

Burke CONNECTION

WELLBEING

PAGE 6

Isaace Howard, 60, of Burke plays piano at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfax Wednesday, Dec. 27. Howard Ministry Church will meet Saturdays at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church once a month.

New Church Forms in Fairfax

PAGE 3

Session Brings
Sea Change

NEWS, PAGE 3

2018: Busy and
Eventful Year

OPINION, PAGE 4

FOLLOW ON TWITTER: @BURKECONNECTION

OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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Session Brings Sea Change

Wave election swamps Richmond with freshman members eager to make their mark.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

This year's General Assembly will be like no other. For starters, the members walking the halls of the Capitol will not look the same. The crop of freshman includes the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian, the first Asian-American woman and the first two Latinas. Gone are the 12 Republican members who were unseated, all white males. Also gone are the three members who got out before the bloodbath that flipped their seats from red to blue, also all white males. In their place is a diverse and young group of new members who are eager to make their mark on the commonwealth.

At the top of the agenda for the Democratic freshmen is expanding Medicaid to 400,000 people who would be eligible under the Affordable Care Act.

"I think what's really important for us, as Democrats, is to identify on the other side who we could have come over and join us," said Kathy Tran, who flipped a formerly Republican seat held by Del. Dave Albo (R-42) for more than 20 years. "We're going to have to reach out and basically identify who's really vulnerable and who's going to be in a position where they're going to have to be supporting the progressive values that were voted in as a wave across the commonwealth."

Even if they're successful navigating the diminished House Republican caucus, House Democrats will still have to deal with a Republican-controlled Senate. But the culture in the Senate is more moderate, and Republican senators have a history of supporting bills that have been routinely blocked in the House.

For example, Senate Republicans have a history of supporting the effort raising the threshold for grand larceny. That's an issue that Democrats have been pushing unsuccessfully for years that may now finally have a chance in 2018.

"We heard during the gubernatorial campaign, Ed Gillespie was supporting an increase so this is one of those issues that — especially with the outcome of the election — I think you can see some support behind," said Del. Patrick Hope (D-47), who is introducing a bill that raises the threshold from \$200 to \$500. "If someone makes a dumb mistake and walks out of a store with something small we shouldn't make a felon



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Republicans were unseated in 12 House districts, and Democrats flipped three seats where GOP incumbents decided against running in a year that ended up being a Democratic wave.

out of them."

THE WAVE ELECTION of 2017 was widely seen as a reacting to the Trump administration, and some of the bills that are now being crafted are also a reaction to the Republican agenda in Washington. State Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) is putting together a tax reform plan as a Virginia answer to federal tax reform that gives tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. Marsden wants to eliminate the food tax, reinstitute the inheritance tax and increase the gas tax. His tax-reform plan also taxes some services for the first time. For example lawn care and dry cleaning would be taxed but lawyers and doctors would not.

"Ever since I've been in the legislature I've heard complaints that we have a 19th century agriculture and manufacturing tax base but we're now a service economy. So this will start to tax some of those services," said Marsden. "We're trying to draw a distinction and get the discussion going around which services are optional for people and which ones are really necessary that we shouldn't burden them with taxes on."

Democrats are also eager to finally get some traction on gun control, which House Republicans have blocked for years. Back in 2015, Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe was able to forge a deal with Republicans to make state police available for voluntary background checks at gun shows. Now Democrats are hoping that newly reconstituted House committees and subcommittees might give them a chance to at least get gun control legislation on the floor rather than having it killed in subcommittee, a strategy Republicans used that allowed them to avoid being on the record voting

against banning assault weapons, for example. State Sen. George Barker (D-39) is introducing a bill that would allow judges to confiscate firearms from individuals they consider dangerous.

"It would have to go to court, and a judge would have to issue a ruling that there's probable cause and it's a serious situation and the gun should be temporarily removed," said Barker. "In some states, it allows police officers to confiscate it. But the bills that we are putting in do not. You would have to go to court."

MANY OF THE BILLS lawmakers are working on involve unfinished business from previous sessions. State Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) is working on a bill that would force Dominion to clean up decades of pollution at several coal ash ponds throughout Virginia. Dominion Energy plans to seal the pollution in place and put a cap on the ponds, which is significantly cheaper than cleaning up the pollution. But Surovell wants to require that the utility recycle the coal ash into concrete or ceramics. And, Surovell adds, it won't actually be more expensive for Dominion at all because the utility will end up passing along the cost to people who are paying for electricity.

"You eliminate the possibility that this toxic gunk will continue to leak arsenic, lead and other chemicals into our groundwater forever," said Surovell. "Landfilling is the short-term cheap solution. But long-term it has the worst potential effects because the stuff continues to leach out chemicals and give people cancer and poison fish and birds and ruin our groundwater."

State Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30) is also returning to a familiar theme: decriminaliz-

ing marijuana. Several states across the country have already done this, and now that California has legalized pot for recreational use many feel that the tide may be turning on this issue. According to a recent report by the Virginia State Crime Commission, law enforcement officers have arrested more than 130,000 people for possession of marijuana in the last decade — 84 percent of them first-time offenders.

"I think people are realizing how inappropriate it is to give people a criminal penalty for a drug that so many people have tried and used and is arguably less significant and harmful than alcohol," said Ebbin. "It's still a tough fight. But we've got Senate Majority Leader Tommy Norment supporting it generally. And we've got Governor-elect Ralph Northam supporting it, generally."

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL last year, Republicans and Democrats both supported several key agenda items — an indication that members from both sides of the aisle may end up working together this year on certain issues. One of those is ethics reform, a hot topic in Virginia since former Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell was convicted of corruption then cleared of wrongdoing by the U.S. Supreme Court. During the campaign last year, Republican candidate for governor Ed Gillespie and Republican candidate for lieutenant governor Jill Vogel both talked about closing a loophole that allows candidates to use campaign money for personal use. That's an issue that already has support among Democrats, although drawing a distinction between official use and personal use can be a gray area.

"I think we've got a consensus that we need to do something," said Del. Marcus Simon (D-53). "Whether we make it a weak ban or a strong ban — a civil violation or a criminal act — I think we're going to outlaw it one way or another."

Another issue where Republicans and Democrats are in agreement is expanding broadband to rural areas. Of course the details of how to make that happen and who benefits are where lawmakers get divided, although this is one of those issues where party ideology is less important than regional ties. Last year, for example, Republicans were divided about whether to create new hurdles for local governments to set up broadband networks in places where that might create competition for private providers. This year, the issue of broadband will once again be an important topic of conversation.

"I'm looking at ways to reduce regulatory burdens," said Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86). "So I'm talking about including broadband in your municipal comprehensive plan, setting up a dig-once policy and creating a data governance board for smart communities."

SEE ASSEMBLY, PAGE 11

OPINION

2018 A Happy New Year? At least some cause for hope

Virginia's election last November, just two months ago, was the first in the nation since the current administration took over in Washington.

Here in Virginia there was some anxiety and uncertainty rolling into Election Day. First, at least one race will not be decided until later this week. Second, the Democrats swept the statewide races, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General.

EDITORIAL

Democrats hoped to make gains in the House of Delegates. It's fair to say no one anticipated the Democrats taking the House. After all, Republicans held a 66-34 majority, a nearly insurmountable advantage.

Democrats gained at least 15 seats in a turn-about that could leave the House split 50-50.

New members include the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian delegate, the first Asian-American woman delegate and the first two Latina delegates.

Virginia's success has generated buzz about pursuing sweeping change in other state legislatures around the country.

Del. Marcus Simon said it well recently (on Facebook): "If someone had told me on Jan. 1, 2017 that one year later Democrats would have picked up no fewer than 15 and probably as many as 17 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates I would have said, 'Love your optimism, but don't get carried away.'"

"My advice to anyone running for office or thinking about running for office, or working for people running for office in 2018: Get carried away."

The new look and balance in the General Assembly could provide progress on some long stalled issues. (More Democrats in office do not equate to progress in all of these areas, it's important to note.)

- ❖ Expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act to cover hundreds of thousands of poor people without coverage

- ❖ Nonpartisan redistricting and use of national best practices when it comes to drawing

political district boundaries after the next census.

- ❖ Progress in transparency, and making public information public. This includes lawmakers killing most proposed legislation with unrecorded voice votes in subcommittee, with no accountability or record of how members voted. It should also include rolling back some of the many exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act passed by the General Assembly.

- ❖ Ethics reform, campaign finance reform.
- ❖ Making it easier, not harder, to vote.
- ❖ More control over utility rates and pollution.

- ❖ Criminal justice reform, including raising the threshold for a felony from \$200 to \$500.
- ❖ Tax reform.

A "wish list" could go on at some length.

The 2018 session of the Virginia General Assembly begins Jan. 10.

— MARY KIMM

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Busy and Eventful Year

What to expect in the new year in Fairfax County and the Braddock District.

BY JOHN C. COOK
BRADDOCK DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR



Training New Neighborhood Leaders

One of my top priorities continues to be strengthening our neighborhoods. I will hold meetings with our homeowners and civic association

leaders, our community pools, and other community leaders to continue helping our communities to help themselves. We are bringing back the popular Neighborhood College program to the Braddock District in spring 2018.

This six session program is built to create and empower community leaders by teaching them how to lead their organizations. Topics are expected to include an overview of County government operations, techniques for running meetings, legal requirements for HOA's, zoning enforcement, environmental and recycling programs, emergency management, and crime prevention.

Metro Reform and Funding

The economic success of Fairfax County requires a strong and vibrant transportation infrastructure, and Metro is a huge part of that. There are two separate and distinct issues involving Metro. One is operations. Changes are required in operations, safety, and personnel

so that the system runs better and costs are contained.

I chair the Governance and Personnel Committee of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. Our committee put forth a comprehensive plan for reforming Metro's operations. It involves shrinking the Metro Board and requiring a vigorous avoidance of conflicts of interest, holding down personnel and pension costs, reforming the labor arbitration system to require consideration of fiscal constraints in labor negotiations, and eliminating the jurisdictional veto.

The other issue is capital. Separate from operations, there is a significant need for sustained capital funding to repair the physical infrastructure which was neglected for so many years. Operational reforms alone will not solve the capital issue. They are two separate pots of money. New capital funding, that is dedicated and bondable, must be passed by the states, federal government, and the District of Columbia this year.

Land Use and Development Issues

The principle few remaining pieces of empty land in the district are the subject of development proposals headed for decision in 2018. Erickson Living has purchased the 78-acre Northern Virginia Training Center site from the Commonwealth and has proposed building a 1,100-plus resident continuing care community there.

I will lead a community input process on a comprehensive plan amendment for the property where the community will determine its

SEE LOOK AHEAD. PAGE 10

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Act. Honor. Hope.

Del. Filler-Corn receives award from Virginia Sexual and Domestic Action Alliance.

From her first election to the House of Delegates to preparing to start her eighth year as a Delegate, preventing and combating sexual assault has always been a priority for Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41). The bills she has put forth contain coalitions of stakeholders. On Friday, Dec. 8, one of these longtime partners, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Action Alliance honored her with their, "Act. Honor. Hope." award.

The Alliance has been a longtime advocate of Del. Filler-Corn's legislation, from her bills that dealt with the reporting of a campus sexual assault investigation to the local commonwealth attorney to creating trauma informed training protocols for campus law enforcement. They were a crucial partner for her bill HB 659 in 2016, which requires any high school family life education curriculum offered by a local school division to incorporate age-appropriate elements of effective and evidence-based programs on the prevention of dating violence, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. This bill, now a law, laid the groundwork for Del. Filler-Corn's bill from 2017, HB 2257, which also codifies the teaching of consent in Family Life Education.

"If the first time a student hears about dating violence, healthy relationships or consent is at college orientation, then it is too late," said Del. Filler-Corn. "This is why I advocated for teaching consent in Family Life Education. I am incredibly grateful for the counsel and efforts of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. Thanks for their support and efforts as well as other advocates, my bill is law today."

During her remarks at the awards ceremony, Filler-Corn also took the opportunity to tell the crowd about her recently introduced legislation. House Bill 44 would strengthen the legislation Del. Filler-Corn passed last year. It would ensure that every high school that offers Family Life Education will teach about consent in an age appropriate and evidence based manner — not allowing it as just an option.

Filler-Corn has also introduced, House Bill 45, which would require any family life education curriculum offered in any elementary school, middle school, or high school to include instruction on the importance of the personal privacy and boundaries of other individuals. Both bills will be heard during the 2018 General Assembly Session in Richmond.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Preventing and combating sexual assault has always been a priority for Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41).

PEOPLE

Like Father, Like Son

Chris Wallace, ending his Scoutmaster career at Troop 1131, St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, Burke, on Dec. 31, 2017, and father of his second Eagle Scout, and his son, Robert Wallace, Eagle Scout #205. Chris Wallace replaced Robert's Life Scout patch with the Eagle Scout patch. Robert lives in Burke and attends Lake Braddock Secondary School.



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Ready for the Cold

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Frigid temperatures and the chill of winter can usher in dangerous health conditions, particularly for those most vulnerable: the elderly and young children. Two of the most prevalent cold-weather ills are hypothermia and frostbite. For those who have to be outside when it is dangerously cold, knowing the warning signs and prevention techniques for these conditions are the keys to keeping them at bay, say health care providers.

"Even a typical winter in this area can be dangerous," said Amy Talbot, Ph.D. of George Mason University. "But extreme conditions can make it even worse for those most vulnerable."

Hypothermia, which occurs when one's body core temperature drops, can develop more quickly than many people realize, says Talbot. "Obviously feeling very cold is a warning sign, but also shivering and experiencing signs that the cold is affecting your brain, so feeling disoriented, stumbling or losing balance easily, unusual speech pattern or changes in personality."

Frostbite is when the skin and underlying tissue are damaged by cold temperatures, says Beth Lowe, RN, a private-duty nurse in Arlington. "During the beginning



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Record cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia.

stages of frostbite, you might see your skin turn red and you'll feel numb or tingling or stinging," she said. "The main thing to remember is not to try to re-warm your own skin, because you can do more damage. It's best to seek emergency medical treatment."

Preventing, recognizing and treating hypothermia and frostbite.

Dressing in layers and wearing shoes that are appropriate for extreme cold are keys to preventing hypothermia and frostbite, advises Carolyn Johnson, Ph.D. of Montgomery College. "When it's extremely cold you want to wear clothing that traps your body temperature and protects you from cold air and wind," she said. "A basic formula to keep in mind: a base layer that should be made from a fabric that wicks away moisture. The second layer should trap heat so it should be made of a polyester fleece over something similar. The top layer should be waterproof and windproof."

Lowe recommends avoiding cotton clothing during the extreme cold because if it gets wet, it can make you cold. "Many of these preventative measure are things that most people already know, but may not think about until it's too late," she said.

Another preventative component, says Talbot, is nutrition. Both food and liquids can help keep one's body warm. "Skipping a meal can make you more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite," she said. "It's important to eat carbs and protein for energy when you're going to be outside for a prolonged period of time, like if you're hiking or playing sports."

If you believe that you are beginning to develop frostbite or hypothermia, Lowe says

LOCAL SHELTERS

For those who are not able to seek shelter, social service providers in Virginia and Maryland are ramping up efforts to provide shelter to those who need to get out of the cold. For more information:

Fairfax County
703-691-2131 or fairfaxcounty.gov

City of Alexandria
703-548-7500 or alexandriava.gov

Montgomery County
240-777-3289 or montgomerycountymd.gov

Arlington County
703-228-1300 or 703-228-1010
publicassistance.arlingtoncounty.gov

in order to avoid advancing the seriousness of the condition, move your body by doing jumping jacks or some other vigorous movement and get out of the frigid elements. "There's no set amount of time that it takes for [hypothermia or frostbite] to develop, so it's important to keep an eye on those who are most vulnerable. But once you notice the warning signs you can try to stop the conditions before they advance, by drinking plenty of fluids, eating carbs and getting inside to a warmer temperature."

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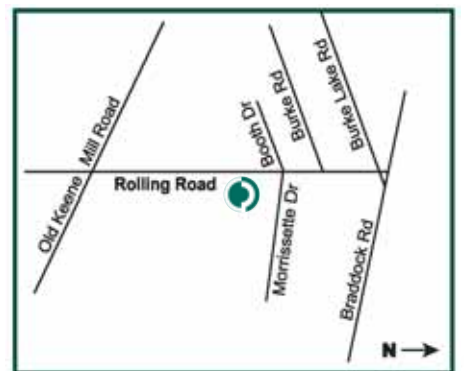
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NEWS

Isaace Howard, 60, of Burke plays the piano at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfax Wednesday, Dec. 27.

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New Church Forms in Fairfax

Howard Ministry Church will meet Saturdays at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfax once a month.

BY COLIN STOECKER
THE CONNECTION

A local pastor said that God told him to start a new church in Fairfax. Isaace Howard, 60, of Burke has been a singer, pianist, and a member of Mt. Calvary Baptist church for most of his life.

"I was raised in a church, First Baptist in Merrifield," said Howard.

He is assistant to the director at the church, but on Jan. 27, that will all change when he fulfills his calling of preaching to his own congregation. Mt. Calvary Baptist Church is 147 years old and will host another congregation under the same roof in January.

Howard believes that his calling by God to start the new church will help him to fill the pews with eager listeners.

"You don't just crank it out. You have to be called by God to do this. If you honor God's calling, he will add to the church," said Howard.

Howard hopes to bring lessons he learned from being the director of the Cavalets, an all-male chorus, and lessons from his own family to his new congregations.

Both of Howard's parents were ministers. He said that many of his sermons come from lessons he learned from his own parents.

"I'm so grateful that they were persistent in teaching us those lessons. I had no idea I was going to be a pastor," he said.

Still, being a man of music, Howard says that music is crucial to a good service.

"I've learned things to do and bad things not to do, but you have to have good music ministry. People are drawn to the music. It sets the pace and gets people ready for worship," said Howard.

"People come in looking ready, but on the inside they're down," he said.

One of the primary reasons for starting the church was turning a fresh page in the already existing church community.

"People are looking for a fresh word from god," said Howard.

However, Howard said that at first he wasn't open to the idea of starting his own congregation.

"It took some convincing at first I didn't desire it," said Howard.

He compares his calling to the wise men from the old testament. "As long as they followed the star, they



Isaace Howard, 60, of Burke talks about what it's like to start a new congregation at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfax Wednesday, Dec. 27.



From left: Pamela Honesty from Stafford and Sydney Pearson of Woodbridge pictured in the lobby of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfax Wednesday.

couldn't go wrong," said Howard.

Many people, like Pamela Honesty from Stafford and Sydney Pearson of Woodbridge are excited to attend the new worship service at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church.

"I like doing new experiences. I feel great and it's something he should've done a long time ago," said Pearson.

"I've known him for many years, his father Norman Howard married me and my husband in my parents' backyard," said Honesty.

Howard Ministry Church will meet Saturdays at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfax once a month, until it is able to catch on and gain a following.

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ENTERTAINMENT



Chocolate Festival

A plate of cupcakes in the 2016 Chocolate Challenge. This year, the City of Fairfax will be all about chocolate on Feb. 2-4 in Old Town Fairfax.

FILE PHOTO BY
BONNIE HOBBS

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

ONGOING

Senior Line Dancing. Mondays, 1 p.m.; Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. at Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8-week session. Email barbriba@hotmail.com or call 703-524-3739.

Carolina Shag. Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at 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.

FUN-Exercise Thursdays, noon-12:50 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. moorefitt@yahoo.com or 703-499-6133.

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

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

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

TUESDAYS/JAN. 2-FEB. 13

Art Lessons for Youth. 5:15-6:15 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor. 8 years and older. Visit www.czartlessons.com. Call 703-250-6930.

TUESDAYS/JAN. 2-FEB. 13

Drawing Plus Color Class. 6:15-7 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing and watercolor. Visit www.czartlessons.com. For 5-8 yrs. Call 703-250-6930.

THURSDAY/JAN. 4

Zumba Dance Party 2018. 6:30-8 p.m. at Green Acres, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Meet new Zumba instructor Vanessa. \$10. Call 703-385-1703.

FRIDAY/JAN. 5

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

SATURDAYS/JAN. 6-FEB. 17

Art Lessons for Youth. 9:15-10:30 a.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor. 8 years and older. Visit www.czartlessons.com. Call 703-250-6930.

SATURDAYS/JAN. 6-FEB. 17

Art Workshop for Teens/Adults. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing, watercolor, Chinese Brush & portfolio development. Visit www.czartlessons.com. Call 703-250-6930.

MONDAY/JAN. 8

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Funday Monday will offer a variety of children's activities and entertainment in Old Town Hall. Free. Call 703-385-7858.

MONDAYS/JAN. 8-MARCH 26

Exercise Classes. 9:30-10:30 a.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. \$30. Call 703-323-4788 or visit www.scfbva.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 10

Earth Fare Opens. 7 a.m. at Fairfax Plaza, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Specialty organic and natural foods grocery store. Visit www.earthfare.com.

Springfield Christian Women's Luncheon.

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road. Speaker will be Ginger Lawrence, author of "Deeply Rooted – A US Marine shares a riveting story of how she came from the rags of war to finding peace, joy, and forgiveness." \$20. Call 703-455-6633.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

Art and Lunch. 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The Fairfax Art League will be hosting, bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Free. Visit www.fairfaxartleague.net or call 703-587-9481.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

Donita Lestina in Concert. 8-10 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. National Brass Quintet, part of the Old Town Hall Performance Series. Free. Call 703-385-7858.

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ENTERTAINMENT

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Family Irish Country Dancing. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Green Acres Center, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Free coffee, tea, and Irish soda bread, music by Shepherd's Pi. \$15, families \$25, GMU students \$5. Second Saturday each month. Call 703-273-6090.

SUNDAY/JAN. 14

George Washington Lecture. 2-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St. Illustrated talk by Dr. Peter Henriques, professor emeritus from George Mason University, called "I Can Not Tell A Lie: Myths About George Washington That Should Be Discarded." Free admission. Call 703-385-8414.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at the Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St. John Cox, who was a guide at the U.S. Capitol Building will speak on the history of the building. \$10. Call 703-323-4788 or visit www.scfbva.org.

Friday Morning Music Club. noon-2 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Friday Morning Music Club, Inc. is a community of music lovers and musicians dedicated to promoting classical music throughout the metropolitan area. On the third Thursday of the month they host their performances at Old Town Hall. Visit www.fmmc.org.

Burke Toastmasters Open House. 6:30 p.m. at The Oaks Community Center, 5708 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Improve public speaking and presentation skills. Email pmagnuson@hotmail.com.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

Sherwood Family Movie. 7 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway. Featuring "Smurfs Lost Village." Participants may bring their own snacks. Britepaths will accept donations of non perishable food. Call 703-385-7858.

Dance Fest 2018. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Harris Theatre at George Mason University, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Virginia Dance Coalition presents DanceFest 2018 Gala Performance highlighting 12 member companies. Visit www.virginiadancecoalition.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20

African American Museum. 1-3 p.m. at Kings Park Library, Large Meeting Room, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Dr. Johari Rashad will give an inside look at the new National Museum of African American History and Culture, located in Washington, D.C. Free. Visit <http://Sprann-va.aauw.net>.

MONDAY/JAN. 22

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Movement Monday-Kids Zumba. Free. Call 703-385-7858.

THURSDAY/JAN. 25

Fall for the Book. 5:30 p.m. at the Great American Bistro, 10427 North St., Fairfax. Fall for the Book's New Pop Up Lit Nights invite the community to happy hour appreciations of literature and storytelling. Visit fallforthebook.org.



Live Music

Guest vocalist Kim Scudera will be on stage with Dave Anderson and Mike Wingo: Anderson-Wingo Duo on Friday, Jan. 26 at 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxarts.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 26

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

Old Town Hall Concert. 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Dave Anderson and Mike Wingo: Anderson-Wingo Duo with guest vocalist Kim Scudera. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxarts.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

Irish Dancing Show. 7 p.m. in the George Mason University Center for the Arts' Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. "Stepping Out" by Dublin Irish Dance, an exploration of the Celtic experience through the fast footwork of Irish step-dancers and an eight-member traditional Irish band. Call calling 888-945-2468, or visit cfa.gmu.edu.

THURSDAY/JAN. 28

Birdland All-Stars Concert. 7 p.m. in the George Mason University Center for the Arts' Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. With drummer Tommy Igoe for a high-energy performance. Call 888-945-2468 or visit cfa.gmu.edu.

FRIDAY/FEB. 2

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

FEB. 2-4

Chocolate Lovers Festival. Various times in Historic Downtown Fairfax. Chocolate-oriented activities all weekend, including a Kiwanis Chocolate Chip Pancake Breakfast. The "love of chocolate" is the unifying theme. Visit www.chocolatefestival.net for a current schedule of activities or call 703-385-7858.

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OPINION

Look Ahead to 2018

FROM PAGE 4

vision for the site. I will kick off this process at a community planning workshop to be held on Jan. 20, 2018 at Lake Braddock Secondary School from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Attendees will work with County staff to review various options, not just those proposed by Erickson, for the site.

Other pending development applications include a residential community proposed at the Roberts and Braddock Road intersection, a potential student and senior affordable housing project on University Drive across from the George Mason field house, and multiple potential proposals along Lee Highway between the Fairfax County Parkway and Shirley Gate Road. We will also continue to work with the Park Authority on planning for the future of Lake Accotink Park and look forward to beginning to develop plans for renovating the Audrey Moore Recreation Center.

Criminal Justice Reform and Diversion First

As Chair of the Board's Public Safety Committee, I have gained an increased appreciation for the bipartisan efforts occurring around the country in the area of criminal justice reform. Simply put, we as a nation are spending billions of dollars locking people up in jail rather than attacking many of the causes of criminal activity.

In Fairfax County, the safest jurisdiction of its size in the country, we are very fortunate to have very little violent crime. Among our top priorities are addressing the opioid crisis and increased gang activity. But the vast majority of our police service calls are for domestic disputes, people in a mental health or emotional crisis, or people, often youth, making mistakes in non-violent offenses.

Jail does not solve these issues, but in fact makes them worse. Studies show that locking up youth perversely turns them into criminals. For adults, incarceration for as little as four days breaks down family connections, causes job loss, and disrupts medical treatment. Criminal Justice Reform is focused on techniques other than jail for non-violent crimes designed for long-term success in reducing criminal behavior.

One big part of our local effort is the County's Diversion First program. Diversion First offers alternatives to incarceration for people with mental illness or intellectual/developmental disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system for low level offenses.

The program seeks to divert away from jail and into treatment those who need it. The program requires training law enforcement to handle such individuals, creating additional court supervision (probation) staff to oversee and enforce diversion opportunities, and funding more mental health treatment. It offers the potential for future reductions in jail costs and lower repeat criminal activity as underlying mental health and substance use issues are addressed.

And There's More

These priorities are just some of what you can expect to see in the County and District next year. You will continue to see a concerted emphasis on constituent services from my office, support for our summer entertainment series (Braddock Nights), further efforts to reduce drunk driving and youth access to alcohol, and support for parents in raising healthy children.

The most important ingredient in these efforts is you – the concerned and engaged citizen. Become an active member of your community, and work with your neighbors to make your neighborhood, and our District and County, a better place to live.

FAITH 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.

The Bahá'í Community of Fairfax County Southwest offers Interfaith Devotions, Children's Classes, Junior Youth Groups and Study Circles, which are open to all. For more information on these or to know more about the Bahá'í Faith, go to www.bahai.us or 571-320-5274.

St. Leo the Great in Fairfax hosts "Night of Praise" the first Saturday of each month, featuring praise music and Eucharist adoration at 7 p.m. Located at 3704 Old Lee Highway in Fairfax.

St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, offers a traditional service on Sundays at 8:15 and 11:15 a.m. and a contemporary service on Sundays at 9:45 a.m. www.stmatthewsumc.org or 703-978-3500.

The Immanuel Bible Church MOPS group meets on Mondays at 7 p.m. at Immanuel Bible Church, 6911 Braddock Road, Springfield. MOPS is for pregnant or parenting mothers of children from infancy to kindergarten. 703-922-4295 or www.MOPS.org.

First Baptist Church of Springfield, 7300 Gary St., Springfield, has traditional and contemporary Sunday services at 10:30 a.m., Sunday school at

9:15 a.m. Special worldwide services offered at special times throughout the year in English, Spanish and Ethiopian. The pastors are Jim Weaver and Jason Mitchell. 703-451-1500 or www.fbcspRINGfield.org.

The following is a list of events at **Mount Calvary Baptist Church**, 4325 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax:

- ❖ Adult Bible Study every Wednesday starting at 7 p.m., Youth Bible Study at 7:15 p.m.
- ❖ Full Praise and Baptism Service at 7 p.m., the last Wednesday of every month
- ❖ Sunday School at 9 a.m.
- ❖ Sunday morning service at 10 a.m., the 4th Sunday of every month
- ❖ Men's Ministry Bible Class, the Saturday before the 4th Sunday of every month
- ❖ Commonwealth Care Center ministry every first and third Thursday night. 703-273-1455.

Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria, has services on Fridays, 7:30 p.m. with a pre-service wine and cheese social at 6:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. with a pre-service Torah study at 9 a.m. Religious school is on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Adult learning opportunities take place throughout the year. Tot Shabbat is on the first and third Saturdays at 11 a.m. Kolot Shabbat, a musical service, is the first Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. 703-370-9400 or www.bethelhebrew.org.

The Cranford United Methodist Church, located at 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton, hosts prayer and healing services on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Worship service is at 11 a.m., and fellowship is at 12:30 p.m.

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

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

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

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

News Assembly

FROM PAGE 3

IT MAY SEEM like the elections never cease in Virginia, where voters go to the polls multiple times every year. And although Washington is already focused on the 2018 campaign, Richmond is already preparing for an epic election in 2019. Not only will that election include all members of the House and the Senate, it will also set the scene for who controls the redistricting process. Both parties are eager to control as much of the process as possible, and Democrats have already won a major victory by electing a governor who will have veto power over the maps drawn by lawmakers.

“The one piece of this that I’m interested in doing is having a factor of competitiveness and competition being part of the equation,” said Del. Mark Keam (D-35). “Right now all the standards that they use for redistricting are things like partisanship, demographics and minority status. But there’s nothing that talks about whether a district is competitive or not.”

BULLETIN BOARD

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

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

NARFE Fairfax Chapter 737 Meeting. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Presentation on “Advanced preparation and arrangement for funeral/memorial” by Peter Hause, Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home. \$11. Call 703-280-2356 for more.

JAN. 9-APRIL 3

GriefShare Program. 7-9 p.m. at Redeeming Grace Church, 5200 Ox Road, Fairfax. A 13-week curriculum program meeting the needs of those adults in the grieving process. Meeting weekly, supporting one another through discussion, video education and homework. \$20 for workbook. Visit www.rgcfairfax.org or call 703-691-0600.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Office Hours. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck will host Saturday office hours. Email mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov.
♦ 9-11:30 a.m. at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton.
♦ 12:30-3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon district office, 2511 Parkers Lane, Mount Vernon.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Shepherd’s Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

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I'm Very Seldom Wrong, But This Time I'm Write



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Since I don't have to write for a deadline this week (12/27/17 papers have already gone to press), maybe I'll write for pleasure. Not that writing this column is ever not my pleasure, but it is time-sensitive, at least on a weekly basis. And though that “weekliness” can occasionally induce some pressure, mostly I can manage it. Besides, it contributes to what you read and my feelings about having written. As such, my columns are rarely about the past, well, only in so far as it gives the present and future concerns some context. Generally speaking however, I am writing about extremely-current events. It's not exactly real time, but the timing is exceptionally real.

This sort of holiday break occurs at The Connection every year as we condense our publication schedule and finish/publish three weeks of newspapers in nine business days. And even though this “condensation” is nothing new for any of us long-sitting employees, it does present its own unique set of challenges, yet it is a schedule which has stood the test of time. Time which eventually leads to pleasure.

And time off is part of what drives this mid-to-late December rush. Because in the newspaper business, especially considering the 24/7 news cycle, with which we are all familiar, even for a weekly publication – for both editorial and sales, you are mostly on. So getting a chance to publish and then pause, gives us all an opportunity to refresh and recharge. And since I'm honeymooning, so to speak, (see column dated 12/13/17 titled “As Good As It Gets”), I have nothing particularly cancer-centric to write about and/or worry about, well, top of mind anyway. There's plenty of cancer stuff bottom of mind though. The difficulty is keeping it there.

The problem/reality is, even when you're meandering around in your head, in order to write, there is a cancer section which inevitably fights its way to the top. It's not as if I have a multiple personality disorder: Kenny-without-cancer and Kenny-with-cancer (my website, by the way: www.KennyWithCancer.com), but sometimes I think I must. Thinking one could totally compartmentalize the facts and fissures that a “terminal” lung cancer diagnosis/“13 month to two year” prognosis imposes is an admirable, much talked about goal but in truth, it's probably unrealistic and likely leads to that dual personality. But who's kidding whom? It's hard/IMPOSSIBLE to know.

So for the moment, I can pretend/presume that Kenny-without-cancer is front and center, top of mind and in control, free to wander aimlessly in print and ponder his fate as if nothing much – other than one's own mortality, is effecting his judgment. Ah, one can dream. And oddly enough, I have been dreaming more, and sleeping longer and deeper, too. I'm sure it's simply a coincidence that having five weeks off from any cancer-related activities/obligations, and likewise having nine days off from any newspaper-related activities has contributed to this semi peace and quiet. A quiet which will soon end when we leave for two days in Pennsylvania to spend Christmas with my wife Dina's cousins, which, along with the cheesesteak I plan on eating, provides it's own sort of comfort and joy.

Still, any port in the cancer storm provides a welcome respite from the – with apologies to Shakespeare – slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune (Shakespeare's quote was “fortune”), however real or imagined. To be sure, cancer is no joke, neither is being diagnosed with a “terminal” form of it: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV, at age 54 and a half. But making fun of it and the circumstances surrounding it, has been my stock and trade since I first went public – in print, in June 2009. The means I've justified to prevent my premature end. So far, so good.

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



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