's London Commons community plans to step down when his current term – his sixth – is done. After all, he said, "I've worked for the county for 37 years. I started working for [former Board Chairman] Jack Herrity in June 1978 and was then [former Centreville District Supervisor] Elaine McConnell's chief of staff for seven years before becoming the Sully District supervisor."

Although, as a Republican, he's often been in the minority politically on the Board of Supervisors, Frey said, "I've tried to make sure the board's more functional than partisan. And I've been willing to make some tough calls to do that."

He's stood apart from the national, Republican Party and followed his own heart and conscience when it came to supporting the creation of a day-labor center for Centreville's Hispanic population. "I think the Republican Party has been wrong on the immigration issue and on many issues dealing with the Latino community," he said.

Generally viewed as a moderate, Frey

said, "I hope whoever replaces me will be of a similar outlook, temperament and political perspective. Local government isn't about politics, but about delivering service." He said he'll probably endorse someone for his job – and he already has someone in mind – but he doesn't want to make any announcements about that at this time.

And although the Sully District has historically leaned Republican – and, at one time, even started taking a turn further right – Frey said things are different now. "Today, I think only a moderate can win," he said. "The district's changed and diversified as the population has grown."

**FREY'S DECISION** to step down is a fairly recent one. "I had my golf tourney fundraiser last year, in case I wanted to run again," he said. "But I took a couple days off at Christmas and really thought about it. You reach a point where you're just not as enthusiastic about going to another Tysons Corner breakfast meeting at 7:30 in the morning."

Now, he's mulling over what he wants to do when he finally has some time to call his own. He may or may not get a new job and, for now at least, he doesn't plan on moving. "I'll stay here," he said. "Centreville's home." That doesn't mean he won't travel, though. Fresh from a trip to Chantilly, France, he's next looking forward to traveling to Ireland this summer to see the southwestern part of the country. He'd also love to visit Africa.

Closer to home, Frey will continue promoting Centreville history, wants to work with animals – possibly volunteering at the county animal shelter – and might even coach youth sports, as he did years ago. "My three passions in life are sports, animals and history," he said. "I love the volunteer-recognition nights with SYA and CYA and I'll miss that stuff. So I'll just do something with them in a different role. I'll keep working with the Historic Centreville Society, and I also want to continue the relationship with Chantilly, France."

He said he'll miss the people he serves and works with, including the county employees, the students and the people he's helped. And he's especially proud that the animal shelter finally received its long-overdue renovation during his tenure. But what's given him the most satisfaction overall, said Frey, are "the people I never knew 'til I got involved in politics and got elected – and now I call them friends."

In an official statement he released Tuesday, Jan. 20, he said it's been an honor and a privilege to represent Sully for the past two decades. "During that time, we've grown and developed into one of the most amazing places to live, work and raise a family – not just in Northern Virginia – but the entire country," said Frey. "We have an active and engaged community of citizens who work cooperatively to make this an even better place."

He noted, as well, Sully's "outstanding schools, active recreation, passive open-space parkland and solid economic base providing job opportunities for our residents. And we have safe, beautiful neighborhoods. To have had some small part in this evolution is something that I am proud of."

"I'm deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the citizens of Sully District and Fairfax County," continued Frey. "And I thank all those I've worked with and who've contributed their time and energy to our community. It has been a truly wonderful 24 years."

# Schoeneman To Run for Sully Supervisor Seat

## Will resign from Fairfax County Electoral Board

**F**airfax County Electoral Board Secretary Brian Schoeneman is running to fill the seat being vacated by Supervisor Michael Frey (R-Sully), who announced his retirement Monday night.

"Having spent the last two years supervising elections in Fairfax County, I realized that I could better serve my community by putting my name on a ballot, rather than continuing counting them," Schoeneman said Tuesday. "I look forward to working hard, earning the Republican nomination and running a successful campaign through November."



**Schoeneman**

Schoeneman, a Republican, has served over the last two years as vice chairman and later as secretary of the Fairfax County Electoral Board. In 2011, he ran for Virginia House of Delegates against Del. David Bulova (D-37) in a district that included

portions of Sully. He also serves on the Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission and was a member of the Bi-Partisan Election Process Improvement Commission established by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors following the 2012 Presidential Election.

"As a Republican, I have long advocated for balanced budgets, low taxes, reducing

the crushing burden of regulations on Fairfax employers, expanding economic development to bring good jobs to Fairfax County, and fighting to ensure that Fairfax County remains the best place to live, work and raise a family," he said. "If elected, I hope to continue my record as a transparent, accessible and honest public servant. I plan on spending the next 11 months meeting the voters of Sully District and demonstrating to them I have the common sense, good judgment and experience to serve them as their county supervisor."

The Sully Magisterial District, which encompasses Centreville, Chantilly, and portions of Clifton and Oakton, has been represented since its creation by Frey, who announced his intention to retire after six terms on Monday.

"I've been privileged to know and work

with Michael over the last five years. He was very helpful to me during my campaign in 2011, where we spent weekends door knocking together, and in my time on the Electoral Board he has been a welcome resource. No one will be able to fill his shoes, but I look forward to the opportunity to succeed him and continue his excellence in constituent services."

Under Virginia law, Electoral Board appointees are forbidden to run for office. In order to comply with the law, Schoeneman will be resigning his seat on the Fairfax County Electoral Board on Wednesday. His replacement will be chosen by the judges of the Circuit Court of Fairfax County.

Schoeneman, 37, is a resident of Centreville's Virginia Run community, where he lives with his wife KayAnn and their son Nicholas.

## ROUNDUPS

### Learn about Police Department

Interested in learning more about the Police Department's creation and evolution from a five-person organization to a nationally renowned department of over 1700? Throughout the year, the Police Department will host a series of lectures as part of the department's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The first lecture will be held on Friday, Jan. 23. This will be a guided tour of the department's museum located in the first floor of the Massey Building, 4100 Chain Bridge Road. Retirees will be giving an in-depth presentation on the various historical displays in the museum. The lecture starts at 1 p.m. To register for any of the events, follow the link listed underneath each lecture.

❖ Jan. 23 – Guided tour of the FCPD historic museum, 1 p.m. at the FCPD Museum, first floor of the Massey Building. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fairfax-county-police-museum-guided-tour-tickets-15303201287>

❖ Feb. 20 – The FCPD Crime Scene Section, 1 p.m. at the DPSC Meeting Room followed by Crime Scene Facility tour. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/crime-scene-section-lecture-and-tour-tickets-15304580412>

❖ March 18 – FCPD Narcotics – Investigations, Trends, and Public Awareness, 1 p.m. at the Sully District community Room <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fcpd-narcotics-investigations-trends-and-public-awareness-tickets-15373711184>

### Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, Jan. 29, from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed.

Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. The inspection may be cancelled in the event of inclement weather. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

### Working Together in Disasters

On Tuesday, Jan. 27, the Fairfax County Community Collaboration for Disaster Resiliency is launching a Community Resilience Pilot Program funded by FEMA and UASI to increase the understanding of how community partners can work together to mitigate disasters. Sully district has been chosen to participate in this pilot and we are calling upon community leaders to get involved.

The Jan. 27 session will include a seminar to educate community leaders on the possible resources and capabilities of each district. During Feb. 17 session, attendees will participate in a table-top exercise that will focus on practicing what was learned from the previous session. Both sessions will take place at The Sully District Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly.

Register online for both the January and February sessions. There is no cost to attend and dinner is included. Register for Jan. 27 Seminar at <https://sullyseminar.eventbrite.com>.

Register for Feb. 17 Exercise at <https://sullyexercise.eventbrite.com>.

Volunteer Fairfax will be willing to send its emergency response program manager to community organizations to discuss these events. Contact Tracy Friend, [tfriend@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:tfriend@volunteerfairfax.org).

### Help Re-stock Food Pantries

Local food pantries need help restocking after the holidays. For many of the local, non-profit pantries this is the time of year when their shelves are minimally stocked. The only collection location within the Sully District will take place on Saturday, Feb. 7 at the Clifton Giant, 5740 Union Mill Road between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Donations collected at this site will benefit the Western Fairfax Christian Ministries

For a list of all donation locations, collection dates and times go to:

<http://fairfaxcounty.gov/living/food/stuffthebus>

## NEWS

CHANTILLY CONNECTION EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN  
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# Serving in the People's House

## Barbara Comstock reflects on her first few weeks in Congress.

BY BARBARA COMSTOCK  
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (R-10)

January 2015 marks quite a few new beginnings for the Comstock family – a new Congress, a new job representing the 10th District of Virginia in Congress for me, and our first granddaughter, Hailey Isabel Roller, born on Sunday, Jan. 18, to my daughter Caity and her husband Andrew. A new year, full of new hopes and new beginnings. I have never been so optimistic and committed to getting this country back on track. We must create a country full of opportunity and hope for every child and grandchild in this country. As I've met with my colleagues, it's clear that there is a strong commitment to working together and getting things done for our constituents — first and foremost — growing a healthy economy, helping our hardworking taxpayers make ends meet, dealing with the growing international threats we face, and finding ways we can produce a more efficient and effective government.

**OPENING DAY AND SWEARING-IN:** Standing in the halls of Congress with my family and our family priest on Jan. 6, preparing for my swearing in, we couldn't help but see and hear the echoes of the past and consider the heavy responsibility on all who are privileged to serve in these halls. Only a little more than 10,000 people have ever served in Congress throughout our history. It is truly an honor to serve as the first woman to be the 10th District's congresswoman. One of the best things about my job is that unlike many of my colleagues, I get to go back to my district every night and see my constituents at the grocery store, at church, driving into work, on the Metro, at restaurants or just about any place I may go. The people in my district also reflect a broad and diverse group of experts who can provide me with great guidance in any number of issue areas.

On Jan. 6, our first day of session, we held an open house for 10th District constituents. In between meeting constituents, I had the opportunity to do inter-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Barbara Comstock with her first granddaughter, Hailey Isabel Roller, born on Sunday, Jan. 18, to her daughter Caity and her husband Andrew.**

views with C-SPAN, and NBC 4 News talking about my first day in Congress and what it was like to be a freshman congresswoman. As noontime approached, it was time to head to the House Floor. After Speaker Boehner was nominated and sworn in, all of the other Members of Congress jointly took our oaths of office on the House floor together. There were many young children with their parents on the House floor, while parents and spouses were watching us in the House gallery.

The House got right down to work that afternoon, voting on The Hires More Heroes Act. This important legislation provides a great opportunity to help both veterans and small businesses. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 71 percent of small business owners say Obamacare makes it difficult for them to hire more employees. The Hires More Heroes Act simply allows veterans to stay on the healthcare program provided through the VA or

SEE COMSTOCK, PAGE 4



**U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock giving an interview with C-SPAN from the Cannon House Office Building.**

PHOTO BY  
NORMAN BAYNE

# Comstock: First Few Weeks on the Hill

FROM PAGE 3

Tricare. The legislation passed unanimously in the House of Representatives. Following the vote I went back to my office and met with more constituents and joined with family and friends in town at numerous celebratory events.

**MY COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:** I am fortunate that my committee assignments for this session reflect many of the same issues that I worked on in the Virginia General Assembly that are very important to my District. I have been appointed to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the Science, Space and Technology Committee and the House Administration Committee which oversees the U.S. Capitol itself as well as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian where many of my constituents work. In my second week, Chairman Lamar Smith appointed me to chair the Research and Development Subcommittee on the Science, Space and Technology Committee. Having worked extensively with our local technology community and having served as the chairwoman of the Science and Technology Committee in the House of Delegates, I was pleased to be able to continue work in this area and particularly focus on how we can best promote and create the jobs of the 21st century. One of the first subcommittee hearings we will have will deal with the challenging issue of cybersecurity.

On the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we will be tackling a highway bill this year, as well as the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. Both of these have wide-ranging impacts in our area and I am pleased I will be able to serve on this important committee at this critical time. One of the first bills the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee brought to the House floor was the The Keystone XL Pipeline Act at the end of our first week. The Transportation and Infrastructure Com-



PHOTO BY NORMAN BAYNE

**U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock with family in her Capitol Hill office.**

mittee shares jurisdiction on this important legislation with the Energy and Commerce Committee. My first brief speech on the House floor was in support of the Keystone XL Pipeline. Republicans and Democrats alike, as well as unions like the Teamsters and LIUNA, and groups such as the Tea Party, and the Chamber of Commerce all support this important project. Why? Because it is a jobs bill — plain and simple. Keystone XL passed by a strong bipartisan vote. Now the Senate is expected to pass it with a strong bipartisan majority and it will go to the President's desk. While the President has already threatened a veto before we even passed the bill, I would hope that the broad bipartisan support for this jobs bill would be cause for the President's reconsideration.



C-SPAN PHOTO

**U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) speaking on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.**

**GROWING RANKS OF WOMEN IN CONGRESS:** This year marks the first time there have been over 100 women serving in Congress. In the first weeks, we had a meeting of the bipartisan Women's Caucus

and we discussed issues where we can work together. Over the holidays, I had already gotten together with a Democrat friend of mine, Rep. Debbie Dingell, to discuss how we can work together on my Young Women's Leadership Program that I first started in 2013. I look forward to continuing to work on this program to expose young women to women leaders who serve in a broad range of professions and we will be starting our application process again this spring. As my first weeks coincided with my daughter Caity and her husband Andrew preparing for the birth of their daughter, Hailey, I feel even more blessed to have this privilege to serve our community and prepare for the best future for the next generation.

**KEEP IN TOUCH:** As has been the case for the five years I served as the delegate for the 34th District, my door will always be open for all of my constituents in Virginia's 10th District. I want to continue the great tradition of Congressman Frank Wolf's much heralded constituent service. That is why we hired many of his district staff to continue in their positions. We are opening up an office in Sterling at 21430 Cedar Drive, Suite 218, and if you are on Capitol Hill stop by 226 Cannon House Office Building to say hello. We also will have a Winchester office that will open in March.

Fortunately, we were given the same phone number as Congressman Wolf's 202-225-5136 and you can follow what's going on in Congress by visiting [Comstock.House.Gov](http://Comstock.House.Gov). If you are on Facebook go to [facebook.com/RepBarbaraComstock](http://facebook.com/RepBarbaraComstock) and "Like" our page and if you are on Twitter go to [twitter.com/RepComstock](http://twitter.com/RepComstock) to follow our activities. Once again, I look forward to serving you in the people's house.



PHOTO BY NORMAN BAYNE

**U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock being sworn-in by the Speaker of the House John Boehner.**



PHOTO BY NORMAN BAYNE

**U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock with her family in Statuary Hall on swearing-in day.**

# State of the County

**Bulova cites achievements despite fiscal challenges.**

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

Despite a projected shortfall of nearly \$100 million facing Fairfax County going into the FY 2016 budget, Board of Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova remains encouraged by a 2014 that she said was full of accomplishments.

"We can't stop pedaling," she said in a question-and-answer session following a screening of her 2015 State of the County address video. "It becomes increasingly harder, with reduced revenue stream from past years. It just continues to be not easy."

The chairman's half-hour address, released Wednesday Jan. 14, highlights transportation improvements around the county, including the opening Phase I of the Metro Silver Line, two new VRE stations, the Bus Rapid Transit and Metro extension hybrid option being looked at for the U.S. Route 1 corridor and the December opening of the I-95 Express Lanes.

"With our current population at over 1.1 million residents and growing," Bulova said in the address, "Fairfax County is planning ahead when it comes to county services, redevelopment opportunities and transportation options in our community."

Bulova noted the effort to revitalize the housing market through mixed-use urban centers like Tysons Corner, the Mosaic District, Reston Town Center and the new Springfield Town Center.

When asked if the growth has yielded a similar growth in non-residential revenue for the county, Bulova responded that they are seeing "some increase." While some new development buildings aren't full yet, she didn't express a concern for overbuilding.

Fairfax County Public Schools superintendent Dr. Karen Garza appears in the video, highlighting the projected growth of the school system to over



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION  
**Board of Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova speaks at the 2015 State of the County Address.**

200,000 students by 2020, its growing special needs population and academic achievements that "continue to exceed their counterparts in the state."

Garza also noted the adoption of the FCPS "Portrait of a Graduate" set of ideals as part of a long-term strategic plan for the school system that's under development.

"Graduates should leave FCPS knowing how to be a communicator, collaborator, ethical and global citizen, creative and critical thinker, and goal-directed and resilient individual," she said.

FCPS is facing a significant deficit of its own, as Garza outlined in the recent release of her 2015-2016 school year budget.

The county's budget process will advance in February when the county executive Edward Long brings forward an Advertised Budget.

Whether residents can expect a property tax increase to cover the county's shortfall, Bulova said, "We'll see what he puts on the table."

The full video of the State of the County address has aired on Channel 16 and can be viewed on the chairman's homepage at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/>.

## Phony Stamps: Two Years Probation

A local businessman has been sentenced to two years probation and ordered to pay tens of thousands of dollars in restitution to the U.S. Postal Service. He is Brian Kim, 38, of Fairfax.

This past summer, he pleaded guilty in federal court to defrauding the U.S. Postal Service. He admitted doing so by counterfeiting and selling approximately \$76,000 in postage stamps at two packaging centers he owned and operated in Northern Virginia. One's in Fairfax and the other is in Arlington.

In a statement of facts filed with his plea agreement, Kim admitted that, from January to October 2013, he counterfeited postal stamps that had been originally printed on a USPS-authorized postage meter.

He then placed those stamps on packages and letters that customers brought to his packaging centers. Neither the customers who purchased the stamps nor the USPS employees who picked up the packages were aware of Kim's scheme.

As an example of his wrongdoing, prosecutors cited

one representative day at his packaging centers – Aug. 12, 2013 – when Kim caused the mailing of letters and packages bearing 80 counterfeit stamps, with a total value of \$395.70. Two months later, on Oct. 15, 2013, postal inspectors seized approximately \$23,974.59 worth of counterfeit stamps while executing search warrants at Kim's businesses.

On Aug. 5, in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Kim pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud before Judge Claude M. Hilton. He returned Jan. 9 to learn his punishment.

At that time, the judge sentenced him to two years probation – the first six months of which will include home confinement with work release. Kim must also pay \$76,000 in restitution, representing the total amount of the illicit gains he received from his fraudulent activities.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney William E. Johnston and Assistant U.S. Attorney Kosta S. Stojilkovic prosecuted it in court.

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# OPINION

## Baby Steps, Not Enough

Supervisors should take action, not defer to “outside expert,” on absurd and outrageous behavior of police department.

Finally, now that the Fairfax County Police Department has taken stone walling into the arena of the absurd, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has at least said it is time for change. It is a step, but a step that continues the appearance of obfuscation if not outright obstruction.

John Geer of Springfield was shot dead inside the doorway of his own home in Springfield on Aug. 29, 2013. Following an argument with his longtime partner, police arrived at Geer's home and spoke with him for more than half an hour while he stood in his doorway, unarmed, with his hands raised and resting on the frame. As he began to lower his hands, by all accounts still at shoulder level, he was shot in the chest and died in his house without receiving medical attention.

It took more than 16 months, a \$12 million civil suit by Geer's family and a court order to get the first tiny bit of information on the shooting, which came earlier this month. Police named the police officer who fired the shot that killed John Geer.

The short written statement by Police Chief Edwin C. Roessler Jr. included some very troubling references that appear to blame the shooting on the fact that Geer was a known gun owner. At least 35 percent of Virginia resi-

dents are gun owners; are they all more vulnerable if for some reason police are called to their homes?

Now Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova has asked the County Executive to locate “independent expertise in the field of police department operations and, specifically, in the area of policies and procedures with respect to information disclosures in the case of police-involved shootings.”

We agree with Supervisor Pat Herrity, who says: “As elected officials it is our job to make policy, not hire an ‘outside expert’ to do our job for us. ... We currently have the resources of a professional staff at our disposal.” Herrity also notes that the proposal does not contain a provision for public input, and that many county residents have researched this topic and qualify as experts.

A few minutes of research shows, for example, that the National Association of Police Chiefs, for example, has extensive documentation about best practices in a variety of police shooting incidents. (Naming the officer involved after 48 hours is among the recommendations.)

The problem goes beyond Fairfax County, and beyond police shootings.

The first paragraph of Virginia Freedom of

Information Act, passed by the General Assembly in 1968, states that all public records “shall be presumed open.” But the legislation includes an exemption that allows police to withhold “complaints, memoranda, correspondence, case files or reports, witness statements and evidence.”

Police officials in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria have adopted what they call a “blanket” approach to using their exemption. That means they have decided to withhold any document they can without any analysis of whether they should, whether the case is open or closed, whether they are about a “police-involved shooting” or information requested by a family about a homicide victim, or even about routine police activity in a neighborhood. Not even defense attorneys or victims of crimes can gain access to actual police reports.

This is about lack of accountability and denying the public access to information that must be made public.

Leaders of police departments here are engaged in serious and significant abuse of power. It's time for elected officials to represent the public and impose change on those who would hide behind a culture of secrecy.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Shared Mission For Peace

To the Editor:

First, let me say, that I am a Christian. You printed a letter from Fouzan Pal, “Need Muslims for Peace,” in the Jan. 14-20 issue. Thank you for printing that letter and thanks to the author for writing it. I would hope that all of your readers take the time to read that short letter.

I have several Muslim friends and they are not terrorists.

I have another 15 or so Muslim acquaintances and based on our limited discussions, I do not think they are terrorists.

However, I also have several friends whose only interactions have been with the radicals who claim to be doing these acts in the name of the Prophet.

Muslims must speak out against the violence and take back the publicity about Islam. I have read an English version of the Koran, but I will bet that not more than 1 percent of my Christian friends have done so. I was thrilled when the Imam in France immediately denounced the terrorists' acts.

All of us Christians need to learn more about the Islam religion and only Muslims can really help us to that. Peace in our time and peace for lovers of God.

**Bill Bigler, PMP**  
Centreville

#### Mercy of Prophet Muhammad

To the Editor:

It's easy to get irritated by an annoying sibling, a child misbehaving, getting trapped in rush hour, or even a work colleague testing your patience. How many of you have thought of letting it go, just let them off the hook and move on? A challenge many of us have to approach, no doubt, yet not an easy one, that's for sure. The slightest provocation pushes us to lengths beyond our tolerance.

Now let's look back 1,400 years ago at an individual who was constantly bullied and picked on, abused and tormented, yet he would raise neither hand nor voice against the onslaughts of his enemies. This man was Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him. One of his characteristics was the willingness to forgive, as one such occasion recalls. It was a peaceful mission, nothing grand by any means. He was to travel to a nearby city near Mecca called Taif and spread the message of God and offer the gift of peace. There he encountered nothing but ridicule and was chased away by street boys who threw stones at him. What would you do if someone called you a bad name, or made fun of you? What kind of reaction would it bring out in you if someone gave you a light shove? Would it make your blood boil or thirst for revenge? What did Prophet Muhammad do? He found a safe spot somewhere further off to recover from the incident, and it was then an angel in the form of a man came to

him and said: “If you so willed, God will bury the city of Taif between the two mountains where it stands.” Prophet Muhammad replied, “No, leave them be. One day, perhaps their offspring will embrace the truth.”

Drawing a simple yet offensive cartoon can hardly compare to what this man had to go through. He endured and he forgave, he suffered yet his reaction was only mercy. A woman would dump her trash on top of him every day as he left his house. When she didn't show up one day he became concerned and upon visiting her he discovered she was sick. This woman who treated him so miserably was immensely impressed that she became a follower of Prophet Muhammad. After Mecca waging unprovoked war upon war on him and his people, after witnessing them being tortured for taking on a different belief and being forced to forfeit that belief, after watching his loved ones and believers being killed for his cause, Prophet Muhammad had the chance to take revenge when he conquered Mecca, but forgave each and every act committed against him and his followers. The ill treatment of his enemies knew no limits, yet his mercy knew no bounds. It was for everyone, young and old, rich or poor, good or bad.

Next time we are provoked, how will we respond? What will we do? Will we go crazy like those who reacted to the offensive drawings of a revered man? Or will we take it in stride and do what Prophet Muhammad did, to have patience and show mercy? It is by our actions one judges our character.

**Seher Bhatti**

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# Brookfield's Otal Honored

## Named Elementary School Counselor of the Year.

By BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**B**rookfield Elementary counselor Carole Zendle wanted to nominate Kathleen Otal, the previous school year, for the FCPS Elementary School Counselor of the Year.

But, saying she doesn't do her job for recognition, Otal wouldn't let her. This school year, though, Otal — also at Brookfield — relented. Zendle nominated her and Otal won.

"In my 30 years as a counselor, I'd never nominated anyone for this — but I'd never worked with anyone like her before," said Zendle. "Kathleen is just phenomenal; she motivates by example, never asks anyone to do what she wouldn't do and she's just a great person."

Otal's been at Brookfield for more than 15 years and went into counseling because she loves "children, schools and helping people. After college, I taught first grade for a year and that helped me understand what teachers go through — it's really a hard job."

Counseling also enables her to work with all different grade levels at once — as individuals, in small groups and in classes. "I love supporting teachers and parents, and I have an opportunity to do all these things as a counselor," she said. "To help the kids, we all have to work together."

Otal said the skills required of a good counselor included patience and love. "You have to never give up and be willing to try lots of different things," she said. "And you have to see the best in every child and have a positive attitude and a sense of humor."

Furthermore, she said, "You have to be able to multitask, balance a lot of things at the same time and prioritize things. There's so much going on; needs pop up and change your schedule. You want to prevent problems from happening, as much as possible. The purpose of a counselor is to help students learn, so you put elements in place to help them do that."

With 830 students, Brookfield has several such programs, including one-to-one mentoring of students by staff members or the school's business partners. Also important are Brookfield's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIs).

"It's giving students positive reinforcement and telling them they're doing a great job," said Otal. "Praise works for everybody. Brookfield has its own 'three Rs' — students are respectful, responsible and ready [to learn]."

She's is one of that program's coaches, along with kindergarten teacher Melissa Amory. "We see it as a big, prevention piece," said Otal. "We recognize students for doing these things, for example, holding a door for someone or helping a friend who feels sad. The students get stickers and, when they receive a



Third-graders at Brookfield Elementary pose with (back row, from left) their teacher Tracy Foster and counselor Kathleen Otal.

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

certain number of them, they write their names in the Book of Honor."

This program acknowledges behavior above and beyond the norm. "We try to catch children being good, as much as we can," said Otal. "It's our school's identity — it's how we behave, and it sets a positive culture in the school."

"We laugh, instead of cry, when we can't change anything," added Zendle. "But we try to do our best for the students and stay positive. And Kathleen always get it that it's about the child and helping the teachers, parents and caretakers get involved for the child's best interests to help him or her do their personal best. And Kathleen always has that focus to not give up."

Also important, said Zendle, is that the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) encourages school counselors to apply for its Recognized ASCA Model Program

designation. Getting this designation signifies that a school has a certified counseling program dealing with student academics plus social, emotional and career development.

"Brookfield was the first elementary school in Fairfax County to receive it," said Zendle. "We had to submit 160 pages of data, plus videos. We got the designation last summer, and it was a really big accomplishment for Brookfield. I think this is another one of the reasons Kathleen was selected Counselor of the Year."

Added Otal: "I knew we'd get it because I knew we have a great program here."

Delighted with her colleague's honor, Zendle said,

**"In my 30 years as a counselor, I'd never nominated anyone for this — but I'd never worked with anyone like her before."**

— Carole Zendle

SEE OTAL HONORED, PAGE 11

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# Francis, Scanlon Help Westfield Pull Away from Herndon

**Bulldogs use 16-2 run to blow open close game.**

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he sharpshooting Herndon boys' basketball team gave the Westfield Bulldogs one of their toughest tests of the season on Friday.

The Hornets connected on six first-half 3-pointers en route to a one-point halftime lead. Two minutes into the fourth quarter, Herndon had knocked down nine shots from behind the arc and trailed Westfield, which entered the game with a 12-1 record, by a single point.

But after 26 minutes of back-and-forth basketball, the Bulldogs stepped up their defensive effort and showed how dangerous they can be.

Westfield used a 16-2 fourth-quarter run to secure a 69-56 victory on Jan. 16 at Herndon High School. After a bucket by Herndon's Dupree Monk cut the Westfield lead to 51-50 with 6:07 remaining, the Bulldogs limited the Hornets to one field goal during the next 4 minutes, 29 seconds. Meanwhile, Westfield guard Blake Francis generated points by attacking the basket and Tyler Scanlon knocked down a corner 3-pointer.

In a matter of minutes, Westfield turned a tight-knit contest into a double-digit defeat for Herndon.

"In the first half, they went 6 of 7 from 3-point range. They're going to be in the game," Westfield head coach Doug Ewell said. "... As we started to get stops, things became a little bit easier for us, so that was really, really important."

The victory improved Westfield's record to 13-1. After losing to Lake Braddock on Dec. 9, the Bulldogs have won 11 in a row.

"This is a big win for us," Francis said. "... We came in facing adversity, coming into their house — small gym, big crowd. I think this is the biggest win of the season so far and now it's a big confidence booster."

Herndon had no answer for Francis' quickness in the fourth quarter. The 5-foot-10 junior guard drove to the rim, scored and was fouled with 5:13 remaining. Francis converted the three-point play, giving the Bulldogs a 59-50 lead.

Later, Francis shook a defender, causing the Herndon player to fall down, and then went to the basket and scored, extending Westfield's lead to 63-52.

Francis finished with 17 points.

"Blake is Blake," Ewell said. "Blake can go. That was an added plus. We needed it."

Scanlon, a 6-foot-7 junior transfer from Paul VI, also finished 17 points. He scored the game's first two points with a dunk, and dunked again to open the second quarter.

Scanlon said he has transitioned from facilitator to scorer with the move from Paul



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION  
**Westfield guard Blake Francis scored 17 points against Herndon on Jan. 16.**



**Westfield head coach Doug Ewell said Tyler Scanlon has fit in well with the Bulldogs after transferring from Paul VI.**

VI to Westfield. He said his experience playing in the hyper-competitive Washington Catholic Athletic Conference has helped his game.

"I think what I learned [at PVI] is every play is important," Scanlon said. "Every play means something in the WCAC and I feel like I've taken that [approach] here. ... I think the biggest thing that the WCAC helped me with is definitely the speed of the game."

Jacob Williams scored 12 points for Westfield and Patrick Lawless added 11.

Herndon turned the ball over 22 times, but head coach Gary Hall said he was pleased with how the Hornets competed.

"We're right there," said Hall, whose Hornets fell to 8-6. "If that's the second-best team in the state, the best team in the region, I like where we are. They knew they were in a game and last I checked there was no award ceremony going on out there."

Sophomore guard Michael Griffin led Herndon with 19 points, including five 3-pointers.

Westfield faced Robinson on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Bulldogs will host Chantilly at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 23.

"I think it's been really good," said Ewell, referring to how the Bulldogs have handled success.

"The guys have grown together. They've had some expectations of themselves. They know there's a lot more work to be done because we want to be good in February."



**Head coach Doug Ewell and the Westfield boys' basketball team improved to 13-1 with a win over Herndon on Jan. 16.**

## BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to [chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

### SUPPORT NEEDED

**Annual STEM-H Expo.** The six high school academies in Fairfax County Public Schools are seeking sponsors, exhibitors, and presenters for their annual STEM-H (science, technology, engineering, math, and health and medical sciences) Expo, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 21, at Chantilly High School. Colleges, businesses, industries, and other organizations that educate for, do business in, or support the STEM-H fields are invited to submit proposals to present STEM-H focused breakout sessions, provide exhibits, and demonstrate STEM-H related business technologies to attract middle and high school students to careers in these fields. Exhibitor registration fees are \$25 for corporate organizations and \$15 for non-profit organizations to help cover event costs. There is no charge for FCPS groups. Donations of

promotional items for student and parent participants and for give-away items for raffles are also being sought. Contact Cara Kirby at 571-423-4502 or [ckkirby@fcps.edu](mailto:ckkirby@fcps.edu).

### WEDNESDAY/JAN. 21

**Republican Women of Clifton.** 7 p.m. at Fairview Elementary School, 5815 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Chet Nagle, Naval Academy graduate, Cold War pilot, CIA agent and author will speak at the January meeting of the Republican Women of Clifton on the conflict in the Middle East and vulnerability of the US electrical grid to EMP and cyber-attacks. Golala Arya, Kurdish Iranian refugee, will contribute her insights on the conflict in Iran. Refreshments at 7 p.m., meeting at 7:30 p.m. Visit [www.CliftonGOP.com](http://www.CliftonGOP.com).



PEOPLE

# Claudette Ward: 80 Years Young Family, friends celebrate her birthday on Sunday.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ore than 100 family members and friends gathered Sunday afternoon, Jan. 18, in Centreville United Methodist Church's fellowship hall to celebrate Claudette Ward's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Her love of family, church, history, gardening and mankind in general have kept her young," said son-in-law Dave Mellott. "People may see her as 80 years old, but we see her as 80 years young."

Ward has also packed a slew of achievements in her eight decades, and she's not done. The longtime Willow Springs resident has been an active, community volunteer since the 1960s and has fought to preserve and promote the area's history.

She's secretary of the Historic Centreville Society and has written many articles on Virginia history for its publication, Millrace. And she's a member of both the Stuart-Mosby and the Fairfax County historical societies.

Ward and her husband John, who died in October 2002, were married 53 years and had eight children — four boys and four girls. Celebrating her birthday with her on Sunday were John Jr. and Ted Ward, Linda Mellott, Judy Ward, Norma Apone and Karen Sica.

Also at the party were Claudette Ward's 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren (with one more on the way). Youngest son Jimmy died in an accident in 1978, and Bill, 63 — who was disabled after an accident — died Dec. 29.

John Ward was one of the first members of the Centreville Volunteer Fire Department (Station 17), and Claudette served as its Ladies Auxiliary president and vice president. She was also president of CUMC's United Methodist Women and served on the Springfield District/Fairfax Center Land-Use Committee.

In 1992, Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully) selected Claudette Ward as the very first Lady Fairfax from the Sully District for her contributions to the Centreville area.



**Claudette Lee Crouch Ward with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.**

PHOTO BY  
BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

She also dedicated countless hours to the Crouch School relocation, moving the Legato School and expanding the Centreville Historic District.

In June 2008, the Lane's Mill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presented her with its Community Service Award. And in December 2009, she received the Clinton Hatcher Award from the Sons of the Confederacy Camp 21. Both honors were in recognition of her "outstanding service and efforts for the educational, historical and patriotic preservation of history."

Sunday afternoon, a roomful of relatives, as well as longtime friends such as Kenyon Davis and Pete Kirby — both of whom served as fire chiefs of Station 17 — and their respective wives, Kathleen Davis and Lauren Kirby, who served on the Ladies Auxiliary, recalled fond memories and shared in the birthday festivities.

Others expressed their thoughts in a birthday booklet of "special moments and treasured memories" created for the occasion. Ed Wenzel, who's known Ward for 30 years,

said she's "always been among the first responders on historic-preservation issues, be they at Centreville, Ox Hill, Fairfax or elsewhere, including cemeteries, historic buildings and earthworks.

She has been a tremendous advocate for the preservation of Fairfax County's heritage. She is a gracious and beloved lady and a treasure to all."

Sue Clark noted "special memories of working [with Ward] in the kitchen, every Tuesday and Saturday, at Centreville Volunteer Fire Department bingo." And county Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy called Ward "a wonderful woman who has dedicated many of those 80 years to serving Fairfax County citizens."

During the party, Ward's children presented her with a pendant of a family tree adorned with her children's birthstones, and several people got up and spoke about what she meant to them. Daughter Judy read a poem she'd written, and daughter-in-law Nancy Ward (John Jr.'s wife) said, "I couldn't ask for a nicer person or a softer heart. She welcomed my family into hers,

and that meant a lot to me. I love her with all my heart."

Pete Kirby said Claudette Ward was part of the Ladies Auxiliary while he was chief, and "the contributions they made to the community can't be measured. We don't often get to see the impact we've had on people's lives — and this is just a fraction of it for Claudette."

Her grown granddaughter, Gretchen Ward (Bill's daughter), said, "Growing up, I always had a good relationship with my grandparents. I have wonderful memories of playing at grandma's house, walking in the woods, playing with homemade Play Dough and making cookies. Happy birthday, Grandma — love you."

Lastly, Claudette Ward told the crowd, "How much I appreciate you being here. My birthday's just an excuse to get my extended family and some of my friends together. As I look around the room, I love you all; thank you so much."

Then, acknowledging her son Bill, who'd died just three weeks earlier, she said she knew "he's here with us in spirit."

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## Seasonal Seven Dwarfs



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Sneezy, Coughy, Phlegmy, Stuffy, Achy. No-Sleepy and Post-Nasal Drippy; and no Doc, which is possibly what led to this column being written. To tell you the truth – and I always do – if I didn't have stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, I wouldn't have given these symptoms a first thought, let alone a second one. But since I do have cancer and it's mostly all I think about; as much as I tried to pretend otherwise and consider these symptoms unrelated, my lungs/breathing did seem to be affected.

And so after 10 days or so of coughing, then full-blown "colding" and back to coughing again, I acquiesced and scheduled an appointment with my Primary Care physician. After asking me the usual and customary how-I-feel questions – which did not prompt an OMG-type reaction from my doctor, he next unwrapped his stethoscope from around his neck and approached me to listen and presumably learn. He placed his stethoscope on my upper back and then on my chest and of course asked me to "breathe in," and "breathe out," repeatedly. Apparently, he heard nothing of consequence. No indications to warrant a chest X-ray, he said; no suspicious sights or sounds to further investigate. As he summarized his assessment: "It's winter," which I correctly understood to mean my symptoms were not cancer-related, I exhaled in relief, smiled widely and thanked him for the reassurance. Then he put his hand on my shoulder and said: "Nothing to worry about." A few minutes later, I left his office with a precautionary prescription for cough medicine and four days of antibiotics; completely normal protocol, lung cancer notwithstanding. But it didn't stop me from worrying. Cancer sort of has an intent of its own.

And that's the problem, underlying and overlaying. Everything I say or do or think or write is filtered – unconsciously anymore, through the prism of my being originally diagnosed with a "terminal" form of cancer. If ever there was a disconnect between symptoms, feelings, mortality, etc.; well, there isn't anymore. We're (cancer and I) not exactly one big happy family, but we are all living together under one roof, residing in one head; mine, mostly. I've had better roommates, that's for sure. Unfortunately, this is one I can't simply ask to leave.

Usually, I can manage, except when there's a blip, something not typically seen or felt on my emotional radar. This most recent bout with the symptoms I've described, completely normal and expected almost at this time of the year, probably should not have been neglected by yours truly for as long as they were (seven to 10 days). Sometimes, fear has a way of affecting your better judgment, though. In retrospect, I certainly should have acted sooner. Hopefully, I've learned my lesson. Next time, I won't ignore the "seasonal seven dwarfs." I was lucky this time. Life is not a fairy tale. Pretending otherwise could be grim.

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

Education • Learning • Fun



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

**Brookfield counselor Kathleen Otal in front of the school, this fall.**

## Otal Honored

FROM PAGE 7

"Kathleen has endless energy and enthusiasm. She inspires me — and I've been a counselor 34 years."

School Principal Mary Miller was also thrilled. "I can't think of another person who deserves it more than Kathleen. I've known her five years, and she and Carole are both such a strong team. But Kathleen is one of a kind; there's always a smile on her face and her positive enthusiasm is infectious."

Calling Otal the school's "cheerleader," Miller said Otal even makes videos with students and puppets to model good behavior. "It helps so much," said Miller. "And in any situation when we need help, she's there. She always makes sure the students' needs are met and works closely with the families."

This school year, Brookfield has a new attendance initiative, also striving for success by helping the students get to school every day and on time. "Data shows that students attending school consistently are more likely to read on grade level by third grade," said Otal. "They're also more likely to graduate from high school, so the local middle- and high-school counselors are also excited about our initiative."

To reinforce it, each Brookfield student received a bracelet in the school's blue-and-white colors with the words, "Strive for 7:45" and "8 is late." The first bell rings at 8 a.m., and that's when the children should be in their seats. Otal's the attendance team leader, along with Assistant Principal Jennifer Drummond.

Regarding her counseling award, Otal said, "I don't like things to be about me. I do what I do for the kids, not for recognition. And I couldn't do what I do here without the other staff members at Brookfield because it's an amazing school. But I was excited — it means I'm recognized for the hard work I do and it's appreciated."

She and her husband, Juan Otal, live in Arlington and have a son, Lucas, who attends Washington-Lee High, and a daughter, Carrie, who attends Kenmore Middle. But Kathleen Otal isn't the only award-winner in their family; her husband teaches fifth grade at Carlin Springs Elementary in Arlington and, two years ago, he was named his school's Teacher of the Year.

# ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to [chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event. Photos or artwork welcome.

## ONGOING

**Workbook on Display.** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. The exhibit is open through January, in the park's visitor center and admission is free. The highlight of the exhibit is an original workbook created by Lewis H. Machen who purchased Walney in 1843 and lived there until his death in 1863. This is the first time the workbook has been shared publicly. Contact 703-631-0013 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence) for more.

The **Airbus IMAX Theater at National Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Center**, 14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway, is showing movies including "Interstellar", "D-Day: Normandy 1944", "Hubble", "Fighter Pilot" and "Hidden Universe". Visit [airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy](http://airandspace.si.edu/udvarhazy) or call 703-572-4118 for the movie schedule or to schedule an IMAX On Demand show for groups of 50 or more.

**Sully Historic Site.** 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Enjoy guided tours of the 1794 home of Northern Virginia's first Congressman, Richard Bland Lee. \$7/adult; \$6/student; \$5/senior and child. Hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 703-437-1794.

**Exhibit of Colorful Nutcrackers at Historic Sully.** Through Jan. 31. Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic

Sully Way, Chantilly. See an array of nutcrackers, both old and new, in a colorful case exhibit. This holiday exhibit is included in a guided tour of the 1794 house. Sully, the home of Richard Bland Lee, northern Virginia's first congressman, will be decorated for the holiday season from Dec. 3-22. 703-437-1794 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully)

**Singing.** 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Clifton. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires rehearse every Wednesday which includes training by an award-winning director. Visit [www.fairfaxjubilaires.org](http://www.fairfaxjubilaires.org) for more.

## PET ADOPTIONS

**Adopt a Dog.** Fridays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. at PetSmart, 12971 Fair Lakes Center, Fairfax. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit [www.lostdogrescue.org](http://www.lostdogrescue.org) for more.

**Adopt a Dog.** Saturdays, 12-3 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Highway. Visit [hart90.org](http://hart90.org) for more.

**Adopt a Dog.** Sundays, 1-4 p.m. at Petco, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. Adopt a puppy or dog. Visit [aforeverhome.org](http://aforeverhome.org) for more.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 24

**Landscape Renovations.** 10 a.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee

Highway, Fairfax. Overgrown or outdated landscape? If so, it's time for an audit and renovation. Learn how making a few small changes can lead to big results. Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenters.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenters.com) or call 703-968-9600.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 30

**Sugarloaf Crafts Festival.** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Dulles Expo & Conference Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center Drive, Chantilly. Browse and buy items and fine art created by more than 250 jury-selected artists displaying one-of-a-kind items in sculpture, glass, jewelry, fashion, wood, metal, furniture, home accessories, leather, photography and fine art. Tickets valid all three days: \$8 online; \$10 at the door; free for children under 12. Free parking. Visit [www.sugarloafcrafter.com](http://www.sugarloafcrafter.com) or call 800-210-9900.

**Swing Dance with The Cutaways,** 8:30-9 p.m. drop-in beginner swing lesson; 9 p.m.-midnight dance at Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon. For more information on swing dance classes, dances, and special events, call 703-359-9882 or visit [www.gottaswing.com](http://www.gottaswing.com).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 31

**Growing Plants Indoors.** 10 a.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee

Highway, Fairfax. Escape the winter doldrums with colorful tropical plants. Select plants and get tips to keep them looking great. Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenters.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenters.com) or call 703-968-9600.

**Sugarloaf Crafts Festival.** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Dulles Expo & Conference Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center Drive, Chantilly. Browse and buy items and fine art created by more than 250 jury-selected artists displaying one-of-a-kind items in sculpture, glass, jewelry, fashion, wood, metal, furniture, home accessories, leather, photography and fine art. Tickets valid all three days: \$8 online; \$10 at the door; free for children under 12. Free parking. Visit [www.sugarloafcrafter.com](http://www.sugarloafcrafter.com) or call 800-210-9900.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 1

**Sugarloaf Crafts Festival.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Dulles Expo & Conference Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center Drive, Chantilly. Browse and buy items and fine art created by more than 250 jury-selected artists displaying one-of-a-kind items in sculpture, glass, jewelry, fashion, wood, metal, furniture, home accessories, leather, photography and fine art. Tickets valid all three days: \$8 online; \$10 at the door; free for children under 12. Free parking. Visit

[www.sugarloafcrafter.com](http://www.sugarloafcrafter.com) or call 800-210-9900.

## WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/FEB. 4-5

**Menopause The Musical.** 8 p.m. at Hylton Performing Arts Center, 10960 George Mason Circle, Manassas. GFour Productions bring this international hit show to Manassas for two shows only. Tickets are available at the Hylton Performing Arts Center box office, [hyltoncenter.org](http://hyltoncenter.org), or by calling 703-993-7759. Now celebrating 13 years of female empowerment through hilarious musical comedy, *Menopause The Musical* has evolved as a "grassroots" movement of women who deal with life adjustments after 40 by embracing each other and the road ahead. Visit [www.MenopauseTheMusical.com](http://www.MenopauseTheMusical.com).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 7

**Evergreens For Every Garden.** 10 a.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Evergreens are a must-have in every garden. They provide year-round interest, structure, define spaces and serve as backdrop to other plants. Attend this seminar to discover the many varieties. Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenters.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenters.com) or call 703-968-9600

## SATURDAY/FEB. 7

**Children's Gardening Workshops.** 2 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. These seminars are ideal for parents and grandparents who want to introduce children, ages 6-12, to gardening. Each child will learn and have fun while creating a dish garden to bring home. An adult must be present. Space is limited. Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenters.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenters.com) or call 703-968-9600.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 14

**It's All About the Birds and the Bees.** 10 a.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Flowers can be so much more than gifts for a Valentine. Find out how they use their shape, fragrance and color to attract the perfect partner for pollination and reproduction. Is it love, biology or both? Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenters.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenters.com) or call 703-968-9600.

## TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY/FEB. 17-18

**Auditions.** 6:30-9 p.m. at Mountain View High School, 5775 Spindle Court, Centreville. Auditions for The Alliance Theatre's production of "Curtains." It's the brassy, bright, and promising year of 1959. Boston's Colonial Theatre is host to the opening night performance of a new musical. When the leading lady mysteriously dies on stage the entire cast and crew are suspects. Call backs Thursday Feb. 19, at 6:30 p.m. Rehearsals begin Feb. 23, 7 p.m. Performance dates are April 24-25, May 1-9. Register at [www.thealliancetheatre.org/auditions.html](http://www.thealliancetheatre.org/auditions.html).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 21

**Boxwood and Flowering Shrubs.** 10 a.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Discover the many new and different varieties of boxwood and discuss flowering shrubs to complement your boxwood. Visit [www.merrifieldgardencenters.com](http://www.merrifieldgardencenters.com) or call 703-968-9600.

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