



Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ♦ Kingstowne ♦ Newington

CONNECTION FAMILIES

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Hannah Friend, left, with fellow West Springfield seniors Rowah Teskeq, and Cheyenne Jones are heading to "Sparta," a temporary set of classrooms, on the first day of school.

The School Year Kicks Off at West Springfield

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Democratic-Endorsed Candidate
Wins School Board Election

NEWS, PAGE 8

TSA Comes
To Springfield

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BEFORE



SECOND SATURDAY

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Support. Information. Hope.

Date: Saturday, September 9, 2017
Saturday, October 14, 2017
Saturday, November 11, 2017

Time: 9:00-9:30 a.m. – Registration
9:30-1:00 p.m. – Workshop

Place: Duff Kronfeld & Marquardt P.C.
Fair Oaks Commerce Center 11320
Random Hills Road/Suite 630 Fairfax, VA 22030

Please join us for coffee at our Second Saturday Divorce Workshop and get the information and support from professionals: a family law attorney, a financial advisor, a family therapist, a private investigator, an estate planning attorney and other professionals who will help guide you through the divorce process. Speakers vary for each workshop.

Registration at the door; however, pre-registration is recommended as space is limited.

Online Registration: www.secondsaturdaynova.com
Email: nancy@secondsaturdaynova.com
Phone: (703) 591-7475

You've come to the right place!



NEWS

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Two Afghan Bistro diners try different lamb dishes at lunch on a Wednesday.

Owner Omar Masroor says all of the lamb dishes are customer favorites along with the Aushak (leek and scallion dumplings.)



Afghan Soul Food Tucked in Strip Mall

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Friends, families with children and businessmen crowd into a small Afghan restaurant located in a strip mall in Springfield for an authentic Afghan lunch cooked from family recipes. Afghan Bistro, located in Alban Shopping Center at 8081-D Alban Road, was listed in Washingtonian's 100 Very Best Restaurants 2017. This new Springfield restaurant has been open barely 22 months but now requires reservations during the busy lunch and dinner hours.

A popular appetizer is the Hot Mezza Assortment that gives the customer a tasting of four flavors including the spicy beef dumplings, roasted butternut squash bouraanee, roasted eggplant bouraanee and leek and scallion dumplings.

Taliha Masroor, a family daughter, explains that bouraanee is a method of cooking that involves roasting and then sautéing. She says her mother, Sofia, does all of the cooking using traditional family recipes.

In addition to the regular menu of stews, vegetarian dishes, chops and kabobs, there are daily specials. Today the menu includes Khameeri Mashreqi which is beef stuffed dumplings topped with lentils, kidney beans and chick peas and cooked in yogurt and Aracosian which is a goat stew cooked in house spices and served with a side of qubuli rice salad.

Owner Omar Masroor explains they chop up the whole goat shoulder and then slow roast it five hours in its own juices with turmeric and cumin.

"Be careful," the waitress said, "the goat stew contains bones."

The menu also offers hamburger, but with a punch. Masroor said, "Believe it or not, we sell a few of these every day." But he adds, "The customer favorites are all of the lamb dishes — the lamb shank, rack of lamb and also, of



Sharon Simkin has traveled from Arlington to have her birthday lunch at Afghan Bistro in Springfield. Owner Omar Masroor says people travel from all over the metro area and out-of-state to enjoy the family Afghan cooking "for the soul."

course, the Aushak, the leek and scallion dumplings. I try to keep the essence of Afghan cooking at its roots, no preservatives, artificial coloring, cream, butter or milk. And no microwave, just a lot of large pots."

Sometimes a surprise piece of birthday cake even appears for that special occasion, and it can be accompanied by a cup of green cardamom tea. Sharon Simkin has driven from Arlington to have her birthday lunch with friends.

Masroor said, "People come from all over — the metro area, from New Jersey, from North Carolina." On Saturday nights there is a regular live sitar performance that begins at 7:30 p.m.

Masroor said, "Afghan cooking is for the soul honestly. It has a lot of flavors, fresh herbs and spices, really comforting." He says he came to America in 1982 and now he and his wife and two daughters run Afghan Bistro. "My brother and cousin are currently training to open another branch restaurant in D.C. this fall." Masroor adds that people are finding out about the Afghan fresh spices and that they are good for the psyche.

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

TSA Comes to Springfield The agency is bringing an estimated 3,000 jobs to the area.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Just when all looked lost for a new government tenant coming to Springfield, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently signed a 15-year lease for a site south of the Springfield Town Center, reviving positive economic news that was stifled when the FBI chose not to build their new headquarters on the Government Services Administration (GSA) site earlier this year.

Local officials look at the new tenant as a breath of fresh air to an area that has been dormant for some time. "This is a big deal — and something I've been working on for years," said Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, via email.

The TSA site is near the GSA site and between the Northern Virginia Community College Medical Campus and the Franconia-Springfield Metro station.

There is an extended stay hotel in the area, and the Springfield Town Center a few blocks away. Within a mile, there is access to the Springfield-Franconia Parkway, I-95, Metro's blue line and the Virginia Railway Express, reinforcing McKay's notion of a



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

The TSA's new location is here at 6601 Springfield Center Drive where there is currently a non-descript warehouse-type building.

"transportation hotspot."

In addition, area transportation officials are looking to extend Frontier Drive past the Metro station, connecting with Loisdale Road near the Toyota dealer, increasing accessibility.

"The agency is bringing an estimated 3,000 jobs to the area, and will surely be a boon to local restaurants, hotels, and retailers," added McKay.

At the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, President and CEO Gerald

Gordon noted the economic advantages as well. "It adds a major employer to the area, and an employer that will offer high-paying jobs and have significant spinoff effects on the economy. Not only will 3,000 more people be working in Springfield, but they can also eat lunch and buy other goods and services in the vicinity of their new office. And, the new headquarters could attract TSA contractors that want to be close to the agency and create demand for more office space in that area," Gordon said, responding by email.

In the past, government buildings have sparked economy in the surrounding areas in a positive manner. Two examples of this, according to Gordon, are the National Reconnaissance Office in Chantilly, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in Springfield, just across I-95 from this new TSA location.

The TSA is currently headquartered in Pentagon City, and have other offices in the Oracle building in Herndon and on Walker Lane on the other side of the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. These offices will all move to the new location. Officials are looking at mid 2020 for the expected move in to begin.

The Spartan baseball team ventures into the unknown on the first day at West Springfield.



Sabrina Bullard, a junior on her first day of the 2017-2018 year at West Springfield.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON

The School Year Kicks Off at West Springfield

The first day of school at West Springfield High School is a big deal for some, and not so much for others. School started a week earlier this year, which wasn't a high point for students, and the school is under renovations, so there are some challenges for students and teachers to

get used to. It's the second year of the renovations, so a makeshift arrangement of trailers out back has been named "Sparta" to keep in line with the school's moniker. "We're getting a new science wing by spring semester, it's going to be awesome," said Dawn Pemberton, a science teacher at the school.



Students unload in the back of the school.



The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors presented a proclamation to declare September as Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month.



Doing the walk in 2016 to raise awareness and funds and prevent suicide.

September Is Suicide Prevention Month

Area agencies, organizations and citizens engage to raise awareness and prevent deaths.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

At its meeting on July 11, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors presented a proclamation, designating September 2017 as Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month.

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Virginia. On average, one person dies by suicide every eight hours in the state. According to the statistics published for 2017 by the National Capital Area branch of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 15-34 in Virginia, third for ages 10-14, and fourth among people 35-54.

"So many of these tragedies are preventable," said Ellen Shannon, area director for the region's AFSP chapter, "if only we can end the stigma and get people talking. It's not a conversation that we're comfortable having, but if we listen, and talk, we might just save a life."

Studies show that more than 50 percent of all people who attempt suicide tell someone about their intentions, but too often people considering suicide are afraid to ask for help, and those who think they see the signs of trouble are reluctant to be wrong and then offend, or cause embarrassment.

Wendy Gradison, CEO of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Inc. (PRS) that runs Northern Virginia's crisis hotline and textline, agrees. In a statement, Gradison said that by "turning up the volume, we can make it OK to have a conversation, make a call or send a text. Making a call or sending a text [to our CrisisLink] saves lives."

PRS reports that for every death, 278 people are able to move past that crisis moment, and the numbers could increase to the positive if more people can be reached. The nonprofit has contributed to those survival statistics, handling nearly

34,000 crisis calls and exchanging more than 33,000 crisis text messages from the Northern Virginia region in 2016 alone through its CrisisLink program.

All of the area organizations that support mental health and fight against suicide are actively engaged in that battle all year long, 24/7, but during Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month, those efforts get magnified to engage as many citizens as possible in the conversation.

Who's doing what to promote suicide awareness and prevention during September, and how can to get involved? Here are just a few of the events and activities taking place in the area:

Out of the Darkness Walk

The 10th annual Fairfax/NoVA Out of the Darkness Community Walk to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Capital Area Chapter, (AFSP) takes place on Saturday, Sept. 16, starting at 11 a.m. Check-in begins at 9 a.m. The walk begins and ends at the Fairfax County Government Center in Fairfax.

Online registration for the event at www.afsp.donordrive.com is open until noon on the Friday before the walk, but individuals and teams can still register in person at the walk from check-in until the start of the walk.

The event is family and pet friendly. Walkers and spectators are encouraged to come early in order to explore the resources area. Representatives from local agencies and non-profits will be on hand to offer information and news about upcoming events.



From left: Capt. II Dennis Kotecki, Wellness and Fitness Program Manager, Fairfax County; Karrie Leigh Boswell, retired Fairfax County firefighter and chair of the Out of the Dark Community Walk; and Ellen Shannon, area director, National Capital Area, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

The organizers say it's also a good time to simply "connect and gain support" from others with similar experiences.

Working closely with the AFSP and leading the charge for the walk for the second year in a row is retired Fairfax County firefighter, Karrie Leigh Boswell, who has been an advocate for firefighter line-of-duty

death benefits during her 27-year career. She got involved in the cause to prevent suicide deaths when "trying to make sense" of the suicide "of one of our own, Nicole Mittendorf." Mittendorf was a firefighter from Woodbridge, who took her own life in April last year and whose death sparked investigations into cyberbullying as a possible contributing factor in her death.

Boswell says she felt compelled to get involved and do her part for suicide prevention for everyone, but particularly for her "brother and sister" firefighters and rescue personnel. "If you think there's a stigma among the general public when it comes to talking about your mental health or feelings of suicide," said Boswell, "it's even greater in those ranks and with law enforcement. We feel like we're supposed to be the ones helping, not the ones needing help."

Boswell is committed to doing what she can personally and to building a community to tackle the tragedies of suicide. "Nothing ever gets done without a broad-based coalition," she said.

"Last year we had about 1,000 walkers and raised about \$150,000," said Boswell. Those numbers made the Fairfax Walk number 18 of the 411 AFSP-sponsored walks that took place across the country in 2016.

Her goals for this year? "Double? Triple? Ultimately to break a million dollars!" Boswell is pleased that half of the funds raised will remain here in the community, with the other half going to

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WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

September Events Highlight Suicide Prevention

FROM PAGE 4

fund scientific research, and national suicide prevention and advocacy efforts.

AFSPorg offers seminars and workshops for clinicians as well as the general public. The group also raises funds for research and resources and advocates at all levels of government to “find better ways to prevent suicide, to educate and to procure resources.”

Contact information: Website www.afsp.org, Twitter @AFSP_NCAC and on Facebook.

24 Hour Work-Out of the Darkness

Organized by Fairfax County’s LiveWell program and Fire and Rescue’s Well-Fit program, this 24-hour workout event is a “great companion piece” for the Out of the Darkness Walk,” said Capt. II Dennis Kotecki, wellness and fitness program manager with Fairfax County. The action also takes place at Government Center, starts at 8 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 15, and concludes an hour before the Walk check-in begins on Saturday morning.

“We are really looking for ways to help our county employee community stay fit, physically and mentally ... and it’s just a great, fun experience and way to support efforts to prevent suicide.”

The Workout is open to all Fairfax County government employees, retirees, family members and first responders from surrounding jurisdictions. The activities are divided into 30-minute sessions and include opportunities for individual exercise as well as group fitness classes.

“We’ll have it all going on,” said Kotecki. There will be cycling, Zumba, a walking labyrinth, a kids’ fitness zone, kettleballs and routines using TRX equipment.

Like the Out of the Darkness Walk, the Work-Out will also have a mental wellbeing expo, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Friday, with information about community resources, as well as county employee benefits.

Eligible participants can learn more, register and select workout activities and timeslots at m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/20f04aaba92fa1fbg-workout2.

#CallTextLive

PRS, Inc. Is launching its third annual #CallTextLive campaign, using that hashtag to reach out directly through social media to engage the community and encourage those in need to make contact with people who can help. The campaign works to educate the community about what resources are available, and what they can do to get help, or give it.

On the PRS website, the organization has posted an interactive Calendar of Events. Throughout the month of September on the calendar viewers can click on links that guide them to resources, training classes, ways to volunteer or donate, inspirational messages, and actions that anyone can take to help raise awareness and prevent suicide.

On Sept. 10 on the PRS calendar, there’s information about World Suicide Prevention Day. Sept. 21 invites people to join in on “Selfie Day!” by sharing pictures on PRS’s social media platforms dressed in a #CallTextLive T-shirt. Sept. 16 and 17 direct viewers to information about, and registration for, a two-day ASIST training session. ASIST is a suicide intervention workshop. The sessions are open to “virtu-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rowing to raise funds — from the 2016 “Work-Out of the Darkness, which precedes the Out of the Darkness Walk to prevent suicide. For the second year, Fairfax County will host a 24-hour workout event for county employees, family members and firefighters and law enforcement from neighboring jurisdictions, from 8 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 15, until 8 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16.

ally anyone older than 16, regardless of prior experience or training.”

In addition to running the CrisisLink Hotline and Textline, PRS offers training workshops and programs such as “CareRing Services” to maintain supportive contact with area older adults.

Contact information: Website – prsinc.org. The Crisis Hotline number is 703-527-4077. Text “CONNECT” to 85511 to reach the PRS Textline.

NAMI Northern Virginia “Help Shine a Light” Walk

The local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness will host its annual Walk on Saturday, Sept. 23, in Tysons Corner, with check-in starting at 9 a.m.

NAMI Northern Virginia has been serving residents of Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church and Loudoun County for 40 years. They offer numerous classes, clubs, and support for individuals living with mental health conditions, as well as support groups, sessions and resources for the families, partners, and friends of those individuals.

Contact information: Website www.naminnorthernvirginia.org. Helpline 571-458.7310 Email at info@nami-vova.org.

Other mental health resources are available through the county on line at www.fairfaxcounty.gov, and through the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. Emergency mental health services with the CSB are available 24/7 by calling 703-573-5679, or coming directly to the Merrifield Center at 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive, lower level, rear entrance, in Fairfax.

Lake Braddock Graduate Studying Medicine

Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine (RVUCOM) has announced the matriculation of student doctor Jennifer Daniels of Springfield. Daniels was one of 160 students selected to matriculate at RVUCOM out of an applicant pool of nearly 5,000 candidates.

Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine are fully licensed physicians who practice a “whole person” approach to medicine. Osteopathic physicians focus on preventive health care and receive extra training in the musculoskeletal system.



Jennifer Daniels

Daniels is the daughter of Marcia Pape and Scott Daniels and granddaughter of June Pape. She is a

graduate of Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University with Bachelor of Science degrees in biology and psychology.

Springfield, Alexandria Students Awarded Coast Guard Foundation Scholarship

The Coast Guard Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to the education and welfare of all Coast Guard members and their families, announced that in 2017 it has awarded a record 166 new scholarships. Combined with 10 multi-year scholarship recipients and three Fallen Heroes Scholars, the Foundation is currently supporting 179 students with approximately \$500,000 in support this year. In the 27 years of this program, the Coast Guard Foundation has paid out more than \$4.7 million to more than 780 college-aged young adults to help the families of Coast Guard members achieve their goals of higher education.

Lesleigh Winner of Alexandria and Carolyn Belisle of Springfield were awarded Coast Guard Foundation Scholarships. Winner, daughter of E7 David Winner, plans to attend Temple University. Belisle, daughter of MCPO David P. Belisle, plans to attend George Mason University.

The Coast Guard Foundation Scholarships benefit the children of enlisted men and



Carolyn Belisle



Lesleigh Winner

women who are serving or have served in the U.S. Coast Guard, whether active duty, reserve, retired or deceased.

“The brave men and women of the Coast Guard are the epitome of dedication and commitment,” said Susan Ludwig, president, Coast Guard Foundation. “Their children have again and again demonstrated that they too hold themselves to that same high standard. We are proud to give back to these young individuals by investing in their future. We believe that it is an investment that will benefit these families and ultimately our country.”

To learn more about the Coast Guard Foundation, or to help support its work, visit www.coastguardfoundation.org or call 860-535-0786.

SCHOOL NOTES

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

Justin Hamilton, of Springfield, won a scholarship in the Heroes’ Legacy Scholarships for



Justin Hamilton

Children of Fallen or Disabled Service Members. He plans to attend the Northern Virginia Community College this year.

Logan Cole, of Springfield, graduated from Hofstra University (Hempstead, N.Y.) in May 2017, earning a Master of Science in education in counseling.

OPINION

Helping After Harvey

Give locally in Texas; give money not stuff.

The scenes of devastation from Hurricane Harvey in Texas will prompt many generous people to contribute to immediate relief efforts.

First, a reminder to give money, not stuff. The organizations on the ground need money now to address particular needs.

As a local paper, it fair to say that if we had a similar disaster here in Northern Virginia, we would want donated money to go to local organizations that understand local needs, rules, supply chains, etc. Give locally.

Houston Food Bank

Displaced families and individuals will need to be fed for a long time.
Donate online www.houstonfoodbank.org
535 Portwall St.
Houston, TX 77029
713-223-3700

Greater Houston Community Foundation

Will coordinate the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund to accept tax deductible flood relief donations for victims that have been affected by the recent floods.

Donate online ghcf.org
5120 Woodway Dr.
Suite 6000
Houston, TX 77056
713-333-2200

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

Tens of thousands of people in and around Houston will be newly homeless as the floods recede.

Donate online www.homelesshouston.org
2000 Crawford Street, Suite 700
Houston, TX 77002
713-739-7514
www.homelesshouston.org/take-action/donate/

Houston Humane Society

Donate online at www.houstonhumane.org
[www.houstonhumane.org/\(Give\)/giving/general-donation](http://www.houstonhumane.org/(Give)/giving/general-donation)
14700 Almeda Road
Houston, TX 77053
713-433-6421

San Antonio Humane Society

Is housing pets of people displaced by Harvey who are taking shelter at the AT&T Center or other places in San Antonio.
Donate online at sahumane.org
4804 Fredericksburg Road
San Antonio, TX 78229
210-226-7461 or 210-518-9742.

Austin Pets Alive!

This rescue group partners with local rescues. Austin Pets Alive! has been helping shelters in the direct line of Hurricane Harvey. They've transported more than 330 animals to their shelter and are expecting hundreds more.
Donate online www.austinpetsalive.org/donate/donate-now/ or visit austinpetsalive.org/hurricane-harvey-evacuations/

#CallTextLive — A Hashtag to Remember

BY WENDY GRADISON
CEO, PRS, INC.

It's been a tough year in Northern Virginia as youth and young adult suicides bereaved families, communities and schools. Many adult family members, friends, neighbors and colleagues were lost to suicide as well. In the aftermath, lives were cut short and so much promise left unrealized.

COMMENTARY Suicide, a serious issue locally and nationally that claims the lives of 44,000 people annually, is the 10th leading cause of death nationwide and second leading cause for people aged 15-24.

At PRS, Inc., a nonprofit that runs Northern Virginia's crisis hotline and textline, we are marking September's Suicide Prevention Month by launching the #CallTextLive Campaign. We've teamed up with Connection Newspapers for this third annual campaign to engage the community in discussing suicide and encouraging people to get help by calling or texting a hotline.

Using the hashtag #CallTextLive, the Campaign works to educate the community about resources available and actions they can take to bring awareness to suicide prevention and intervention. In fact, a simple call or text to a crisis hotline or textline often provides the empathetic, trained voice that someone in crisis needs to reduce his/her pain and provide alternatives and connections to care.

The #CallTextLive Campaign has a variety of events and actions to bring suicide prevention to the forefront. Throughout the month, we will post these on a web-based interactive calendar at www.prsinc.org/calltextlive. In addition, we will be sharing tips and resources via social media and asking people to share their stories and photos on PRS Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using #CallTextLive hashtag as well as posting Stories of Hope — video vignettes from survivors, family members, and hotline volunteers.

A highlight of the month is Selfie Day on Sept. 21 when friends, community, and clients show support by tagging themselves on selfies on our Facebook and other social media pages

using #CallTextLive. We have t-shirts available for purchase for PRS Selfie Day. We also encourage the community to join the PRS team (with #CallTextLive t-shirts) for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Fairfax Walk on Sept. 16 and the NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) NOVA and Loudoun Walks, which are both taking place Sept. 23.

For every death, 278 people manage to move past thoughts of suicide and survive. PRS supports this through its CrisisLink program, which handled nearly 34,000 crisis calls and exchanged over 33,000 crisis text messages from the Northern Virginia region last year. Any time of the day or night, the PRS CrisisLink Hotline can be reached at 800-273-TALK [8255] and the textline by texting "CONNECT" to 85511.

Making a call or sending a text to PRS CrisisLink saves lives. Removing the stigma around reaching out, discussing issues that contribute to suicide and encouraging people to get help is key. By participating in #CallTextLive, we can turn up the volume, and make it OK to have a conversation, make a call or send a text.

both parties came together to reject hate and renew our nation's founding principles of equality and inclusiveness. But instead of joining these leaders — including many prominent Republicans — we understand you have refused to speak out against the President's reaction to Charlottesville.

As Jewish members of the Virginia General Assembly, we write you because, as Virginians and Jews, we find your failure to denounce the President's reaction to Nazism deeply dis

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

American Values

To the Editor:

The following open letter was addressed to Republican gubernatorial candidate Ed Gillespie.

On Aug. 11 and 12, we saw violence and hate we hoped we would never again witness on American soil. In Charlottesville, Neo-Nazis and white supremacists took to the streets, marched with torches, gave Nazi salutes, shouted that Jews "will not replace them," chanted the Fascist slogan "Blood and Soil," proclaimed white supremacy, and murdered a

woman who was brave enough to stand up to them. Then, instead of clearly rejecting this evil, the President of the United States twice defended those marching with the very Neo-Nazis who unleashed this deadly violence on one of Virginia's greatest cities.

After President Trump's press conferences, we were left shocked and then deeply saddened. Let's be clear. "Very fine people" don't march with people who are holding Nazi flags and chanting anti-Semitic slogans. We were heartened to see, in the wake of Donald Trump's horrifying comments, that leaders in

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CONNECTION FAMILIES

Time for School

Making the transition from summer to the classroom.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

As children savor the last days of summer, many families are gearing up for the start of a new school year. From first day anxiety to new bedtime routines, local educators offer suggestions for a seamless transition to the classroom.

"I have always loved the rhythms of the school calendar because of the beginnings and endings and the possibilities for reflection and a chance to refresh and renew..." said Amy L. Best, Ph.D., professor and chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University. "I think the ritual of back-to-school shopping, whether that means a new binder and notebook, a new backpack, or a pair of new sneakers ... remains important for us because it offers opportunity to think about school anew."

The start of a new school year is an ideal time to help children set reasonable expectations, an important concept for high school students who begin to manage an increasing amount of responsibility and must learn to create a balance in their lives, says Best. "Put things in perspective," she said. "Sometimes the goals [that are] focused on personal growth, like learning how to advocate for yourself with a teacher, or navigating the halls, are as important as identifying academic milestones."

"It's useful to revisit points of struggle and perhaps more importantly, triumphs from the previous year. Reminding a student how they successfully managed a difficult issue is helpful," said Best.

Gone are the days of staying up late and sleeping in the next day. A healthy bedtime routine must be re-established gradually, advises Sean Aiken, head of school, BASIS Independent McLean.

"Consider easing into the early morning routine by adjusting your sleep schedules several days before school starts with progressively earlier wake up times," said Aiken. "Building the routine before the first day of school will help the adjustment on day one."

"In the week before the school year begins, families should revisit the expectations for bedtimes and morning routines and choose an evening and following morning to practice the routines," said Jalene Spain Thomas, Lower School Director St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School in Alexandria. "Children will appreciate knowing that the new routine for this school year includes a slightly later bedtime or more time for independent reading or shared reading with a parent."

For younger students, separation anxiety may become an issue as they move into a parent-free environment each day, says Aiken. "In these cases, con-



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The ritual of back-to-school shopping offers an opportunity to think about school anew, says Amy Best of George Mason University.

tact the school and establish a go-to adult for your child to talk to in the event they miss you too much during the day," he said.

Focusing on the positives about a child's school environment can help ease anxiety. "Younger students may want to draw a picture of what they think their new classroom will look like," said Thomas. "Older

students may enjoy writing a list of what they hope to accomplish in the school year that the family opens together in January."

Start with an organized workspace and shared family calendar to keep the family organized from day one, advises Aiken. "Folders and binders for home organizational systems are just as important as those your child will bring to school," he said. "Post a large calendar in a common area of the home so early due dates, back to school nights, and extracurricular activities can be seen by everyone in the family."

"Parents, remember to take

some time for yourselves in those early days, too," said Aiken. "You've worked hard all summer arranging camps, play dates, and other great activities. Maybe it's time to take a long lunch break together or catch a cheap matinee once you're safely assured that you children are off and running in their new learning adventures."

"Consider easing into the early morning routine by adjusting your sleep schedules several days before school starts with progressively earlier wake up times."

— Sean Aiken, head of school, BASIS Independent McLean

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Karen Keys-Gamarra celebrates at her victory party at the Elks Lodge in Pine Ridge.

PHOTO BY
MICHAEL LEE POPE



Democratic-Endorsed School Board Candidate Wins

Keys-Gamarra overcomes Republican-advantage in low-turnout August.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Guardian ad litem and Fairfax County Planning Commission member Karen Keys-Gamarra swamped Republican Chris Grisafe and two other candidates in a special election this week, one that Democrats say is a sign of strength for their party heading into the fall. The seat was vacated by Republican-endorsed former School Board member Jeanette Hough in May, days before the deadline for the race to be on the ballot in November. Democrats cried foul, attacking the Republicans throughout the campaign for trying to rig the vote by engineering an August special election so the voters would be older and whiter and ostensibly more inclined to vote Republican than the much larger pool of voters in November.

“It backfired,” said at-large School Board member Ryan McElveen, adding that the cost to taxpayers was about \$300,000 for the special election. “That became the narrative, and it’s what people were talking about.”

After it was clear that she had won more than 60 percent of the vote, Keys-Gamarra arrived to a raucous crowd of campaign volunteers and party faithful assembled at the Elks Lodge in Pine Ridge. Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam introduced the victorious Democrat with a speech that some in the crowd compared to the kind of delivery popularized by professional wrestlers, a newfound sense of ebullience for the typically buttoned-down candidate for governor. Keys-Gamarra thanked those who worked on her campaign without the benefit of a list, which she said she said she had been too busy to write.

“Today is so much bigger than me,” said Keys-Gamarra. “This sends a message that every student, every citizen, deserves a voice.”

ON THE CAMPAIGN trail, Keys-Gamarra focused on a theme of leveling the playing field for students across the county. She would frequently say that all

ELECTION RESULTS

- ❖ Karen Keys-Gamarra: 41,436 votes, 64 percent
- ❖ Chris Grisafe: 21,315 votes, 33 percent
- ❖ Michael Owens: 1,408 votes, 2 percent
- ❖ Sandra Allen: 787 votes, 1 percent

students deserve the same opportunities no matter what ZIP code they live in. That was a message that resonated with voters in Virginia’s most populous county, which has pockets of poverty scattered around some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the county. Supporters say that was the right message for an at-large seat on the School Board, which represents all parts of the county.

“Karen was really focused on this issue of equity,” said Tamara Derenak Kaufax, who represents the Lee District on the School Board. “She understands that poverty brings challenges, and that was something she talked about at every campaign appearance.”

Some Democrats were worried that the controversy surrounding the recent vote on renaming J.E.B. Stuart High School might undermine Keys-Gamarra, who agreed with those wanting to change the name. But as the precinct numbers rolled in Tuesday night, it became clear that issue might not have been the flashpoint some had feared. Democrats were closely watching precincts like Belvedere and Barcroft for a sense that voters there might be pushing back against the move to strip the high school of its controversial Confederate name.

“If there was going to be a backlash, that’s where you would have seen it,” said U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11). “But she won those precincts.”

Campaign manager Peter Dougherty acknowledged that turnout for the August special election was low compared to November. But he said the numbers this week exceeded his expectations, which he assumed would be maybe 6 percent or 7 percent of registered voters. Instead turnout was closer to 10 percent. Keys-Gamarra ended up with more than 41,000 votes — 64 percent, almost doubling the turnout of her Republican-endorsed opponent. Dougherty said he was surprised to see his candidate win in precincts like Fairfax Station, which is traditionally GOP territory.

“I think this shows that Democrats are really excited right now,” said Dougherty. “Voters wanted someone who would stand up to what we saw in Charlottesville, and I think Karen’s message was the antidote to that.”

ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnews-papers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday.

Virginia. Call 703-403-5360 or visit www.nvso.us.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 10

Community Welcome Picnic.

noon-2 p.m. at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. Everyone is invited to a community welcome picnic with burgers and hotdogs with all kinds of side dishes, along with live music by Bob Perilla’s Big Hillbilly Bluegrass Band and fun activities for children of all ages. Free. Call 703-451-8223 or visit sydenstrickerumc.org.

Vietnam Memorial Lecture.

2 p.m. at Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. 10209 Main St., Fairfax. “The 35 th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” Janet Folkerts, curator of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection, will share stories of the artifacts left at the Memorial and the soldiers they honor and memorialize. Free. Call 703-385-8414.

Tech Babies Storytelling Show.

5 p.m. at Epicure Cafe, 11104 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Jessica Piscitelli Robinson presents an hour long story about experiences trying to make a baby, when the tried and true method failed. \$10. Visit www.bettersaidhandone.com/.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 13

Shawna Caspi in Concert.

7:30 p.m. at the Epicure Cafe, 11104 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Performing in support of her fourth album Forest Fire, which is being released on Sept. 1.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 14

Acoustic Soul Concert.

6:30-8:30 p.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive. Part of Hometown Thursdays with local bands from the Fairfax Area. Call 703-385-7858.

Artist Reception.

7-9 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The Fairfax Art League will be having a reception at the Old Town Hall Gallery, meet the featured artist. Call 703-587-9481 or visit www.fairfaxartleague.net.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 15

Music on the Plaza.

7-8 p.m. at Old Town Plaza, 3955 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Live music and dance to relax by, weather permitting. Call 703-385-7858.

Bingo.

7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Smoke free Bingo. Visit fairfaxvfd.com, or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 16

Outdoor Yoga.

8-9 a.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Yoga by Pure Om. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a mat and water bottle. Free. Call 703-385-7858.

Oktoberfest, Walks, Bike Ride.

8 a.m. at Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church (AUUC), 10125 Lakehaven Court. German food and drinks will be available for purchase while enjoying traditional German music. Free. Visit scenicroutes.us/nvv/events or email nicebrowns@verizon.net.

Bikes for the World.

9 a.m.-noon at Saint Mary of Sorrows Church, 5222 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Bring usable/repairable bikes and spare parts for shipment to poverty stricken areas of the world. Contact Cathy at 703-307-5512, cat.gaiser@gmail.com or Brian at 703-764-3845, LBBAKEITH@gmail.com.

THURSDAY/AUG. 31

Hometown Thursdays.

6:30-8:30 p.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Jojo Bayless Band performs. Hometown Thursdays is an opportunity to meet up with friends, grab dinner at one of the many restaurants in downtown, and listen to great music. Free, family-friendly event for all ages.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 1

Photo Exhibition.

9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. 10209 Main St., Fairfax. “Over There: Americans in World War I” a traveling exhibition from the National Archives and Records Administration showcases photographs from the battle fronts in France, Italy, and Russia, supply and support operations behind the lines, and the Paris Peace Conference, open through Oct. 20. Group guided tours available by reservation, \$25. Call 703-385-8414.

DJ Music and Golf.

7-10 p.m. at Top Golf, 6625 S. Van Dorn St., Alexandria. Music by Sway DJ. Call 703-924-2600.

Music on the Plaza.

7 p.m. at Old Town Plaza, 3955 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Main Street Clarinet Quartet performs. Performances are free. Call 703-385-7858.

Bingo.

7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. The Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department hosts smoke free Bingo (with breaks for our smoking friends). Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or 703-273-3638.

SEPT. 3-4

Model Train Shows.

noon-5 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road. Labor Day Weekend, The Potomac Module Crew members will have HO Scale and others will have a LEGO Model Train Show. Museum members, free; adults 16 and over, \$4; children 5-15, \$2; under 4, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

SEPT. 6-30

The Trawick Prize Art Exhibit.

Burke artist Michele Montalbano named as one of the finalists for the Trawick Prize. Various times at at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E. Bethesda. Finalists artwork is on display Sept. 6-30. Call 301-215-7990.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 8

Movie Under the Moon.

6:30-9:30 p.m. at Van Dyck Park, 3720 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Featuring “The Sandlot,” starts at 7:30. Free. Visit fairfaxva.gov.

SEPT. 9-10

Burke Centre Festival.

9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Burke Conservancy, 6060 Burke Centre Parkway. Arts and crafts, live shows, rides, face painting, and festival foods. Visit www.burkecentreweb.com.

SEPT. 9-20

Northern Virginia Senior Olympics.

Various times and locations, more than 50 different events taking place at more than 25 venues across Northern

News

Springfield Branch Manager Enola Thaboun (blue shirt, kneeling) and other volunteers pose with book bags they helped assemble for the Backpack Service Project.

PHOTO
CONTRIBUTED



Andrews Federal Credit Union Helps Assemble Backpacks for Area Students

Andrews Federal Credit Union's Enola Thaboun, Springfield branch manager, along with several other volunteers, collected and filled more than 70 backpacks as part of Rotary NXT Club of West Springfield's Backpack Service Project.

Backpacks were distributed via the Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) for first to sixth grade children from local low income families.

"This was truly an outstanding representation of Rotarians doing good things in the world," said Ralph Menzel, President Rotary Club of West Springfield. "We can take pride in knowing that our service project of supplying those backpacks will go a long way in help-

ing the LCAC achieve its goal of providing school supplies to 500+ children as they head back to school."

Rotary NXT is an innovative pilot program under the Rotary Club of West Springfield offering an evolution of the Rotary experience. They tailor meetings and service projects to active professionals who need schedule flexibility. Their core focus areas include networking, professional development, and service to the local and international communities.

To learn more about Andrews Federal Credit Union and its community involvement, or to become a member, call 800-487-5500 or visit www.andrewsfcu.org.

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NEWS

'Fill the Boot' with Area Firefighters

BY MASTER TECHNICIAN JOEL KOBERSTEEN
FIRE STATION 40, FAIRFAX CENTER

Labor Day Weekend is almost here which means that Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) personnel will once again be conducting the Fill the Boot campaign benefiting the Greater Washington Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). This Friday, Sept. 1 through Monday, Sept. 4, watch out for uniformed firefighters with fire apparatus on display at controlled intersections all over Fairfax County and help us Fill the Boot! Last year we led the United States and Canada collecting \$521,509!

Your Fairfax County Firefighters will be hosting an official campaign Kick Off on Thursday, Aug. 31 at 11 a.m. at Fire Station 5 - Franconia.

Every Labor Day Weekend for more than 35 years, firefighters have been at controlled intersections all over Fairfax County asking motorists and pedestrians to Fill the Boot — 100 percent of the donations collected go directly to the Greater Washington MDA that assist families in the Washington, D.C. area living with some of the 43 neuromuscular diseases. Thanks to the generous donations of the citizens and visitors, the personnel of FCFRD, Department of Public Safety Communications and IAFF Local 2068 have been honored to be the highest collecting municipality in the United States and Canada for eight of the last 10 years. We also could not do this without the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Retirement As-

sociation and Fairfax County Police Department who provide important support behind the scenes.

Greater Washington MDA uses these donations to help fund such items as:

❖ The annual week long MDA Children's Summer Camp where children from 6 to 17 years old can have a "typical" camp experience with their peers. They enjoy swimming, boating, zip line, crafts, a talent show and many other activities all tailored to their specific disability. This week also provides a respite for the families from the sometimes 24 hour a day job of caring for a special needs child. This camp is provided free of charge for the families.

❖ The MDA clinic at Georgetown University Hospital and Children's National Medical Center. This "one stop shop" allows those with neuromuscular disease to see all of their specialists, such as their cardiologist, neurologist, pulmonologist, occupational therapist and many others in one location. This alleviates the need to make appointments and travel throughout the Washington, D.C. area to the many medical professionals that they see on a regular basis.

❖ Research at the National Institutes of Health and Georgetown University, so, one day, we will not need to Fill the Boot again!

❖ Programs designed to help people with neuromuscular disease live, go to school and work independently.

Joel Kobersteen is Coordinator - Fairfax County Fill the Boot Campaign.

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kiddiecountryii@aol.com
Fax: 703-644-0073 Phone: 703-644-0066

Kiddie Country is accepting applications for a co-teaching position working with two year olds. Hours are 7:30 A.M.-3:30 P.M., Monday-Friday. Applicant must be degreed, preferably in Early Childhood Education. Team teachers will work together to appropriately conduct a planned semi-structured program supported by a curriculum specialist. Please apply if you are nurturing, accessible, enthusiastic, caring and committed to high quality education for the littlest of our learners. Please contact Kiddie Country for further information or an appointment. EOE

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-Werner Heisenberg

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LETTER

FROM PAGE 6

turbing. The events in Charlottesville recall the darkest moments in both the history of this country and the Jewish people. What we saw on Friday and Saturday was an assault on our democratic society and the very values this country was founded upon. Yet the President of the United States, the leader of our country, has not once but twice defended those who would march with the Neo-Nazis and their ilk.

Our country at its best has been a beacon of hope and safety for all peoples. Hundreds of thousands gave their lives so that the forces that destroyed Europe would never set foot on American soil. President Trump's reaction to Charlottesville represented a betrayal of that noble legacy and our core American values.

Donald Trump is the leader of your party. Your refusal to speak out against him is a colossal failure of leadership, a moral abdication, and deeply troubling to Virginia's Jewish community. We urge you to break your silence and immediately denounce Donald Trump's hateful and inadequate response to the Charlottesville attack.

We are living through a moral reckoning, a time when all citizens of our great commonwealth and nation are called to defend the most fundamental values of our democracy. We ask you to immediately stand up, loudly and clearly, against those who would condone violence and hatred.

As Americans, Jews, and Virginians, we urge you to join us and immediately condemn the President's dog-whistle defense of Nazism.

Senate Democratic Leader **Dick Saslaw**, Sen. **Adam Ebbin**, Del. **Eileen Filler-Corn**, Del. **Marcus Simon**, and Del. **Mark Levine**

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Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403- 5360. Visit www.rsvpnova.org.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 12

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Lunch. 11:30 a.m.-noon at American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Presentation on "Hearing Loss & Hearing Aids-Beware and Be Wise" by Bonnie O'Leary Outreach Manager, Northern Virginia Outreach Center. \$11. Call 703-280-2356 or email rrharney2@gmail.com.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 19

ESOL classes. noon-7:30 p.m. at The Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. Day and evening English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes open to those who wish to improve their English skills. Call 703-323-5400 for more.

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them. -Werner Heisenberg					

Bathroom Humor



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I write this column in all sincerity, but what are you asking me for? A rhetorical question if there ever was one. To what I refer is the question I was asked earlier this morning by one of the home-improvement tradesman working on my upstairs bathroom. Having made significant progress on the bathroom in the five weeks or so since I published "And So It Begins," a column detailing the few facts I retained about the demolition/renovation and the anxiety I felt about it, today's task was waterproofing the shower enclosure/bathroom floor in preparation for the tile, if I understand correctly. Now, as further context, I know very little about home improvement (car repairs, computer technology, lawn and garden; shall I go on?). Moreover, I know very little Spanish. Combine the two, as happened this morning, and you are asking (literally) for trouble.

The waterproofing man arrived at 8:45 a.m. The day before, his boss/presumably the owner, had stopped by for a walk-through and to drop off materials for the job. I thought I would see him again, I was wrong. The only person on the job is the person whose English is better than my Spanish and the only Spanish I know, I know from a cartoon character, "Speedy Gonzales, the fastest mouse in all of Mexico," I grew up watching on Saturday-morning television. After directing him to the upstairs bathroom, within a few minutes, the man walked downstairs and asked/motioned for me to follow him back upstairs, I figured there was likely a question that needed answering so immediately I got off the couch to assist.

Once we were both inside the bathroom, he started pointing to the walls (front, back and sides), ceiling, niche and planned-for bench within the enclosure, to ask for - so far as I could understand, what needed to be waterproofed (I'll spare you any details about the process since I'm unlikely to do so accurately). Now, other than asking the project manager Simple-Simon-type questions about what is going on, what has gone on (literally and figuratively) and what is planned to be going on, I am out of any kind of loop. The workmen come in. I point them upstairs. Then I go into my office and mind my own business. I rarely check their progress. Generally speaking, I only look to see what's been done after they've left. I am not in anybody's way and I don't serve as any kind of resource other than answering the most basic questions: "Is that the basement door?" "Do you mind if we shut off the water?" "Is there a hardware store nearby?" As such, I am the least-bit helpful.

The man working today is new to me/the project. He's not been here before. But I did open the door to let him in and I did direct him to the upstairs bathroom. For all he knows/has experienced so far, I seem to be somewhat helpful. Ergo, after a bit, rather than calling his boss, he came back downstairs to solicit my help. Limited though I knew it would be, I was happy to try. As the conversation began, it became clear to me that not only did I not know what he was talking about (job wise), I couldn't even understand what it was that he was saying. I was lost in translation and lost in intention. As I attempted to answer/explain/guess what he was asking while we were both pointing/gesturing/talking, I quickly realized that this was a language match not made in heaven. Nevertheless, we eventually came to some sort of an understanding of the task at hand and back downstairs I went.

Sitting on the couch, I began to feel uncomfortable about the instructions I think I had just given/agreed to. As a result, I considered calling my project manager at home on a Saturday morning to get some clarity/confirmation about what I think had just transpired upstairs. Not at all bothered by my weekend intrusion, and after listening to a condensed version of this column, Stefan assured me that what seemed to be happening here was supposed to be happening.

And here I thought outliving my lung cancer prognosis by six-plus years was a miracle.

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

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