

EASTER FUN

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CONNECTION**

HomeLifeStyle

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Lake Braddock's Rachel Sowa singing "In His Eyes" from "Jekyll and Hyde" at Dessert on Broadway in 2016.

# Have Your Musical And Eat it Too

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PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

Lisa Connors, a spokesperson for the county, left, interviewed Cornerstones CEO Kerrie Wilson, right, on Facebook Live on Wednesday, April 5, outside the Embry Rucker Shelter in Reston.



Lisa Connors interviewed OPEH Director Dean Klein on Facebook Live on Wednesday, April 5, outside the Embry Rucker Shelter in Reston.

## Report: Homeless Population Down 47 Percent

**Budget woes threaten progress as the number of homeless people drops below 1,000 for the first time in Fairfax County.**

BY FALLON FORBUSH  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he number of homeless people on the streets of Fairfax County reached a record low this year. The Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness counted 964 homeless people in the Fairfax County and Falls Church area on the night of Jan. 25 during its 2017 Homeless Point In Time Count. It is the first time that fewer than 1,000 people were reported homeless during the nine years the county has been collecting the data for the report.

The count covers people who are literally homeless – those who are in shelters, in time-limited transitional housing programs, or unsheltered and living on the street or in vehicles. Of those counted this year, 474 were people in families, including 286 children, and 490 people were single individuals, including 155 older adults ages 55 and over.

The first count in 2008 reported 1,835 homeless people, which means the homeless population during the count has decreased by 47 percent.

The results were announced on Wednesday, April 5, outside the Embry Rucker Shelter in Reston by OPEH Director Dean Klein and Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Cornerstones, a nonprofit organization that serves people in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, childcare and other human services.

**THE PROGRESS** in reducing homelessness in the county was attributed to helping those in need find affordable housing in the area.

“The cost of living here puts housing out of reach for so many people,” Wilson said.

“That is essentially the real problem we have here.”

The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness and its partner organizations take a “housing first” approach to helping those in need. This method first offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Then, supportive services and connections to community-based resources are provided in order to keep people in their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

“The goal of reducing homelessness has two dispositions,” said a man who was staying at the Embry Rucker Shelter. He requested to remain anonymous. “If you’re a homeowner and don’t like homeless people in your midst, that’s one end of the spectrum,” he said. “The other is a nurturing and caring disposition where people don’t want the homeless to suffer. We’re not all working towards the same goal.”

This philosophy of helping the homeless become self-sufficient is embraced at the Embry Rucker Shelter, which is operated by Cornerstones.

“Nobody should be raised in a homeless

shelter,” Wilson said.

But her organization would rather keep clients in the shelter longer until they can find a housing arrangement that works in order to keep them from slipping back into homelessness.

Her organization, Cornerstones, often relies on shared housing where it matches homeless individuals to be roommates and sets them up with landlords who offer affordable housing arrangements.

These opportunities are few and far in between and will become more challenging in the years to come for its homeless individuals.

**“The cost of living here puts housing out of reach for so many people.”**

— Kerrie Wilson, Cornerstones

This is because the county has relied on housing resources for its homeless single population in the past from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, according to Klein. But this resource is at risk.

The Trump administration plans to significantly reduce HUD’s funding from \$46.9 billion in 2017 to \$40.7 billion in 2018, a 13.2 percent cut, according to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

“We need more housing,” Klein said. “We recognize that federal housing reductions are looming. We are very concerned about what that may mean and the impact that could have on the progress that we’ve made in the community.”

Klein’s office will also take a hit locally.

The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness is set to lose \$200,000 in funding next year in order to balance the county’s fiscal year 2018 budget.

**THE DECREASE** in OPEH’s advertised fiscal year 2018 budget will prevent it from using motels as a last resort housing options for families with children who are experiencing homelessness when shelters are full or when individuals have medical needs that make a shelter facility inappropriate, according to the county’s advertised budget plan.

“It would really eliminate some of the flexibility needed for our system and providers,” Klein said. “Often times, our shelters are full. With that, we need other flexibility to make sure people and families aren’t living on the streets.”

Still, Klein remains hopeful despite the challenges ahead.

“We saw a significant decrease in the number of homeless families ... we see that our single population continues to be a huge challenge to not only help them to secure employment but also to help them to get housing,” Klein says.

### May 22 Community Forum on Policing

The Fairfax County Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, which recommended the creation of an independent police auditor and civilian review panel, also encouraged the Board of Supervisors to set dates for community forums to revisit other commission recommendations and review how far along they are.

The first such forum has been scheduled for May 22 this year, according to an April 4 board matter presented by supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock), chair of the board’s public safety committee.

A second forum will be scheduled closer to the fall, to take place in the Mount Vernon area of Fairfax County, Cook said.

The forum will take place in the Fairfax

County Government Center board auditorium, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The Government Center is located at 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax.

More information about the Ad Hoc Commission, including final reports from the subcommittees and full commission, is available online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission).

—TIM PETERSON



## Combating Domestic and Sexual Violence

County launches 'Make the Call' campaign.

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

**"E**veryone in this room knows someone who is the victim of domestic violence, whether you know it, or not," said Braddock District Supervisor John Cook. "That's how widespread this problem is." Cook, who is the chair of the Board of Supervisors Public Safety Committee, and recently appointed chair of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, was speaking at a reception at the Fairfax County Government Center to launch the "Make the Call Campaign."

The year-long initiative was designed by county staff and domestic violence prevention partners to encourage victims, offenders and bystanders to call the county's 24-hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Hotline at 703-360-7273.

Cook was joined by speakers from sev-

eral county agencies, as well as his board colleagues Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) and Chair Sharon Bulova. Law enforcement was represented by Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid and Deputy Chief of Patrol Erin Schaible of the county police department.

The launch date of the campaign was chosen to coincide with the Board of Supervisors' designation of April as the month for Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention.

Cook is not concerned that the messages might get mixed by putting the two issues together in one month, because he sees them as often interconnected, and frequently stemming from the same root causes. The departments represented at the launch often work together on individual cases and cross paths almost daily in the performance of their duties. Several of them, like SafeSpot, the child advocacy nonprofit that provides a family-friendly,



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

**Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) helps launch the "Make a Call" campaign to encourage use of the 24-7 Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline. Cook is holding the Spanish version of signage that says "Be part of the solution, use my voice for 703-360-7273."**

centralized location for the investigation of child abuse and assistance in coordinating services, and CASA, the court appointed special advocates program for abused, neglected and abandoned children and youth as they maneuver through the court system, have formed working collaborations to best serve their clients needs and provide the most coordinated of services.

Hotline operators receive about 240 calls per month. From those calls, about 64 per month seek family abuse protective orders and 13 families are placed in domestic violence shelters. There are about 160 domestic violence related arrests made each month in Fairfax County, and as law enforcement knows, and Cook noted, domestic violence is the leading cause of homicide in the jurisdiction.

"If you are the victim, make the call," said Cook. "If you think you know someone who is being abused, make the call." The hotline is staffed 24-hours a day and "they are the experts," Cook added. "They will know how to help, what to do. Make the call. Maybe you can help save someone's life."

## Uncertainty Amid Growth

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**A**s recovery from the Recession continues, there is still uncertainty around federal spending, and President Donald Trump's proposed budget. Rising interest rates, the northern Virginia housing market and employment patterns in the region were among the presentations at the April 6 Economic Outlook summit hosted by the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce and Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation.

Business and community leaders filled the banquet space on the side of the Belle Haven Country Club for the morning meeting, which was guest-moderated by Rebecca Cooper, senior writer for the Washington Business Journal.

Cooper opened citing a number of trends she said are "good news for retail space." She said she's seeing an increase in specialized fitness, such as indoor play spaces and swim schools, as well as more temporary uses like pop-up shops.

When a space hosts something like a popular weekend maker-market, Cooper said "suddenly," that retail area "is the place to be."

Cooper also noted the rise in food businesses mixed into shopping centers. Retailers should be pleased, she said, because eateries increase customers' 'time on premise.'

Dr. Ann Battle Macheras with the Federal

Federal spending, interest rates, employment patterns feature at Mount Vernon-Lee Economic Outlook summit.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**The April 6 Economic Outlook summit hosted by the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce and Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation also featured (from left) Dr. Gerald L. Gordon, Fairfax County EDA; Jane Gandee, Chamber Chairman; Rebecca Cooper, Washington Business Journal; Ann B. Macharas, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond; Dr. Terry Clower, GMU Center for Regional Analysis; Edythe Kelleher, SFDC executive director; Mark Viani, SFDC Vice President; Scott Stroh III, Chamber President; Robert Stalzer, Fairfax County Deputy Executive; and Dr. Frank Nothaft, CoreLogic.**

Reserve Bank of Richmond broke down the modest, yet continued growth in real domestic GDP since 2009 — the average has been 2.1 percent.

One of the biggest drivers, she said, has been Personal Consumption Expenditure.

Productivity and workforce growth are also factors in the moderate growth; Dr. Battle Macheras said Virginia's employment is comparable to the U.S., and both are expected to slow in the next few decades.

Additional speakers included Dr. Terry Clower, with the GMU Center for Regional Analysis; Robert A. Staltzer, Deputy Fairfax County Executive; Dr. Frank Nothaft, Chief Economist with CoreLogic and formerly with

Fannie Mae; and Dr. Gerald Gordon, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

Dr. Clower agreed that job growth should continue, albeit moderately, with rebalancing in the contract sector of jobs from Sequestration, a theory he said was "bounce-back equilibrium."

Among the 15 largest job markets in the country, he said, Washington D.C. ranks in the middle in job change from February 2016 to 2017. That's just behind Miami and ahead of Detroit. First in growth over that period was Atlanta, followed by Dallas and Seattle.

Staltzer gave an overview of Fairfax County's \$7.59 billion budget. The FY2018 budget was the subject of three days of pub-

lic hearings the week of the April 6 summit.

The county's tax rate would remain steady, Staltzer said.

Dr. Nothaft, speaking on the housing market, said prices are up in 2017 — five percent in the U.S. and just three to four percent in Fairfax County — as are rents. Mortgage rates are still historically low, he said, but are also increasing.

A 30-year fixed-rate, Dr. Nothaft presented, is forecast to reach 4.6 percent by December this year.

For more information, the speakers offered resources including [www.corelogic.com/blog](http://www.corelogic.com/blog) and [cra.gmu.edu](http://cra.gmu.edu). Also visit [www.mtvernon-leechamber.org](http://www.mtvernon-leechamber.org) and [www.sfdc.org](http://www.sfdc.org).



# OPINION

## Your Award Winning Papers

**Richmond Times-Dispatch (daily) and the Mount Vernon Gazette/Local Media Connection (non-daily), win the VPA's highest awards.**

Virginia Press Association's highest award, the VPA Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service, went to Local Media Connection/Mount Vernon Gazette for coverage and editorials throughout 2016 relating to police reform in Fairfax County.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch won in the daily category for its series about the death of a mentally ill prisoner, Janycheal Mitchell, in a Portsmouth Jail.

The judges noted, "The Mount Vernon Gazette covered the complex issue of police reform from February through December 2016, sparked by the shooting of an unarmed man by a Fairfax County police officer. ... The Gazette focused community attention on the case, particularly on the efforts of citizens and representatives of law enforcement agencies working together on reforming police practice. This led to the creation and implementation of a Civilian Review Panel to provide oversight of police policy, procedures and activities. ... The approach of the Gazette in this matter provides a good illustration of the positive role a community newspaper can play when it takes an activist approach to issues of importance to its readers." Editor Mary Kimm and reporter Tim Peterson accepted the award.

Virginia Press Association honored its 2016 award winners on Saturday, April 8, 2017 in Richmond at its annual dinner. The Connection papers, including the Alexandria Gazette Packet, garnered more than 35 awards in many categories, including investigative reporting, education coverage, headline writing, photography, column writing, sports writing, obituaries, environmental writing, food writing, graphics, and more.



PHOTO BY ROBIN MOGLE

**Local Media Connection writers and photographers won 37 Virginia Press Association awards for work in 2016, including the Virginia Press Association Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service. Pictured here from left, John Bordner, Mark Mogle, Mary Kimm, Shirley Ruhe, Tim Peterson, Vernon Miles, Eden Brown, Andrea Worker and Jeanne Theismann.**

aries, environmental writing, food writing, graphics, and more.

Shirley Ruhe was the top award winner, earning seven different awards including two first place awards, one for investigative reporter for her series on sex trafficking.

Other first place award winners include photographer Mark Mogle, who also won two first places; Bonnie Hobbs for General News for her coverage of the rise and fall of the mayor of the City of Fairfax; Eden Brown for Education writing; Tim Peterson for Public Safety writing

and for Sports writing; Joan Brady for Feature Series on foster care alumni success stories; Jeanne Theismann for headline writing; Alexandra Greeley for food writing. Steven Mauren, editor-in-chief, won first place for Editorial Pages in Alexandria Gazette Packet, along with Mary Kimm, cartoonist Steve Artley, and designers Geovani Flores and Laurence Foong.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## 2016 Virginia Award Winners

- ❖ Virginia Press Association Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service, the association's highest award, went to **Local Media Connection/Mount Vernon Gazette** for coverage and editorials relating to police reform in Fairfax County.
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 1st Place, In-Depth or Investigative Reporting, Arlington, Investigative Series-Sex Trafficking
- ❖ **Mark Mogle**, 1st Place, General News Photo, Wreaths Across America, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Eden Brown**, 1st Place, Education Writing, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 1st Place, Column Writing, People at Work, Alexandria Gazette Packet,
- ❖ **Jeanne Theismann**, 1st Place, Headline Writing, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Steven Mauren, Mary Kimm, Steve Artley, Geovani Flores and Laurence Foong**, 1st Place, Editorial Pages, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Mark Mogle**, 1st Place, Picture Story or Essay, "Plaid Tidings," Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Tim Peterson**, 1st Place, Public Safety Writing, Burke Connection
- ❖ **Bonnie Hobbs**, 1st Place, General News Writing, Fairfax Mayor Caught in Sex-for-Meth Sting, Fairfax Connection
- ❖ **Joan Brady**, 1st Place, Feature Series or Continuing Story, Great Falls Connection,
- ❖ **Alexandra Greeley**, 1st Place, Personal Service Writing, Food Features, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Tim Peterson**, 1st Place, Sports Writing Portfolio, Springfield Connection
- ❖ **John Bordner**, 2nd Place, General News Photo,

- Kluge Farewell, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 2nd Place, Feature Series, Homelessness, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Kemal Kurspahic and Staff**, 2nd Place, General Makeup, Fairfax Connection
- ❖ **Marilyn Campbell**, 2nd Place, Personal Service Writing, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- ❖ **Jon Roetman**, 2nd Place, Sports Writing Portfolio, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 2nd Place, Column Writing, In the Kitchen, Mount Vernon Gazette
- ❖ **Jean Card, Laurence Foong, Renee Ruggles**, 2nd Place, Informational Graphics, Guide to the Parks, Fairfax Station Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 2nd Place, Personality or Portrait Photo, Vienna-Oakton Connection
- ❖ **Ken Moore**, 2nd Place, Health, Science & Environmental Writing, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Kemal Kurspahic, Andrea Worker, Donald Sweig, Ken Moore, Geovani Flores, Laurence Foong**, 3rd Place, Front Page Design, Reston Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 3rd Place, Personal Service Writing, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Steven Mauren, Geovani Flores, Laurence Foong**, 3rd Place, General Makeup, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Shirley Ruhe**, 3rd Place, General News Photo, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Eden Brown**, 3rd Place, General News Writing, Arlington Connection
- ❖ **Jeanne Theismann**, 3rd Place, Personal Service Writing, Obituaries, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Steve Artley**, 3rd Place, Illustrations, Editorial



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES

**Mary Kimm and Tim Peterson accepted the Virginia Press Association Award for Journalistic Integrity and Community Service.**

- Cartoon, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Vernon Miles**, 3rd Place, Feature Writing Portfolio, Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **Jon Roetman**, 3rd Place, Sports Writing Portfolio, McLean Connection
- ❖ **Jean Card, Laurence Foong, Renee Ruggles**, 3rd Place, Informational Graphics, Guide to the Parks, Mount Vernon Gazette
- ❖ **Tim Peterson**, 3rd Place, General News Writing, Mount Vernon Gazette
- ❖ **Laurence Foong**, 3rd Place, Informational Graphics, Real Estate Map, Great Falls
- ❖ **Mary Kimm**, 3rd Place, Editorial Writing, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Ken Moore**, 3rd Place, Education Writing, Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **Ken Moore**, 3rd Place, Feature Writing Portfolio, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection

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## OPINION

# County Ready for Next Phase of Diversion First

BY SUPERVISOR JOHN C. COOK  
(R-BRADDOCK DISTRICT)



### COMMENTARY

**F**airfax County continues to make substantial progress on a program called "Diversion First."

This program provides treatment instead of incarceration for people with mental health issues or developmental disabilities who come into contact with law enforcement for low-level offenses. With Diversion First, an officer can identify a suspect as needing supportive services, and can bring him or her to the Community Services Board (CSB) instead of making an arrest. Instead of making an arrest, officers bringing low-level offenders to the CSB saves the County money, time, and resources. Last year, 375 people were

diverted from arrest into treatment- which represents a huge accomplishment. This is not the only opportunity for diversion, however. The County is now pursuing the next phase of the Diversion First program, with a focus on making diversions after this initial contact with law enforcement.

Imagine you or I were arrested for a low-level crime, such as trespassing or disorderly conduct, on a Saturday night. We may be held until Monday or Tuesday. We could then probably post a bond for a few hundred dollars and be released. People with mental illness or developmental disabilities, however, often have troubled employment histories, and do not have that money. They

are often detained for months awaiting trial.

During this time, the County is paying approximately \$200 per day to hold them, all while their mental state is deteriorating. By their next hearing date, these individuals have often spent as much or more time in jail awaiting their day in court than if they had been found guilty of the original charges, resulting in a release based on "time served." They leave in a worse condition than when they entered. Eighty percent of the time, they will repeat their criminal behavior.

Diversion First breaks this cycle. It provides judges with a treatment alternative at the bonding hearing, when the judge can offer "supervised release" instead of bail. Supervised release requires mandatory treatment, with supervision by a trained probation officer. The person gets treatment and can recover. Then they can be released

from criminal charges later if treatment is successful.

Studies show this treatment alternative can reduce the reoccurrence of criminal activity to as low as 20 percent. That means a 60 percent reduction in crime (from 80 percent to 20) from this population. Literally hundreds of crimes can be prevented each year. With jail costing around \$200 per day, and treatment only a few thousand dollars per year, over time the County will save significant funds.

This program is a win-win. Treatment improves lives. Crime will be reduced. Taxpayers will save long-term money. We must continue the progress of Diversion First by implementing these new avenues for diversion. This will allow the County to direct resources more efficiently, allow the Police to save time, and help people with disabilities improve their lives.

# Past Time for Pension Reform in Fairfax County

BY PAT HERRITY  
SUPERVISOR (R-SPRINGFIELD)



### COMMENTARY

**M**ost of our residents are in complete disbelief when they learn that Fairfax County offers, and continues to offer, a pre-social security supplement benefit — also known as the second pension. County employees that

started working for Fairfax County right out of college can retire from the County as early as age 55. In addition to their regular pension benefits, which are more generous than surrounding jurisdictions, County employees get a second pension benefit that provides the employee a County-paid benefit equal to social security payments until they reach social security age. Unlike actual social security payments, which saw no increase last year, the County's second pension recipients received a guaranteed 3 percent increase. Serious pension reform in Fairfax County is past due and it starts with elimination of the second pension benefit for new employees.

Here are just some of the reasons I believe we need to eliminate the pre-social

security supplement for new general county and school employees:

❖ **This benefit does not help recruit or retain employees.** Compensation plans should be designed to recruit and retain employees — this benefit does neither. The benefit is not

valued as much as salary by the employees we are trying to recruit. Because the benefit is not paid unless you retire, it encourages employees to retire earlier.

❖ **Fairfax County is the only county in Virginia to offer this benefit.**

❖ **It is an expensive benefit that adds 6 percent to the cost of every payroll dollar.** This benefit cost the County \$30M and the school system \$75M in FY 2016.

❖ **The cost of providing this benefit continues to grow and is unsustainable.** As people live longer, the cost of providing this benefit continues to grow and continues to crowd out important County and school programs.

❖ **The cost of this benefit is unpre-**

**dictable.** Because this is a defined benefit, poor market returns can significantly increase the cost of the benefit.

While pension reform starts with eliminating the pre-social security supplement, we must also address the County's retirement plan and the school system's supplemental pension plan (ERFC). This includes changing the retirement age, eliminating the County's DROP program (allows for retirement payments prior to retirement), reducing the high costs of administering the benefit plans, and investigating the conversion to a hybrid plan like the rest of the counties in Virginia have done. We need to keep our promises to our current employees, but must move our compensation programs into the 21<sup>st</sup> century for new employees.

Our hard working County employees continue to ask for salary increases to get them to market averages and some of our teachers' salaries are below market averages. Unfortunately, too many of our compensation dollars are going to pension benefits which competes with the ability to fund employee and teacher raises and attract high quality candidates for openings. The cost of benefits for county and school employ-

ees range from 60 percent to 80 percent on top of each payroll dollar, compared to 25 to 35 percent for most private companies. Growing pension liabilities also compete for funds with the high quality services that our residents expect.

I have been working to address the County's overly generous and unsustainable pension costs since 2010. I spoke about the County and school pension issues repeatedly during the meals tax debate as a prime example of where the County needs to get spending prioritized and under control. Largely as a result of the meals tax discussions, several of the County's civic associations and community groups have joined me in the call to reform the County's pension benefit programs.

The goal of these reforms cannot just be to make our pension benefits sustainable and affordable, but to change our total compensation packages so that we can do a better job of attracting, retaining and rewarding a quality workforce. Despite a delay in discussing our pension costs, it appears that the Board is finally prepared to look at pension reform. My hope is that we will implement comprehensive and meaningful reforms.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## We'll Miss Our Neighbor Dave Albo

To the Editor:

It felt like a punch in the gut when news of Del. Dave Albo's retirement popped up on my phone. As a long time Republican activist and community volunteer, I have gotten to know Dave over the years, and his style of common sense policies, and straight talk are what stand out. In the age of heavily

vetted policy positions and press releases, Dave was a breath of fresh air. He shoots from the hip, adds in a little humor, and gets his point across to even the most disagreeable. I recall him telling a town hall crowd that if policies can't be explained to a fifth grader, they're probably not worth enacting.

Dave is not just a great Delegate when he is in Richmond, he is a great Delegate the other 11 months of the year too. His constituent services are unparalleled. He is always out in the community attending meetings, sponsoring events, and

listening to what his constituents tell him. No matter who is speaking to him, Dave listens and cares. He is the embodiment of his campaign slogan "Our Neighbor." As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. We will be sad to see Dave return to life as a private citizen, but he does so after having made the community a better place. Fairfax County and Northern Virginia will surely miss our neighbor, Dave Albo.

**Kyle McDaniel**  
Springfield

## Write

The Connection 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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By e-mail: south@connectionnewspapers.com



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## NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Together We Will Northern Virginia hosted a meet and greet event with Democratic candidates for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: (from left) Justin Fairfax, Susan Platt and Gene Rossi.**

# Meeting Democratic Candidates for Lt. Governor

**O**n April 2, the group Together We Will Northern Virginia hosted a meet and greet event with Democratic candidates for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Justin Fairfax, Susan Platt and Gene Rossi. The candidates spoke to community members and

voters about their policy positions in the Cellar Room of the Auld Shebeen in Fairfax.

The Primary Election is June 13, 2017.

For more information, visit [www.togetherwewillnova.org](http://www.togetherwewillnova.org).

—TIM PETERSON



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**THE CONNECTION  
NEWSPAPERS**



# EASTER FUN & EVENTS

## Easter Bunny in Springfield.

Through April 15, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, Lower Level, Grand Court, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Visit the Easter Bunny in the Mad Hatter Garden. Visit [springfieldtowncenter.com/](http://springfieldtowncenter.com/) for more.

## Easter Bunny in Fairfax.

Through April 15, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Fair Oaks, 11750 Fair Oaks, Fairfax. Adventures in Bunnyville and photos with the Easter Bunny at Fair Oaks. Visit [www.shopfairfaxsmall.com](http://www.shopfairfaxsmall.com) for more.

## THURSDAY/APRIL 13

**Maundy Thursday.** 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Springfield, 7300 Gary St., Springfield. Celebrate the Lord's Supper as part of our Maundy Thursday observance. Visit [www.fbcspRINGfield.org/easter](http://www.fbcspRINGfield.org/easter) for more.

## FRIDAY/APRIL 14

**Good Friday.** Noon at First Baptist Church of Springfield, 7300 Gary St., Springfield. Come and worship at noon in the church sanctuary as a remembrance of the crucifixion on what we call "Good Friday." A light luncheon in the Fellowship Hall will follow. Visit [www.fbcspRINGfield.org/easter](http://www.fbcspRINGfield.org/easter) for more.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 15

**Pancakes and Egg Hunt.** 8:30 a.m. at St George's United Methodist Church, 4910 Ox Road, Fairfax. There will be children activities to go along with the breakfast and egg hunt. Free. Call 571-218-9972 for more.



**Holy Saturday Silent Retreat.** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Free. Spend a day in noble silence, meditating and creating a space to be still and listen. Our day will be spent alternating between sitting and walking meditation with some periods of stretching. Only a small fraction of meditation practices will be guided. Call 703-281-1767 or register online at [unitysilentretreat.eventbrite.com](http://unitysilentretreat.eventbrite.com).

**Easter Egg Hunt.** 9:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church of Springfield, 7300 Gary St., Springfield. Ages birth - 6th grade. Visit [www.fbcspRINGfield.org/easter](http://www.fbcspRINGfield.org/easter) for more.

**Fairfax Egg Hunt.** 10 a.m.-noon at Van Dyck Park, 3720 Old Lee Hwy., Fairfax. Age schedule: 2-4 years 10:30 a.m.; 5-7 years 10:45 a.m.; 8-10 years 11:15 a.m. Visit [www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov) for more.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 22

**Earth Day Clean Up.** 10 a.m.-noon at Daniels Run Elementary School, 3705 Old Lee Highway. Park at the school and walk over to Daniels Run Trail to help clean the trail, make bird feeders from recycled products, decorate reusable bags, learn about waste reduction. Call 703-385-1695 for more.



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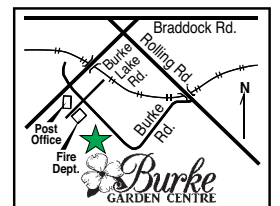
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Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

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

Questions? E-mail [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9431

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**Messiah United Methodist Church**  
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703-569-9862 [www.messiahumc.org](http://www.messiahumc.org)

**Holy Week and Easter Schedule**

April 9 - worship at 8:15, 9:30, and 11:00 am

April 13 - Holy Thursday service at 7:30 pm

April 14 - Good Friday service at 7:30 pm

April 15 - Easter Egg Hunt at 10 am

April 16 - Easter Sunday worship at 8:00, 9:30, and 11 am

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# HomeLifeStyle

Remodeler David Foster (left) talks with a homeowner browsing in the recently-opened Design and Selection Center, which is holding an Open House on April 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Open House will feature three seminars, access to representatives from major home improvement product manufacturers, a raffle and chef-prepared hors d'oeuvres.



Major vendors and manufacturers participating in the Design Center have increased substantially. Options for cabinet facings, plumbing fixtures, surface materials, tile and flooring are part of the permanent display. Foster designers are regularly exposed to new products and materials.

## Design Center Educates Homeowners with Remodeling Plans

Open House, April 22, will feature three seminars, industry experts and new showroom.

BY JOHN BYRD

Foster Remodeling Solutions will launch its new 3,270-square-foot Home Design and Selection Center in Lorton with an open house on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The event will include seminars on a variety of topics ranging from kitchen and bath design to "How to Plan a Successful Remodeling," to steps entailed in introducing "Aging-in-Place" modifications into the home. Seminar presenters are recognized experts in their respective specialties. Representatives from top manufacturers will also be on hand to answer questions about specific products, appliances and emerging technologies. Several manufacturers also will be contributing new products as raffle items.

Visitors can arrive as early as 10 a.m. and browse the newly-expanded Design and Selection Center. Chef-prepared hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served



Three full-size kitchen displays are now on view in the Lorton showroom. The 3,270 square foot Lorton showroom is one of the largest home improvement product expositions in northern Virginia.

throughout the day.

There will be several full-sized kitchen and bathroom designs on view, vignettes featuring cabinets, vanities, flooring and lighting, even a full-sized outdoor courtyard which spotlights break-through materials and styles being applied to roofing and siding.

"Our goal is to make it easy for attendees to find answers to an array of home improvement questions in a single day," said David Foster, who has operated Foster Remodeling Solution for over 34 years. "We encourage attendees to come prepared with ques-

tions, drawings and photos, and to bring interested friends and neighbors. All of the offerings are free and open to the public."

### Design and Selection

There are three design consultation rooms that allow homeowners to review in-progress design details of a home improvement on a flat screen television.

"Home improvement is a very dynamic industry," Foster said. "You have to stay ahead of changing technologies and evolving practices. We're expanding methods for



A home laundry with mudroom features has proven popular in northern Virginia homes.

PHOTOS BY  
SUZY FOSTER

bringing ideas to homeowners that have already proven successful. ... This Open House will be more of an exposition than we've offered in the past; we're building on what we've learned about local homeowner interests."

The three one-hour seminars will be held at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. so that interested parties can attend all three without conflict.

❖ Design consultant Sean McLarty, a veteran remodeler with 33 years of professional experience, will provide tips on "Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling" at 11 a.m.;

❖ Dory Clemens, a space planning specialist, will conduct a seminar at 1 p.m. on "Aging-In-Place" applications. The session will focus how to assess which modifications to your home are most appropriate for near-term and foreseeable needs;

❖ At 3 p.m., Chris Arnold, whose 25 years of remodeling experience embraces every facet of the industry, will discuss "How to Plan a Successful Remodel," including best options for financing a project.

Interested parties can register for the show room opening and for individual seminars online at [www.fosterremodeling.com](http://www.fosterremodeling.com), or by calling 703-350-1371.

John Byrd ([byrdmatx@gmail.com](mailto:byrdmatx@gmail.com)) has been writing about home improvement for 30 years.



The April 22 event will feature three seminars: Kitchen and Bath Design, Aging-in-Place Strategies for the Home and How to Plan a Successful Remodel.





# Easter Table Design Ideas

Local tastemakers offer spring table setting and centerpiece ideas.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**T**he arrival of spring offers fresh inspiration for table setting and home décor, say local designers. “What’s really beautiful about spring is that there is such natural beauty outside,” said Amanda Mertins, co-owner of Patina Polished Living in Old Town Alexandria. “Everything comes to life in spring. It’s all so fresh, you don’t have to do anything too contrived because decorations present themselves naturally with lovely daffodils and hyacinths. Pastel colored eggs are also part of the scene. You can combine the natural elements with the givens like eggs and bunnies.”

“Trim a few branches from a flowering bush or tree,” said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke, Virginia. “If you have tulips or daffodils, harvest some and make your own bouquet or place single stems in bud vases.”

“You can’t beat the amazing color display that’s going on outside right now,” added Anne M. Walker of Anne Walker Design in Potomac, Maryland.

“The deep magenta blossoms of the Redbud trees combined with the chartreuse color of the budding

tree leaves and new grasses makes my heart skip a beat. Bring these vibrant greens and purples into your house any way you can: fresh flowers, throw pillows, candles. A little touch of coral is welcome now and is a wonderful harbinger of the warmer days ahead.”

For a simple Easter centerpiece start with a tray, advises Thomas. “Cover the bottom with Easter grass or faux moss,” she said. “Place a potted plant or bouquet in the center with decorative Easter eggs nestled in the grass around it. Add a bunny or two and you have a cohesive centerpiece that is easy to move if necessary.”

Small accent pieces can have a big impact on table settings. “Make the table more festive by having place cards at each setting,” said Kelley Proxmire, principal at Kelley Proxmire, Inc. “Make each setting a little bit more special by putting individual small flower arrangements, or perhaps an Easter candy at each place.”

To create a sophisticated display, Walker advises forgoing traditional pastel colors and Easter eggs in lieu of vintage white décor. “[Home accessory stores] will all have decorating treasures, and they should be at deeply discounted prices this week,” she said.

Mertins creates an “Easter tree” decorated with hand-blown, hand-painted eggs. “They’re from Austria and they’re really like works of art,” she said. “You can hang these eggs from budding branches like those in a Forsythia [shrub] with green leaves and buds.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLEY PROXMIRE, INC.

**Designer Kelley Proxmire uses individual small flower arrangements to personalize the table setting in this Vienna, Virginia home.**

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# CALENDAR

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

## ONGOING

### Easter Bunny in Springfield.

Through April 15, Monday through Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, Lower Level, Grand Court, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Visit the Easter Bunny in the Mad Hatter Garden. Visit [springfieldtowncenter.com/](http://springfieldtowncenter.com/) for more.

**Easter Bunny in Fairfax.** Through April 15, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Fair Oaks, 11750 Fair Oaks, Fairfax. Adventures in Bunnyville and photos with the Easter Bunny at Fair Oaks. Visit [www.shopfairoaksmall.com/](http://www.shopfairoaksmall.com/) for more.

### "Cherry Blossom Kimonos."

Through April 30 at the Workhouse Arts Center, Building 9, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The kimonos show is part of a campus-wide celebration of cherry blossom events in the region, titled "Late Bloomers." Visit [www.workhousearts.org/event/exhibit-late-bloomers/](http://www.workhousearts.org/event/exhibit-late-bloomers/) for more.

### Storytime in the Park.

Through May 30, 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Square, Fairfax. Visit [fairfaxva.gov/parksrec](http://fairfaxva.gov/parksrec) or call 703-385-7858.

**Senior Line Dancing** 1-2 p.m. Little River Glen Senior Center 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Cost: \$5. 703-524-3739 [barbriba@hotmail.com](mailto:barbriba@hotmail.com)

**Carolina Shag.** Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. [nvshag.org](http://nvshag.org).

### Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).

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

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

**Stories From Strawberry Park** 10-11 a.m. Tuesdays in Mosaic, Strawberry Park, 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Enjoy a live interactive performance each week. For ages 10 and under. Held outside in Strawberry Park. In inclement weather and October through April, storytime will be held in Angelika Film Center. Visit [www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-district/2326/](http://www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-district/2326/).

## APRIL 14-MAY 7

**"The Late Wedding."** Various times at the John Swayze Theatre at the New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. A play by Christopher Chen that is both a spy thriller and a sci-fi love story. Visit [www.thehubtheatre.org](http://www.thehubtheatre.org) for more.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 15

**Pancakes and Egg Hunt.** 8:30 a.m. at St George's United Methodist Church, 4910 Ox Road, Fairfax.



Springfield Town Center hosts a pre-Easter tea party in the mall's grand hall on April 12.



Lilly Brinkley of Franconia has her face painted at the Springfield Town Center pre-Easter tea party.

# Ready for Easter at Springfield Town Center

As she attached the grass green pipe cleaner to her two-dimensional wicker Easter basket, Taylor Morgan of Franconia lamented that it wouldn't be able to hold "real Easter eggs." Morgan and her mother Sabrina had just come from having a photo taken with the very Easter Bunny itself, who she said she asked — Santa-style — for a Hatchimal, one of last Christmas' hottest toys.

They sat at one of dozens of tables set up for crafts and coloring, as part of a multidimensional (secular) pre-Easter event hosted on April 12 at Springfield Town Center. The mall's marketing director Kim-



Front, from left, Christopher and Katelynn Johnson, and Gabrielle Martinez, all of Alexandria, meet the Mad Hatter and Alice of "Alice in Wonderland" at the Springfield Town Center pre-Easter event on April 12.

berly Baldy said they had more than 500 people registered in advance, and that was just counting email addresses of parents, not including children.

In addition to the furry photos and crafts, the event tied in an Alice in Wonderland tea party theme as well as face painting. Tea — non-caffeinated, Baldy specified — for the party was supplied by Teavana.

The Mad Hatter, Queen of Hearts and Alice herself roamed and mingled in the grand hall area of Springfield Town Center, while the March Hare was otherwise occupied.

— TIM PETERSON

There will be children activities to go along with the breakfast and egg hunt. Free. Call 571-218-9972.

**Holy Saturday Silent Retreat.** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Free. Spend a day in noble silence, meditating and creating a space to be still and listen. Call 703-281-1767 or register online at [unitysilentretreat.eventbrite.com](http://unitysilentretreat.eventbrite.com).

## APRIL 15-16

### Bonsai Show and Demonstration.

9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Sponsored by the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society (NVBS). Visit [nvbs.us](http://nvbs.us) or email [info@nvbs.us](mailto:info@nvbs.us) for more.

## APRIL 18-JUNE 10

### Spring Art Lessons for Youth

**Classes.** 5:15-6:15 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor for children 8 and older. Visit [www.czartlessons.com](http://www.czartlessons.com) or call 703-250-6930 for more.

### Spring Drawing Plus Color Class.

6:15-7 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing and watercolor for children 5-8 years. Visit [www.czartlessons.com](http://www.czartlessons.com) or call 703-250-6930 for more.

## TUESDAY/APRIL 18

**Early Fairfax Archaeology.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Fairfax Courthouse, 4000 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Chris

Sperling, Senior Archaeologist, Fairfax County Park Authority discusses "Beginning from a White Oak Tree in Fairfax County" Native American/European exploration and settlements. Visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) for more.

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 19

**Civil War Forum.** 7:30 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax. Bernard Kempinski, writer of articles and books on railroading, will present the Civil War Forum, "Introduction to the Railroads of the Civil War." Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) for more.

## THURSDAY/APRIL 20

**Quilt Restoration.** 10:15 a.m. at the Fairfax Antique Arts Association, Green Acre Senior Center, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Presentation and samples provided by Clara Sue Ashley and Chris Young of the Quilt Shop of McLean on the varying processes that can be used with extraordinary results. Members are encouraged to bring in family pieces. Call 703-273-6090 for more.

**Artists Talk.** 7:30 p.m. at George Mason University, School of Art, Room 1007, 4400 University Drive, MS 2F5, Fairfax. "Radcliffe Bailey: The Great Dismal Swamp," on view from April 21 through Aug. 18. Visit [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu) for more.

## APRIL 21-MAY 9

**Spotlight on the Arts Festival.** Various times at Old Town Hall,

3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The 32nd Annual Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival starts on April 21st with a glittering evening at Old Town Hall celebrating three decades of arts in the City of Fairfax. Opening Gala, is 7 p.m., Saturday, April 29. Visit [www.fairfaxspotlight.org](http://www.fairfaxspotlight.org) for more.

## APRIL 21 AND APRIL 22

**Wild Horse and Burro Adoption.** noon-5 p.m. at Meadowood Special Recreation Area, 10406 Gunston Road, Lorton. Preview animals and submit applications. Animals will be available for \$125 to approved adopters on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit [BLM.gov](http://BLM.gov) or call 866-468-7826 for more.

## SATURDAY, APRIL 22

**ECHO Yard Sale.** 8 a.m.-noon at St. Bernadette Catholic Church Gymnasium, 7600 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Collectibles, accessories and housewares to benefit Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO). Call 703-239-1678 for more.

**Earth Day Clean Up.** 10 a.m.-noon at Daniels Run Elementary School, 3705 Old Lee Highway. Park at the school and walk over to Daniels Run Trail to help clean the trail, make bird feeders from recycled products, decorate reusable bags, learn about waste reduction. Call 703-385-1695.

**Family Fun Challenge.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3720 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax. GMU Women's basketball team leads activities to promote community through children's

activities, hands on science, face painting, Yoga, inflatables, and family sports challenges. At the event, we will have a Homeless Shelter Party drive to collect small gifts for children and families in need: balls, dolls, books, gift cards, jump ropes, and frisbees. Visit [parties2inspire.org/](http://parties2inspire.org/) for more.

**"Resilience" in Community.** 7-10 p.m. at the Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax. Juried art show with works by local artists for sale, live music by local Latin-Jazz band Batida Diferente, a live charity auction, appetizers, wine and beer tastings. The event supports Britepaths' work to provide services to working families in the Fairfax County area who are struggling to make ends meet. \$45. Visit [britepaths.org](http://britepaths.org), email [info@britepaths.org](mailto:info@britepaths.org) or call 703-273-8829.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 23

**"Peter and the Wolf."** 2-4 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. The Washington Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Jun Kim will perform Sergei Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" Visit [www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov) for more.

**A Film Celebrating Earth Day.** 4-6 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Documentary "The Anthropologist" views anthropology through the lens of a pair of female anthropologists and their daughters. Visit [www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov) for more.



# ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

For the third year, members of Lake Braddock Secondary School's five choirs will perform one Broadway hit after another, in solo, duet, ensemble or full group settings.



The "Dessert on Broadway" concept was so popular the first two years, they've had to relocate it from the school's cafeteria to the "Little Theater" to accommodate more attendees.

## Have Your Musical and Eat it Too

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

Lake Braddock choir students aren't preparing just one musical this spring; they're putting on a smorgasbord. For the third year, members of the secondary school's five choirs will perform one Broadway hit after another, in solo, duet, ensemble or full group settings.

"Dessert on Broadway" is scheduled for April 22 with a pair of performances in the afternoon and evening.

Director Mary DeMarco said the choir boosters used to do an annual fundraiser in the form of a family fun night with games, a silent auction, etc. "Why don't we do what we do well," DeMarco remembers thinking, "which is perform?"

By opening the program to a la carte acts rather than one major production, DeMarco said it is more conducive for getting all five choirs to perform, as well as special acts that are featured throughout.

**ONE-THIRD** of choir students don't have time to participate in a full production, she said, due to other clubs or sports. With the short preparation time required for this show, by comparison, it gives those students more opportunity to take the stage.

"Everyone gets a chance to shine," said Lake Braddock junior Audra Heyne. "Since it's Broadway, they're very big numbers. We like it a lot."

The Fairfax Station resident said she'll be singing in a duet from "Guys and Dolls."

"You get a little taste" of a variety of musicals she said, from the classic "Les Misérables" to recent hits "Hamilton" and "Dear Evan Hansen."

The concept was so popular the first two years, they've had to relocate it from the school's cafeteria to the "Little Theater" to accommodate more attendees.

The choirs have Broadway the place fresh on their minds, after nearly 100 members traveled to New York City to compete in a national festival with songs from their dis-



From left, Lake Braddock Singers Allan Cate, Micah Super, Jonathan Brinson and Andrea Hatcher performing "America" from "West Side Story" at Dessert on Broadway in 2016.



Lake Braddock sophomore Morgan Kelso singing "Killer Instinct" from "Bring It On! The Musical" at Dessert on Broadway in 2016.

trict-level assessment.

Students attended a Broadway show and participated in a workshop with members of the "Aladdin" cast.

"We were in a building where Broadway auditions were going on as well," Heyne said. "It was really cool to see that culture going on around us."

Sophomore Morgan Kelso of Burke said she was definitely motivated to become a better performer. "You can add a little of what they're doing ... in a high school production or community production."

Kelso is planning to sing "The Wizard and I" solo from "Wicked."

In fact, students plan to open "Dessert on Broadway" with a dance number they learned in the workshop.

**THE "DESSERT"** component comes in the form of finely plated (catered) confections, which the students and organizers say are part of the glitzy atmosphere they're hoping to create for the event.

DeMarco said it's important that even the hallway outside the theater be decorated to not look like you're at a school. But more like "coming out to an evening, a professional setting, dinner theater," she said.

Last year, she continued, "just felt fancier. People dressed up. We built a stage for the performance with the skyline of New York City. You feel like you've gone to something, not a kids show."

Organizer and Audra's mother Nancy Heyne said the fundraiser of course is also "a good way for people to support the arts

and see them grow.

"It showcases the many layers of talent we have at Lake Braddock," Heyne said. "These kids — it's been really fun to see them year after year perform and get better. To see arts continue through these young people."

Kelso said she hopes for a big crowd from the community. "We love to share our singing with people who aren't just our families," she said.

"Dessert on Broadway" takes place Saturday, April 22, with performances at 1:30 and 7 p.m. at the Lake Braddock Little Theater, entrance 14. General admission tickets are \$10 for the matinee with dessert available for additional purchase. Evening is \$20 and includes dessert.



# ‘From Our Pain May We Heal’

## County honors National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**N**o one expects to become a crime victim. But when it happens in Fairfax County, there’s a whole network of people and services ready to help both victims and their families overcome the trauma and cope with the aftermath.

And on Sunday, April 2, at Fairfax Corner, the county Police Department’s Victim Services Section marked National Crime Victims’ Rights Week – April 2-8 – with the 5th Annual 5K Walk and Crime Victims Tribute. Victims, survivors, family members, friends and the community participated to raise awareness of victims’ rights in Northern Virginia and show support for all crime victims.

Many victims, survivors and their advocates even wore superhero capes as a sign of solidarity with all victims of crime. Large photos of some local victims were displayed in front of the stage, and the event began with a moment of silence for them. Then came several speeches before the candle-light walk.

As the county’s former police chief, Dave Rohrer said he’s worked with some “truly wonderful” people. “We’re here today to honor and remember the victims and survivors of serious, violent crimes,” he said. “But the dispatchers, police officers and detectives, firefighters, paramedics and advocates in Victims’ Services and the court system, we honor you, too, for your caring, passion and commitment to serving.”

Noting the event’s theme of “Strength, Resilience and Justice,” Rohrer said, “Most of us came here to make a difference, and we will never forget the strength and resilience that you have and have taught us. Justice refers to the legal rights victims have.”

Furthermore, he said, “Safety is not just a legal right, but also a basic human right – to be free and safe in our persons, regardless of who we are, where we come from, what we look like or our status.” Then, acknowledging all those “who’ve done so much to serve and support,” he added, “We live and work in an extremely caring and empathetic community.” Rohrer is deputy county executive for public safety.

Current Police Chief Ed Roessler said Fairfax County is the safest jurisdiction of its size in the U.S. To the victims, he said, “You give us the strength and resilience to pursue justice and you’re not alone. We’ll help heal not just yourself, but our community, and we extend our blessings upon you.”

Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Jessica Greis-Edwardson said it’s humbling to



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Some of the crowd at the Crime Victims event at Fairfax Corner.



Deputy County Executive for Public Safety Dave Rohrer



Fairfax County Police Chief Ed Roessler

(From left) Joe Samaha listens while Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) proclaims National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.



work with the victims and survivors of violence. “It makes me want to be a better prosecutor,” she said. “Their stories are astound-

ing and take your breath away. And it’s a pleasure to be a part of helping you as you move forward.”

**THE GUEST SPEAKER** was Joe Samaha, whose daughter Reema – a Westfield High grad – was one of the 32 people killed in the April 16, 2007 mass shooting at Virginia Tech. She was a freshman, just 18, when a gunman ended her life.

Her parents established scholarships in her name, and her father became an advocate for the VTV Family Outreach Foundation, promoting increased school and college-campus safety and trying to prevent tragedies caused by gun violence. Its Campaign 32 worked to have all states participate in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and another Campaign 32 ([www.campaign32.org](http://www.campaign32.org)) is beginning, continuing the advocacy for campus safety and security.

When the Virginia Tech tragedy occurred, said Samaha, “There were no alert systems then for students there, or push bars on the doors to prevent their chaining [by the assailant]. Now there are more-immediate lockdowns and active-shooter drills, plus legislation helping those in need of mental-health treatment for suicidal thoughts.

“In my opinion, there were 33 victims, because I believe the shooter could have been helped [before he killed people],” continued Samaha. “On Dec. 13, 2006, he’d signed up for a [counseling] appointment, but didn’t show up. He was screaming out loud for help, silently, but was not given help.”

Samaha then had the crowd hold hands while he read “Reema’s Inspiration,” which he wrote: “From our pain, may we heal; from our fear, we seek comfort. From our grief, we are blessed; from our solitude, we seek serenity. From conflict, we find harmony; from our anger, we seek peace.”

Then, to those working in Victims’ Services and public safety, he offered a prayer from St. Francis of Assisi: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.”

Speaking from the heart, Samaha said, “On April 16, 2017, it’ll be 3,653 days since the Virginia Tech shooting. My daughter’s spirit still lives and inspires and comforts me every day. After the tragedy, I took the political path and my wife Mona took the spiritual path – but we took that journey together.

**FOLLOWING THE MASSACRE**, he said, “There were no victims’ advocates; they were turned away. The traumatized were

SEE VICTIMS, PAGE 15

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4

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According to the Lease by and between James Mott Community Assistance (of unit 1057) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: computers, tables, chairs, ladder, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday April 21, 2017 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

According to the Lease by and between Michael Jordan (of unit 2069) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: beds, furniture, books, clothes, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday April 21, 2017 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

According to the Lease by and between Lina Chovil (of unit 4075) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: luggage, boxes, tubs, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday April 21, 2017 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

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## 21 Announcements

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, May 1, 2017 commencing at 10:30 AM, at 5801 Rolling Road, Springfield, Virginia 22152, in order to enforce the warehouseman's lien for storage and related services, we will sell by Public Auction the items in the accounts of: Judith Boston, Salim Cadet, William Cammett, TJ Dunlap, Douglas B. Hitt, Daniel Lester, New Vision Engineering Group, Thomas Pauls, Patricia Bradley, Timothy R. Doremus, DJ McMulloch, Donald Munford, Eric Fedewa, Fried & Rosefelt, Lorenzo Parker, and Sam Ponniah.

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## 21 Announcements

Pursuant to Section 50-33, 50-35 and 50-36 of the Code of the City of Fairfax, the City of Fairfax Police Department will be disposing of the below listed unclaimed property, by public auction conducted by an independent auction service, converted to department use or generally disposed of. Any person who feels they have a legal claim, with reasonable proof of ownership, should contact MPO Lynn Coulter of the City of Fairfax Police Department at 703-385-7829 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays until close of business Friday, April 28, 2017.  
Below is a summary list of all items. For a complete list, please go to the City of Fairfax website: <http://www.fairfaxva.gov/unclaimedproperty>  
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30 - Miscellaneous items  
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## 21 Announcements

**Public Hearing**  
Springfield Community Business Center Commuter Parking Garage  
Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services  
Thursday, April 20, 2017 7:00 p.m.  
Key Middle School Cafeteria, 6402 Franconia Road, Springfield, VA\*

The Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services will conduct an open forum public hearing on the design of the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) Commuter Parking Garage project. The proposed project would include 6 parking levels with about 1,100 parking spaces, a bus transit center with 7 bus bays, 12 commuter spaces, and a short term parking area for drop off and pick up. A pedestrian bridge connecting Springfield Plaza to the parking garage is also proposed. Other features include bicycle storage, passenger waiting areas, a community area on the ground floor and on the roof top. Project schedule information will be discussed at the public hearing.

**Preview** the project information, environmental documents, and preliminary plans prior to the public hearing at the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, VA 22035, (tel. 703-324-5800). Please call ahead for staff availability.

**Give your written comments** at the hearing or submit them by May 4, 2017 to Mr. Deepak Bhinge, Project

\* New Location

Manager, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, at the same address. You may also email your comments to Deepak.Bhinge@fairfaxcounty.gov. Please reference "Springfield CBC Parking Garage Comments" in the subject heading.

**Fairfax County ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all county programs, services and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. State Project #0644-029-175, P101, R201, C501; Federal Project #CM-SA01 (742).**

**ACCESSIBILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:** This hearing is being held at a public facility believed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Any persons with questions on the facility should contact Mr. Deepak Bhinge, Project Manager, Fairfax County Department of Public Works, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax VA, (tel. 703-324-8770). Persons needing interpreter services for the hearing impaired or those with limited English proficiency must notify Mr. Deepak Bhinge no later than Thursday, April 13, 2017 so appropriate arrangements can be made.

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# Victims Seek Truth, Accountability and Apology

FROM PAGE 12

helping the traumatized, and that wasn't good. Now, unfortunately, I'm kind of an expert on mass shootings." He then told the crime victims and survivors in the audience what he's learned: "You are the strongest and most resilient people I know," said Samaha. "You are heroes; and in a different way, we are all family and find strength in that support – the village. As victims, we seek the trilogy – truth, accountability and apology – knowing we may never receive the full truth, complete accountability or a sincere apology. "As victims, we learn to deal with the healing of broken bodies, broken hearts and broken minds. We learn to cope with our trauma. As victims, we have been to war and yet we find strength, not to succumb to our grief, but to take action. As victims and survivors, we honor, remember and create a living legacy for those we have lost, and those injured, to feel and enjoy the essence, the aroma and the touch of their love. "As victims, we are resilient: We can live again, we can laugh again, we can breathe again, we can trust again, we can love again and believe in God again. And may the greatest gift given to you be forgiveness. That's what enabled me to go on to do the work I do." Supervisor Jeff McKay



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION  
**Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Jessica Greis-Edwardson**

(D-Lee) then gave Samaha a plaque proclaiming April 2-8 National Crime Victims' Rights Week. And after the walk, the Rev. Allan McCullough of Grace Hill Church gave a benediction.



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**Fairfax Club Estates**

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**Fairfax \$649,900**

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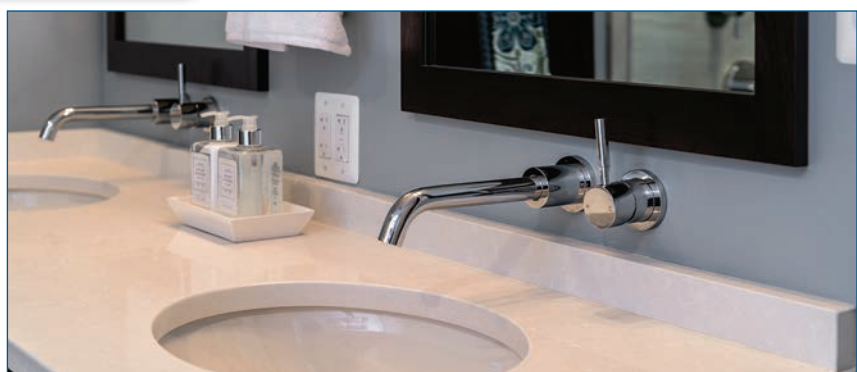


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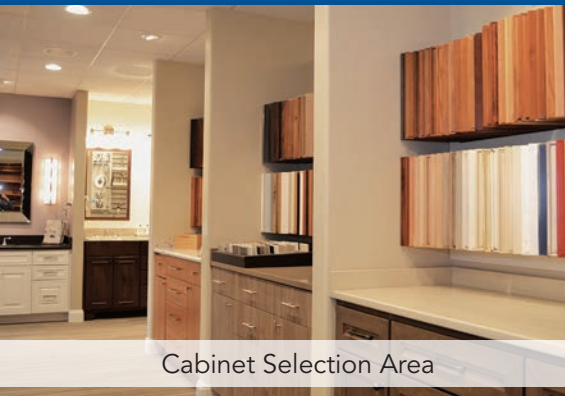
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**Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017  
10:00am to 5:00pm**



Cabinet Selection Area



Tile and Flooring Selection Room



Outdoor Selection Area

## Seminars

We will be providing 3 free educational seminars throughout the day. Our Design Consultants will give you tips and guidelines about remodeling.



**11:00am**

Sean will be providing you with information and tips for Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling.



**1:00pm**

Plan for every stage of life, Dory will discuss Aging-In-Place Remodeling.



**3:00pm**

Are you thinking about remodeling but don't know where to start? Do you need lending options? Come to Chris's seminar on How To Plan a Successful remodel.

Please join Foster Remodeling Solutions at our Open House for our newly remodeled and expanded Design and Selection center.

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- Win Raffle Prizes
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- Q&A with our Design Consultants
- Browse through thousands of products for your home