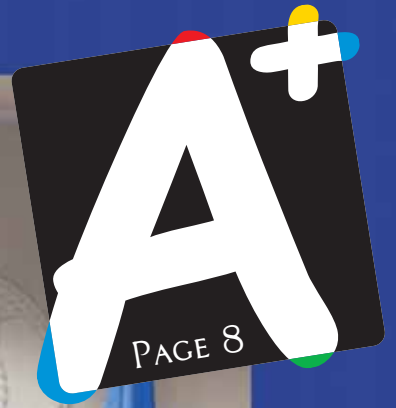




# Fairfax CONNECTION



City Clerk Melanie Crowder (far left) administers the oath of office to Mayor David Meyer while Councilman Jeff Greenfield (in background) and Meyer's wife Cindy look on.



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### FRIDAY/MARCH 3

**Rising Above Fear.** Burke Presbyterian Church Distinguished Speakers Series, with Omid Safi, director of Duke University's Islamic Studies Center, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Being Muslim in America: Between ISIS and Islamophobia. Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke, 703-764-0456. Tickets are available at <http://www.BurkePresChurch.org>. They are \$25 for Friday and Saturday sessions and \$15 for a single session. Tickets are limited.

**Grace Presbyterian Church** offers Sunday school for all ages at 9:15, and a blended worship service 10:30 a.m. every Sunday morning. Coffee and fellowship follows worship. Nursery care is provided from 9:00-11:45. 7434 Bath Street, Springfield. 703-451-2900 or [www.gracepresby.org](http://www.gracepresby.org).

**The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center**, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to both newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. The center emphasizes working with the mind and learning how to understand the workings of the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit <http://www.guhyasamaja.org> for more information.

**Lord of Life Lutheran** offers services at two locations, in Fairfax at 5114 Twinbrook Road and in Clifton at 13421 Twin Lakes Drive. Services in Fairfax are held on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8:30 and 10 a.m. Services in Clifton are held on Sundays at 8:50 and 10:50 a.m. 703-323-9500 or [www.Lordoflifeva.org](http://www.Lordoflifeva.org).

**First Baptist Church of Springfield** offers Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., followed by both traditional and contemporary worship services at 10:30 a.m. at 7300 Gary St., Springfield. 703-451-1500 or [www.fbcspRINGfield.org](http://www.fbcspRINGfield.org).

### SATURDAY/MARCH 4

**Rising Above Fear.** Burke Presbyterian Church Distinguished Speakers Series, with Omid Safi, director of Duke University's Islamic Studies Center, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Moving Forward in Love: An Interfaith Collaboration, Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke, 703-764-0456. Tickets are available at <http://www.BurkePresChurch.org>. They are \$25 for Friday and Saturday sessions and \$15 for a single session. Tickets are limited.

**Fairfax Baptist Temple**, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a bible study fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service. Nursery care and children's church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, 703-323-8100 or [www.fbtministries.org](http://www.fbtministries.org).

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## Passing of the Torch in Fairfax

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he symbolic passing of the leadership torch led off Tuesday night's Fairfax City Council meeting. Steve Stombres, who's been interim mayor since August, was honored for his service, and new Mayor David Meyer was ceremonially sworn in.

Stombres, who was a former City Council member, stepped in to fill the void created when former Mayor Scott Silverthorne resigned. And Meyer became the mayor in a special election, last Tuesday, Feb. 7, and was officially sworn in last Friday after the election results were certified.

Thanking his family, friends, campaign staff and citizens for their support, Meyer said he was eager to work with his colleagues on the City Council. Noting that each one brings many years of volunteer service and professional experience to the table, he said, "We're fortunate to have these individuals leading this City." He also thanked his fellow mayoral candidates, Council members Michael DeMarco and Ellie Schmidt, for running a "spirited campaign."

"We have substantial work to do," said Meyer. "We'll complete the rewrite of our Comprehensive Plan, which will guide us in all our areas of work. Let's embrace our future with enthusiasm, working together for the common good. We may not always



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

**New Mayor David Meyer and former Mayor Steve Stombres (holding photo) are surrounded by Stombres's family: (from left) daughter Katie, wife Kristen, son Jimmy, daughter Ellie, stepfather Gerry Goodale and mother-in-law Judi LaMorte.**

agree on all the issues, but we have a unity of purpose, and I look forward to serving you as your mayor."

He then presented a framed photo of a bench in the City's Old Town Square to Stombres, telling him it's being placed there

in his honor. Meyer said Stombres "wanted the splash pad there and wanted the park to be for everyone. Thank you for all you've done for us."

Stombres expressed his appreciation to everyone on the Council and told Meyer

**Stombres is honored; Meyer is sworn in.**

he'd be there to help him, should the need arise. "It has truly been an honor to serve alongside you," he said. He also thanked City staff "for all you do for our community."

He further recognized City Clerk Melanie Crowder for her assistance and City Attorney Brian Lubkeman for his legal advice and friendship.

To City Manager Bob Sisson, Stombres said, "For so many years, we've relied on his sound guidance and institutional memory. And we never needed him more than we did this past six months."

Stombres also thanked his wife and three children, his relatives and the residents for all their support and understanding during his stint at the City's helm. "This community is a wonderful place to live," he said. "It's really something special. After having worked in national politics, it's refreshing to serve in a community with a political process that values fairness and transparency, citizen input and collaboration — and I'm proud to have served as your mayor."

Later, during the meeting, Councilwoman Ellie Schmidt said Stombres "added a level of professionalism that was just right for the time."

In addition, Councilwoman Janice Miller called him a "smart, hardworking, collaborative and generous" person and a "good family-man" and thanked him for "taking time out of his busy life to be our leader."

## The Candidate Who Won the Election, and Lost Her Job

**Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals dismisses Nancy Loftus claim that Fairfax County violated her First Amendment rights when they fired her for winning a seat on the City of Fairfax Council.**

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

**I**n early 2014, Nancy Loftus successfully campaigned for a seat on the City of Fairfax Council, a position that came with a \$4,500 annual salary.

Soon after she won her first election to a seat on her hometown's governing board, she was abruptly fired from her \$85,000 job as a full-time Fairfax County assistant attorney by her boss, County Attorney David Bobzien.

She was fired, she claimed, not because she ran for public office. She was fired for winning.

Fairfax County's decision to terminate Loftus was controversial and set in motion a three-year court battle that ended last week when the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's decision to dismiss Loftus' claim, rejected her appeal for \$6 million in damages and rejecting every other claim raised by Loftus.



**Fairfax City Councilwoman Nancy Loftus lost her Fairfax County job when she won her election in 2014.**

"Loftus' claim must fail," the court wrote in its Feb. 8, 2017 decision.

"Although Loftus contends her termination was in violation of the First Amendment, the Supreme Court has made clear that public employers may permissibly bar their employees from participating in a wide array of political activities, including running for elective office."

**IN AN INTERVIEW** Tuesday, Loftus said she was "frustrated and furious" by the decision.

"The court ruling completely eviscerates

[Virginia's] 'right to participate law' that encourages free speech," Loftus said Tuesday.

"I'm sorry for what this means for my family, but I'm also sad for the blow to free speech and the political process in Virginia."

In its decision, the court declared Fairfax County terminated her employment "not because [the county] perceived her new position could create a conflict of interest; not because she chose to run for office, because of any positions she espoused when running for office, or for being elected. In sum, she could not hold her position with Fairfax City and retain her job with Fairfax County."

Loftus was fired on June 27, 2014 — less than a month after winning a seat on the non-partisan council. Her termination followed two warnings from the County Attorney's office, the first on April 17, just 19 days from the City's May Election.

After going through Fairfax County's grievance process without success, Loftus

decided to fight back in court. She hired Virginia state Sen. J. Chapman Petersen (D-34), a longtime friend, who promptly released correspondence with the Fairfax County attorney's office, which included Bobzien's 12-page dismissal letter. In the letter, Bobzien acknowledged that Virginia State Law allowed Loftus to be a candidate, but claimed the same law did not provide her with the right to accept the will of the voters if they elected her.

Petersen, a former City of Fairfax council member, said at the time he called Bobzien several times to discuss alternatives to firing Loftus, but Bobzien never called back. "I was disappointed and frankly surprised that the county attorney's office would ignore Virginia law, especially after the county attorney himself authorized Nancy's candidacy back in February."

In an interview Monday, Petersen, who argued Loftus case before the appeals court, said the opinion was, essentially, a blow to free speech and contradicted Virginia law.

"In my opinion, [the court's decision] basically takes away any ability for a public employee to protect their rights under [Virginia state law]. So, that's a serious concern," Petersen said. "It's sufficient to say

SEE LOFTUS, PAGE 5



## NEWS

# Next City Election Will Be Sept. 12

## Voters will choose Meyer's successor on the Council.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Since David Meyer resigned his post as City Councilman last week to take over the job of Fairfax City mayor, there's a vacancy on the Council. An interim Council member is expected to be appointed on Feb. 28. But meanwhile, the Council on Tuesday night selected Sept. 12 as the date for a special election for Meyer's replacement.

Meyer was one of three Council members running for mayor in a Feb. 7 special election. And in January, prior to that election, the Council discussed whether to fill the winner's seat, at all.

"I'm concerned about having a lengthy Council vacancy because we need four Council votes to do certain things, such as increase the tax rate," explained former Mayor Steve Stombres. "And the mayor can't vote [except to break a tie]."

Agreeing, Councilman Jeff Greenfield said, "I think there's value in having a full Council — especially as we enter into budget discussions. It's in the community's best interests."

During the public-comment portion of the Tuesday, Feb. 14 Council meeting, some citizens weighed in on the issue.

Mary McDaniel, a City election officer, related what several people told her during last week's election. She said the Fairfax voters are "tired of frequent elections" and campaign seasons that seem to run, one right after the other.

McDaniel said voters didn't want the City to spend the \$15,000-\$20,000 that special elections cost, and they also didn't want to have stand-alone, City elections on days other than general elections. She also noted that City voter turnout is lower for Fairfax elections than for state or national ones.

Basically, she told the Council, "Your constituents are irritated and don't want any special elections."

Some other citizens who either spoke in person, or emailed, lobbied for a November date when an election is already scheduled for two City offices. However, the Council had a different idea.

Councilman Jon Stehle made a motion to set the Council special election on Sept. 12 and Councilwoman Janice Miller seconded. "We should have it as soon as we practically can, and summer probably isn't the best time," said Councilwoman Ellie Schmidt. "It's been an unusual year, and I favor having the special election in September."

Councilman Michael DeMarco agreed, saying, "If it were held in November, the winner would then have to turn around and get ready for the May 2018 Council election."

Miller was concerned about a November election "because it becomes tied up in a partisan election. Maintaining good roads, schools and public safety in the City isn't Republican or Democrat. We need to provide adequate time for qualified citizens to run for office. They should have ample opportunity to meet and present their views to the people who'll vote for them. I'm happy with the Sept. 12 date."



Jeff Greenfield

Finally, Greenfield told the residents that the Council members heard their comments Tuesday night. But, he explained, "We are constantly under pressure from Richmond to move our elections to November and to make them partisan. We've resisted that. When you have a Council candidate's sign in a yard with a sign for a candidate for governor, people make connections where there may not be any."

He, too, supported Sept. 12 because "coming out of vacation season, there are so many challenges to [holding the election earlier]. And I don't want to do anything to minimize turnout." The Council then unanimously approved requesting Fairfax County Circuit Court to set Sept. 12 as the date for the special election.

## Silverthorne Case: One Charge Dropped, One Goes Forward

The case against former Fairfax Mayor Scott Silverthorne is moving forward through the court system. Last week in Fairfax County General District Court, one charge against him was dropped and Silverthorne will enter a plea to the other one, next month in Circuit Court.

County police arrested Silverthorne last August, alleging that he gave an undercover police officer two grams of meth in exchange for joining a group of men for sex inside a Tysons Corner hotel. Police had received an anonymous tip that Silverthorne would be there, so they followed up and carried out a sting operation.

They charged him with felony distribution of meth and misdemeanor possession of drug paraphernalia. He was later released on personal

recognizance and resigned as the City's mayor a week later. Former City Councilman Steve Stombres was then appointed interim mayor until another councilman, David Meyer, was chosen mayor in a special election on Feb. 7.

In court the next day, Wednesday, Feb. 8, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Kathleen Bilton dropped the misdemeanor charge against Silverthorne. He then waived his right to a preliminary hearing on the other offense and the case was set for March 13 in Circuit Court. His attorney, Brian Drummond, said his client plans to enter a plea at that time and his case "is not going to trial."

— BONNIE HOBBS



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## NEWS

# City Mulls Having a Vice Mayor

**No formal policy deals with an unexpected vacancy.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**W**hen former Fairfax City Mayor Scott Silverthorne was arrested last summer and then resigned his post, the City realized it had no formal policy in place to deal with such an occurrence.

While the city manager handles Fairfax's day-to-day operation, there was no automatic mechanism to deal with either the death or resignation of a mayor. So during its Jan. 3 work session, the Fairfax City Council discussed the possibility of having either an acting mayor or a vice mayor.

"The City charter doesn't address a gap in the case of an unexpected vacancy?" asked Councilman Michael DeMarco.

"The charter invests all the powers of the City in the Council," replied City Attorney Brian Lubkeman. "The mayor stands separately."

Councilwoman Ellie Schmidt asked the difference between an acting mayor and a vice mayor, and Lubkeman said both play the same role, but "The vice mayor steps up to serve when the mayor can't."

"Is there a set way to designate an acting mayor?" asked Schmidt. Lubkeman answered that it's within the mayor's power to do that. And that's exactly what

Silverthorne did when he left office last August, appointing the longest-serving Council member, Jeff Greenfield, to take his place until an interim mayor was named, a few days later.

Then-Councilman David Meyer said the Charter Commission determined that this procedure gave a mayor some flexibility. "So I think this is a solution in search of a problem," he said. "And it's purposely cumbersome to tweak a city's charter; I don't think a change is needed."

However, Councilwoman Janice Miller disagreed. "Last August, our community had no idea who was in charge, and I think that's a problem," she said.

"We should have transparency, predictability, consistency and visibility. Mr. Silverthorne always appointed the person with the greatest seniority."

"I'd like us to go forward with the position of vice mayor and determine how we'd select one," she continued. "And I think, by March, we should hold a public hearing to determine if there's community support for one. And I'd like it to take effect by July 1, 2018."

Although a mayor only gets to vote on issues before the Council in case of a tie, Lubkeman noted that a vice mayor would continue to have a Council vote, as usual.

Agreeing with Miller's recommendation for a public hearing, Greenfield added, "In the past 20 years or so, the acting mayor was the Council member with the most seniority." City Manager Bob Sisson was then directed to develop, for Council's approval, the wording to advertise the public hearing.



Janice Miller

## Loftus Loses Second Round

FROM PAGE 3

that I think that she never got a fair shake at any stage in the process."

**THE COURT AGREED** with Fairfax County that her position as an assistant county attorney created "an incurable conflict of interest."

"This case was really about the rules the Bar sets out for lawyers," said Braddock Supervisor John Cook in an interview on Tuesday. "You can't be in the county legal office and on the city council at the same time because it would be a conflict on city-county

issues. Recusal does not work because under the rules of the State Bar, if one lawyer in a firm is conflicted then the entire firm is conflicted. Therefore, she would have conflicted out the entire county attorney's office from any case with the city."

In its summary, the appeals court cited the "resign-to-run" provisions of the Texas Constitution — which stripped certain public employees of their office upon declaring their candidacy for the state's legislature.

"If the 'resign-to-run' provisions ... pass muster under the First Amendment, surely the termination of Loftus' employment only after her election to the City Council survives First Amendment scrutiny."


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## Ending Gerrymandering Important to Region

Efforts appear dead for this session, but elections later this year provide new opportunities.

While three bills that could have reined in the runaway gerrymandering in Virginia made it through the Virginia Senate to crossover, they died on Tuesday morning in a House subcommittee, despite some vocal Republican support.

In Virginia, Democrats have won every statewide election since 2010, and notably Barack Obama won the state in 2008 by more than 52 percent of the vote. Many of these victories have been narrow. In 2009, Republicans won Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General by strong margins.

It is reasonable, given these results, to expect that representation at the state level would be approximately even, with either Republicans or Democrats holding a small advantage. Instead, Republicans control the House of Delegates 66 to 34, and the Virginia Senate 21 to 19.

There is little competition for these seats as a result.

According to OneVirginia2021, an advocacy group for ending gerrymandering, 56 candi-

dates in the House of Delegates faced no real competition in the last general election in 2013, with 22 Democrats and 34 Republicans facing no major-party challenger. In the end, only two seats changed parties.

These same lawmakers are set to redraw the the boundaries for state legislative and congressional districts after the 2020 census, and the just-killed proposed constitutional amendments would have required that these not be motivated by partisan politics. By far the best approach would be to turn the process over to a non-partisan commission to draw boundaries in the best interests of Virginia citizens.

One of the proposals, cosponsored by Sen. Jill Vogel (R) and Sen. Janet Howell (D), passed the Senate 31-9, but died in the House subcommittee on a 5-2 vote.

It matters more here in Northern Virginia. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that localities have only the power specifically given to them by the General Assembly. It means that the economic engines of the state in Northern Virginia provide most of the financial wherewithal but citizens in Alexandria,

Arlington and Fairfax County are often unable to govern themselves as they wish because of control by a far more conservative General Assembly.

Real change starts locally. Anyone seeking change should tune in for this year's elections in Virginia, including all the seats in the General Assembly, plus Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. Every voter will choose one Virginia Senator and one member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

Nonpartisan redistricting could support the best interests of the population, not the politicians.

### In 2016

Hillary Clinton (D) 1,981,473 (49.75%); Donald Trump (R) 1,769,443 (44.43%)

### In 2013:

McAuliffe (D) 1,069,789; Cuccinelli (R) 1,013,389 Northam (D) 1,213,155; Jackson (R) 980,257 Herring (D) 1,103,777; Obenshain (R) 1,103,612

### In 2012:

Obama (D) 1,971,820; Romney (R) 1,822,522 Kaine (D) 2,010,067; Allen (R) 1,785,542

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### EDITORIAL

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Unpacking the Truth from Rhetoric and Emotion

To the Editor:

The Feb. 2-8, 2017 Connection was packed with quotes and opinions by Congressman Connolly, Delegate Filler-Corn and Mary Kimm expressing outrage over the President's Executive Order "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," which temporarily suspended entry into the United States of people from 7 nations identified as "Countries or Areas of Concern." The Connection had pictures of congressional members and lawyers at Dulles Airport and numerous quotes from Congressman Connolly, such as "Donald Trump would paint over Emma Lazarus's words on the Statue of Liberty" and "We will fight this illegal Executive Order." In Delegate Filler-Corn's opinion piece, she states the Executive Order "... is in direct opposition of our American values and our Constitution because it essentially creates a religious test for entry into the United States." In her oped, Mary Kimm heartily celebrated "...peaceful demonstrations pro-

testing the un-American assault on travel from particular Muslim majority countries."

So let's unpack the truth from the rhetoric and emotion to see if there is any overlap, starting with examining whose entry into the U.S. was suspended, why their entry was suspended and who developed the list of the countries on the suspended travel list. The Executive Order states "...to ensure the proper review and maximum utilization of available resources for the screening of foreign nationals, and to ensure that adequate standards are established to prevent infiltration by foreign terrorists or criminals, pursuant to section 212(f) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f) [Classes of Aliens Ineligible for Visas or Admission/Association with terrorist Organizations], I hereby proclaim that the immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States of aliens from countries referred to in section 217(a)(12) of the INA [Immigration and Nationality Act Of 1952], 8 U.S.C. 1187(a)(12), would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, and I hereby suspend entry into the United States, as immigrants and nonimmigrants, of such persons for 90 days from the date of this order..." Section 217(a)(12) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1187(a)(12) is the Visa Waiver Program Improve-

ment and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015 passed under former President Obama and lists "Countries or Areas of Concern," which, since its passage, includes the seven countries of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Libya — all added under former President Obama. The criterion for these countries/areas is: "(I) whether the presence of an alien in the country or area increases the likelihood that the alien is a credible threat to the national security of the United States; (II) whether a foreign terrorist organization has a significant presence in the country or area; and (III) whether the country or area is a safe haven for terrorists."

As you can see from the above listed criterion, "Religion" and "Muslim majority" are not criteria for the countries or areas of concern identified by the Obama Administration and specified in President Trump's Executive Order. So the first accusation, that Executive Order used a religious litmus test to select the countries for suspended entry, is false. In fact, former President Obama established a precedent for halting entry of refugees into the U.S. from a predominantly Muslim country when his "...State Department stopped processing Iraq refugees for six months in 2011," because of a credible threat to Americans

as reported in a 20 November, 2013 ABC News exclusive report.

Let's unpack the question of whether or not the Executive Order is consistent with the Constitution. The Preamble to the Constitution states "WE THE PEOPLE of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." There are two points of significance in the Preamble that pertain to the President's Executive Order. First, the Constitution applies to citizens of the United States, not to non-citizens as implied by Delegate Filler-Corn. Secondly, the Constitution was established to provide common "defence" (now spelled defense) and promote the general Welfare. Now let's examine the oath of office that every President must take in accordance with Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution as follows: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the

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# LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

United States.” The Constitution is clear: The President is sworn to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution to include the common defense and general welfare of American citizens. President Trump issued his Executive Order to protect American citizens from people from other countries who were determined to pose security risks. The Order is consistent with the Constitution. Delegate Filler-Corn’s accusation that the Order is in opposition to the Constitution is false.

Next up, let’s examine whether or not the Order was legal. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 states “(e) Whenever the President finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate.” The President has broad legal

authority to suspend the entry of people from other countries into the United States. If the President does not have the Constitutional authority to suspend entry into the country, then how did the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 pass the Constitutionality litmus test before becoming law, why has the law not been overturned by the Supreme Court in the last 65 years? This is a slam dunk — Congressman Connolly’s claim is false.

In summary, there is little to no overlap between the truth and the rhetoric and emotion that filled the Feb. 2-8, 2017 Connection on the issue of the President’s Executive Order “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.” President Trump’s Executive Order was Constitutional, legally sound and it has precedence.

Beware, do your due diligence to avoid getting caught up in politically motivated whirlwinds based on fact-free hot air swirling madly around the beltway.

**Chris Lusk**  
Burke

## Alarming Tendencies

To the Editor:

Last week Congressman Gerry Connolly, my representative in the 11<sup>th</sup> district, sent the following tweet: “Maybe his enablers will rouse themselves when the Brownshirts come for them. I, for one, will resist.” Wow! Not sure what his intent was but to refer to evil people under Hitler to those of us who voted for President Trump is outrageous. Unfortunately, it appears that many Democrats these days are using connection to Hitler to make their attacks on people who support President Trump.

Yet as we witness on TV, rioters, reportedly including professors, set fires at the University of California at Berkeley in opposition to a conservative speaker and Trump supporter who was scheduled to speak there. It seems to me that this should alarm both democrats and republicans as to how low people are sinking in our nation and especially how low the Democratic Party has sunk.

**Barbara Kay Mercuro**  
Fairfax

## Voting Rights Under Attack

To the Editor:

Unsatisfied with the existing identification requirements to vote in Virginia, on Feb. 1 Republicans in Virginia’s House of Delegates voted to make it even harder to vote in state elections. If this were to pass, in order to register to vote in Virginia’s state elections, Virginians would need to prove citizenship by providing a birth certificate, a passport, or naturalization documents. This is part of the continued Trump-led Republican effort to attack the very soul of our democracy by raising concerns about non-existent voter fraud and then pretending to fight it.

These restrictions will not stop voter fraud because that fraud does not exist. What the restrictions will do is send Virginians root-

ing through boxes of decades-old files containing birth certificates and passports. Passports are expensive, and birth certificates are hard to obtain, especially if you were born somewhere outside the U.S. These restrictions will keep ordinary, every day Virginians from voting to choose their representatives.

Republicans are doing their best to keep Virginians from the polls, but they cannot keep us from the phones. Unless you are currently holding your birth certificate or passport in your hands, I recommend picking up your phone and calling your state senator before they try to take that away too.

**Kenneth Bledsoe**  
Reston

### BULLETIN BOARD

**Civil War Research** scholarship to a public or private high school senior who resides in Fairfax, Fairfax City, Prince William County, Manassas City, or Manassas Park from the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable in Centreville, Va. Visit [bullruncwrt.org](http://bullruncwrt.org) for more.

**Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths** offers free Financial Education Classes Sessions at various locations in the Fairfax County area to low- and middle-income adults who reside throughout Northern Virginia. The offerings are free and open to

the public, but reservations are required. <https://britepaths.org/news/get-financially-fit-new-year>

**Volunteers Needed.** PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: <https://prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/>. Questions? Email [lpadgett@prsinc.org](mailto:lpadgett@prsinc.org).

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# Celebrating Black History Month

**Educators say these lessons are urgently needed in current racial climate.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**E**ven though Elavie Ndura knows that it is a daunting challenge to help children grasp the entirety of the African American experience in the shortest month of the year, each February she and other educators give it their best effort. This year, they feel it's more important than ever.

"With all of the racial experiences we're having these days, it's critical that children know their history and are not basing their knowledge on only what they see on television or what they hear from their friends," said Elavie Ndura, Ed.D., professor of education at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Research shows that children who understand their histories do better in school and in society, so it's critical that families teach their children about their history."

Ndura believes that the current racial climate in the U.S. gives this year's Black History Month additional significance. A study released last month by the Pew Research Center shows that among Americans, 61 percent of blacks, 58 percent of Hispanics and 45 percent of whites say that race relations in the United States are generally bad. Local educators say Black History Month offers opportunities to address issues of race by allowing the past to inform the present.

"We have seen for more than a year how people from different political viewpoints, but also races, sexes, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses related to each other in the present political climate, and it was troublesome," said Mika'il A. Petin, Ph.D., associate director of African and African American Studies at George Mason University. "Teaching the history of Black or African-heritage peoples in this month ... is necessary to starting difficult conversations about ... current race relations ... and social inequalities."

Race relations in our society have been deeply strained during the election and as America adjusts to a new presidential ad-

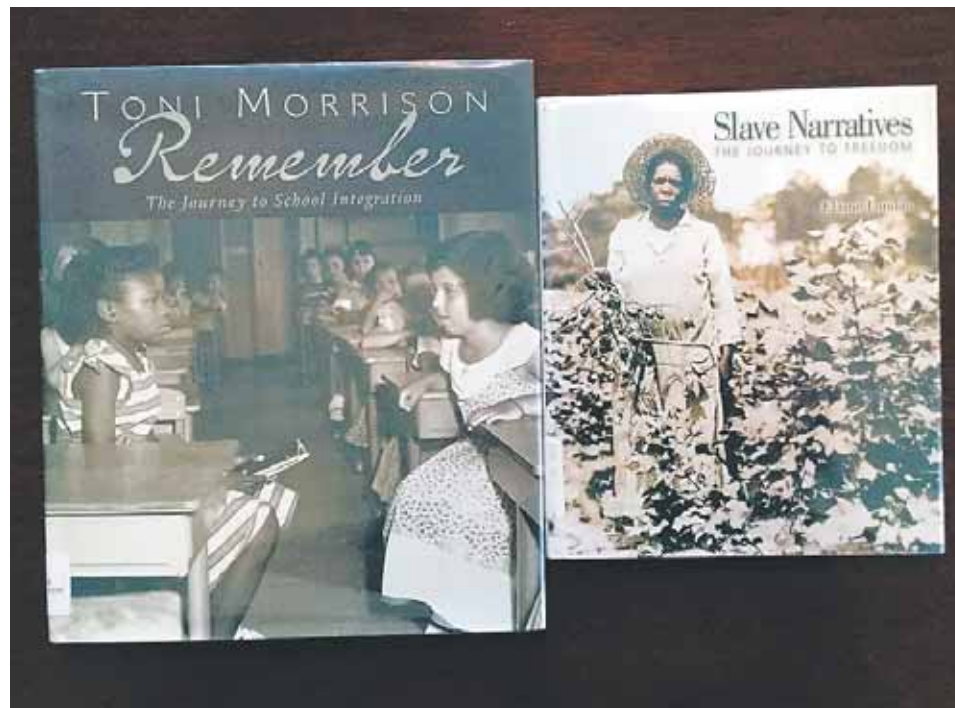


PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE CONNECTION

**Books that explore African American experiences are on display at libraries and bookstores during Black History Month.**

ministration. These divisions make African American history lessons critical for all children, but particularly for black children, says Ndura. "As African American parents we have a serious duty to educate our own youth," she said. "Knowing your history grounds and anchors you firmly so that you are not wavered in the wrong direction because of whatever feelings might be caused by what you're seeing on the news."

Black history lessons work best when they're intentional and creative, advises Jessica Lewis, Ed.D., assistant professor of education and human services at Marymount University in Arlington. "Children benefit when they are exposed to a variety of perspectives, ideas and stories because it helps expand their view of the world and people living in it," she said. "The ability to understand and identify with others and their experiences is a powerful, life-long lesson."

Lewis advises making a trip to a local bookstore or library to find books that offer a glimpse of African American history and suggests that parents begin with books on subjects that interest their children. "[Parents] may start with readings on sports, or science, or biographies of the accomplishments and hardships of individuals who persisted throughout history to make a difference," she said. "Parents can ... select books by black authors

and illustrators and then take the time to read the story together, discuss the pictures, and ask questions about what the characters are feeling and experiencing."

Other ideas include exploring music with roots in African American history such as ragtime, jazz, gospel and blues, making a timeline of major events that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement, and reading speeches from civil rights leaders and then helping children write their own speech about what they are inspired to change in the world. Such activities can open a natural discussion and need not be complicated to be effective, says Lewis.

"Parents are their children's first educators," said Lewis. "It is important for parents to help their children understand the experiences of other children who are not like them because it builds empathy and a deeper sense of community."

One roadblock to such honest conversations, cautions Petin, is a discomfort with discussions of racial differences.

"Let's be frank, some white Americans who are politically and socially conservative become noticeably uncomfortable with the topic of race, and therefore find difficulty with Black History Month," he said. "Yet, Black History Month — similar to the Black Lives Matter movement — does not express superiority over others. Both the month of celebration and sociopolitical movement are forms of resistance to deliberate attempts to conceal the worthiness of Black or African-heritage people in this country."

Some people "may attack Black History Month and Black Lives Matter as political correctness and identity politics, but I would argue that they are not seeing the humanity in both efforts," continued Petin. He emphasized the importance of taking a purposeful approach to teaching children about black history. "I think that all parents must intentionally search for, study, and celebrate those who are on the margins, living in the shadows, perceived as voiceless, and regarded as invisible. Too often, black Americans were those marginal, shadowed, voiceless, and invisible people. All parents should be honest about that, and should have confidence in the U.S. only being great when they and their children educate themselves on this country's history in more inclusive terms."

Schools often play a significant role in the month's activities. Students at the Bullis School in Potomac, Md., for example, attend a Black History Month assembly each February. This year's event was led by several students who shared their thoughts, essays and other projects on a variety of topics. "Diverse literature is always a great idea," added Allison Ewing, chair of the social studies department at Bullis.

"Twenty-eight days of teachable moments" is one way that Petin characterizes Black History Month. "It is never too early to start preparing your kids for a world that is increasingly more connected and shrinking," he said. "When all parents teach their children how to develop skill sets to understand, value, empathize, and celebrate those who may be different than them, the children are better prepared to function in the world."



**Bullis School fifth graders Elizabeth Martin and Will Simpson look on as their documentaries about the civil rights movement were presented to the school.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF BULLIS SCHOOL



# SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at [south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Area Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) student publications were named Pacemaker finalists by the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA) for 2017. The NSPA Pacemaker competition is one of student journalism's highest honors. The following publications were named Pacemaker finalists:

"Sentry," Robinson Secondary School (middle school yearbooks); **Owen Schwartz and Michaela Rudolph**, editors; Adrienne Forte, adviser.

"Lair," Lake Braddock Secondary School (high school yearbooks); **Jake Gold, Samantha Hernandez, and Christopher Margraf**, editors; Kathryn Helmke, adviser.

**Tara Ackerman**, graduate of Lake Braddock Secondary School and resident of Burke earned semester honors from Kansas State University in the fall semester of 2016. Students earning a grade point average of 3.75 or above on at least 12 credit hours receive semester honors along with commendations from their deans.

**Meredith Elaine Shock**, Burke, VA resident, has been named to the dean's list at James Madison University for the fall 2016 semester. Students who earn dean's list honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Shock is scheduled to graduate in 2017 and is majoring in writing, rhetoric & technical communication.

**Nabila A. Guled** is a senior majoring in organizational leadership. Nabila has been named to the Fort Hays State University Dean's Honor Roll for the fall 2016 semester.

**Ms Meghan Chandler Presing** of Fairfax earned a MSW - Master of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. UWM is the second largest university in the State of Wisconsin, with approximately 26,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

**James Hua Lau** a senior at Hampden-Sydney College, has been recognized as an outstanding campus leader in the 2016 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. James is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael N. Lau of Springfield, VA.

Forty-three students from Hampden-Sydney College were selected for this year's edition. Students are nominated by seniors, administrators, faculty, and coaches based on their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities, and potential for continued success. They join a select group of students from more than 2000 institutions of higher learning in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and several foreign nations.

A private college for men, Hampden-Sydney is ranked nationally by U.S. News & World Report. The College is known for its liberal arts curriculum, the Honor Code which stresses individual and collective responsibility, and a focus on the education of young men.

Three Fairfax County residents have been recognized for academic excellence during the fall 2016 semester at New River Community College.

**Justin Luu** of Fairfax made the President's List  
**Elisa Stephano** of Burke made the President's List

**Cristian Rice** of McLean made the Dean's List  
To be placed on the President's List, a student must have taken 12 college-level semester hours or more, attained a grade point average of 3.5 for any one semester, and earned a minimum of 20 semester hours at New River Community College. A Dean's List student is one who has taken 12 college-level semester hours of credit or more and attained a grade point average of 3.2 for any one semester. New River Community College is located in Dublin, Virginia and is one of the Commonwealth's 23 community colleges.



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- 1-866-703-6293
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\*Registration is limited to two people per RSVP. Photo ID may be requested at event entrance.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

Send notes to the Connection at [connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/) or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication at noon. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

## THURSDAY/FEB. 16

**Friday Morning Music Club** noon - 1 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Friday Morning Music Club, Inc. is a community of music lovers and musicians dedicated to promoting classical music throughout the metropolitan area. On the third Thursday of the month they host their performances at Old Town Hall. Free and open to the public. [www.fmmc.org](http://www.fmmc.org)

## SATURDAY/FEB. 18

**Valentine's Day Banquet.** Greater Zion Baptist Church will host Family Ministry 2017 Valentine's Day Banquet, 6:30-11 p.m. at Waterford Receptions at Springfield, 6715 Commerce Street in Springfield. Cost: \$50 per person. Contacts: Anthony and Terri Bazemore @GLZBC (703-764-9111); abazemore6@verizon.net; terrib6@verizon.net. Special features: Dinner Buffet, Music & Dancing. Payment deadline: Feb. 12.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 19

**NTRAK Model Train Show at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum** 1-4 p.m. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station, VA. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older \$4. [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), 703-425-9225. [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](https://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), Twitter@FFXSTNRR.

**“Winter Concert” – Northern Virginia Youth Winds** 3 p.m. WT Woodson High School, 9525 Main Street, Fairfax. Northern Virginia Youth Winds Conductor: Denny Stokes & Northern Virginia Junior Winds Conductor: Linda Gammon. Free concert, no tickets required. [fairfaxband.org](http://fairfaxband.org) or call 571-336-CFBA (2322)

## MONDAY/FEB. 20

**Student Holiday LEGO Camp.** 9 - 5 p.m. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway. Instructor Peg Weis teaches building techniques used with thousands of specialty pieces, dozens of mini figures and rotating themes. \$70/day. Ages 6-11 years. Registration forms are available in office or online at [www.fairfaxva.gov/parksrec](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/parksrec). Email [parksrec@fairfaxva.gov](mailto:parksrec@fairfaxva.gov) or call 703-385-1695.

**Winter Game Day.** 3-5 p.m. at Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive. Board games, a flamingo toss, pie face, coloring, snacks, hot drinks, and more. Visit [www.BurkePresChurch.org](http://www.BurkePresChurch.org) for more.

## FRIDAY/FEB. 24

**Angry Birds Event and Movie.** 6-8:45 p.m. at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway. Games, snacks and movie. \$15. Call 703-385-7858.

**Cello and Piano Concert.** 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. The Bonita Lestina Old Town Hall Performance Series with cathedral Brass is under the direction of L. Thomas Vining. Call 703-385-7858 or visit [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 25

**Brothers at Arms in the American Revolution.** 11 a.m. at City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St. Book talk by local author, Larrie D. Ferreiro. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library) or call 703-293-6227 x6.

**Art and Lunch.** Noon-3 p.m. at Village Gallery, 3950 University Drive. Bring



## Live Music

**On Friday, Feb. 24 at 8 p.m., the Bonita Lestina Old Town Hall Performance Series will feature a clarinet, saxophone, and flute jazz trio at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-385-7858 or go to [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts)**

PHOTO  
CONTRIBUTED

lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Free and open to the public. New members welcome. Please visit the Fairfax Art League on Facebook or at [www.fairfaxartleague.net](http://www.fairfaxartleague.net) or call 703-587-9481.

**Civil War Interpretive.** 2-4 p.m. at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway. Retired educator Wes Boutchard will unfold the incredible story of a mulatto slave related to Blenheim's Willcoxon family, his escape from slavery and the choices he made as a free man. Call 703-591-6728 for more.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 26

**American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras.** 3-5 p.m. at Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run. Sibelius, Finlandia and Liszt, Les Preludes concert. Visit [www.aypo.org](http://www.aypo.org) for more information.

**Burke Historical Society.** 3:30-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road. Brian Slawski, BHS Vice President and Programs Chair, will conclude his series on jazz in Northern Virginia and the District, past and present, with a look at local jazz festivals, instruction, and radio. Free. Visit [www.burkehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.burkehistoricalsociety.org) for more.

**Into the Joy of Spring.** 4 p.m. at Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road. Fairfax Band concert. Free. Visit [fairfaxband.org](http://fairfaxband.org) or a call 571-336-CFBA (2322) for more.

## MONDAY/FEB. 27

**Funday Monday.** 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. Music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more. Call 703-385-7858 or visit [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts) for more.

## THURSDAY/MARCH 2

**Hooligan Sparrow Film.** 4:30 p.m. at Johnson Center Cinema, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive. The film follows activist Ye Haiyan to China's Hainan Province to protest a principal's

abuse of elementary school girls. Visit [fams.gmu.edu/events/6438](http://fams.gmu.edu/events/6438).

## SATURDAY/MARCH 4

**Film Screening.** 2 p.m. at the Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The screening of the film “*Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine*,” a documentary exploring the life and death of Matthew Shepard, a gay student murdered in 1998, in Laramie, WY. The story of Matt Shepard's struggles is told through the personal lens of his friends, family and those who were close to him throughout the years. Visit [mattshepard.eventbrite.com](http://mattshepard.eventbrite.com) for more.

**Single Dinner and Movie Night.** 5 p.m. at Uncle Julio's, 4251 Fairfax Corner Ave. \$32 at door includes dinner, soda, tip and movie ticket. RSVP required. Sponsored by New Beginnings, a support group for separated/divorced men and women. Call 301-924-4101 or visit [www.newbeginningsusa.org](http://www.newbeginningsusa.org) for more.

## WEDNESDAY/MARCH 8

**Irish Luncheon.** 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive. Springfield Christian Women's Connection will host, with musical entertainment from bagpiper Robert Mitchell. \$20. For luncheon reservations call 703-922 6438 or e-mail [SpringWmConn@yahoo.com](mailto:SpringWmConn@yahoo.com) by March 3.

## SUNDAY/MARCH 26

**Hands On Activity Day.** 1-4 p.m. at The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Railroad and/or historical crafts and activities will be offered for all ages although most are suited for ages 8 and above. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16 and older, \$4. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) or call 703-425-9225 for more.

## MARCH 31-APRIL 1

**Spring Children's Consignment Sale.** Friday at 9 a.m.-8 p.m. at Cameron

United Methodist Church, 3130 Franconia Road. Some items are half price on Saturday. Email [CUMC.CCS@gmail.com](mailto:CUMC.CCS@gmail.com) for more.

## ONGOING

### The U.S. Small Business

**Administration** is reminding businesses in Virginia that working capital loans are still available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and private nonprofit organizations affected by the severe storms and tornadoes on Feb. 24, 2016. Deadline to file is March 7, 2017. <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster). [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

**Senior Line Dancing** 1 - 2 p.m. Little River Glen Senior Center 4001 Barker Ct, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8 week session. [barbriba@hotmail.com](mailto:barbriba@hotmail.com) 703-524-3739

**Fairfax Pets on Wheels New Volunteer Orientation** First Wednesday of each month. 7:30 - 9 p.m. 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. An orientation for new volunteers interested in visiting residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities with their approved pets through the Fairfax Pets On Wheels program is held the first Wednesday of every month starting at 7:30 p.m. Please check our website, [www.fpow.org](http://www.fpow.org) for each month's location. Prior to attending, please complete the online application found at <http://www.fpow.org/volunteer>. Please do NOT bring your pets to this orientation. Also, see weather policy for possible cancellations. [www.fpow.org](http://www.fpow.org) 703-324-5424.

[dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov)  
**Fairfax Rotary Club Meeting** 12:15-1:30 p.m. Mondays. American Legion, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Meetings with luncheon and program. [fairfaxrotary.org](http://fairfaxrotary.org).  
**Carolina Shag.** Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421

Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. [nvshag.org](http://nvshag.org).  
**FUN-Exercise** Thursdays, noon - 12:50 p.m. Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. [moorefit@yahoo.com](mailto:moorefit@yahoo.com) or 703-499-6133.

**“Out of the Blue...” Art Show**  
**Workhouse Arts Center** February 8 to March 8 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Building 9 Hours: Wednesday - Sunday 11 - 6 p.m. Part of the Workhouse Arts Center 2nd Saturday Artwalk. “Out of the Blue...” is the featured artist show of Karen Chin. Her collection of pieces are “Out of the Blue” unrelated topics and represent a collection of subject matter that has been accumulating on her art to-do list. The show includes a nod to the hearts, reds and pinks of February.

**EXERCISE PROGRAM** Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m. year-round at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Rd. Fairfax. The exercises are for strength, balance and maintaining limberness. Contact SCFB office at 703-426-2824 for more information.

**Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).** Wednesdays. 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na'ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. RSVP [Naama.Gold@jccnv.org](mailto:Naama.Gold@jccnv.org).

**Smoke Free Bingo** (with breaks for smoking friends). 7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot. [www.fairfaxvd.com](http://www.fairfaxvd.com). 703-273-3638.

**NARFE Monthly Meeting** Every Second Tuesday 11:30 a.m. American Legion Post 177 located at 3939 Oak Street, Fairfax. NARFE Fairfax 737 monthly luncheon meeting. Enjoy lunch accompanied by a special program. Lunch at noon. Cost: \$11 Speaker/Program-12:45PM. [rrharney2@cox.net](mailto:rrharney2@cox.net) 703-501-0020

**English Conversation Groups** weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries Practice and improve your English. Day and start times vary. Visit: <https://va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp>

**First Sunday Jazz Brunch** 11 - 2 p.m. Recurring monthly on the 1st Sunday at Bazin's on Church 111 Church St N.W., Vienna. Enjoy brunch accompanied by the soft jazz sounds of Virginia Music Adventure. Visit: <http://www.fxva.com/listing/bazins-on-church/1686/>

**Stories From Strawberry Park** 10 - 11 a.m. Tuesdays in Mosaic - Strawberry Park 2910 District Avenue, Fairfax. Enjoy a live interactive performance each week taught by a group of unique storytellers. For ages 10 and under. Held outside in Strawberry Park. In inclement weather and October through April, storytime will be held in Angelika Film Center. Recurring weekly on Tuesday. Visit: <http://www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-district/2326/>

**Funday Monday** 10:30 a.m. – Every Monday – Old Town Hall, 3999 University Dr, Fairfax. There will be music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more. It is open to children of all ages, however especially for those who haven't yet started school. Programs are free and open to the public, donations are gratefully appreciated. There is ample free parking in the downtown area, and stroller access at the rear of Old Town Hall on Main St. 703-385-7858 [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts)



# NEWS

## Fairview Artists Visit Richmond

On Sunday, Feb. 12, Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) hosted student artists and their families from Fairview Elementary School in Fairfax for a reception and capitol tour in Richmond. Fairview Elementary School Principal Lynn Mayer and Fairview Art Teachers Heather Devlin and Vered Grossman were also in attendance.

Since January, the works of these young artists have been displayed on the fourth floor of the General Assembly building, in the hallway leading to Filler-Corn's Richmond office. The student artists are a variety of ages and used a variety of mediums in their artwork. This is the second time that Filler-Corn has featured artwork from a local elementary school, having hosted White Oaks Elementary the previous year.

"Spending time with these creative young people and their proud parents was a highlight for me and truly made my day. Their energy and enthusiasm is contagious," said Filler-Corn.

Filler-Corn, who also serves as chair of the General Assembly Arts Caucus, was pleased that so many families made the trip down to Richmond. She posed for pictures with all the student artists as they pointed out their artwork to her and their very proud parents.

"You never know who might have walked by these paintings," Filler-Corn explained to the students. "Delegates, Senators, and Cabinet Secretaries...even the Governor, have all viewed your beautiful work. You should be so proud of yourselves."

Following the reception in the General Assembly Building, the entire group, including Del. Filler-Corn, walked over to the Capitol for an official tour, with a stop on the Floor of the chamber of the House of Delegates.

The students listened intently to both the tour guide's explanation of the history of the building,



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED  
**Fairview Elementary student artists at Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) Richmond office, together with Principal Lynn Mayer and Art Teachers Vered Grossman and Heather Devlin.**



**A group photo on the Capitol steps.**

and the Delegate's stories of a day in the life of a Member of the General Assembly. She reminded the children, that one day, they too could sit and vote in the House as she does today.

Filler-Corn hopes to continue the tradition with other local elementary schools in the 41st District. "There are nine elementary schools in my district. I look forward to continuing the tradition we started this session for years to come," Del. Filler-Corn said.

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# PET Connection

**Publishes: Feb 22, 2017 • Ads close: Wed, Feb 16, 2017**

Connection readers love their pets. This keepsake edition will feature photos, anecdotes, advice and more about beloved family pets. Reach pet owners where they live in a section sure to attract and hold their attention.

The Pet Connection will publish on February 22, 2017, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by February 16. We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults.

Find more information about submissions online at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets).

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## COMMUNITY

# Volunteers Give Fairfax Seniors Valentines

BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO  
THE CONNECTION

A group of enthusiastic telecommunications employees started their morning by going to work, but in the afternoon, using their personal time, they headed to the nursing home to show the residents that someone remembered them on Valentine's Day.

Current and retired employees of AT&T, who are members of the volunteer group Pioneers, filled a cart with care packages, called "blessing bags," and roses to deliver to the residents of Fairfax Nursing Center. They packed 182 clear, plastic bags with lotion, lip balm, mardi gras beads, a small plush toy, playing cards and Valentine's Day cards.

Volunteer Robert Brockway played the piano in the dining room for residents who attended a Valentine's Day party; while the other volunteers went from room

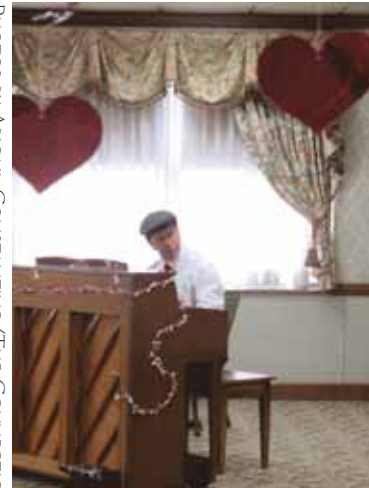


From left, AT&T Pioneers volunteers Marie Golden, Ella Mallard and Janice Proctor display the items they will be giving to the residents of Fairfax Nursing Center on Valentine's Day.

to room to leave or give a "blessing bag," along with a red, plastic rose. After they delivered the pack-

ages, they joined the residents at the party for a raffle.

The AT&T Pioneers is a network



AT&T Pioneers volunteer Robert Brockway entertains the residents of Fairfax Nursing Center on Tuesday, Feb. 14, during the nursing home's Valentine's Day celebration.

of volunteers that serve in local communities. For more information, visit [attpioneervolunteers.org/](http://attpioneervolunteers.org/)

## VIEWPOINTS

### How did you spend Valentine's Day; what did you like about it?

— ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO



**Nellie Hashemi**

"Went to work in the morning. I've come here to the nursing center in the afternoon to send out valentines and roses and try to make the day special for them and try to show people that we care about them. And then I'm going to go back to work, and then I'm going to have dinner with my husband."



**Janice Proctor**

"Today, I spent it at the nursing home, and I really enjoy that I get to make everybody else happy."



**Ella Mallard**

"Doing things for other people because God has been so good to me, and I want to share the things He has given me with others."



**Lisa Mullinax**

"I spent it volunteering at the Fairfax nursing home just for satisfaction. I enjoy visiting people."



**Diane Johnson-Pierre**

"Spent it at work. The first part of my day was at work. The second part of my work was here at the Fairfax rehabilitation center serving our elders. Because it's very important to me that we show them love."



**Maureen Kuhn**

"I was at the nursing home in Fairfax and I did it with the Pioneers because I love to do my volunteer time with the Pioneers. I've done it for 27 years."



**Marie Golden**

"I went to work, came here and helped out because I love to volunteer. I love to help."

## WEEK IN FAIRFAX

### Community Meeting on Braeburn Drive Bicycle Improvements

Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) will host a community meeting to discuss proposed bicycle improvements on Braeburn Drive from Olley Lane to Guinea Road on Thursday, Feb. 23, 2017, 6:30-8 p.m., in the cafeteria of Little Run Elementary School, 4511 Olley Lane, Fairfax. The improvements are part of the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) 2017 repaving program, and are limited to changes that can be made with roadway striping as part of the repaving process.

Community members are invited to give feedback on traffic safety, bicycling and the pedestrian environment in the Braddock District. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/bike/braeburnbikelanes2017.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/bike/braeburnbikelanes2017.htm).

### Fairfax County NAACP Hosting Community Gathering

The NAACP of Fairfax County is hosting a community and Black History Month commemoration on Saturday, Feb. 25.

The event is scheduled to take place from 9-11 a.m. at the Kings Park Community Library in Burke. All are invited to attend the free event, where breakfast will be served, the Fairfax County NAACP announced.

County officials and NAACP members will be on hand for networking, and to share information about the organization's plans for the remainder of 2017.

Kings Park Community Library is located at 9000 Burke Lake Road. To register for the event, visit [www.eventbrite.com/e/naacp-fairfax-county-community-gathering-and-black-history-month-commemoration-tickets-30197417288](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/naacp-fairfax-county-community-gathering-and-black-history-month-commemoration-tickets-30197417288). Visit [www.fairfaxnaacp.org](http://www.fairfaxnaacp.org) for more.

— TIM PETERSON

## BULLETIN BOARD

Send notes to the Connection at [connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/) or call 703-778-9416. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

### FEBRUARY

**Over-40 Softball League.** A Fairfax-based league is looking for enough players to form another team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Brady Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. If interested, email [skeduman@aol.com](mailto:skeduman@aol.com) for more information.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13



# Dialogue on Islam 'in Multiple Colors'

Islamophobia and xenophobia in today's political climate discussed at Mason.

BY RASMIEYH ABDELNABI  
INSTITUTE FOR IMMIGRATION RESEARCH  
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

**M**ore than 130 students, educators, university staff, and community members came together Feb. 1 at George Mason University for a panel discussion on Islamophobia and xenophobia in today's political climate. Due to an overwhelming response to the event, organizers had to change the room to a bigger one the day before the event. According to Monica Gomez Issac, the executive director of the Institute for Immigrant Research (IIR) at Mason, several faculty members asked to bring their entire classes to the event. The packed room left attendees standing along the walls and sitting on the floor.

The panel discussion was jointly hosted by Mason units, which included the IIR, the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies, and the Dialogue and Difference Project with the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. The panelists included Amber Jamil, the executive director for the American Pakistan Foundation, Patricia Maulden, the director of the Dialogue and Difference Project, Besheer Mohamed, a senior researcher at Pew Research Center, and Ahmet Tekelioglu of the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies.

"Life has changed a lot, for a lot of people over the last two weeks. It is an interesting



PHOTO BY EZZAT SHEHADEH/ALI VURAL AK CENTER FOR GLOBAL ISLAMIC STUDIES

**From left, Besheer Mohamed of the Pew Research Center, Amber Jamil of the American Pakistan Foundation, Monica Gomez Issac of the Institute for Immigration Research, Ahmet Tekelioglu of the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies and Patricia Maulden of the Dialogue and Difference Project.**

time to be a part of an institute for immigration research. It is an interesting time. It is an interesting time to be at one of the most geographically diverse institutions of higher education in the United States at this moment," said Shannon Davis, acting director of the IIR.

**THE PANELISTS** focused on the need for dialogue that combined facts, emotion, and human connection. Each panelist was given time to present their thoughts on Muslims in United States.

Besheer Mohamed, who specializes in surveys and minority religious groups, shared some survey results with the audi-

ence. He explained that as a researcher his intent was to show what people know about Muslims, their perceptions of Muslims and the stark disconnect between the two. Mohamed said that survey research suggests that the public does not know much about Islam and are not in contact with Muslims. According to Mohamed, only half of the public knows that the Quran is the Islamic holy book or know a Muslim.

Despite not knowing enough about Islam or knowing any Muslims, the public perception of Muslims is negative, Mohamed said.

The American public "is divided on whether or not they trust Muslims, they are

divided on whether Muslims are anti-American, divided on whether Islam is likely to encourage violence. But also really not sure about the religion at all," Mohamed explained.

However, this is where the role of the researcher to inform the public of the facts becomes important, he said.

Ahmet Tekelioglu of the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies and an expert on Muslims in America, said the challenges in today's political climate are not new and called for more dialogues on Islam. Since 9/11, there has been an emphasis on educating the general public about Islam through university classes and community presentations, as knowledge of Islam shapes the world, from the United States to Europe. "At the center, one of our main challenges is to make sure that Islam is known with its multiple colors, not understood as a homogeneous religion," he explained.

Patricia Maulden of the Dialogue and Difference Project, cautioned against the use of facts without the consideration of emotional responses, particularly when there is a climate of fear or misunderstanding. The first step in addressing Islamophobia and xenophobia, Maulden explained, is to see each other as human because it is in humanizing each other that we can better hear the facts.

She also said that it is essential to honor people's feelings instead of dismissing them and once people feel heard and understood, the use of facts will be more effective.

Amber Jamil of the American Pakistan Foundation said it is important to reach out to people and tell individual stories, particularly those that impact the community.

**A VIDEO** of the panel discussion can be found at iir.gmu.edu.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 12

20153-1224.

**"Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated (FCAC-DST)** announces its annual scholarship package is now available. The FCAC Scholarship application is available at [www.fcacdst.org/applications.htm](http://www.fcacdst.org/applications.htm). The completed application must be postmarked no later than Feb. 17, 2017 and mailed to: Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Attn: Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 221224, Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1224."

### FRIDAY/FEB. 17

**Scholarship Application. Deadline for Fairfax Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority** scholarship applications. The application is available on the chapter website: <http://www.fcacdst.org/applications.htm>. The completed application must be postmarked no later than February 17, 2017 and mailed to: Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Attn: Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 221224, Chantilly, Virginia

### SATURDAY/FEB. 25

**NAACP Breakfast.** 9-11 a.m. at Kings Park Community Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Network with county officials and NAACP members and hear more about plans for 2017. Call 703-978-5600 for more.

**Community Tax Assistance Day.** Deloitte presents its 10th annual Community Tax Assistance Day or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Day (VITA) to serve qualified individuals and families. Deloitte employee/volunteers will assist families with 2016 Federal and state tax returns for households with a total income of \$54,000 or less. Translations services in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese will be provided. In addition, American Sign Language interpreters will be available. Location is Fairfax SkillSource Center, Heritage Center, 7611 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Appointments are recommended: e-mail [taxday@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:taxday@volunteerfairfax.org) or call 703-246-3896. Walk ins are welcome. Additional information is available at [www.nvavash.org](http://www.nvavash.org). On tax preparation day, clients should

## KHA to Perform in Cherry Blossom Festival Parade

The National Cherry Blossom Festival and a panel of local celebrity judges selected one a cappella group and three soloists as the winners of the fourth annual Sing Into Spring vocal competition. The winners were selected following a live audition at the Atlas Performing Arts Center in Washington, D.C., where 21 finalists went head-to-head to showcase their vocal abilities. The winners will perform in the largest spectator event of the



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Fairfax singer and songwriter KHA.**

Festival, the nationally televised National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade presented by Events D.C., on Saturday, April 8.

Among the winners is a Fairfax resident KHA, a pop and soul singer and songwriter born and raised in the D.C. area. She has performed at The Kennedy Center with Stevie Wonder, The Warner Theatre, and was a featured soloist on the steps of the U.S. Capitol for the 53<sup>rd</sup> Presidential Inauguration Ceremony.

bring all pertinent documentation. For a complete list, visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

### FRIDAY/MARCH 3

**Rising Above Fear.** Burke Presbyterian Church Distinguished Speakers Series, with Omid Safi, director of Duke University's Islamic Studies Center, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Being Muslim in America: Between ISIS

and Islamophobia. Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke, 703-764-0456. Tickets are available at <http://www.BurkePresChurch.org>. They are \$25 for Friday and Saturday sessions and \$15 for a single session. Tickets are limited.

### SATURDAY/MARCH 4

**Rising Above Fear.** Burke

Presbyterian Church Distinguished Speakers Series, with Omid Safi, director of Duke University's Islamic Studies Center, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Moving Forward in Love: An Interfaith Collaboration, Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke, 703-764-0456. Tickets are limited, available at [BurkePresChurch.org](http://BurkePresChurch.org). They are \$25 for Friday and Saturday sessions and \$15 for a single session.



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## ZONES

**Zone 1:** The Reston Connection  
The Oak Hill/Herndon Connection  
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**Zone 3:** The Alexandria Gazette Packet  
The Mount Vernon Gazette

**Zone 4:** Centre View North  
Centre View South  
**Zone 5:** The Potomac Almanac  
**Zone 6:** The Arlington Connection  
The Vienna/Oakton  
Connection  
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The Great Falls  
Connection



2

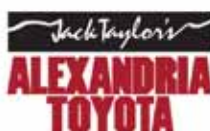
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2017

# Special VIP Offer for your Toyota



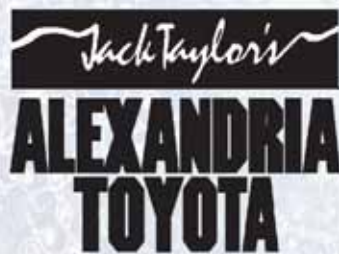
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## VARIABLE DISCOUNT

**\$5.00 OFF** with purchase of \$35.00 - \$49.99  
**\$10.00 OFF** with purchase of \$50.00 - \$99.99  
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**\$20.00 OFF** with purchase of \$200.00 - \$499.99  
**\$50.00 OFF** with purchase of \$500.00 Or more

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 2/28/17.

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## BRAKE SPECIAL \$99<sup>95</sup>

INCLUDES: Install Genuine Toyota front brake pads, inspect front & rear rotors & drums, check tire condition and inspect all hardware. TCMC pads only.

MACHINE ROTORS AN ADDITIONAL \$199.95.

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## \$29<sup>95</sup> LUBE, OIL & FILTER SERVICE SPECIAL \$49<sup>95</sup>

INCLUDES: Change oil (up to 5 qts.), install Genuine Toyota oil filter, inspect & adjust all fluid levels and complimentary multi-point inspection with print out.

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## COMPLIMENTARY 15 MINUTE ALIGNMENT CHECK

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## 30,000 MILES FACTORY RECOMMENDED SERVICE \$159<sup>95</sup>

Synthetic \$10 More

INCLUDES: Change engine oil & filter (up to 5 qts), rotate tires, inspect wear and adjust pressure, measure brake pad thickness & rotor runout, replace cabin air filter (if equipped), replace engine air filter, reset maintenance reminder light (if applicable) and multi-point vehicle inspection.

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renovated,

new Kitchen,

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