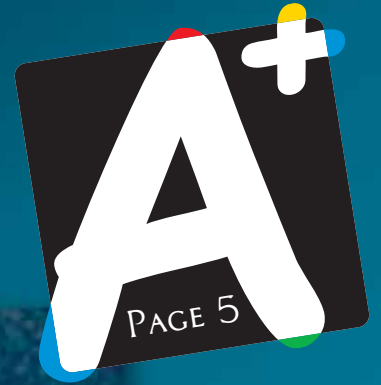




Reston CONNECTION



Nabra Hassanen, 17, of Reston was a sophomore at South Lakes High School. She was murdered in what police are calling a deadly case of road rage. The investigation continues.

Murder of Reston Teen: 'A Deadly Case of Road Rage'

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Chalk on the Water Festival

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PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

In an act of solidarity, Isabel Membreno of Sterling, left, and Laura Fuentes of Sterling join a group of nearly 40 community members who showed up on Monday, June 19, to stand watch as Muslims enter the ADAMS Center mosque in Sterling for their evening Ramadan prayers.



Rizwan Jaka, ADAMS Center chairman of the board, steps out of the Sterling mosque to speak with community members on the sidewalk who gathered to show their support for the Muslim community.

Murder of Reston Teen: 'A Deadly Case of Road Rage'

No evidence of hate crime; investigation continues.

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

Darwin Martinez Torres, 22, of Sterling was charged with killing 17-year-old Nabra Hassanen of Reston in what police are calling a deadly case of road rage, according to the Fairfax County Police Department.

"There is nothing at this point to indicate that this tragic case was a hate crime," Julie Parker, spokesperson for the FCPD said during a press conference on Monday, June 19. "No evidence has been recovered that shows this was a hate crime. Nothing indicates that this was motivated by race or by religion."

Hassanen, a sophomore at South Lakes High School, was reported missing on Sunday, June 18, around 4 a.m. near Dranesville Road and Woodson Road in Herndon, which is in Fairfax County.

A group of as many as 15 teenagers were walking and riding bikes on Dranesville Road after attending an overnight event for Ramadan at a mosque in Sterling, which is in Loudoun County. The teenagers were traveling from the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, known as the ADAMS Center, to a restaurant, according to police.

As the teenagers were returning to the mosque from the restaurant, some were traveling on the sidewalk while others were on the road, according to police.

DETECTIVES BELIEVE Torres came upon the group in a car when a teenaged boy on a bike in the group began arguing with the driver. Torres then drove his car onto the curb as the group scattered. Witnesses say Torres caught up with the group in a nearby parking lot and got out of his car armed with a baseball bat. He then caught up to Hassanen, whom police believe was on foot, and assaulted her with the bat, according



A rainbow appears above the ADAMS Center mosque in Sterling as community members gather for Ramadan evening prayer services on Monday, June 19.

to police.

"It appears the suspect became so enraged over this traffic argument, that it escalated into deadly violence," Parker said.

Detectives close to the investigation were unwilling to provide details about the argument that incited Torres to murder.

"No, there was no indication of racial slurs or any kind of a back and forth, other than a verbal argument," Lt. Bryan Holland of the FCPD's Criminal Investigations Bureau said during the press conference. "It was just an argument between a driver and a bicyclist that was in the roadway and that's all I want to go into at this point," he added.

Holland was also unwilling to divulge details about a second assault the victim endured.

"There was an assault that occurred in Fairfax County and another assault that occurred in Loudoun," he said.

After Torres's initial assault, he took Hassanen in his car to a second location nearby in Loudoun County, according to police.

"At this point, we don't want to disclose [the location]," Holland said.

When Hassanen's friends could not find her when they regrouped at the mosque after the altercation with Torres, police were called to help, according to police.

Patrol officers from the Fairfax County Police Department and Loudoun County Sheriff's Office immediately began a search. A police helicopter, K-9 teams and search and rescue teams searched for the missing and injured teen, according to police.

While searching, one officer saw a car driving suspiciously in the area and stopped

it. The driver, later identified as Torres, was taken into custody as a suspect, according to police.

Around 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 18, the remains of a female were found in a pond in between two office buildings on Ridgetop Circle and the Fields at Cascades apartments on Huntington Square in Sterling, approximately 4 miles from the mosque.

The Office of The Chief Medical Examiner of Virginia conducted an autopsy on Monday, June 19, confirming the identity of the remains to be that of the missing Reston teenager, according to police.

The autopsy results showed Hassanen suffered from blunt force trauma to the upper body, according to police.

TORRES IS BEING HELD without bail and police are not searching for other suspects, according to Parker.

Since police report that assaults occurred in both Fairfax and Loudoun counties, it is undetermined where the criminal case against Torres will be tried, according to Holland. While police do not think Torres's motive for the murder was bias-related, they will not know for sure until the investigation is complete.

"If during the course of this ongoing, active criminal investigation, information or evidence surfaces that would indicate that this was potentially hate motivated, at that point, detectives would obviously take the investigation in that direction," Parker said.

Sharon Bulova, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, stepped in to reiterate this fact during the press confer-



PHOTO COURTESY OF FCPD

Darwin Martinez Torres, 22, of Sterling.

ence.

"Law enforcement will not know for sure until the investigation uncovers all of the facts in the case," Bulova said. "This is still an ongoing investigation. While the police work to uncover the motive, the fact remains that any violent murder is a senseless and a hateful

act."

Though Muslim community members were grateful for law enforcement's swift actions, in the wake of the FCPD's press conference, they encouraged police to continue investigating the motive for the murder.

"We call on law enforcement to investigate all aspects of the motive," said Rizwan Jaka, ADAMS Center chairman of the board. "All angles of the motive must be investigated thoroughly. The perpetrator must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

Law enforcement intends to seek the harshest punishment for Torres.

"I can assure you that while justice will not bring Nabra Hassanen back, justice will be done as the suspect in this brutal attack is in custody and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Lt. Col. Tom Ryan, FCPD deputy chief of police for administration, said during the press conference. "I say to our Muslim community and to our Fairfax community as a whole, that the Fairfax County Police Department is committed to your safety and that when crimes such as this occur, our officers and detectives take it personal."

DURING THE MONTH of Ramadan, a prayerful time for Muslims to connect with God, family and community, the tragic situation was heightened, sending waves of shock and anger throughout the country.

SEE MURDER, PAGE 11

Losing One of Our Own

Worst fear of any parent of a teenager, losing a child to violence.

Later this week, when area Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan, a month of observance and daily fasting at Eid al-Fitr, the surrounding community grieves with them the loss of 17-year-old Nabra Hassanen of Reston.

Nabra was among a group of teenagers who were gathered at the All Dulles Area Muslim Society for an all-night event overnight Saturday during Ramadan, and who were returning to the center after going to eat at a fast food restaurant.

Fairfax County Police report: "At about 3:40 a.m. on Sunday, a group of as many as 15 teenagers was walking and riding bikes on Dranesville Road. The group of teens had been attending an overnight event at a mosque, the All Dulles Area Muslim Society or ADAMS Center, and had left to go to a fast food restaurant. As they were returning to the mosque, some were on the sidewalk and others were on the road itself. Detectives believe [Darwin Martinez Torres, 22, of Sterling] came upon the teens while he was driving. The investigation reveals a teenaged boy on a bike began arguing with Torres. Torres then drove his car onto the curb as the group scattered. Witnesses say Torres

caught up with them a short time later in a nearby parking lot and got out of his car armed with a baseball bat and began chasing the group. Torres was able to catch Nabra. His anger over the encounter led to violence when he hit Nabra with a baseball bat. Torres then took Nabra with him in his car to a second location nearby in Loudoun County."

Nabra's body was found in a Loudoun pond. Torres is charged with her murder, which police describe as a road rage incident rather than a hate crime, although more charges could come later.

All parents who have successfully raised children into a teenagers know fear for their safety as they become more independent. We expect our teens to be safe participating in events based at a house of worship. We expect our teens to be safe from violence. Nabra's death means that all of us now have a diminished sense of safety; we all grieve with Nabra's parents, who lost their beautiful and beloved daughter during Ramadan, on Father's Day. We share their horror at what their daughter suffered.

Coming together in support of the Muslim community in vigil, prayers and other support has meant a great deal.



PHOTO COURTESY KHADIJAH ABDULLAH-LARDAS
Nabra Hassanen, 17, of Reston was a sophomore at South Lakes High School.

"Basically, the outpouring of support from the Christian community, the Jewish community, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Bahá'í; everyone is comforting to us," Rizwan Jaka of the ADAMS Center told a Connection reporter. "People care so much and it means so much to us."

But we will all feel the loss of Nabra Hassanen, and a loss of sense of safety here, in weeks and years to come.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

November General Elections

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

With the conclusion of the political party primaries last week the general election is now teed up for Nov. 7. There were some surprises coming out of the Democratic and Republican primaries. Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam easily won the Democratic primary to be the nominee for governor even though there was discussion beforehand that polls indicated a tight race. Polling for primaries is notorious for being inaccurate because with a typically light turnout the universe of potential voters is almost impossible to determine.

Former one-term U.S. Rep. Tom Perriello has a great deal to offer and will hopefully stay on the scene for future opportunities. Although the term "establishment" was grossly over-used in describing Ralph Northam, his service in the state senate plus his active role as lieutenant governor made him well known and greatly admired throughout the state.

Justin Fairfax gained everyone's admiration after a primary loss to Attorney General Mark Herring four years ago led to his active campaigning during the interim time making him well known for this primary. He was also well known for his work as an attorney. If you review the areas where Ralph Northam did well



and compare them with where Justin Fairfax was strongest, you create a strong statewide team that will be nearly impossible to defeat. Attorney General Mark Herring was not challenged in a primary and will be on the ballot to succeed himself in November. There is no one-term limitation with the attorney general and the lieutenant governor as there is with the governor.

The greatest surprise of the primaries may have been on the Republican side to pick a candidate for governor. Ed Gillespie who has been mentioned for years as the next Republican governor of Virginia barely got through the primary with a shockingly strong showing by Corey Stewart who is known for his anti-immigrant work in Prince William County and for campaigning with a Confederate flag. He has the distinction of being so over the top that he was fired by the Trump campaign. Turnout was especially low in the Republican primary, and Stewart was just over a percentage point in taking out Gillespie. It will be interesting to see if the folks who voted for Stewart will vote in the general election or decide to stay home.

The Republican primary for lieutenant governor was a slug-fest between two state senators with Jill Vogel winning after a mud-slinging campaign that left neither candidate looking good.

All 100 seats for the House of Delegates are

up for election this fall with a record number of contested elections.

Historically it has been difficult to recruit candidates to run for the House of Delegates, but events of the past year have brought forth more candidates than ever before. There was a record number 27 seats where the candidates were determined by the primary because there was so much interest in running. Democrats will certainly pick up seats in the House of Delegates getting closer to shifting or sharing power in that legislative body.

While I am uncontested in my race for the House of Delegates you can still expect to see me campaigning. It is a good way to stay in touch with constituents and to increase turn-out for the statewide elections. Expect a busy fall of campaigning leading up to the fall elections in Virginia that will send a signal to the nation as to the public's reaction to national events.

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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Finding the Right Mentor

Mentor can brighten a young person's future.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Tamyka Mason says that she was struggling with academics, finances and time management. She knew that she needed to make a change, but didn't have a source for guidance. Mason discovered the Women in Search of Excellence (WISE) Mentoring Program run by Northern Virginia Community College and her life began to change.

"When I joined WISE, [I] was assigned [a] mentor and learned how to speak about the challenges I was facing and the goals I had," said Mason. "[My mentor] helped me dramatically ... plan for future events."

The upcoming summer months offer teens an opportunity to connect with adults other than parents who can offer guidance through mentorship programs. Finding the right mentoring match can be a life-altering experience, say experts.

"Through supportive relationships with adult mentors, teens can learn how to develop practical goals, identify resources to accomplish goals ... regulate emotions, communicate effectively with others and cope better with stress," said Jerome

Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University.

The Virginia Mentoring Partnership (VMP) is a source for those who are looking for a mentor or those who want to mentor others. The organization's program managers train mentoring program coordinators and mentors. Their goal is to increase the number and quality of mentoring programs in Virginia. VMP maintains a database where prospective mentors or mentees can plug in a ZIP code and find the closest mentoring program.

"We provide support across the State of Virginia to help align program practices that research shows make high quality mentorship programs," said Betsy Bilharz, Virginia Mentoring Partnership. "We recruit, screen and match mentors with young people using that set of standards."

Recognizing that a mentoring relationship is not usually a relationship of equals is an important aspect of mentorships, says Amy L. Best, Ph.D., professor and chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at George Mason University. "There are really

two types of mentors: those who provide guidance and willingly share



The Women in Search of Excellence (WISE) Mentoring Program run by Northern Virginia Community College is designed to address challenges faced by young women in higher education.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

knowledge they have accrued from their experience in the field," she said. "The second type are those who facilitate opportunity, vouching for someone or helping the person with points of contact in their area of interest. Both are important."

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP develops best when mentors listen to a young person's concerns and expectations [and] empathize and tailor support and skill building around the teen's needs and with their input, says Short. "The relationship should benefit both the mentor and the teen through expressions of gratitude, a sense of accomplishment, and expectations for future support and success."

Tykesha R. Myrick works as a financial aid manager at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and is the founder of

the WISE program, which targets minority women, pairs students with adult professionals who offer guidance to the students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. "The relationships go beyond academic accomplishments and are life changing and life lasting," said Myrick. "The goal is to provide a holistic environment for these young women."

Mentorship programs such as WISE work best when those being mentored are receptive. "The [best] mentees [respect] the mentor's gift of time [and] recognize the importance of learning by listening and ask thoughtful questions, and they are open and responsive to guidance," said Best. "It is equally important to invest not simply in the best and brightest, but those with the smallest glimmer of promise. Good mentors move mountains."

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ENTERTAINMENT

Send entertainment announcements to www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Art Exhibition. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. through June 29 at U. S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive. Exhibit "H. K. Anne Presents The American Landscape," will be on exhibit at the USGS National Center is a public building, parking is available in the visitor's lot outside the visitor's entrance. Photo ID is required to enter. Visit www.HKAnneFineArt.com for more.

Lake Anne Exhibit. Through July 2 at the Reston Community Center at Lake Anne, 1609 Washington Plaza N. Exhibit features work by members of the Reston Photographic Society. Visit www.leagueofrestonartists.org/rps or call 703-476-4500.

All-comers' Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. Call 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com.

"A Bird in the Hand" through spring 2017 Reston Town Square Park, 11990 Market Street, Reston Town Center. See and explore Patrick Dougherty's monumental public art sculpture made from tree saplings. Presented by GRACE in collaboration with IPAR. 703-471-9242 restonarts.org

Teen and Adult Art Classes

ArtSpace Herndon Every Monday from 5:30-8:30 p.m. 750 Center Street, Herndon. Drawing and Mixed Media with Melanie Stanley - During Fall and Winter of 2016. Cost: \$45/class. The class will use a variety of techniques for drawing, painting, mark making, and collage using fine arts tools and materials. Students will be taken down a creative path to learn to use drawing tools and brushes more effectively. Register by emailing Melanie, and she will send you the supply list and payment options/information: ridingfree2@gmail.com. 703-956-9560. www.artspaceherndon.com.

THURSDAY/JUNE 22

Road Trip to "RENT." 5:15-11 p.m. meet at 5:15 pm Hunters Woods Shopping Center (Ledo Pizza) or at 5:30 pm Lake Anne Plaza parking lot, 1609 Washington Plaza N., 2254 Hunters Woods Plaza. Reston Association trip to National Theatre to see "RENT," a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning theatrical production follows a year in the lives of seven artists struggling to follow their dreams without selling out. \$95 for RA members, \$110 for non-members Email Ashleigh@reston.org or 703-435-6577 to register.

Improv Comedy Night. 7:30 p.m. at NextStop Theater, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. "Last Ham Standing," show for all ages. Visit www.nextstoptheatre.org for more.

SATURDAY/JUNE 24

Slam Allen Concert. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Blues style music. \$20. Visit www.artspaceherndon.com or call 703-956-6590.

JUNE 24-25

SoccerFest. Various times at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Full weekend of soccer competition. call 703-471-5414.

DEADLINE JUNE 27

T-Shirt Art Competition. Reston

Bicycle Club (RBC) and Arts Herndon invite all 2D artists to enter the Reston Century T-Shirt Art Competition following a theme that identifies it with bicycle road cycling, "Ride Safe/Ride Fun." Winner notified July 15. Visit restonbikeclub.org/ for more.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 28

The Great Zucchini (Comedy/Magic). 10-11 a.m. at the Visitor Center Pavilion 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Wednesday Morning Children's Series. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov

DEADLINE JUNE 30

Call for Artists. at the US Geological Survey, National Gallery, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Eligible works are paintings, mixed media, and two-dimensional works suitable for wall hanging (no photography). The exhibit will be on display from July 3-28. Artwork that reflects USGS's environmental mission is encouraged. Enter works here www.leagueofrestonartists.org.

SATURDAY/JULY 1

Independence Day Celebration. 10 a.m. at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Water Mine opens 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; boat rentals open 1:30-2:30 p.m.; puppet show 3-9:15 p.m.; live music 9:15 p.m. (approximately) Fireworks show \$10/car. Food vendors will set up near the park main office. Campgrounds are available for an overnight stay. Reservations recommended, call 703-471-5415.

Deanna Bogart Band Concert. 7:30-10 p.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. A night of dancing to the jump blues of this pianist/saxophonist/vocalist. Call 703-912-4062 or visit restontowncenter.com/concerts.

MONDAY/JULY 3

Mr. Knick Knack Performs. 10:30-11:15 a.m. in the pavilion at the Reston Town Center, Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. Music for the children, part of musical Mondays program. Call 703-912-4062 or visit www.restontowncenter.com.

TUESDAY/JULY 4

Firecracker 5K. 8-10 a.m. Reston Town Center, Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. Live music and American flags while rooting for the runners in the "Battle of the Branches" competition. Call 703-912-4062 or visit www.restontowncenter.com.

Herndon Independence Day Celebration. 6:30-9:30 p.m. in Bready Park at the Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave. Family-fun event featuring games, patriotic arts and craft activities, live music, family games, bingo, food, balloon artists and more. Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation/special-events/4th-of-july.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 5

Blue Sky Puppet Theater. 10-11 a.m. at the Visitor Center Pavilion 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Wednesday Morning Children's Series. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov

THURSDAY/JULY 6

The Annandale Brass (American Popular Music). 7:30- 8:30 p.m. at Kidwell Farm, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Thursday Evening Concert Series. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

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Investigation Continues

FROM PAGE 3

"The community is together every night," Jaka said. "This affects everyone's heart in the deepest fashion."

Hassanen's Muslim community was particularly stricken.

"The community is grieving," Jaka said. "The community is in shock and we're trying to counsel the whole community and counsel the youth. Regardless of what the motive was, this was a heinous and horrific murder and tragic."

Jaka remains hopeful and is heartened by the show of support the mosque has received from around the state.

"Basically, the outpouring of support from the Christian community, the Jewish community, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Bahá'í; everyone is comforting to us," he says with tears in his eyes and emotion in his voice. "People care so much and it means so much to us."

Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock, Fairfax County and Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and other government officials have issued statements of support and sympathy for Hassanen's family and the grieving Muslim community.

IN AN ACT OF SOLIDARITY, a group of nearly 40 community members showed up on Monday, June 19, to stand watch as Muslims entered the ADAMS Center mosque in Sterling for their evening Ramadan prayers.

"She didn't deserve to die," said Laura Fuents of Sterling, who held a lit candle as she stood on the sidewalk outside of the mosque. "I can't even imagine what her family is feeling."

"I've been living here for over 30 years and it's very sad that something like this happened in our neighborhood," said Isabel Membreno of Sterling, who also stood while holding a candle that was burning brightly.

"They've extended their support, so it means a lot that we can come together," Jaka said. "God tells us in the Koran that we must respond to bad with good. It just shows the love that overcomes the bad."

Online fundraisers on LaunchGood and GoFundMe are raising money for Hassanen's family to cover funeral expenses and other needs with a combined goal of \$365,000. As of the morning of Tuesday, June 20, the campaigns raised a total of \$327,305 from more than 12,000 contributors nationwide.

The South Lakes High School Muslim Student Association is organizing a "Vigil for Nabra" event at Lake Anne Plaza at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 21.

"We have to always remember, respond to bad with good," Jaka said. "We have to show more love, more harmony. We were overwhelmed by calls, by emails, by visits by the interfaith communities. Pastors are coming and calling, rabbis are calling and coming over. That's the love that overcomes the hate."

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Relatively Speaking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

If you live long enough, it's quite likely that many of the family members/generations born before you will have predeceased you. Moreover, the family members born before them, two generations-plus behind, are most surely to be geshtorbin (Yiddish for dead) as well. The effect: memory loss. Specifically, the memories lost of a generation of great grandparents – and beyond, you probably never knew or for whom you have extremely limited knowledge; after all, you were an infant when your maternal grandmother died. And when your widowed mother died nearly nine years ago, you lost what may very well have been that final anecdotal connection to your family's history, especially if your Jewish and your grandparents immigrated from Russia, Romania, The Baltic States, etc. before World War II where recorded history of Jews was evidence not documentation.

It just so happens that in my family, in fact, our closest surviving cousins, Ronnie and Gil, who themselves are in their 80s, are alive and extremely well and living with their daughter, Jayne, in Massachusetts. This past weekend, Ronnie and Gil drove eight hours to visit my brother Richard and me. And though we are regularly in touch over the phone, it has been years since we were all together in Washington, D.C. And being in their company, naturally we reminisced – ALL WEEKEND. What spawned this column was a comment Ronnie (a singer/pianist in Boston for 25 years) made in response to a question we asked about whether there was any other musical talent in the family. She said quite matter of factly that my maternal great-grandfather – who I had never met or even heard of before, "was a cantor in Russia – with a beautiful voice" (who never left Russia). "What! I never knew that." I don't recall knowing anything about my great grandparents, maternal or paternal.

You see, Ronnie was there almost at the beginning. She was the first born to my mother's oldest sibling and only sister, my Auntie Lee. My mother was the baby of the family – after two brothers were born. As such, the age difference between my mother and Ronnie was about 14 years, atypical for a niece and an aunt. As a result, Ronnie was witness to lots of family history that I thought might have been lost forever when my mother died in 2008. As a few examples, Ronnie knows who was present at my mother's "Auntie's" house for Passover Cedar in the early 1960s. She knew that "Auntie" was my mother's mother's brother's widow, not my mother's mother's sister. I certainly didn't. She knew that three families/our cousins lived together in this three-story home and all worked together in the family market: Levine's. Still more that I didn't I know.

Another family connection Ronnie and Gil reminded us of was a family line we have in South America. Again, before World War II, one of my maternal grandfather's (Hyman) brother's Simon (Shimon) immigrated to Argentina where to this day exists first (Eduardo) and second cousins (names I'm afraid don't know) I've never met, though Ronnie and Gil have met numerous times in Miami and in Argentina (Ronnie and Gil used to live in South Florida). The more we talked, the more we travelled back in time. But I won't self-indulge myself and bore you any longer. I will try to wrap it up in the next paragraph.

My mother, Celia died in December 2008, my father died in December 2006. With their passing, my brother and I lost – among a million other things, their first-hand, on-site accounts of our Lourie/Blacker history dating back 150 years or so to Russia/Eastern Europe, before any of my relatives immigrated to America. Ronnie, my mother's cherished niece, knows as much about our family history as there is still to know and her husband of nearly 63 years, Gil, knows almost as much. Their visit wasn't just a weekend. It was a lifetime. A weekend of a lifetime for which Richard and I are extraordinarily grateful.

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

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NEWS



PHOTO BY ELLEN BARKER/THE CONNECTION

The Virginia is for Lovers 'Love Sign' currently rests at Lake Anne, where residents can visit and pose with the famous sign.

Lake Anne Plaza Hosts Chalk on the Water Festival

Artists lined Lake Anne on Saturday and Sunday, June 10-11, for the Chalk on the Water Festival. Children, families, and professionals all came out to contribute to public art and compete for prizes.

Kirsten South, 5, was working on a rainbow in her assigned location. Her brother Thomas was also participating. "I love it," said their mother, Alexandra South. "It's a chance to be part of a broader art project."

Clair Wood's space was being transformed into a fantasy snail. Wood, who enjoys art, was inspired by "Alice in Wonderland." This was her second time participating in the festival.

Not all participants create art outside of the festival. Claire Jones, who said she is not usually an artist, is taking part in the Chalk on the Water Festival for the second time. She was introduced to the concept through her girl scout troop.

Sarah Mullery's older daughter has participated before, but it's her

younger daughter's first time. "It's been very fun," Mullery said. "She's enjoyed the experience of being out, doing art in the community."

Some of the art makes use of the surroundings. Charlotte Cottrell wanted to reference the weekend heat by creating an image of a woman sunbathing. Last year, Cottrell came in second place at the Town Center's similar event.

Participants entered in one of four categories: family/elementary, family/junior and senior high school, amateur artists, and professional artists. Cash prizes were awarded to the top three contestants in each category.

This year, the Virginia is for Lovers sign was displayed in Lake Anne during the Chalk on the Water Festival. Many attending posed in front of the iconic sign.

The chalk art lines the lake at Lake Anne Plaza. Visitors can view the artwork until it is worn or washed away by the elements.

— ELLEN BARKER



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