

Fear Follows ICE Enforcement

Men said to be detained after leaving Mount Vernon shelter.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE GAZETTE

Around 6:45 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, Oscar Ramirez, Marvin Roach, Theron Brewster and other men emerged from the hypothermia shelter at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church on Russell Road in the Mount Vernon Area of Alexandria. Many walked next door to 7-Eleven for cold beers, they said, to begin planning the day out, as is their routine.

When they began crossing the parking lot towards the Aldi grocery store, opposite Rising Hope, a flurry of at least half a dozen unmarked police cars descended on the group, Ramirez, Roach and Brewster said.

"Like it was a setup or something," said Brewster.

Officers with uniforms reading "POLICE" and "ICE" (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) immediately told the men to stop where they were. The officers didn't identify themselves other than that, the three men said, and weren't displaying weapons.

Roach and Brewster, both Caucasian, were shown pictures of men on a computer, they said, and asked by officers if they had seen any of them. Neither were asked for any kind of identification or nationality in-



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE GAZETTE

From left, immigration attorney Nicholas Marritz speaks with Oscar Ramirez, Marvin Roach and Theron Brewster about their experience being questioned, and in Ramirez' case temporarily detained, by ICE officers on Wednesday, Feb. 8 in Alexandria.

formation.

Ramirez, however, was surrounded by officers, along with several other Latino men and told to stand against a wall while keeping their hands visible. Ramirez is a native of El Salvador but said he moved to the United States in 1986, when he was just a boy.

The Latino men were also asked if they had seen the men on the computer screen, said Ramirez, who attempted to help translate for some of the other men. But, after being singled out, they were also questioned about their immigration status.

Ramirez said he wasn't asked for photo identification, just his date of birth, Social Security number and date when he entered

the country. He admitted he isn't a U.S. citizen, but holds a green card and was granted a suspension of deportation by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services because he had been a resident for so long and has three daughters all born in America.

Officers told Ramirez he was OK, and was free to go. Other men, he said, were shackled and shoved into a large white van.

When the van pulled up, all three men said, there were already men inside, some of whom were crying. A number of men from the shelter were put in the van, which drove away.

Ramirez said he knows some of them have minor criminal records, and one was facing charges for a robbery in Washington,

D.C. But he also said he had never seen an incident with law enforcement like this in his life.

Roach and Brewster, longtime residents of the area, echoed Ramirez. "I've been here all my life," Roach said, "I've never seen anything like this. It happened really fast, it was like a kidnapping."

SINCE THAT WEDNESDAY morning, the three said they've seen similar unmarked police cars in the area of the church off and on.

According to an ICE official, just two individuals were arrested Wednesday in that area, as part of routine activity.

"Every day, as part of routine targeted enforcement operations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws," the official said in a statement.

The official could not confirm other aspects of the men's story, and insisted ICE does not detain people in vans, as the men described.

"ICE conducts targeted immigration enforcement in compliance with federal law and agency policy," the statement continues, "ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately."

Though the statement is at odds with the men's account, Ramirez said there is genuine fear in the Latino community. Businesses including the laundromat usually frequented by Latinos in that shopping center have been barren in the last week.

"People are staying in, they're scared," he said.

SEE FEAR FOLLOWS, PAGE 5

Storck Holds Back Bock Farm Decision

Changes to require new public hearing.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) has asked to again postpone Board of Supervisors action on development for the Bock, or Hinson, Farm property in Mount Vernon.

Storck's office said his motion at the Feb. 14 supervisors meeting was a "referral back" to the Planning Commission to allow the applicant, developer Joe Francone, to bring forward an updated proposal.

"Given the needed changes to the development plan," Storck's motion read, "these changes will require a new public hearing before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. This action will not require the applicant to

re-start the process but will require them to continue to work with staff and community on refinements to their concepts."

One initial proposal that passed the Planning Commission and has already come before the supervisors was for a senior (55+) community with four, four-story buildings with 128 units at 55 ft in height, including underground structured parking.

However Storck said that he doesn't support that option.

At a community meeting last month, Francone introduced two other options that addressed some community members' concerns over the height of the first option.

Those secondary options in-

cluded: B, a senior community proposal, but with lower building height (50 feet) and approximately five to 10 fewer units; and C, a proposal of 35-40 units of townhomes that aren't age-restricted and would be around 35 feet in height, not including the peaks of the roofs.

Storck said he thinks the second and third options both make more sense than the first, however at this point, the applicant may come back with an entirely new option.

"The bottom line is it was deferred," Storck said in an interview. Which he said was the only way for the applicant to move forward in a way that could go "cheaper, faster and with some-

thing that makes more sense."

Results of an online community survey on the Bock property options, conducted by Storck's office, are available here: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/documents/bock_farm_survey_results.pdf

— TIM PETERSON

New Acting Head at WPHS

West Potomac High School principal Alex Case and assistant principal Michelle Lyttle are both on administrative leave.

In a letter sent to parents on Feb. 13, Fairfax County Public School Region 3 assistant superintendent Terry Dade explained assistant principal

SEE NEW, PAGE 5

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County Executive Proposes \$4.10 Billion Budget

Calls for no increase in real estate taxes; falls \$61 million short of schools' request.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE GAZETTE

An exercise in “triage and trade-offs” was how Mount Vernon District Supervisor Daniel Storck described the FY 2018 budget as proposed by County Executive Ed Long to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

“There are really no surprises here, but it is still sobering” to see the results in black and white, added Supervisor Jeff McKay (Lee).

Long is proposing a General Fund budget of \$4.10 billion.

The highlights of the 60-plus slide presentation include:

- ❖ \$1.97 billion for Fairfax County Public School operations, as well as School capital construction projects with \$13.1 million, and School debt service transfer of \$189.13 million.

- ❖ Additionally, \$83.4 million for school programs and services such as Head Start, Health and Behavioral Science Services and after-school programs.

- ❖ Funding for performance, merit and longevity increases for county employees.

- ❖ 18 relief Police Sergeant positions and \$2.7 million for pay scale levelling for uniformed Police and Sheriffs.

- ❖ \$3.10 million additional for Health and Human Services priorities, including for Community Services Board support for individuals with developmental disabilities to comply with current state and federal requirements and the addition of a human trafficking position.

- ❖ Funding for two new positions to support the start of the comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance.

- ❖ The county is able to manage the increases to Metro funding for FY 2018 – but the warning alarm has sounded. Starting in FY 2019 and beyond, the increases to the county's required contribution to Metro “are



County Executive Ed Long said the proposed budget maintains commitment to the county's financial policies addressing needs for both county and schools, but in the end “the county's needs are much greater than our resources.”

not sustainable within existing revenue resources.”

- ❖ Reductions and savings included in the Advertised FY2018 Budget total over \$13.0 million, generated through agency-identified opportunities, other post-employment benefits, fuel savings, and cost realignments.

The proposed budget is balanced at the current real estate tax level of \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed property value and the county retains its Triple-A Bond rating.

By creating a budget without increasing the current tax rate, a number of county priorities cannot be funded, according to Long.

The items that have been set aside in the multi-year budget include a Market Rate Adjustment of 1.65 percent for county employees, funding for the second year of the Diversion First program, police span of control positions that were recommended by the Ad-Hoc Commission and a consultant study, public safety staffing plan, additional funding for employment and day support



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE GAZETTE

Members of “Invest in Fairfax” rally at the Government Center during the presentation of the proposed FY 2018 budget.

for individuals with developmental disabilities, information technology investments, and funding to replace fire and rescue apparatus. These items together carry costs upwards of \$125 million.

The budget falls \$61 million short of the amount requested by the School Board. To bridge that gap would mean a real estate tax increase of 2.5 cents, according to Long.

About 40 citizens rallied in the lobby of Government Center — until they were asked to vacate the premises and continue their demonstration and press conference outside the building. Led by Dave Broder, “Invest In Fairfax” made its appearance to “reject the FY 2018 budget proposal.” The group is a coalition of families, teachers, small business owners, county employees and firefighters, mental health workers and others. “It's unacceptable that in the wealthiest county in the nation, the county executive would balance the budget by cutting mental health funding, cutting pro-

grams for people with disabilities and breaking promises to our frontline professionals.” Broder and his group are calling on the public to engage in the budget process and make their voices heard. “We need to remember that these services and our schools are largely what made Fairfax County great and they need to be protected.”

LONG ATTRIBUTES the majority of the county's fiscal woes to sluggish economic growth. In the 10 years between FY1998 and FY2008 the county's economy grew annually by about 6.5 percent. Since then, growth has slowed to 2.1 percent — less than a third of the growth posted in the prior decade.

“We have to also add in the effects of sequestration and the decrease in government contracts,” said Long.

The largest portion of the 1.1 percent increase in total employment over the prior

SEE \$4.10 BILLION, PAGE 18

FCPS Adopts \$2.8 Billion Budget for FY2018

5.1 percent increase from 2017 prioritizes compensation and classroom resources.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE GAZETTE

The Fairfax County School Board formally adopted interim Superintendent Steve Lockard's proposed \$2.8 billion operating budget at its Feb. 9 meeting, following several work sessions and public hearings on the matter.

The adopted budget calls for an increase of \$135.1 million, or 5.1 percent from the FY2017 approved figure.

That includes \$44 million for a 2.5 percent step increase for all employees who are eligible, \$33.2 million into a multi-year plan for making teacher salaries more competitive with surrounding jurisdictions, and \$45.9 million to cover expected health in-

surance and retirement system contribution raises.

FCPS School Board chair Sandy Evans called the adopted budget “a reflection of what we value as a school system and as a community.

“Great teachers, administrators and support employees are the foundation of our excellent school system,” Evans continued in a statement. “Providing market competitive compensation, especially for our teachers, continues to be our top priority.”

Teachers would benefit from a market scale adjustment, Fairfax County said, and non-teacher salaries would be adjusted one percent.

“We recognize the need for fiscal responsibility and as such we are seeking support

only for what we believe to be necessary to sustain the excellence we expect in Fairfax County,” Evans said.

Evans' statement went on to lament the voting down of a proposed “meals tax” on prepared food that was estimated to bring in \$100 million in revenue for Fairfax County — around 70 percent of which would have gone to FCPS, proponents from both the Board of Supervisors and school board said leading up to the vote.

A first look at the gap between a requested transfer from Fairfax County that is 5.9 percent greater than last year's and where the county stands will come as County Executive Ed Long announces the Fairfax County Advertised Budget Feb. 14.

A year ago, Long's advertised budget fell

\$68 million short of the request from then-FCPS superintendent Karen Garza, igniting contention between the boards and anger from many community members who urged county leaders to “fully fund FCPS.”

Between now and when FCPS is scheduled to adopt an approved budget for FY2018 on May 25, there are budget work sessions lined up for Monday, March 13; Monday, April 24; Monday, May 1; and Thursday, May 18.

A joint budget work session is scheduled for Feb. 21. The school board will bring another approved budget to the supervisors April 4.

For more information on budget dates and news, visit <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/budget/FY2018>.

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THREE BEDROOMS

NEWS

A Declaration of Conscience

Church members protest "looming threats."

Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church (MVUC) members unanimously passed a Declaration of Conscience at a formal meeting Sunday, Feb. 12 that reads in part: "In the face of looming threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community and the rise of hate speech, harassment and hate crimes, we affirm our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person."

The declaration also mentions threats to health care, reproductive rights, and climate change mitigation and says, "We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil."

The declaration was proposed by the Unitarian Universalists Association (UUA) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) for adoption by congregations and signing by individuals.

MVUC Pastor Rev. Dr. Kate Walker said, "I am delighted that members of Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church clearly understand the ramifications some of the Presidential executive orders are having on the most vulnerable in our country and those who need safe haven here due to violence and economic nightmares in their own countries. This statement speaks beautifully to our concerns and is based on the religious principles that our faith is grounded upon."

Passage of the declaration allows Walker to represent the congregation in public writings or speaking on the issues and allows members to "share that their religious community is committed to and engaged in a fight for justice, equality and compassion for all," according to a message Walker sent to mem-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Mt Vernon Unitarian Church members voted unanimously with green cards Sunday to adopt a "Declaration of Conscience" to "oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil."

bers with the proposed declaration.

The message also stated that "There is a sense of urgency and a need for vigilance since the elections. There is clarity that we must act, not alone, but together. This is not about partisan politics. It is a principled response to the potential targeting of people not for what they have done, but for who they are. It is a commitment to speak out and to act in support of basic human rights."

MVUC engages in a number of social justice programs and is a member of Ventures in Community, a group of 60 local faith-based and nonprofit organizations and VOICE, Virginians Organized for Inter-faith Community Engagement.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE FARSON

National Competition

The West Potomac High School Varsity Dance Team attended the Universal Dance Association National Dance Team Championship at Disney World Resort in Orlando, Fla. Feb. 3-5. The team competed hip hop and pom dances and received a Superior rating for their pom performance. The dancers' season is not over. They will continue performing half time and sideline dances at the West Potomac Men's Varsity Basketball Team playoff games.

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to gazette@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.

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SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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Fear

FROM PAGE 1

Across the country last week, ICE launched a number of “targeted enforcement actions,” Department of Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly said in a statement on Feb. 13. That was following an executive order signed by President Donald Trump promoting stricter enforcement of immigration laws.

Officers in Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, San Antonio and New York City areas arrested more than 680 people “who pose a threat to public safety, border security or the integrity of our nation’s immigration system,” Kelly said.

Kelly went on to explain this is nothing out of the ordinary for ICE. As well, he said, “President Trump has been clear in affirming the critical mission of DHS in protecting the nation and directed our department to focus on removing illegal aliens who have violated our immigration laws, with a specific focus on those who pose a threat to public safety, have been charged with criminal offenses, have committed immigration violations or have been deported and re-entered the country illegally.”

Routine or not, the latest activities of ICE have clearly raised public sensitivity and fear of deportation. At a Lee District town meeting on Feb. 11, state Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) said there was like a whole segment of the audience missing due to perception of events like what allegedly took place on Russell Road as raids.

“We have to do more to make people feel welcome,” Surovell said. “I’m going to do everything I can to support them.”

A woman in the audience said students in her English for Speakers of Other Languages class are coming to school scared, some that parents may not be there to pick them up at the end of the day.

“There is genuine fear,” said state Sen. George Barker (D-39), “that little kids should not have. A political decision may sound great until you see the faces of the individuals affected.”

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) said since word of ICE activity in Mount Vernon started circulating last week, he’s received numerous concerned calls and emails about people being unreasonably disturbed.

“At the core of this, it’s about a diverse community wanting to make sure we honor and respect that by not going after people that may be different, look different from us.”

At the same time, Storck said, “we recognize, we don’t want people that are criminals to be out in our community. There’s a balance we always want. I don’t think our President has that balance in what he does.”

Storck said he’s been in touch with the Mount Vernon District police station about citizens’ concerns over ICE activity. He said he was told they “usually don’t know what’s going on,” with ICE or other federal law enforcement operations.

FCPD spokesperson Master Police Officer Don

New Acting Head at WPHS

FROM PAGE 1

Jessica Statz has agreed to serve as “principal designee during Mr. Case’s absence.”

No explanation has been given for the departure of both administrators. FCPS spokesman John Torre would not comment further than confirming both are on leave.

When asked whether Case and or Lyttle were placed on leave by the school system or chose to take absence themselves, Torre again declined to comment.

— TIM PETERSON



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERTO TELLERIA

A resident’s cell phone photo captured ICE agents engaging with men near the 7-Eleven on Russell Road in Alexandria on Wednesday, Feb. 8.

Gotthardt said in an email county police had no role in any “federal raids,” and, “and in fact, have not been made aware of any in Fairfax County.”

TRAFFIC WAS SLOWED significantly Saturday afternoon Feb. 11 on I-66 around Centreville where a number of both FCPD and ICE vehicles had lights flashing and a large van with about a dozen Latino male passengers were pulled over.

In this case, Gotthardt said an FCPD officer made a routine stop for a traffic violation and then, after seeking advice from a patrol supervisor, contacted ICE to assist with interviews.

Gotthardt said he did not know the nature of the conversations, though both he and an ICE official confirmed that none of the men were arrested and were allowed to re-load the van and resume driving.

When asked to give further detail on the FCPD protocol for collaborating with ICE, Gotthardt did not respond in time for print.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova said she hasn’t been made aware of any more activity by ICE than what other citizens are seeing themselves or on the news.

But, as she said she has asserted numerous times, Fairfax County is a “Very diverse community — people have come from all over the globe. It’s important that we maintain a harmonious community.”

Bulova also said she’s watching carefully “to make sure all members of our communities are being treated fairly.” After having listened to the story from Ramirez, Roach and Brewster, immigration lawyer Nicholas Marritz of the Legal Aid Justice Center in Falls Church doesn’t believe that was the case across from Rising Hope.

“Stopping a group of people without reasonable suspicion, seems to be on extremely questionable legal footing to me,” Marritz said. “You have the right not to be seized, based on the color of skin. It’s a violation of Constitutional rights.”

Marritz said the men’s narrative underscores the need for more people to understand and assert their rights.

“Everyone is protected by the Constitution,” he said. “You have the right to remain silent, to say ‘I’m not going to tell you about immigration status,’ to ask to talk to an attorney. No one should have to suffer an indignity like this.”

Storck said the stress and fear he’s heard from community members, especially among children, is “not what we want in Mount Vernon, in Fairfax County.”

“This is not the United States of America that I voted for, nor the kind of country in think the vast majority of people really want,” Storck continued. “We need solutions, not more fear. Solutions, by recognizing the millions of undocumented residents, and providing a path to be here legally, protecting their children in the meantime. Protecting our children, frankly.”

Storck said he planned to speak with senior FCPD leadership and find out more about their protocol for interacting with ICE.

The hypothermia shelter at Rising Hope is coordinated by New Hope Housing.



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The West Potomac Jazz Band was asked by the National Education Association to provide the entertainment during its reception at the museum.

Evening of Jazz

On Saturday night, Feb. 11, the West Potomac Jazz Band performed at a cocktail party in the atrium of the newly-opened National Museum of African American History & Culture.

"I just love this band," said Lily Garcia, president of the National Education Association. The NEA had rented out the museum that night, and its members enjoyed the jazzy gathering in the atrium before touring the museum. "Typically we hire an adult band for events, but this year we decided to see if we could find a student band. After all, that's what we're all about," Garcia said. "This high school band is just incredible. These kids are the future."

The students played classics — Earth Wind & Fire, Chuck Mangione, Frank Sinatra — for about an hour and a half, enjoying the acoustics in the soaring atrium.

"We were thrilled to have an opportunity like this," said junior trumpet player Henry Drembus. "It was so nice to be playing for such an appreciative audience."

After they finally packed up at 10 p.m., Band Director Steve Rice, who is in his 24th year teaching at West Potomac, sat back and smiled. "These kids are always going to remember this," he said.



Band Director Steve Rice (top left) and his West Potomac Jazz Band, on the curving staircase in the atrium of the National Museum of African American History & Culture.

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OBITUARY

Robert J. Bixler

Robert (Bobby) J. Bixler, III, 66, died unexpectedly Tuesday Feb. 7, 2017 in Alexandria. Bobby was born Jan. 5, 1951 at Fort Belvoir. He lived his entire life in the Mount Vernon area. He graduated from Mount Vernon High School in 1970 and started his career working as the head bartender at the NCO and Officers Clubs at Fort Belvoir. He retired in 2014 from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service as a lead warehouse worker at Fort Belvoir after 44 years of service.

Bobby enjoyed all sports especially the Washington Redskins and the Nationals. He played softball and golf until his knees made the game not fun anymore. He

enjoyed going to a local bar and grill to play darts and pool and have a few drinks with his friends.

Bobby was preceded in death by his parents Robert and Margarethe Bixler. Bobby never married and is survived by four siblings: Elizabeth Bornman (Louis) of Shawnee, Kansas; Margarethe Fuller (Terry) of Alexandria; James P. Bixler and Samuel Bixler of Tonganoxie, Kansas; one nephew, Michael Fuller of Tampa, Fla.; and two nieces, Christine Wolfe of Overland Park, Kansas, and Kristy Collins of Pasadena, Md.

Bobby was cremated and will be buried at a later date with family and friends at Mount Comfort Cemetery in Alexandria.

South County Government Center,
8350 Richmond Highway, Room 220.
RSVP to Carole Rogers at
crogers@britepaths.org or 703-273-
8829.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

Mobile DMV. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Sherwood Hall Library. Two programs, *DMV Connect* and *DMV 2 GO*, will provide full DMV service to the Route 1 area. At the Sherwood Hall service centers, customers can apply or renew their ID cards, drivers licenses, take road and knowledge tests, apply for special ID cards, get copies of their driving records, obtain vehicle titles, license plates, decals and transcripts, order disabled parking placards or plates, purchase an EZ-Pass transponder and more. A full list of services is available at www.dmv.virginia.gov.

THURSDAY/FEB. 16

Lee District Bicycle

Improvements. 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Groveton Elementary School cafeteria, 6900 Harrison Lane. Paving plans will be discussed. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/bike/leedistrictbikelanes2017.htm for more.

"Thrifty Thursdays" Basic

Budgeting Classes. 7-9 p.m. at

DEADLINE FEB. 17

Scholarship Application. The Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is taking scholarship applications. The application is available at www.fcacdst.org/applications.htm. The completed application must be postmarked no later than Feb. 17.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

Health Screenings. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Potomac Yards Giant, 621 East Glebe Road, Alexandria. Giant Food is offering free health screenings at select in-store pharmacies. Customers can receive free blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol screenings. In addition, Giant pharmacists can help determine if customers are missing any recommended adult vaccinations. No appointment is necessary. Visit giantfood.com/live-well/pharmacy.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Making Valentines

Spring Hills Mt. Vernon Assisted Living resident Myra Starr embraces Valentine's Day as Girl Scouts Torry Lowe (middle), 7 years old, and Silvanna Sctelo (right), 11 years old, offer her some cookies. Girl Scouts from the St. Louis Catholic Church joined the senior residents to get ready for Valentine's Day on Wednesday, Feb. 8. The five to 11 year olds worked with the seniors to make Valentine's Day cards for each other, their families and their friends.





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OPINION

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Inappropriate Topic?

To the Editor:

My wife and I are avid readers of the Mount Vernon Gazette for many years and appreciate the local reporting we receive every week. One recent article, "Scholar to Address Scouts," [Feb. 9-5] was especially disturbing to me. However, I appreciate the Gazette publishing the article. I find it extremely disturbing given our current political divisive environment for the Boy Scouts to invite a scholar to encourage resistance. Instead of presenting a theme of unity during these troubled times, C.R. Gibbs, a noted and respected speaker on an "array of historical topics" will present a lecture on "Let Your Motto Be Resistance, Great Slave Revolts." This presentation, to impressionable young boys, is ill timed in my opinion. Wouldn't it be better for Mr. Gibbs, to tap into his vast knowledge and demonstrated expertise on historical topics to speak on another subject? Perhaps a presentation inspiring an interest in history might be more appropriate.

Steve Ayers

LTC, US Army (Ret)

Permanence of Electoral College

To the Editor:

John B. Allen of Alexandria responded to my letter published in the Jan. 26 Gazette. In my letter, I quoted the oath of office for members of the House of Representatives and criticized

Congressmen Beyer and Connolly for boycotting the inauguration ceremony for now President Donald J. Trump. I questioned whether their boycott complied with the oath of office in which they swore to "bear true faith and allegiance" to the Constitution.

Strangely, my letter amused Mr. Allen as he stated it made him laugh. He also made reference to the fact that President Trump "lost the popular vote ...". People who refer to the popular vote totals in analyzing American election results show their true ignorance of the system by which we elect Presidents or their sad refusal to accept those results. As everyone who has taken a civics course knows, under the Constitution, the candidate who receives the most electoral votes wins the Presidency without regard to the popular vote. In the recent election, Mr. Trump won 306 electoral votes to Hillary Clinton's 232 electoral votes. When the Electoral College met in the respective state capitals and the District of Columbia, taking into account so-called "faithless electors," Trump won the election 304 - 227.

Here are a few more facts. Mrs. Clinton's entire popular vote "victory" occurred in California where neither candidate campaigned. Mrs. Clinton won California by over 3.2 million votes and Mr. Trump won the rest of the country by over 1.4 million votes. The electoral college method of electing Presidents will never be repealed. Its premise is to make sure states with smaller populations have an influence on the election. As a part of the Constitution, the electoral college method can only be changed or eliminated through approval of an amendment by 2/3 of the House of Representatives and the Senate and 3/4 of the states. Thus, so long as the 13 states smallest in population

oppose a change, it will never occur. Those states are, in descending order of population, West Virginia, Idaho, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, Montana, Delaware, South Dakota, North Dakota, Alaska, Vermont, and Wyoming. Of course, any collection of 13-plus states will defeat such a proposed amendment.

Mr. Trump won 30 States to Mrs. Clinton's 20 States (and the District of Columbia). Mr. Trump won the majority vote in 2,626 counties while Mrs. Clinton won the majority vote in 487 counties.

Nothing Mr. Allen said in his letter changes my view that once a congressman has been elected, he or she is obligated to represent all of their constituents, not just the ones who voted for them. In so doing, they ought to show respect for the Constitution of the United States including by attending its most important ceremony, the inauguration of a President.

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

Write

The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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Call: 703-917-6444.

By e-mail: gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

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Celebrating Black History Month

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

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Even 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 administration. 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 seri-

ous 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 socio-political movement are forms of resistance to deliberate attempts to conceal the worthiness of Black or African-heritage people in this country."



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ENTERTAINMENT

Pipeline Playwrights Hosts Inaugural Series

Four plays by local women coming to MetroStage.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE GAZETTE

A new Pipeline Playwrights group in Alexandria has launched its 2017 inaugural series with four new plays by four women writers. Pipeline Playwrights is a group of women playwrights, ages 30s to 50s, who are based in Northern Virginia, and working together to support, present, and promote each other's work with the goal of moving their plays into the local and national theater pipeline.

Each of the Pipeline Playwrights — Jean Koppen, Soo-Jin Lee, Ann Timmons, and Patricia Connelly — will present a reading of a new full-length play in the 2017 spring reading series at MetroStage in Alexandria.

"Each reading is a play by one of the playwrights at MetroStage in Alexandria," said Patricia Connelly of Alexandria, one of the playwrights and co-organizers who works as an attorney. "Readings are an important part of the development process. We have professional actors who read the play on stage. It's to give the audience a sense of the play."

She said that it's a work in progress at that point. The writers solicit comments from the audience to hear what's working and what's not; it's an opportunity for the playwrights to hear their plays out loud.

She said the group first met at a Dramatist Guild Conference at The Kennedy Center in 2014 and formed a group of writers called the Northern Virginia Writers Circle. "We meet every couple of weeks; we read aloud our plays and give comments. Out of that group, we decided to try to take our work out publicly."

Up first on Feb. 27 is playwright Ann Timmons' play, "A Very Present Presence." This comedy opens as Alice's mid-life crisis is interrupted by a visitation from her long-dead great-aunt, who takes her on a journey through time. And Alice learns that her

problems spring from sources deeper than she imagined.

"Ann is a professional actor and a writer. She got her start in New York and she wrote a couple of one-woman shows that she toured around the country," said Connelly. "It's a comedy and one of Alice's ancestors was a Suffragette, and although Ann has been working on the play for probably a year, the subject seems timely."

Next on March 20 is Soo-Jin Lee's play, "The Men My Mother Loved." "The play is about a mother and daughter; the mother takes the daughter on a trip to South Korea where the mother grew up and she introduces her to people from her past, including former boyfriends," added Connelly.

On April 3, Patricia Connelly will present "Around the Snake Turn," a drama set in West Africa in which a mother pits herself against her extended family, her culture, and the centuries' old tribal religion of the village, to save the lives of her children.

Connelly said she spent two years working on the play about sex slaves called Trokosis (meaning ritual servitude). "I got the idea for the play when I saw an article in the New York Times about a young girl who was given for a sex slave to the village priest to atone for a crime committed by a relative. It was in West Africa and this was a 12-year-old girl who was a slave ... The story haunted me that this was a system of justice."

On May 8, the final play by Jean Koppen called "Unprotected" will be featured. In Koppen's new drama, a mother and her teenage daughter confront the subtle and not-so-subtle ways women are vulnerable to sexual assault.

"It's about a mother, father, daughter, and mother's brother, his wife and son. There's an incident involving cousins, two teenage children. And in the course of that we learn something about the mother's past," said Connelly.

All play readings on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal St., Alexandria. They'll be readings of the whole plays with times for discussion with the playwrights and actors. A reception follows.

More info at www.facebook.com/events/101047870374049.



Matthew Miller, Caren Anton, Katherine Stanford, and Robin Covington read from "A Very Present Presence."



Lars Klores and Elizabeth Keith read from "Unprotected."



Jennifer Knight reads from "The Men My Mother Loved."



Cody Jones and William Shipman read from "Around the Snake Turn."

CALENDAR

Email announcements to gazette@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.

ONGOING

RockNBlades. Fridays in February 8:45-10:30 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ice Skating, 2017 Belle View Blvd. Skating with music. \$12 admission includes rental skates.

"Sanctuary." Through Feb. 18 in the Commons Fireplace Alcove of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. Selected black and white photographs from Nina Tisara's "Sanctuary" series, shot in Huntley Meadows Park. A closing reception

will be held on Feb. 18, 6:30-7:15 p.m., followed by a concert by Nova Chamber Orchestra beginning at 7:30 p.m. Email Nina Tisara at ninat@ninatisara.com or call 703-765-5950 for more.

Convergence Arts Initiative.

Through March 4, Fridays 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at The Gallery @ Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. Highlights the artwork of students from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, T.C. Williams, and St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School. Artists reception: Saturday, Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m. Email danabh@ourconvergence.org or call 703-998-6260 for more.

Ceramic Guild Show.

Through March 5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. "Customer Appreciation: Welcome to

our World" Ceramic Guild show at Scope Gallery. Visit www.scopegallery.org, www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope or call 703-548-6288 for more.

China Photography Exhibit.

Through March 6, various hours at the Bisdorf Building, NVCC, 5000 Dawes Ave. "China in my Eyes" photography exhibit. Artists reception: Saturday, Feb. 11, noon. Visit www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/ or email JZelloe@aol.com for more.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 15

Historical Gardens Lecture. 9:30-11 a.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. The Alexandria/Mount Vernon Antiques Club will have Dean Norton, the horticulturist at George Washington's

Mount Vernon Plantation, speaking about the various authentic historical gardens at the Mount Vernon estate. Call 703-360-4979 for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 16

Business After Hours. 5:30-7 p.m. at The Wharf, 119 King St. Enjoy refreshments and hors d'oeuvres with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce while networking with other business and nonprofit professionals. Members \$10, non-members \$25, and members at the door \$25. Visit web.alexchamber.com/ for more.

U.S. Navy Band. 7:30 p.m. at the Schlesinger Concert Hall, NOVA, Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive. Free. Visit www.navyband.navy.mil/ or call 202-433-4777 for more.

FEB. 17-18

Arlo Guthrie in Concert. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. \$110. Visit birchmere.com.

FEB. 17-26

Winter Restaurant Week. Neighborhood restaurants throughout Alexandria, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and the West End. \$35 three-course dinner for one or \$35 dinner for two; select locations offering lunch from \$10-20/person. Visit www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com or call 703-746-3301 for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

ENTERTAINMENT



FILE PHOTO/VISIT ALEXANDRIA

The George Washington Birthday Parade starts at the intersection of Gibbon and S. Fairfax streets at 1 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20.

Celebrating George's 285th

This year is the 285th anniversary of George Washington's birth in his hometown of Alexandria, where historians are serious when they say "George Washington slept here." The following is a list of activities to learn and celebrate the life of the country's first president.

FEB. 18-19

Presidents Day Breakfast Sampler.

9 a.m.-noon at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Hwy., Join "General Washington" for a sample of hoecakes prepared by Mount Vernon staff. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more information.

Visit with George Washington.

11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Hwy. Mingle with costumed characters from George Washington's world, followed by an 18th-century dancing demonstration, birthday cake and wreath-laying ceremony. Adults, \$20; children ages 6-11, \$10; and children under 5 free. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more information.

MONDAY/FEB. 20

George Washington's Birthday. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Hwy. Celebrate the national observance of George Washington's Birthday by visiting his home and burial site free of charge on this day, and watch a variety of activities. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more information.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

George Washington Birthnight Banquet and Ball. 5:30-11 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N Royal St. Set in 1799, the evening includes an 18th-century banquet, English country dancing, dessert collation, character re-enactors plus the General and Mrs. Washington. Period costume optional; "after-five" attire encouraged. Tickets are tiered starting at \$125. Advance reservations required. Call 703-746-

4242 for more information.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Revolutionary War Reenactment.

10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward, 4301 W Braddock Road. Historic camp and tactical demonstrations throughout the day, including a Revolutionary War skirmish at 2 p.m. between the Redcoats and the Colonial Army. Participants include renowned reenactment units from around the United States dressed in authentic period costumes and demonstrating authentic 18th-century weaponry. Free. Visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/GWbday for more information.

Wonders of Science.

1-4 p.m. at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105 S. Fairfax St. Hands-on demonstrations of the scientific interests of George Washington, including period medicine, inventions, and espionage. \$6 per person. Visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/GWbday for more information.

Walking with Washington Tour.

2-3:30 p.m. at Ramsay House Visitors Center, 221 King St. View some of the sites connected to the General, like where he filled his prescriptions or slept overnight. Free. Visit www.washingtonbirthday.com for more.

MONDAY/FEB. 20

Historic Alexandria Open Houses.

Times vary at the Friendship Firehouse Museum, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum and The Lyceum: Alexandria's History Museum. Free. Visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/GWbday for more information.

Fire Engine Association Breakfast.

9-10:30 a.m. at The Alexandrian, 480 King St. Sponsored by the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association, features "George Washington's" first appearance of the day plus an address by retired Four-Star General John H. Tilelli, the awarding of the Ben Lynt Award. \$35. Visit www.friendshipfire.net or call 703-751-6416 for more information.

Armed Forces Community Covenant Ceremony.

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Market Square, 301

King St. Honor the nation's veterans, active military, and their families with music, games, and activities for children with military vehicles, demonstrations, informational booths, and displays. Visit www.washingtonbirthday.net or call 703-829-6640 for more information.

George Washington Birthday Parade.

1-3 p.m. starts at the intersection of Gibbon and S. Fairfax streets. Expect nearly 3,500 participants including historical groups, youth from Scouting groups, animals, bands and more. Visit www.washingtonbirthday.net or call 703-829-6640 for more information.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 22

Childrens Party for George.

3:30-4:30 p.m. at Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. A party for children in honor of George Washington's real birthday including reenactors of George Mason, John Carlyle, GW's stablemaster and houndmaster. Visit alexlibraryva.org or call 703-746-1705 for more.

Lecture: George Washington the Entrepreneur.

7:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. Using Washington's financial papers, Edward G. Lengel, chief historian of the White House Historical Association, chronicles the story of how Washington built the Mount Vernon estate into a resource to win the war of independence. Visit www.washingtonbirthday.net or call 703-829-6640 for more information.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

George Washington Symposium.

1-3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Dr. Mark Tabbert, the Memorial's director of collections, discusses contemporary research on the life of George Washington. Free. Visit www.washingtonbirthday.net or call 703-829-6640 for more information.

Annual Birthday Gala.

5:30-9:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Dr. Black tie affair, featuring The presentation of the George Washington Memorial Award. \$125. Visit www.washingtonbirthday.net or call 703-829-6640 for more information.

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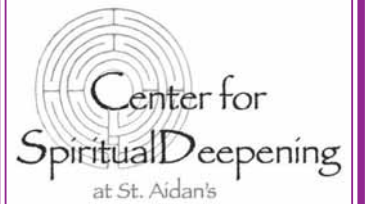
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Denise Levertov:

Poet, Prophet, Pilgrim

February 22, 7:30-9:00 pm

Dana Greene

Denise Levertov is a modern poet who combined a commitment to a poetic vocation with engagement in the social justice issues of her day. In lecture and meditation, we will ponder her life and her poetry. Dana Greene is dean emerita of Oxford College of Emory University and author of biographies of Denise Levertov, Evelyn Underhill and Maisie Ward.

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Eco-Savvy Symposium. 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn why plant and animal life biodiversity is critical to a healthy ecosystem and what can be done to bring diversity to your own backyard. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/.

The Lee-Fendall House as Civil War Hospital. 10 a.m. at the Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. “This Tide of Wounded” tour of the museum and grounds highlights the Lee-Fendall House’s role as a hospital during the Civil War. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Call 703-548-1789 or visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

SOUPer Saturday. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St. Hundreds of ceramic pots and bowls donated by Torpedo Factory artists. For \$20, get a bowl and a voucher for a cup of chowder from the Chart House. All proceeds benefit United Community Ministries and their programs serving families in the community. For more, contact Stephen Lally at 703-819-9990 or email slallypottery@gmail.com.

Historic Candy Story. 11 a.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Susan Benjamin is the founder of True Treats Candy, the nation’s only historic candy company, and will highlight African American history via the sugarcane industry. \$10. Call 703-746-4356 for more.

Experiences of Slavery. 2 p.m. at the Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. “From Slavery to Freedom,” this tour interprets the Lee-Fendall House from the perspective of its enslaved inhabitants, exploring the experiences of slavery in the city. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org or call 703-548-1789 for more.

Photo Exhibit and Concert. 6:15 p.m. at Chapel of Mt Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. The Ars Nova Chamber Orchestra will play the music of Prokofiev, Grieg. There will be an open house for a black and white photographic series “Sanctuary” of Huntley Meadows Park, plus a preview of new mosaic art, both by Nina Tisara. Free. Email music@mvuc.org for more.

FEB. 18-19

Presidents Day Breakfast Sampler. 9 a.m.-noon at George Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway. Join “General Washington” for a sample of hoecakes prepared by Mount Vernon staff. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more.

Visit with George Washington. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Hwy. Mingle with costumed characters from George Washington’s world, followed by an 18th-century dancing demonstration, birthday cake and wreath laying ceremony. Adults, \$20; children ages 6-11, \$10; and children under 5 free. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Revolutionary War Reenactment. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Learn about a soldier’s life, see authentic weaponry and uniforms from the Revolution. Watch an actual battle between British and Colonial troops. Free. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/FortWard for more.

Top 10 Plants for the Garden. 1:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Horticulturists Karen Rexrode and Keith Tomlinson of Meadowlark Gardens and Judy Zatsick discuss their favorites. \$10. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/

greenspring/ for more.
Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Concert. 3-5 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Pianist Thomas Pandolfi playing Paderewski’s Piano Concerto in A Minor, and Duke Ellington’s The River. \$20; children 8 and under are free. Visit www.wmpamusic.org.

Barbershop Harmony Concert. 3 p.m. at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. The 30-member Harmony Heritage Singers present a concert of popular songs. Free. Call 703-765-4779 or email gronbrandt@gmail.com.

Surreal Artist Lecture. 4 p.m. at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Hear Peter Stern talk about the process he employs and the experiences he’s had piloting his own ultralight plane over a variety of landscapes and creating the magical images in Surreal. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

MONDAY/FEB. 20

George Washington’s Birthday. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at George Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway. Celebrate the national observance of George Washington’s Birthday by visiting his home and burial site free of charge on this day, and watch a variety of activities. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more.

Wreath Laying Ceremony. 11 a.m.-noon at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution, at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax St. Join the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution as they host colonial military and civilians to honor the soldiers of the Revolution. Free. Visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/GWbday for more.

TUESDAY/FEB. 21

Winter Gardening Lecture. 7-8:30 p.m. at the Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. Learn early season practices that will save you time, money and labor. Free. Email mgarlalex@gmail.com or call 703-228-6414 for more.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 22

Childrens Party for George. 3:30-4:30 p.m. at Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. A party for children in honor of George Washington’s real birthday including reenactors of George Mason, John Carlyle, GW’s stablemaster and houndmaster. Visit alexlibraryva.org or call 703-746-1705 for more.

FEB. 23-APRIL 2

The Hand Print Workshop. Various times at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Dennis O’Neil’s Hand Print Workshop exhibit features a wide representation of the prints created by these artists in his Alexandria studio, including some by William Christenberry and Renee Stout, as well as works by O’Neil himself. Opening Reception, Sunday, Feb. 26, 4-6 p.m. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

THURSDAY/FEB. 23

Starving the South. 7:30 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Andrew F. Smith discusses his book “Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War,” and sign books. \$10. Call 703-746-4994, or visit www.alexandriahistory.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 24

CAC Hats Off Gala. 7-10 p.m. at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767

Take Advantage of These Restaurant Week Deals

BY HOPE NELSON
THE GAZETTE

Alexandria’s winter Restaurant Week returns for another year from Feb. 17-26, allowing diners to experience special menus and special deals from a passel of the city’s best restaurants. Here are a few must-tries that are off the beaten path.

Café Pizzaiolo, 1623 Fern St.

This pizza purveyor near Fairlington doesn’t need a Restaurant Week stint to boost its popularity, but a \$35-for-two menu doesn’t hurt all the same. While the prix-fixe menu doesn’t offer all of Pizzaiolo’s favorites, it does highlight some of the restaurant’s hallmarks and just might introduce you to an item you haven’t tried before.

APPETITE The eponymous Pizzaiolo Salad, for instance, is worth your time on or off the week’s special menu. With peppers and tomato caprese atop a bed of mixed greens and finished off with some Parmesan, the salad is an interesting number bite for bite and one that you’ll want to come back for on its own as an entrée another time. For an entrée, choose between the salmon with risotto or a Neapolitan-style pizza topped with sausage — and honestly, as a party of two, why not try both?

Finish off the meal with some gelato or tiramisu and you’ve hit all the major food groups for the evening — and have perhaps found some new go-tos along the way.

Bastille, 606 N. Fayette St.

Walk into Bastille and there’s a near-instant feeling of upper-echelon French dining in a comfortable, unpretentious atmosphere. Add in the celebratory feelings of Restaurant Week and you’ve got an evening to remember.

Unlike other Restaurant Week participants, Bastille offers up an extensive version of a prix-fixe menu for its dinnertime selection. Rather than choosing from a couple of options, the café hosts a wide array

King St. Benefit to help child abuse victims and vulnerable families in the City of Alexandria. Visit www.centerforalexandriaschildren.org or call 703-746-6043 for more.

Blessed Sacrament Concert. 7:30 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 W. Braddock Road. Director of Music, John McCrary will conduct the Blessed Sacrament Festival Chorus and Orchestra. Email jmccrary@blessed-sacramentcc.org or call 703-998-6100 x103 for more.

Todd Snider Concert. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. Nashville gonzo outlaw music. Visit www.birchmere.com for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

Black History Month Speaker. 9-11 a.m. at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Road. C.R. Gibbs will be the featured speaker for Boy Scout Troop 1906 talking on “Let Your Motto Be Resistance, Great Slave Revolts.” Visit www.bethlehemofalexandria.org/ for more.

The Will to Adorn Workshop. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. The Will to Adorn: African American Diversity, Style, and Identity. Free. Email black.history@alexandriava.gov, or call 703-746-4356 for more.

Winter Birds and Feeder

Workshop noon-2 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Learn about the birds that call Huntley Meadows Park and your backyard home during winter. Learn how to identify winter birds through calls, games and activities. Children must be accompanied by an adult registered in the program. \$8 county residents, \$10 non-county. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park for more.

Civil War Winter Drill Day. 1-4 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Members of the 3rd U.S. Regular Infantry, Company K, will interpret the life of the Union soldier on Civil War in the winter. Visit www.fortward.org or call 703-746-4848 for more.

Annual Black History Month Gala. 7 p.m. at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, 5000 Seminary Road. Keynote speaker is Dr. Stedman Graham. He will speak on the 2017 National Black History Month Theme: The Crisis in Black Education. Visit www.vabhma.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 26

Deer and the Garden. 1:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Author and garden expert Ruth Clausen shares some

of favorites to mix and match. For an appetizer, try the cheese board or the beignets de crevettes (savory breaded shrimp “beignets”). The main course offers an array of options for nearly every palate, ranging from French standard Coq au Vin in a deep red wine sauce to an Angus beef hangar steak with — what else? — French fries alongside. Vegetarians won’t be left out, either; a sunchoke and spinach risotto seems sure to hit the spot.

Bastille’s dessert menu is extensive, but you could do worse than the crème caramel with bourbon raisin compote. Bon appetit!

Lena’s Wood-Fired Pizza and Tap, 401 E. Braddock Road

While dinnertime options often get top billing during Restaurant Week, many participants offer a prix-fixe lunch, as well — for a lower price. This helps diners maximize their tasting menus for a more reasonable price — and maybe stretch their dollar across several eateries, too.

It’s safe to say that Lena’s lunchtime menu rivals its dinnertime selection and in a few cases even edges out the latter. The polenta fries alone put a point in the luncheon column; the light-and-airy yet substantive-and-hearty polenta cakes are a mainstay at Lena’s, and to omit them from your plate would be a crime. (Note also that said polenta fries aren’t offered on the dinner Restaurant Week menu — choose your timing wisely.)

Dive into a half-panini with soup or salad for a main course; the meatball Panini stars Lena’s famous giant meatball, which is as advertised, and served with marinara sauce and provolone on a hoagie roll. Or for something less protein-heavy, go with the vegetable Panini, which sports an array of roasted veggies such as eggplant, portabella, sweet peppers, and more accompanied by pesto and mozzarella and nestled in focaccia bread.

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

beautiful shrubs, annuals and perennials that deer usually ignore, and signs her book on “50 Beautiful Deer-Resistant Plants.” \$10. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ for more.

Secretive Marsh Birds. 2 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Join several area audubon clubs, the Northern Virginia Bird Club and the Virginia Society of Ornithology. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/sh/direct.htm or call 703-765-3645 for more.

Locals Highlight Black History. 2 p.m. at the Lee Center Richard Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St. Program features the recognition of three former employees: Lawrence “Lucky” Elliott, Traverse Gray, and Jackie Mason for their more than four decades of service to the Alexandria community. Call 703-746-5402 or email Mac Slover, Regional Program Director, at mac.slover@alexandriava.gov.

FocusMusic. 7 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Scott Ainslie and Reggie Harris in concert. \$18/\$15 for advance sales and members. Call 703-380-3151, or visit www.focusmusic.org/buy-tickets.

ENTERTAINMENT

'China In My Eyes' Opens at NOVA

Just in time for the Chinese New Year, the Alexandria Campus Library in partnership with the Confucius Institute at George Mason University opened a photography exhibit titled "China in My Eyes" on Feb. 1. Seventy photographs captured by 28 photographers take viewers on a journey through China, displaying scenes from the everyday life of ordinary Chinese citizens while capturing an array of emotions and experiences.

After NOVA's Associate Dean Matt Todd, Lucia Claster, deputy director of the Confucius Institute, and Dr. Monika Hoffarth-Zelloe, curator of the exhibit, delivered welcoming remarks, the guests were invited to sample Chinese tea and snacks while viewing the exhibit. Almost 100 students, faculty, friends of the Confucius Institute, friends of the Library and community patrons attended the event. Several of the photographers, ranging from Mason students, faculty, staff and local residents, were present at the grand opening and offered personal insights into the significance of their photographs.

Natascha Zelloe, a college student and native of Alexandria, said she wanted to capture the simplicity of daily Chinese life in her photographs.

The exhibit also promotes the library's wide collection of materials on Chinese culture, art, history and language and remains on display through March 6.



Lucia Claster, deputy director of the Confucius Institute; Zhongya Liu, teacher at Confucius Institute; Dr. Monika Hoffarth-Zelloe, curator; and Yan Pan, teacher at Confucius Institute



Natascha Zelloe, photographer and a student from Alexandria.



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Delight in our HomeLifeStyle sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun pages, the third week of every month.

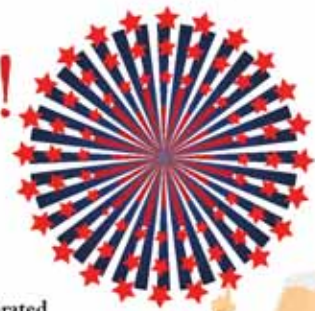
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Mount Vernon Gazette

FIRST NIGHT ALEXANDRIA

THE 31ST DAY OF DECEMBER, 2016

HUZZAH!
THANK YOU!



First Night in Alexandria celebrated its 22nd birthday on December 31st. First Night Alexandria relies on the generosity of area businesses and individuals to throw the largest family-friendly, best date night, budget-friendly New Year's Eve celebration through the performing arts in the region! The sale of admission badges covers less than one-half of the annual cost to produce the event. In addition to the many goods and services provided pro bono or far below retail, \$260,000 is needed to cover the expense of First Night Alexandria, including all the great performers. These businesses and individuals make it all possible.

We are grateful for their generosity and hope you too will thank them by doing business with them.



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FirstNightAlexandria.org

OPINION

From ICE Sweep to State Budget

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE SENATOR (D-36)



Crossover week of the 2017 Session came to a close as we finished initial action on over 3,000 bills. Twenty-two of my bills were passed by the Senate and moved on to the House of Delegates.

My two Saturday Town Hall meetings had the largest crowds I have seen in eight years. There was significant concern regarding federal immigration raids on U.S. 1. On Friday, I received alarming reports that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had arrested numerous Latinos in a raid on U.S. 1. While the deportation of convicted felons has been consistent policy, random street sweeps and arrest or deportations of law-abiding residents is unprecedented in our community. I will work to get better information and seek to stop these actions.

Other questions focused on affordable housing, education funding, water quality, addressing the opioid crisis, respecting LGBTQ rights, proliferation of out-of-state license plates, and concerns about fracking. You can watch videos of both town halls on my YouTube channel.

On Monday, we heard a spirited debate on the regulation of short-term rentals by services such as AirBNB. Since we considered legislation last year, I heard concerns from numerous residents about residences being effectively used as hotel or movie studios. The bill we passed reaffirms local government's authority to regulate temporary rentals and fine owners who fail to pay occupancy taxes for renting property to multiple tenants over 30-days per year.

On Thursday, we passed the Senate Amendments to the State Budget. I am pleased that the Senate Budget Amendments provided unconditional matching funds for a two-percent raise for our teachers. These funds, coupled with other amend-

ments would result in an additional \$18.5 million for Fairfax County Public Schools, \$26.6 million for Prince William County Public Schools and \$7.1 million for Stafford County Public Schools.

Unfortunately, the Senate has proposed to cut about \$6 million from the Governor's proposed budget to improve operation of our election system. Last year, Virginia's voter registration system failed on the last day of voter registration due to Virginians attempting to register to vote. The Governor's proposed funding would have solved this problem. I will work to ensure it is restored.

On Thursday, my two pedestrian and cycling safety bills acquired a bit of a "fever" on the House side of the Chamber. Biking and pedestrian safety is a major problem in the United States, Virginia and the 36th District. Nationwide bike and pedestrian fatalities are rising faster than average. In Virginia, pedestrian fatalities were up 51 percent in 2016. That kind of increase is not an aberration.

My legislation to clarify the use of bike lanes and specifically prohibit the use of bike lanes to pass cars was killed in a House Transportation Subcommittee by one vote. Members were concerned that it would be "confusing" to drivers. I argued that driver education and signage would solve the problem, but was not persuasive.

My legislation to create a new standard and new penalties for seriously injuring a "vulnerable user" was sent to the House Courts Committee which previously killed a similar bill. Hopefully, I will have better luck.

This week, my legislation to generate better information regarding coal ash regulation will be up for vote along with most of my other bills in the House of Delegates.

As always, if you have any feedback, drop me a note at scott@scottsurovell.org. Also, please complete my constituent survey at www.scottsurovell.org/survey if you have not done so yet. It is an honor to serve as your state senator.

Hilina Bekele, of Alexandria, has been placed on the dean's list in recognition of academic excellence during the fall 2016 semester at New River Community College (Dublin, Va.)

Lucy Von Fahnstock, a resident of Alexandria and graduate of West Potomac High School, was named to the fall 2016 dean's list at University of Dayton (Dayton, Ohio).

Georgia Stenberg, a freshman at Bethel University (St. Paul, Minn.), was named to the dean's list for academic excellence for the fall 2016 semester.

Matthew Lynch of Alexandria, recently received a Bachelor of Science degree from Frostburg State University (Frostburg, Md.)

Curtis Giles of Alexandria, recently received a Master's Degree degree from Frostburg State University (Frostburg, Md.)

Raven Moses of Alexandria, was named to the dean's list at Saint Joseph's University (Philadelphia, Pa.) for the fall 2016 semester.

Grace Johanna Webber was named to the dean's list at William Jewell College (Liberty, Mo.) for the 2016 fall semester.

Mallory Gerndt of Alexandria, has been honored to the fall 2016 dean's list at Newberry College (Newberry, S.C.).

Elections Matter

BY ADAM EBBIN
STATE SENATOR (D-30)



As a member of the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee, I support fair, open and efficient elections, which are fundamental to the maintenance of bedrock democratic principles. After a hotly contested presidential election, and leading into statewide elections, this is a good time for an update on the state of Virginia election law.

Several proposed Constitutional amendments, bills and budget items concerning voter registration, absentee voting, redistricting reform, and the responsibilities of the Department of Elections have been making their way through the General Assembly. If enacted, they would have a profound impact on future elections.

COMMENTARY

Last October, the House and Senate Committees on Privileges and Elections jointly held a five-and-a-half hour hearing regarding Virginia's readiness for the 2016 election. Republican committee members expressed grievances regarding voter registration, placing blame on election officials, despite declining to fund past budget proposals for the department during the 2016 session. These funding increases would have addressed technical issues with the online portal known as the Virginia Election & Registration Information System (VERIS).

Days later, VERIS crashed.

This prompted a federal judge to extend the voter registration deadline, and Gov. Terry McAuliffe to propose \$3.9 million in much-needed funds for the administration of elections. This funding request provided senators and delegates an opportunity to ensure the implementation of critical upgrades to our election systems, by funding our elections technology and staff. The budget adopted by the House of Delegates included the proposed funding. However, the Senate budget removed this funding, stripping allocations for VERIS improvements, and even removed money for printing additional voter registration forms and absentee ballots. This included declining to approve \$2 million to replace federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds that will expire later this year. HAVA funds currently cover 60 percent of the Department of Elections operating budget.

I spoke against this action on the Senate floor arguing that removing this funding is a drastic cut that will undermine the ability of the department to complete its critical mission of ensuring the integrity of our elections process.

Several pieces of legislation to improve access to the ballot box were introduced by my Democratic colleagues and myself. Sen. George Barker (D-Fairfax), Sen. Jennifer Wexton (D-Loudoun), and I all introduced legislation to allowing senior citizens to vote absentee. Sen. Lynwood Lewis (D-Accomack) worked to repeal Virginia's restrictive voter ID laws enacted

in 2013. I also worked to expand the availability of early voting to all Virginians. Unfortunately all of these measures were defeated along party lines in committee.

Instead, legislation passed the Senate that would place burdens on voters and our electoral system. A bill introduced by Sen. Amanda Chase (R-Chesterfield) would require voters to submit a photocopy of their photo ID when applying for an absentee ballot. The logic behind this is faulty, as the stated purpose for requiring photo IDs at polling places is to verify the voter's identity. But, when elections officials receive copies of photo IDs in the mail, they have nothing to compare the photocopied likeness to. This is a pointless exercise, and a barrier for some. Nevertheless, this legislation passed the Senate along party lines and has also passed out of committee in the House.

The Senate Finance Committee was provided with an opportunity to extend funding for activities to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the voter rolls. However, they declined to approve money that would support list maintenance, including, removal of deceased individuals, felons, and noncitizens from the rolls, checking for duplicate registrations for those still registered in their state of previous residence.

Another bill (SB1581) would require local voter registrars to annually verify Social Security numbers of each registered voter, despite this information being already verified by the state during a voter's initial registration.

The full Senate passed a budget and legislation that inhibits smooth engagement in the electoral process. Chesterfield County Registrar Lawrence C. Haake, who has served over 20 years as the Chesterfield registrar was quoted in the Richmond Times Dispatch as saying "I'm not sure the General Assembly understands the importance of what they are doing, [they are] not supporting elections in the Commonwealth by taking that money."

There is still hope that this funding would be restored as the House and Senate budgets are reconciled by a conference committee. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Chris Jones (R-Suffolk), seemed to confirm this sentiment, saying "There's nothing more essential than the conduct of our elections."

I will work with budget conferees toward a final budget that prioritizes the bedrock democratic principle of fair, open and efficient elections by sufficiently funding our election system. Thankfully, Governor McAuliffe is likely to veto all legislation that adds hurdles to participating in the democratic process. I pledge my vote to uphold such vetos.

Please consider following me on Twitter @AdamEbbin, emailing your views to me at district30@senate.virginia.gov and visiting AdamEbbin.com.

It is my continued honor to serve the people of the 30th District.

SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

Phoebe Otchere, of Alexandria, named to the dean's list for the fall semester 2016 at Youngstown State University (Youngstown, Ohio).

Kerrienne Mazur, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2016 dean's list at The University of Scranton (Scranton, Pa.).

Morgan S. Braswell and William B. Danskine, of Alexandria, made the scholastic honor roll for the fall term at Oregon State University (Corvallis, Ore.).

Tyler Kelly, of Alexandria, was named to the dean's list for the fall 2016 term at Springfield College (Springfield, Mass.).

Phillip Faig, of Alexandria, earned a doctor of ministry diploma at George Fox University (Newberg, Ore.) in December.

Anastasia Carolyn Espejo Voellm, of Alexandria, made the dean's list at Baylor University (Waco, Texas).

21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE

The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking bids for Roof Replacement at Charles Barrett Elementary School.

Sealed Bids with the notation ITB # 17-02-01, Roof Replacement at Charles Barrett Elementary School will be received in the Central Procurement Office, 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 620, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, on or before 3:00 pm, Friday March 9, 2017. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock stamp in the Procurement office. Bids appropriately received will be opened and the names of the firms responding will be read aloud. ITB documents may be obtained at the above Procurement Office or by calling 703-619-8162, or by downloading the ITB from the ACPS website at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/financial-services/purchasing/>

All questions must be submitted before 3:00 p.m., March 1, 2017. If necessary, an addendum will be issued and posted to the ACPS web site.

A pre-bid conference/site visit will be held on February 22, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the address listed above.

No ITB may be withdrawn for a period of ninety (90) days after the opening of bids except as may be set forth in the ITB.

ACPS reserves the right to cancel this ITB and/or reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities in any bid.

Gerald W. Amacker (Jerry)
Senior Buyer

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ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS NUMBER 17-01-04

The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking responses from qualified Offerors interested in Design Build Services for the New West End Elementary School.

There is a non-mandatory pre-conference being held on February 23, 2017 at 11:00 AM, at the Alexandria City Public Schools Central Office, located at 1340 Braddock Place, in Conference Room 620-1, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

Sealed Responses with the notation RFQ# 17-01-04 Design/Build West End Elementary, will be received in the Central Procurement Office, 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 620, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, on or before 3:00 pm, March 10, 2017. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock stamp in the Procurement office. Responses appropriately received will be opened and the names of the firms responding will be read aloud. RFQ documents may be obtained at the above Procurement Office or by calling 703-619-8343, or by downloading the RFQ from the ACPS website at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/financial-services/purchasing/>, after registration on the Vendor Self Service system.

All questions must be submitted before 4:30 p.m., on February 28, 2017. If necessary, an addendum will be issued and posted to the ACPS web site.

No RFQ may be withdrawn for a period of ninety (90) days after the opening of proposals except as may be set forth in the RFP.

ACPS reserves the right to cancel this RFQ and/or reject any or all applications and to waive any informalities in any response.

Sharon T. Lewis M.P.S., CPPB, VCO
Director of Procurement & General Services

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**THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS**

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OBITUARY

Charlene Myers died on January 24, 2017 at her home in Alexandria, VA. Born February 25, 1927 at the Dukes Memorial Hospital, Peru, IN. Daughter of William Roy Myers and Mary Sullivan Myers. While living an idyllic childhood on the family farm she completed twelve grades at the Jefferson Township School in 1945. This was followed by graduation in 1949 from Butler University. Study continued upon receiving a Kellogg Foundation Scholarship to study and internship in Pathology Chemical Laboratory Medicine at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Lafayette, IN under Dr. James MacFadden, Director of Pathology. In January 1952, she began what was to become an interesting 46-year employment at the Alexandria Hospital in Alexandria, VA. The first 26 years was as Chief Medical Technologist under Laboratory Director Richard E. Palmer, MD. Upon his retirement, she began employment in the Finance Department as a purchasing agent. Following retirement in 1998, she enjoyed being with old friends, St. Pauls Episcopal Church, concerts and traveled. She was preceded in death by her only sibling, William Henry (Bill) Myers in 2009. Survivors are beloved niece and nephew; Anne Elizabeth Myers Neitzke (Robert) her son Robert Maxwell (Max), and daughter Lola Elizabeth of Indianapolis, IN. John William Myers, daughter Elise Jaleh and Libby Marie of Dayton, OH.

Decedent requested no funeral service. Interment in the Eel River Chapel Cemetery, Peru, IN will be the final resting place.

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Obituary

Robert (Bobby) J. Bixler, III, 66, died unexpectedly Tuesday February 7, 2017 in Alexandria, VA. Bobby was born January 5, 1951 at Fort Belvoir, VA. He lived his entire life in the Mount Vernon area. He graduated from Mount Vernon High School in 1970 and started his career working as the head bartender at the NCO and Officers Clubs at Fort Belvoir. He retired in 2014 from the Army and Airforce Exchange Service as a lead warehouse worker at Fort Belvoir after 44 years of service. Bobby enjoyed all sports especially the Washington Redskins and the Nationals. He played softball and golf until his knees made the game not fun anymore. He enjoyed going to a local bar and grill to play darts and pool and have a few drinks with his friends. Bobby was preceded in death by his parents Robert and Margarethe Bixler. Bobby never married and is survived by four siblings: Elizabeth Bormman (Louis) of Shawnee, KS, Margarethe Fuller (Terry) of Alexandria, VA, James P. Bixler and Samuel Bixler of Tonganoxie, KS; one nephew, Michael Fuller of Tampa, FL, and two nieces, Christine Wolfe of Overland Park, KS, and Kristy Collins of Pasadena, MD. Bobby was cremated and will be buried at a later date with family and friends at Mount Comfort Cemetery in Alexandria.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Storage Line of Virginia, LLC (t/a APT Storage), Box 767, Haymarket, VA 20168, pursuant to the assertion of a lien for rental of a storage unit, will hold a public auction for the sale of all goods in storage unit #407B to take place at 11:30 am on Thursday, February 23, 2017, at storage unit #407B located at Sacramento Square, 5401 Claymont Dr, Alexandria, VA 22309, to satisfy the lien. All terms of the sale are cash. Call 800-217-4280 for questions.

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OBITUARY



Jean (Anderson) Raabe, 85, died peacefully at home on January 30, 2017 in Alexandria, VA, with her husband Mark and sister Alice at her side. Jean was successfully treated for lung cancer for more than eight years and died of complications which included rapidly progressing dementia. She had in-home hospice care for two weeks but she cheerfully attended a worship service in her downtown church and a string quartet concert at NIH the week before she died.

Jean was born in Aberdeen, South Dakota in 1931, the oldest of four children of Dewar and Elizabeth (Davies) Anderson. Her family moved to Truman, Minnesota, and later to Madelia, Minnesota, where she was Salutatorian of the class of 1949 and the Homecoming Queen. She obtained her teaching degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. Jean taught Home Economics for three years in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota before marrying Mark Raabe in 1956. They began their more than 60-year marriage in San Diego, where Mark was stationed on a Navy ship and where she continued her teaching career.

In 1958, the couple moved to Alexandria, Virginia. Jean immediately began taking teaching assignments until she started full-time at Wakefield High School in Arlington where she taught Home Economics for more than 25 years. Jean loved teaching and her students gave every indication of loving her. She led innovative programs in foods and child development classes, that combined her passions for cooking, nutrition, and the teaching and care of children. It was a time when boys began taking Home Ec. In 1967, a Washington Post reporter visited her classroom with an even mix of girls and boys and described Jean as "a tiny woman with a wide smile and an uncanny knack of keeping her teenage charges interested and enthusiastic." A year later, another newspaper account quoted Jean saying, "Boys add a lot to a foods class, and I don't just mean their appetites.... they're interested and enjoy it so. They're more willing to experiment with a recipe and try new things. They'll give you an argument to defend something they've done." After retiring, she volunteered weekly, teaching teenage mothers how to cook in the Alternatives for Parenting Teens Program. Jean was active in her professional groups, the Northern Region of the Virginia Association Family and Consumer Sciences, and the Potomac Home Economists. She was also a member of the Arlington Retired Teachers Association.

After Jean retired, she and Mark purchased a 100-year-old cabin, with a guest cabin, on Woman Lake in northern Minnesota. For the past twenty-five years, they have welcomed many friends and family, especially all their beloved great nieces and nephews, and they have hosted many special family gatherings there. Jean learned how to fish, and she enjoyed catching more and larger walleyes than her husband during their special evening times together on the lake with glorious sunsets.

Jean and Mark traveled extensively with many of their trips focusing on nature, wildlife and birds. In 1973, when bluebird populations were down by 90%, and declining, Jean spotted the couple's first bluebird near Antietam National Battlefield where they had a weekend cabin. This led them to becoming charter members of The North American Bluebird Society, the establishment and monitoring of a100 nest box trail on the Battlefield, and the fledging of more than 10,000 Eastern Bluebirds over 37 years.

Jean was an early volunteer and passionate supporter of The Children's Inn at NIH, a nonprofit residence for families and their children who are participating in pediatric research at the NIH. She also served for many years on the Board of and volunteered at Community Family Life Services, a nonprofit providing a network of social services for low income and homeless families.

Jean was a faithful longtime member of First Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Washington, DC, served as an Elder, and participated in many service activities of the congregation.

Jean loved beautiful music, and she and Mark were regulars at concerts of the National Symphony Orchestra and the Manchester String Quartet. She also loved flowers, growing them along with vegetables in her Antietam garden.

Jean will be remembered for many good things, but above all, for her abundant kindness and her generosity towards anyone in need. She was considerate of every person in her life and earned the admiration of those who met her. She held keen insights and strong morals, which she was undaunted in sharing, but she never judged others who believed differently. She was a gracious and generous host, creating environments of comfort, beauty, fine food, and delightful conversation. When Jean told a story, she would captivate the entire room. She was attentive and devoted to her family, making every child and adult feel honored and adored.

Jean is survived by her loving husband of more than 60 years, Mark Raabe, with whom she shared her life completely. She is also survived by her brother Steven (Patricia) Anderson; sisters Alice (Bob) Morrice and Margaret (Dick) Jacobs; brother-in-law Bob Raabe; sister-in-law Rita (Larry) Williams; 17 nieces and nephews; and 26 "greats" (great-nieces and nephews).

A memorial service is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 25, at First Trinity Lutheran Church, 309 E St., NW, Washington, DC.

A second memorial service will be held on June 3rd in Minnesota at their lake cabin on Woman Lake.

All are welcome to attend and celebrate Jean's life. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to The Children's Inn at NIH, 7 West Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814 (designate the Jean and Mark Raabe Education Endowment Fund), or online at www.childrensinn.org/donate; or to CFLS, 305 E St., NW, Washington, DC 20001 or online at www.cflsdc.org/donate.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the provision of section 4-1-16 of the code of the City of Alexandria, the Alexandria Police Department located at 3600 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 is now in possession of unclaimed bicycles, mopeds, lawn equipment, money, scooters, and other items. All persons having valid claim to the property should file a claim to the property with reasonable proof of ownership or the items will be sold, destroyed, converted or donated. For a complete listing go to <http://alexandriava.gov/police/> and contact the Police Property Section at (703) 746-6709.

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NEWS

\$4.10 Billion Budget

FROM PAGE 3

year has been in the the leisure, hospitality and retail sectors, lower paying categories. Job growth in the generally higher-paying sectors of information services and cybersecurity have lost ground. According to the county's data, this slower economic growth and fewer higher-paying jobs have begun depleting the county's coffers, while demand for services, as exemplified by the 2016 Fairfax County Human Services Needs Assessment, is on the rise.

Fairfax County's high office vacancy rate is also having a negative impact on the budget. According to Long, of 116.4 million square feet of office space in the county, more than 20 million still sits empty. Even more worrying on this front, studies show that 73 percent of the the region's office space is obsolete and just can't meet the technology and work space demands of today's business marketplace.

Long also produced statistics that show the local housing market still underperforming against the nation's figures during 2016. With so much of the county's revenues relying on real estate taxes, it doesn't help matters when more than half of the 342,000 residences in the area saw no change or a decrease in their property's assessed value.

Still unknown in the final budget evaluation is what effect the state's yet-to-be-approved budget will have, as well as uncertainties surrounding the new federal administration.

The board's next budget committee meeting is on Feb. 21.

SUPERVISOR Pat Herrity (Springfield) said in a statement: "It is again obvious by today's proposed budget that we desperately need to do something about our unsustainable pension costs. ... I believe it's time we refocus on our priorities like public safety, congestion relieving ... teachers' salaries, and helping those most in need, and not balance the budget on the backs of either our taxpayers or our employees. ...The only way to fund our requirements

is to set and fund priorities and reduce elsewhere."

McKay and Supervisor John Cook (Braddock District) both expressed concern about figures showing that those least able to afford it seem to be facing the largest property assessment increases. McKay noted that in his district Habitat for Humanity housing ranked number three for the largest assessment increases in the area and questioned Long on "the math." Long had no ready answer for this particular example, but promised that staff would look into the matter.

Cook questioned if the county executive had looked at inequalities and potential savings in programs like those that provide after-school care for all children at no cost, "even the children of millionaires who could afford to pay." As for the lack of economic growth in the area, Cook said, "It's been 12 years since we had more than 3 percent growth in the county. It's time for the people across the river to stop this silly stuff and see to growth."

Public hearings will be held at the Government Center on on April 4, 5 and 6. Those wishing to speak must sign up in advance.

The supervisors will be holding town hall meetings in their districts, and Long has committed to be in attendance to present the budget proposal directly to the public, and hear the public's response and suggestions.

The Board of Supervisors' meetings are recorded and available on the Fairfax County government website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov. Information about the meetings in each district is also available there, or call the local supervisor's office directly for more information. The entire Advertised Budget Proposal presentation is also online. Citizens are also encouraged to participate in an online chat with Long on Feb. 24 from 3 - 4p.m. A link leading to a question submission for the chat can be found at the end of the "5 Things to Know About the FY 2018 Budget" on the county website.

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dents partici-
pated in the
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tute in
Richmond to



learn how government works. Named after former state Sen. Toddy Puller, the institute is designed for students who live in Virginia's 36th senate district and offers the opportunity for students to watch the legislative process at work in the state senate and house chambers, committees, to meet with policy makers, and to tour historic state facilities, including the state Capitol. Amanda Ghiloni, Malcom Johnson, Celia Lane, Mary Peterson, Jacob Ramari, and Mark Weil learned about Virginia's state government alongside their state senator, Scott Surovell. Students are selected based on their leadership skills, work ethic, and interest in state government.

2

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COMING SOON

**9504 Lynnhall Pl.
\$1,099,000**

Stately Colonial!

Prime location near river in prestigious Oxford. Home was crafted with the finest materials & workmanship resulting in true

custom masterpiece. Features include: High ceilings, glass window walls, exquisite trim work, open floor plan, two story family room with stone fireplace, library on main level with full bath attached would make excellent master, oversize 2 car garage, fenced grounds with custom pool, decks and patios.



COMING SOON

4301 Adrienne Dr.

Southwood Gem!

Fabulous customized home in prime Southwood location just off the GW Parkway. Stunning family room with dramatic cathedral ceiling and floor to ceiling stone fireplace. Other features include: updated custom kitchen, hardwood floors, updated baths & oversize 2 car garage. Gorgeous grounds include, stone patio & large fenced back yard.



1604 Baltimore Rd.

\$899,000

Unique Opportunity in Waynewood School area! Best price new construction in Ft. Hunt area! Total renovation and addition totaling

approximately 3,500 sq ft of top quality construction. Features include: stunning open floor plan, high ceilings, 4/5 BR's, 3.5 Baths, luxury master suite, amazing chef's kitchen and two car garage. Patio & large fenced rear yard. Can't be duplicated close to this price! Super Value!



NEW PRICE!

4214 Robertson Blvd

\$605,000

Super Spacious!

Exceptional opportunity. Remarkably reasonable price for 6

Bedroom, 3 Bath home in the Heart of Mt. Vernon. Features include: 3,400 sq ft living area, hardwood floors, updated kitchen, and oversize two car garage. Fabulous screen porch overlooks fenced rear yard. Truly special property!



4601 Cornwallis Ct.

\$475,000

VALUE!

Unique opportunity!

Three level home with rare detached two car garage for under \$500k! Home is in excellent, move in condition. Oversize two car garage has huge second level which creates many potential uses. Prime location on level half acre corner lot. Combination of features that can't be duplicated at this price!



8417 Plymouth Rd.

\$1,399,000

New Build!!

New Nelson II model on half acre lot in Plymouth Haven. 3525 square feet on

two main levels plus fully finished basement and 2 or 3 car garage. Open floor plan, high ceilings, upgrades throughout. Finished recreation room & bathroom in Basement. Pre-construction contract offers maximum opportunity to customize! \$10,000 towards closing costs! (Using approved lender)



CONTRACT

**5427 Grist Mill Woods Way
\$899,000**

Stunning 5,686 sq ft Colonial featuring dramatic open floor plan, large room sizes,

soaring high ceilings, and modern amenities typically found in \$1 Mil+ properties. Features include: 3 Fin levels, walk out lower level, 5BR's, 4.5BA's, Chef's kitchen, upgraded trim, hardwood floors, & 2 car garage. Custom deck and brick patio capitalize on gorgeous fenced grounds backing to park.



CONTRACT

9027 Mcnair Dr.

\$585,000

Fabulous Home!

Spacious grounds and updated home in pristine condition on half acre lot. Features include: open floor plan, updated

kitchen, hardwood floors, thermal windows, fireplace, custom screened porch with cathedral ceiling overlooks private rear grounds. Surrounded by Country Club grounds and beautiful 75 acre Grist Mill Park!



CONTRACT

4221 Dandridge Terr

\$598,500

Beautifully Updated!

Priced to sell - fabulously updated home in Southwood, one of the area's premier communities. Features include: 4 BR's, 2.5 updated baths, stunning Chef's kitchen open to family room with stone fireplace, hardwood floors, and side load 2 car garage, custom deck overlooks fenced rear yard. Nothing like it for under \$600,000!



CONTRACT

**9419 Mt. Vernon Cir
\$998,500**

One time opportunity to acquire true estate caliber property in Mt Vernon on the Potomac- the only community in the area with a

private marina for the exclusive use of its' residents. Imposing residence with many custom touches including open foyer with double curved stairway, custom white brick exterior, high ceilings and spacious room sizes. Columned veranda overlooks pool.



SOLD

9314 Craig Ave.

\$635,000

Pristine Condition!

Truly exquisite property! Spacious 5 Bedroom home on gorgeous, fenced level lot in premier location.

Numerous features include: Bright open floor plan, Hardwood floors, gas cooking/heat/hot water, thermal windows, and garage. Large deck overlooks spacious grounds. Property is in pristine "move in" condition!



SOLD

9221 Patton Blvd.

\$795,000

Custom Build!

True custom home with bright open floor plan and Potomac views on half acre lot in premier water access community. Stunning Master suite on main level! Other features include: 5 Bedrooms, 4.5 Baths, Chef's kitchen w/ granite counters, Gas cook top, wood floors, large deck and oversize 2 car Garage. Truly amazing value!



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