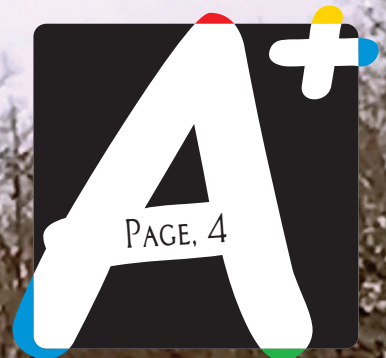




Parked cars fill both sides of the street outside of the No Parking Zones on Old Hunt Way in Herndon. "If someone's life was a matter of a few minutes, they are not going to survive. I can assure you, a fire truck, a police car, an ambulance will sit in traffic on that street," said resident Richard Romero at the Jan. 9 Herndon Town Council Public Hearing.

Oak Hill Herndon CONNECTION



Neighbors Frustrated with High School Students Parking

NEWS, PAGE 2

Town Hall Told of 'Chaos-Causing Trump Effect'

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First Week in Richmond

COMMENTARY, PAGE 8

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News

After a barrage of complaints by Old Dranesville Hunt Club residents of Herndon High School students parking in the neighborhood, a geographically limited Residential Parking Permit Program went into effect late fall 2017 leaving some areas of the neighborhood without parking permit coverage.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Neighbors Frustrated with High School Students Parking

Solution approved, but is it enough?

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A month after a new Residential Parking Permit Program went into effect in the Old Dranesville Hunt Club area near Herndon High School, residents there remain frustrated with a continued parking crunch caused by HHS students parking in the curbside spaces. At the Jan. 9, 2018, Herndon Town Council Public Hearing, Bill Ashton, Town Manager, presented a staff report for a proposed "Residential Parking Permit Program: Expanding the Old Dranesville Hunt Club Zone."

Ashton reviewed the 2017 situation, which caused the current Old Dranesville Hunt Club Residential Parking Permit Program to go into effect. Ashton reminded the Town Council they had received resident complaints of a high volume of cars parked in their neighborhood and reports of litter and increased speed. Ashton told how construction at Herndon High School had reduced the availability of on-campus parking forcing students to seek to park in the nearby residential neighborhood. Ashton cited that in accord with Code criteria for the establishment of a residential parking permit program, a petition requesting action had been signed by 91.6 percent of residents and received.

ASHTON DEFENDED the current 2017 Parking Permit Program. He said, "We went as far as we could under the ordinance,"

based on studies and conditions on the ground. He added that they had established a zone of "100 spaces give or take."

Ashton said when the no parking signage was actively enforced beginning Dec. 1, the problem shifted, as they anticipated to different locations in the neighborhood including further down Old Hunt Way. Unable to park at the high school and now unable to park in the 100 plus restricted parking spaces, students sought to park anywhere else in the neighborhood they legally could.

Ashton reported on Monday, Dec. 2 he had staff "back out on the ground" studying the effects of the zone on Old Dranesville Hunt Club in areas where parking remained open. "We started taking traffic counts. We started looking at whether these folks were residents of Old Dranesville Hunt or not," he said.

Ashton reported staff observed 65-75 percent of the spaces occupied. Code limit is 65 percent. When they ran the license plates numbers for these vehicles, 65-89 percent were not registered in the neighborhood. Code limit is 25 percent.

In his presentation to the Town Council, Ashton said the proposed amendment on the table that evening would expand the current parking program by 82 spaces. "The largest expansion possible while keeping consistency with the Code," he said. Ashton added the impacted area would be parking by permit only, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. It would include Crest Drive

SEE PARKING, PAGE 6

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Kofi Annan, president of the Fairfax County NAACP, moderates the Town Hall-style conversation with U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D), in a community room above Giardino Italian Restaurant in West Springfield.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D) speaks with Dr. Michelle Woody with the Fairfax County NAACP, the organization that hosted the Town Hall with the senator.

Town Hall Told of 'Chaos-Causing Trump Effect'

Fairfax County NAACP hosts Town Hall gathering with Kaine.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D) spent almost two hours with area residents at a Town Hall-style gathering in West Springfield on the evening of Jan. 11, hosted by the Fairfax County NAACP and moderated by the organization's president, Kofi Annan.

Annan began: "From the outside, from our perspective, it looks like no one knows what's going on, it's chaos [on Capitol Hill]. How are things going in your view?"

The junior senator from Virginia since 2013, Kaine answered that in terms of the daily workings of the Senate, his response would be mostly unchanged from the last few years to this moment. "In our general work, more happens cooperatively than you think. A lot less happens than should. For example, Obama Care. We spent a year fighting to protect health care for 32 million Americans. Instead of repeal, we should have been working on improve, and we weren't."

But the real change today in Kaine's view is "the Trump Effect, not knowing, quite frankly what new surprise will come along."

Kaine spoke of the alleged vulgar remarks made by President Trump earlier in the day about immigrants and some of the countries from which they came. "I mean, you hear that and you just don't know what to say."

THIS LATEST CONTROVERSY, according to Kaine, makes the work being done to address the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Act (DACA) and immigrants in the country under Temporary Protection Status (TPS) that much more difficult.

"And then we didn't know that last week

was going to be 'open season for off-shore drilling week' around the country," Kaine added, saying that this decision was followed this week by an exception for the state of Florida. "Why Florida? Because we listen to Floridians and the Governor there opposed it. Well, so do we in Virginia."

Kaine admitted that the "Trump Effect" was chaos-causing and frustrating when there "is so much critical work on the table, like hurricane emergency relief and avoiding a government shut-down," but instead, he says, that work gets side-tracked. "Every week it's left hooks, curve balls and surprises."

Annan also asked the senator his opinion of racism in America, including "Why isn't the Ku Klux Klan categorized as a terrorist organization?"

"I don't know," replied Kaine. "To me, it is. I am not sure of the process, but you know, I now plan to find out."

Racism has long been a societal scourge, Kaine said, but that it was the election of Donald Trump and the actions and comments made by the Trump administration that "gave permission to express those racist views" basically with impunity. But he still sees good that may come from this new attitude of "taking off the mask."

"You know who and what you are up against. To really deal with a problem you have to know its dimensions." It is Kaine's belief that the exposure of the depth and breadth to which racism continues to exist will help bring focus to the issue and aid in the fight against it.

The attendees questioned Kaine and the topics were wide-ranging.

Nayely Lopez is a field employment specialist with CASA, an organization that works with low-income immigrant commu-



Yasmeen Durrani and Naila Alan, both of Herndon, came to the meeting to ask what U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D) would do about the Trump travel bans. "Keep up the fight, work with those who oppose them," replied the senator.

nities. She attended the session with Sookyung Oh, area director for the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC), and Jung Bin Cho, also with NAKASEC. "Will you vote to approve the continuing resolution [to fund the government] if there is not a clean DACA bill before then?" she asked.

Kaine was unwilling to commit to her request. Despite being a "passionate advocate" for immigrants, he also said "I am an anti-shutdown person" and cited the damage done to the Virginia economy and many of its citizens because of the government shutdown in 2013. "I need to see the details of the bills being put forth before I can make a decision. I think we are really close."

THE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS kept coming — environmental protections

and the effects of climate change, LGBT rights and the status of transgender persons in the military, protection against voter suppression, advancing opportunities for minorities at Governors Schools in Virginia (a program started in 1973 by then-Governor Linwood Holton who would later become Kaine's father-in-law), even the possibility of promoting programs like Fairfax County's Diversion First (aimed at diverting individuals with mental health issues to medical care versus the criminal justice system) on the national level.

Jorel Sabado of Springfield wanted to know how the senator's Catholic faith affected his political actions. "Of course, your values inform your decisions," replied Kaine, but added that it was not his job to make everyone follow the rules of his church. "That is not why we are elected."

Naila Alam from Herndon, and a member of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) worries about the travel bans that have been in and out of effect and in the courts since President Trump first introduced them as an Executive Order January last year. Kaine vowed to continue to fight against them.

Asked to comment on the election of more Democrats to the Virginia Legislature, Kaine responded that it gave him a level of energy and confidence for his own chances in Virginia, it bode well for the expansion of Medicaid in the state, and that as a member of the Senate Health and Education Committee there was a synergy that could result.

Kaine is seeking re-election in November, and has already made campaign stops "in some areas of our state that are really suffering," but said that the Town Hall meeting wasn't about campaigning, but about keeping up a dialogue with all Virginians. "Hearing what the concerns are, and keeping people informed — that's practicing democracy."

New Year, New Order

Local organizers teach methods for streamlining a space.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

With the holidays now a memory, local organizers are getting requests from those with overflowing buckets of ambition to create and maintain a clutter-free space.

"One of the first things to learn is that a few minutes spent on a few tasks each day can go a long way in maintaining order," said Jodie Jacobs of SOUPerior Organizing. "Decide how important a clean, clutter-free space is to you and follow through on keeping it that way. Prioritize it like other important things in your life."

One habit that Susan Unger of ClutterSOS teachers her clients to focus on simple things that can be done easily and frequently. "In general, I recommend keeping up with household duties on a daily basis so none of them become a bigger project," said Unger. "For example, don't leave dishes in the sink. Load the dishwasher after every meal and put all cooking and food prep items away so the counters are clear."

Establishing a daily routine so that tidying becomes second nature is a technique that Unger uses in her own life and teaches to her clients. "I always make my bed first thing in the morning," she said. "Having a neat bedroom is a great way to start the



Teaching children to put away toys at the end of the day can create a peaceful environment.

day."

Also on her recommended list of daily tasks: apparel. "Be sure to put all clothes away on a daily basis rather than leaving them on a chair or the floor," said Unger. "Clean clothes should be hung up or put in drawers and dirty clothes in the laundry basket."

In fact, Unger tells clients to gather the entire family at the end of each day and spend 10 minutes tidying as a group. "Make a sweep of your house and determine which items need to be put in their proper place," she said. "It makes for a less stressful and



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JODIE JACOBS

Small tasks such as putting away clothes each day can lead to an organized space.

more pleasant morning when you're not waking up to clutter sitting around," said Unger.

Deal with mail on a daily basis so it doesn't pile up, advises Unger. "Immediately recycle or shred the junk mail and put bills, items to file and reading in an appropriate place."

Whether it's a small basket by the front door or storage boxes placed under a bed, one technique for tidiness is having a designated space for items. "Kids' homework should have a landing place like a backpack," said Jacobs. "The backpack should

go in a particular place, like on a hook. You have to figure out what works for your family."

Keep bathrooms in order by adding over-the-door hooks to hold towels, suggested Todd Martz, Home on Cameron in Alexandria. "This might make the room appear smaller, but it [offers] a place to put towels," he said. "Include a decorative bag on the door hook for toiletries so they're out of the way."

"Add an ottoman or coffee table with storage," continued Martz. "Maximize the space next to a utility or laundry room by adding a ... shelf to hold blankets."

Whether it's once a week or once a month, schedule time to spend on organization projects and record it on a calendar, advises Jacobs. "Tie it to something that you already do and select a time that won't be overrun by other events, she said. "If you know that every Sunday at nine o'clock, you always watch a television show, set aside that time to go through mail, pay bills and respond to invitations while you're watching. That way, your time won't get bumped for a soccer game or business meeting."

One caveat that Jacobs offers her clients is, "Maintaining a routine doesn't mean that you won't slip up at times," she said. "You have to hold yourself to realistic standards or you'll get discouraged."

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

The Elden Street Tea Shop. Saturdays in ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Sip tea and enjoy a variety of locally made snacks and pastries while enjoying the latest art installations in the gallery. Visit www.eldenstreettea.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Yoga Storytime with Little Twisters. 10:30 a.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Read a classic children's book, then act it out using yoga moves and poses. Cosponsored by the Friends of Reston Library. Age 3-5 with adult. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

Community Food Packing. 10-11:30 a.m. at Dominion Energy, 3072 Centreville Road, Herndon. Assistance League of Northern Virginia will hold its next monthly Weekend Food for Kids packing. For further information contact Lynn Barron: LynnB517@verizon.net or visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

Design and Wine. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Featuring Stopping in the Woods on a Snowy Night with Melanie Stanley. \$40 per person which covers wine, light snacks and supplies. Registration is required with payment in advance. No prior art experience necessary. Call 703-956-9560.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

Improv-Extravaganza. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. For one-night-only, The Alden's (the) Unruly Theatre Project and Loudoun County High School's Improvasaurus will bring their signature improv styles to ArtSpace Herndon. Suggested Donation of \$10. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org/ for more.

Swing Dance. 8:30 at Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon. Swing Dance with Gina DeSimone and The Moaners. 8:30-9 p.m. drop-in beginner swing lesson; 9-midnight dance. \$15. Visit www.gottaswing.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20.

Basic Fundamentals of Drawing. 1-2:45 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Eight-week series of classes with John Koeber. \$150 for the eight-week session. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org.

Weaving Workshop at GRACE. 5 p.m. at



The "45 Plays for 45 Presidents" ensemble includes Caroline Kashner, Brittany Martz, Chloe Mikala, Mary Myers, and Sarah Anne Sillers.

'45 Plays for 45 Presidents'

NextStop Theatre Company opens a hysterical take on history with the play "45 Plays for 45 Presidents." The play, which is already selling out performances, presents a series of 45 two-minute plays — one for each American President. In a female-forward twist to the amusing premise, NextStop's production also casts five women as all the presidents. Performances are Thursdays through Sundays from Jan. 11 to Feb. 4 at NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. General admission, \$20-\$55 at www.NextStopTheatre.org or by calling 866-811-4111.

Greater Reston Arts Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Exploratory weaving workshop for ages 18 and up. Students will leave with a completed wall hanging. \$45 for Reston residents/\$55 for nonresidents. Register at restoncommunitycenter.com. Call 703-471-9242 or visit restonarts.org.

Meet the Tattoo Artist. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Meet Gilda Acosta and explore getting a tattoo. Her work will be on display Jan. 9-Feb. 10. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org/ for more.

Flower Photography Expert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Room 6 at the Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road. The Reston Photographic Society on how to take fabulous photographs of flowers, both in the garden and in the wild. Hankins is the author of "Wildflower Meditations: A Gift for the Spirit" and BeautifulFlowerPictures.com. Visit www.leagueofrestonartists.org for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 21

Multi Cultural Hip Hop. 3 p.m. at RCC-Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Color Orange: A Hip-Hop Concert about friendship and multiculturalism. Call 703-435-7986 or visit www.reston.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 24

Red Cross Blood Drive. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at

Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

Meet Me at the Movies. 10 a.m. at at Bow Tie Cinemas, Reston Town Center, 11940 Market St. Reston Association presents "LBJ." Refreshments and door prizes provided prior to movie. Free to 55+. Email Ashleigh@reston.org or call 703-435-6577.

THURSDAY/JAN. 25

Dollars and Sense. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Monthly group discussion focuses on business leaders and markets. The discussion will focus on "Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World" by Michael Lewis. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

Creative Responses at GRACE. 7-8 p.m. at Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St #103, Reston. Creative professionals respond to the work on view in the gallery. The short presentation will be followed by open conversation. Presenters may include poets, dancers, writers, musicians, visual artists, and more. All ages. Free and open to the public. Call 703-471-9242 or visit restonarts.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 26

Harried Americans Roadshow. 7-9 p.m. at Cafe Montmartre, 1625 Washington Plaza N., Reston. The Harried Americans will present their newest variety show and smarty-pants brand of Americana, Jazz, Blues and original songs. The show will feature musical guests, The Aloha Boys and their acoustic down-home, backyard-style Hawai'ian music. The show also includes poet Rod Deacey and comedian Jon Yeager. \$10 at harriedamericans.com or the door.

Swing Dance. 8:30 at Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon. Swing Dance with King Teddy. 8:30-9 p.m. drop-in beginner swing lesson; 9-midnight dance. \$15. Visit www.gottaswing.com.



Meet the Artist

On Saturday, Jan. 20, Meet the Tattoo Artist from 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Meet Gilda Acosta and explore getting a tattoo. Her work will be on display Jan. 9-Feb. 10. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org/ for more.

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News

Parking Frustrates Neighborhood

FROM PAGE 2

from the intersection with Old Hunt Way to Herndon Parkway and "Huntsman Place from its intersection with Old Hunt Way to 715 Huntsman Place and Old Hunt Way from 735 Old Hunt Way to 669 Old Hunt Way." Ashton acknowledged though while there would be no parking at the top of the street near the Montessori school, 24 parking spaces would remain open and hence available to students and others at the bottom of Old Hunt Way.

Ashton said he and Herndon High School Principal Elizabeth Noto had been in conversation. He told how Noto had assured him she anticipates having a gravel parking lot that had been impacted by recent construction at the high school and had drainage issues, in place very soon. Ashton said Noto told him given recent modifications she can now get students who are in the permanent parking lottery on site now and those in the temporary lottery she is sure she will be able to accommodate once the gravel lot is in place. "She wanted me to assure you she wants to work with the town and be a good neighbor," said Ashton.

Many citizens from the impacted area turned out to comment, among them Tom Tamaccio, secretary, Old Dranesville Hunt Club Homeowners Board who said he was speaking for the Board. Tamaccio told the Council while residents in the neighborhood had seen improvements and they are appreciative of the help, he emphasized: "We still do have a problem...ultimately we're going to need to have a total residential program to resolve the problem."

OTHER RESIDENTS who commented agreed but noted under the proposed amendment leaving the lower end of Old Hunt Way with parking availability, that there is also a safety concern. A cul-de-sac is located there; a favorite space for young children to play and it is gathering space for residents.

Richard Romero who lives on Old Hunt Way noted another

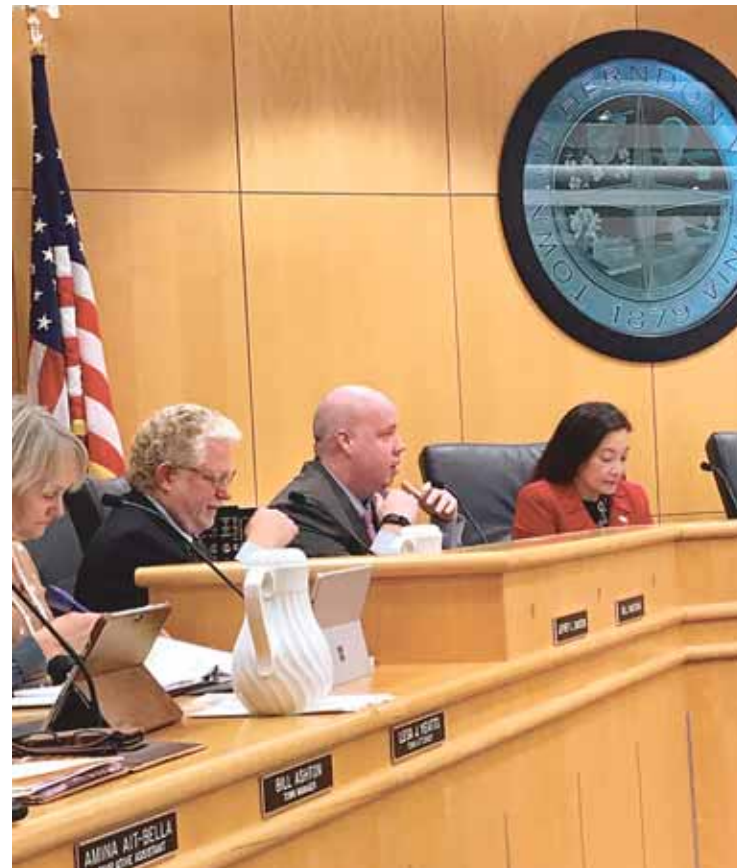


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The Herndon Town Council held a Public Hearing on Tuesday, Jan. 9, considering two key proposed actions: to establish a Residential Parking Permit Program in the Old Dranesville Hunt Club Zone by expanding the zone and to amend the current 6-year-old ordinance to increase the usage charges for sanitary sewer and water.

safety concern. Since he works from home and can see the street throughout the day, he reported when cars park on both sides of the road; traffic becomes backed up. "My big concern is that if an emergency service vehicle tries to get to one of those homes, and if someone's life was a matter of a few minutes, they are not going to survive. I can assure you, a fire truck, a police car, an ambulance will sit in traffic on that street," Romero said. Many citizens expressed frustration with the system asking why wait for the scenario to play out in a third location and asked for clarity in why more aggressive parking restrictions cannot be put in place now. Ashton reiterated that by Virginia Code, the proposed expansion of 82 spaces is the largest increase possible at this time.

During comments from the

Town Council, Councilmember Grace Wolf Cunningham assured the audience they have taken as many parking spaces as Code will allow. She stressed they want to be sure the whole neighborhood is safe and acknowledged she is aware the cul-de-sac is really where the neighborhood heart is. Wolf said to the residents, given the approval of the amendment, "I urge you, as soon as you see students parking in the 24 uncovered spaces, to come back to us... to reevaluate the study for the remaining 24 spaces so that we can start that process... and we can go from there."

Mayor Lisa C. Merkel called the question to amend the current Residential Parking Permit Program: Expanding the Old Dranesville Hunt Club Zone. The Herndon Town Council passed the motion unanimously.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send school notes to north@connectionnewspapers.com by noon on Friday.

Mary Clougherty, of Herndon, was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at Lehigh University (Bethlehem, Pa.).

The following Herndon High

School students were named to the All-District Band.

❖ Wind Ensemble (and All-State eligible): **James Adams**, first percussion; **Emma Rood**, first harp; and **Nathan Coughlin**, first string bass.

❖ Symphonic Band: **Ethan Morad**, Bb clarinet; **William Logan**, Bb clarinet; **Jordan Meyer**, Bb clarinet; **Zoe Birman**, tenor sax; **Matthew**

Disinger, horn; **Kacey Hillebrand**, trombone; **Coby Chiu**, euphonium; and **Carla Nicolini**, percussion

❖ Alternate: **Matt Procopio**, bass clarinet.

Ari Snaevansson, of Herndon, will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Health Sciences from Gettysburg College (Pa.).

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.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Child turning 5 years old by Sept. 30? If so, contact your child's school to make arrangements for kindergarten enrollment. Most schools begin getting information together now for parents of incoming kindergartners, and many host an orientation or open house. All kindergarten programs are full-day and located in FCPS elementary schools. Check your school's webpage or contact the school directly for specific enrollment information and dates of orientation or visit www.fcps.edu/registration/kinder-garten-registration.

THROUGH JAN. 26

Coat Drive to Benefit Cornerstones.

Collection in building lobbies. Help us help those in need in our community stay warm this winter. Reston Town Center will be accepting new or gently used winter coats (in good condition and cleaned), and new hats, gloves and scarves. Items will be collected in boxes located in building lobbies for donation to Cornerstones.

Visit restontowncenter.com.

FY 2019 SCHOOLS BUDGET

FCPS Superintendent Scott S. Brabrand will present the **2018-19 school year (FY 2019) Proposed Budget** at the School Board meeting on Thursday, Jan. 11, at Jackson Middle School at 7 p.m. The School Board plans to hold a budget work session on Jan. 22, and a public hearing on the Proposed Budget on Jan. 29, with additional hearings on Jan. 30 and Jan. 31, if needed. Get more information on the FCPS budget at www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/budget/fy2019.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 17

Public Meeting. 7 p.m. in Room 106 of the Herry Building located at 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The Fairfax County Park Authority will hold its annual public comment meeting on the agency's proposed fee adjustments. The public meeting agenda includes a brief presentation on the fee process followed by an opportunity for public comment. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/feemeeting

MONDAY/JAN. 22

NARFE Dulles Chapter 1241 Luncheon

Program. 11:30 a.m. at Amphora Diner, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. Speaker: Richard Eimas, Tax Advisor & Enrolled Agent, Block Advisors Tax & Business Services

Topic: Impact of Tax Cuts & Jobs Act. Luncheon is \$18 which includes tax and a small gratuity. Call your reservation and choice of entree to Shirley Boning at 571-442-8910 or e-mail Shirley.boning@comcast.net no later than Thursday, Jan. 18.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 24

DMV2Go at the Pavilion. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Pavilion at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston The wireless office on wheels offers all DMV services: driver's license and ID card applications and renewals, driving records, vehicle titles, license plates, decals, order disabled plates, and more. Information on all services available at dmv.virginia.gov/general/

Public Hearing – Planning Commission. 7:30 p.m. in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The Board of Supervisors authorized the consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Sunset Hills Road realignment. The adopted plan for this area recommends three different options for how the intersection of Sunset Hills Road and Hunter Mill Road could be modified. The Board of Supervisors requested that staff consider a realignment of Sunset Hills Road to Crowell Road as a replacement to these three options. The proposed Plan Amendment recommends that Sunset Hills Road be realigned to Crowell Road and that a roundabout be considered as the intersection control. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/plan-amendments/current/sunset-hills-realignment or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission/

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Seasons Gratings



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a baby-boomer, I've transitioned from black and white television to color to "H.D." - and of course now to "Smart Television;" and within that evolution, so too has the variety, content and number of channels- and the "demand" that we consumers can make - from home, transitioned as well. And I don't suppose much of it could have happened without advertising and the revenue it has generated. Promoted by people, places and things. From sports heroes to celebrities to news makers to cartoon characters to puppets and on to anthropomorphic agents/avatars and other creative mouthpieces.

I grew up watching television - without a remote, not listening to the radio. I remember seeing "Mr. Clean," "The Jolly Green Giant," "Mr. Magoo," "Speedy" - from Alka Seltzer - among other iconic creatures of the creative, all of whom sent so many messages to so many consumers, ripe for the plucking. A brand new medium had arrived: television, and its audience was extra large and extra eager.

And even though these spokes-things were not exactly speaking from the heart (what heart?), they were speaking/symbolizing with conviction - and repetition. The impressions made on impressionable future consumers were incalculable. It launched a generation. Not the "Greatest Generation," mind you, but a generation nonetheless, prepped and ready to make its mark: in the drug store, the convenience store, the supermarket, the box store and now the on-line store. We are not merely what we buy, we are what and how we are advertised to.

Previously I had written a column about how I loathe the computer-generated characters which have been utilized on television in an attempt to capture consumers' interest. As soon as they appear on television, I switch rather than fight. For me, it's an immediate turn off, literally and figuratively. I am not listening to inanimate objects/creations tell an "animate" (yours truly) object what to do. And though I understand the humanity behind the message, as far as I'm concerned, the delivery system does not compute (an old-fashioned usage). Artificial spokes-things are not worth the computer screens they're drawn on.

What has brought this rant on is a new element in the artificially-intelligent world in which many of us are subjected: holiday greetings from a computer. Mass emails sent by manufacturers from whom as a consumer we've emailed, inquired, bought, sold, etc., wishing me a "happy, healthy, prosperous holiday/New Year," yada, yada, yada; click/delete. As fast as I can. Are you kidding me? It's not bad enough that as consumers we are regularly watching/listening to fake spokes-things on television, I am now being directly interacted with through my personal emails too. No. That's where I draw the line/terminate my attention span.

However well-conceived, I am not getting involved with what is in effect, a thing. Pre-programmed messages of this kind are the unkindest cut of all; "Et tu, Brute?" If you/your company can only treat me like a number - and not as a person, don't treat me at all. Don't think for a nanosecond that a holiday missive to a massive holiday audience carries any substantial weight. It doesn't. It provides the exact opposite: a greater wait until I respond. It's akin to be weightless in outer space. It's for bemusement. It serves no functional purpose. And though I can certainly appreciate how getting into thousands/millions of personal email accounts with one keystroke has an appeal, you risk squandering a previously hard-earned resource: goodwill.

You want me as a customer? Don't email me feelings. Email me facts and figures. You really want me as a customer? Then speak to me, really. Save your greetings; and not for next year either.

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

OPINION

First Week in Richmond

BY BARBARA FAVOLA
STATE SENATOR (D-31)



It is always exhilarating and humbling to sit in the Chamber as the President of the Senate gavels an unruly body of 40 senators into order. On Jan. 10, Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam did just that. The next day, Lt. Gov. Northam presided over the Senate for the last time. We wished him well and sent him off to be inaugurated as the 72nd Governor of Virginia.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY WEEK

Transparency: Committee votes will now be recorded and live-streamed, so Virginians can hear the substantive debates on bills as they work their way through the process. Most bills, especially controversial ones, face their defeat

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in committee meetings. This long overdue bit of sunshine will enable Virginians to see for themselves how seriously lawmakers are tackling issues important to them. The link to view meetings can be found under the "Members and Session" tab of the viriniageneralassembly.gov website.

Education: Option for Four-Year Teaching Degree: I am proud to say that my bill SB 76 to enable prospective teachers to potentially gain a teaching degree in four years, rather than five, passed out of the Senate Health & Education Committee unanimously. This will reduce the opportunity cost of becoming a teacher, a factor that weighs heavily on prospective teachers who have incurred a large school debt, yet they have the desire to enter

an important but low-paying profession.

Children & Families: Kinship Care Bill — My bill (SB 44) provides support payments to relatives who are willing to offer kin in foster care a permanent home. It passed out of the Rehab and Social Services Committee but was referred to Finance. More than 75 percent of the cost of this kingship program, called "Fostering Futures" is born by the Federal Government. I really hope the money committees can find the \$45,000 to start this program.

On a lighter note, my bill to help small business that bake alcohol infused confectionery products obtain an ABC license, so they may continue to grow their businesses, passed out of committee, as well.

Your emails and support are crucial to the legislative process. It is an honor to represent you and to fight for our values.

The state senator represents parts of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun.

Mr. speaker — Not Mr. Speaker

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



One of the first tasks in a new session of the Virginia General Assembly is to decide who is going to run the show. In the Senate of Virginia, the decision is made by the voters of the Commonwealth when they elect the Lieutenant Governor whose principal duty is to preside over the Senate.

In the House, the Speaker of the House is the presiding officer who is elected by the members of the House. The political party with the most members has control of the House and elects the Speaker. Republicans control of the House is 51 to 49 this session, a sharp drop in the 66-34 control of recent years. The closeness of the balance of power led to some meaningful discussions that should result in more transparency in the operation of the House.

My interest in becoming the presiding officer of the House by being elected Speaker was well known. Once the two disputed delegate elections were decided in favor of the

COMMENTARY

Republicans there was no way I could reasonably expect to win. Only the Republican who had worked in his party and in the legislature for decades was nominated, and he was elected unanimously. That helped the session get underway in a cooperative spirit. There will be ample opportunity for debate when the many bills that reflect the issues before the General Assembly are considered.

What does a Speaker wannabe do when his party does not gain control of the legislative body? I have decided for myself that if I cannot be the formal Mr. Speaker of the House of Delegates then I can return to my role as Mr. speaker (small "s") speaking out on tough issues that some may want to duck, and I can speak out on institutional practices that are not transparent or fair. In this way, I can best serve my constituents and the long-term interest of the Commonwealth. I can also serve as a mentor to the many new exciting members that are joining the House of Delegates, and I can

help to reduce any feelings of intimidation they might be experiencing. Certainly the legislature provides experiences that are not replicated in any other role in life.

The techniques of mass communication through phone calls, postcards, rallies, opinion writings, and other practices that were so successful in helping to get candidates elected can be utilized in the legislative process to help influence the outcome of legislation. I have already been seeing groups shifting from advocacy for individual candidates to advocacy for issues. On issues like expansion of health care and independent redistricting, a strong public voice and advocacy are necessary for success.

There will be more opportunities for the public to follow the legislature in real-time this year than ever before. Video streams of meetings of House Full Committees can be accessed online. Download an instruction sheet at https://publications.viriniageneralassembly.gov/display_publication/209.

You can contact me in Richmond by using regular email, kenplum@aol.com or by calling my local telephone number 703-758-9733, which will ring in my Richmond office.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Voting the Party Line

To the Editor:

The Republican Party celebrated the New Year with the recent passage of their so-called "tax reform" bill. While some of us may enjoy modest and temporary tax cuts, the bill is a gift to our nation's plutocracy whose tax cuts are substantial and permanent. All this will come at the cost of an exploding federal deficit. The fiscal rectitude preached by the Republicans during the Obama years was pushed aside when it came time to do the bidding of the moneyed interests they are beholden to. The bill was hurriedly written in a slapdash manner, with no serious analysis of economic impacts, and rushed through the leg-

islative process in part to avoid public scrutiny. It complicates the tax code and will no doubt bring a host of unintended consequences. One foreseeable consequence is new opportunities for tax cheaters, who will be further emboldened by the fruit of long-term Republican efforts to diminish IRS enforcement powers. Sadly, District 10's Representative Barbara Comstock voted for this bill. The excuses she offers to justify her vote show once again that she is just reliably voting the party line regardless of the interests of her constituents or our nation. The people of District 10 can only hope that 2018 will bring them better representation in Congress.

Richard Markeloff
Herndon

Write

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

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