

Fairfax Station **CONNECTION** Clifton & Lorton

Assembly Begins to Reflect Diversity of Virginia

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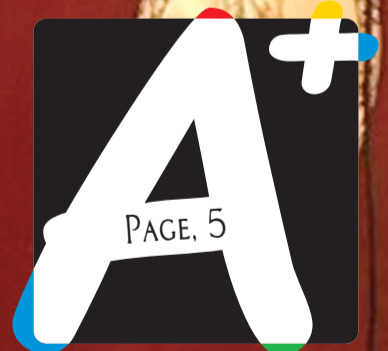
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Del. Kathy Tran (D-42) joins her Democratic colleagues at her first press conference of the session to highlight the importance of breaking down barriers to voting and increasing voter participation. Tran writes a Richmond Diary of the first week of the session for The Connection.



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POETRY CORNER



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Molly Thames

Home

I would close my eyes and walk down the stairs
I never needed to see to know what's there.
My small gray house so perfectly placed.
I had memorized every crack in the driveway that my house faced.
I would tiptoe over the squeaky wooden floors.
I remember hide-and-seek behind every swinging door.
The comforting gold sofa and all of its ripped seams.
I loved our memories from Christmases when we all still believed.
I remember the whispers between the bedroom walls
I miss the interruption of my mom's dinner calls.
But most of all I remember the sound
of when the men first dug into the ground.

— MOLLY THAMES
CLIFTON

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Assembly Begins to Reflect Diversity of Virginia

Del. Kathy Tran (D-42) writes a diary of her first week at the Virginia General Assembly session in Richmond.

Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2018

I joined my Democratic colleagues at my first press conference of the session to highlight the importance of breaking down barriers to voting and increasing voter participation.

I discussed HB 1058, the Uniform Military and Overseas Act, which will give active duty military service members and Virginia National Guard members who are stationed overseas the option of securely voting online.

I introduced this bill, which is chief co-patroned by Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34), because I believe that voting is a cornerstone of our democracy, and I want to ensure that our service men and women – who risk their lives every day to protect our right to vote – have more options to take part in our democracy, especially when stationed overseas.

My staff and I finished moving into our offices at the Pocahontas Building. We are located at W432 and W432A, and I hope that many of my constituents from the 42nd District will come and visit us in Richmond.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

The deadline to pre-file legislation was at 10 a.m. and I was excited to file my first set of bills.

These bills aim to strengthen our public school system, support our workforce including the successful transition of veterans to the civilian workforce, and promote green energy.

The Virginia House of Delegates convened at noon and the 2018 General Assembly session officially started. I was sworn in, along with my colleagues, and I promised to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Commonwealth of Virginia.

I am honored to represent my community and am dedicated to doing all I can to be a thoughtful policymaker and a strong voice for my constituents in the 42nd District.

Looking around the House of Delegates, I was very moved to see our government begin to reflect the diversity of our Commonwealth. I am proud to be one of the first Asian American women and the first Vietnamese American to be elected to state government in Virginia. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that everyone has opportunities to thrive in our Commonwealth.



Del. Kathy Tran (D-42), middle, meets visiting constituents in Richmond.

This afternoon, I welcomed to Richmond several constituents who came as my guests to watch the start of the session and to hear Governor McAuliffe's final State of the Commonwealth and farewell address. I ended the first day of session by attending Governor McAuliffe's reception to mark the conclusion of his tenure as governor.

Thursday, Jan. 11

I joined my Democratic colleagues in the House and Senate for a joint press conference on expanding Medicaid to nearly 400,000 hardworking Virginians. The strong moral and economic imperatives for expanding Medicaid are undeniable. Del. Wendy Gooditis (D-Clark County) shared her powerful story about how lack of access to medical care for her brother motivated her to run for office. I stand with Delegate Gooditis and all families across the Commonwealth who understand firsthand the need to increase access to healthcare. I am committed to working with my Democratic and Republican colleagues in the General Assembly to ensure we expand Medicaid.

During session, Speaker Kirk Cox (R-Chesterfield) announced the 2018 Committee assignments. I am honored to have been selected for the Privileges and Elections Committee and the Science and Technology Committee.

Del. Vivian Watts (D-39) delivered a powerful speech regarding the history of women in the Virginia House of Delegates. She highlighted that there have never been more than 19 women in the House of Delegates at any one time before this year, when 28

women took the oath of office.

The professional experiences and backgrounds that we bring to the General Assembly better reflect the communities we serve and keenly inform our policymaking.

I also met with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy to discuss different issues impacting diverse faith communities with my colleague Del. Debra Rodman (D-Henrico). I enjoyed the conversation and look forward to continuing to engage with constituents and local community organizations.

Friday, Jan. 12, 2018

I attended my first Privileges and Elections Committee meeting. There are numerous bills that have been introduced in the House of Delegates focused on ending gerrymandering and making voting more accessible. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Privileges and Elections Committee this session to find solutions to concerns people across the Commonwealth, including here in the 42nd District, have regarding our democratic process.

Later on in the day I spent time talking to my colleagues in the General Assembly on different issues I am working on, including strengthening our schools and ensuring that Virginia is welcoming and inclusive of everyone. The busy week ended on a positive note as I prepared for Inauguration Weekend in Richmond with my family.

Saturday, Jan. 13

My husband and I were honored to par-



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ticipate in the inauguration ceremony for the 73rd Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Dr. Ralph S. Northam, Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax, and Attorney General Mark Herring. The General Assembly met in a Joint Assembly in the House Chamber at 11 a.m. and then convened on the Capitol Portico for the inauguration ceremony at noon.

In his address, Governor Northam spoke about how his upbringing on the Eastern Shore and his experience as a pediatric neurologist has shaped his perspectives as a policymaker, and he shared his vision to advance opportunity and hope for all in the Commonwealth.

It was a bitterly cold afternoon with some snow flurries, but the sun shined brightly at the conclusion of Governor Northam's speech. After the inauguration ceremony, there was a parade featuring marching bands and community organizations from across the Commonwealth.

I found it very moving that Lt. Governor Fairfax, only the second African American to hold statewide office in Virginia, was sworn in during Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. That night, we celebrated our new statewide officials at the Governor's inaugural ball.

Sunday, Jan. 14

After a whirlwind first week of the 2018 General Assembly session, I spent time with my family in Richmond. My husband, children and I visited the "Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China," special exhibit at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

This was our first time going to the VMFA, and I was glad to have a chance to explore one of the Commonwealth's finest cultural institutions.

"Looking around the House of Delegates, I was very moved to see our government begin to reflect the diversity of our Commonwealth."

— Del. Kathy Tran (D-42)

OPINION

Looking Back While Planning for the Future

BY DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR



As I reflect on the many achievements of the past year in our region, I am more excited than ever about the future of the Mount Vernon District! Throughout Fairfax County this past year, we celebrated our 275th Anniversary, launched One Fairfax to promote social equity and approved a Police Body Camera Pilot Program. Here in Mount Vernon, revitalization and renewal are well under-

way. From new redevelopment projects like Lorton's Liberty and the Huntington Club, to transportation improvements such as the Richmond Highway widening from Jeff Todd Way to Telegraph Road and updating our Comprehensive Plan to allow for future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Metrorail on Richmond Highway, change is the new normal! Although many changes are on the horizon, we will also continue to respect our history and heritage.

As we modernize, other District advancements include establishing new community advisory committees to oversee the Original Mount Vernon High School redevelopment, the Lorton Community Center and the South County Police Station and Animal Shelter development. The South Flow Alliance was created to advocate for decreased airplane noise, while

the District Domestic Violence and the District Environmental Advisory Committees will be actively advance constituent services and environmental causes. While launched in 2017, this year these committees will be actively engaged in bringing community focus, ideas and leadership to these endeavors. In the last week of 2017, the Covanta Fairfax Energy-from-Waste Facility reopened after a fire earlier in the year. Although this started in tragedy, the improved safety features and enhanced public communication plan developed during the renovation process are expected to benefit the District and its residents for decades to come.

In 2018 we plan to continue advancement and renewal in the District. Some key 2018 results expected are:

- ❖ The Police Body Camera Pilot at the Mount Vernon District Police Station will provide an opportunity to improve public and police safety throughout the District.
- ❖ The National Park Service will study safety and traffic patterns on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, leading to improved travel and increased safety.
- ❖ The District Domestic Violence Committee will be working to increase awareness and existing support systems, as well as continuing to plan to open a local

shelter.

❖ The next phase of Richmond Highway widening from Jeff Todd Way to Napper Road will advance to design phase, bringing it one step closer to fruition.

❖ Six schools in our District will continue or complete their renovations.

❖ The new Lieber Gate at Fort Belvoir will open this summer.

❖ The Backlick Road Railroad Bridge will open this fall, with two more major railway improvements in planning stages, improving the I-95 Corridor commute.

❖ EnviroSolutions, Inc. (ESI) CDD landfill will begin the process of closing the facility, as it stops accepting debris in fall 2018.

In addition, we will continue to bring you great community events throughout the year. Key events will include the Feb. 3 Town Meeting, the Ides of Bark Dog Festival, the Mount Vernon Nights Summer Concert Series, Tour de Mount Vernon Community Bike Ride and the Holiday Open House.

We will also look for opportunities to educate and inform our community through events like the District Forum on the County Budget, Teen Job Fairs, the Senior Safety Summit and a Rabies Clinic, to name a few. See planned events listing below.

As you consider what this new year brings for you, resolve to engage in your community in 2018! We want and need you! There are many ways to be active, from trash cleanup days to joining a District Board Committee. Come to the

31st Annual Town Meeting on Feb. 3, at Mount Vernon High School to find out more about our District and how to get involved. The day will begin with the Exhibit Hall opening at 7:45 a.m., followed by the Program, Audience Q&A's and a Virtual Tour starting at 9:30 a.m. Visit our www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/ for more information on how to connect with us! #ConnectMVD As always, it is my pleasure to service as your District Supervisor. I welcome your feedback and want to hear from you. Please contact my office at mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-780-7518, any time with any issues, concerns or suggestions!

Upcoming District Events

- ❖ Feb. 3: Town Meeting
- ❖ Feb. 7: District County Budget Forum
- ❖ March: Development Forum
- ❖ March 6: Board Authorizes Maximum Real Estate Tax Rate for FY2019
- ❖ March 18: Ides of Bark Dog Festival
- ❖ March 13/15: Tax Relief Forum
- ❖ March 17: Teen Job Fair at South County HS
- ❖ April 14: Teen Job Fair at Mount Vernon HS
- ❖ April 29: Rabies Clinic
- ❖ Spring: District Boards, Authorities and Commissions Representatives Meeting
- ❖ Spring: Community Walk
- ❖ Spring: Trash Clean Up Day
- ❖ May 24: Board Adopts FY2019 Budget

LETTERS 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 recitute 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 legislative 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

Redefining 'Temporary'

To the Editor:

The Connection Newspapers' editorial, "Pulling Legal Status" [Jan. 10-11], insists there is "no upside" to terminating "Temporary

Protected Status" for immigrants, but even the editorial hints at upsides:

❖ Salvadorans send \$3.6 billion in remittances to their home country. In national accounting, these remittances are treated like imports — money leaves the U.S., exacerbating our trade, or what economists term "balance of payments" deficit.

❖ Your editorial counts the losses to GDP of ending TPS, but many of those jobs will go to Americans, perhaps at a higher wage due to a tightened job market.

❖ Returning TPS recipients to their homelands before they become eligible to receive Social Security benefits increases the Social Security trust fund's solvency.

❖ Much of affordable housing's disappearance is driven by demand. Repatriating people will suddenly create lots of vacant housing units, and thereby drive down rents — no government sub-

sidies or zoning density bonuses for affordable housing needed.

Your editorial is essentially a non-sequitor, demanding permanent "Temporary Protected Status." Something permanent per se cannot be temporary or vice versa. The average person sees a sort of corruption in our government abusing language and legal concepts in this fashion and would foreseeably oppose granting temporary protected status to others beset by future disasters if this one ended up being a sleight-of-hand. The fact that TPS recipients have mortgages, U.S.-born children, etc. is irrelevant to their reason for being here under temporary protected status. And if "temporary" really means permanent, our government is perpetrating a fraud on its citizens, much like developers calling a proposed new building's rooftop "open space."

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

Fairfax Station,
Lorton & Clifton
CONNECTION

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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 teaches 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 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 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



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JODIE JACOBS

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

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.”

Gary Kramer, D.D.S.
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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Children's Science Center at Fair Oaks Mall. Stop by the Experiment Bar in January and check out Lava Tubes! Learn about density and polarity in this small tube. And back by popular demand, DIY Snow is here for another month to celebrate winter. Visit childsci.org.

Second Saturdays. 6-9 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. The Second Saturday Art Walk is the perfect time to meet nearly 85 Resident and Associate Artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in our galleries. Experience performances of dance, cabaret, comedy, big band, jazz, and theater. Indulge in classes in the art of mixology or cuisines from around the globe. Enjoy art exhibitions in nine galleries of the region's finest sculpture, painting, glass, ceramics, and fiber art works. Visit www.workhousearts.org/.

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. Capital 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>.

Grand Opening. Board & Brush Creative Studio, 11215 Lee Highway, Suite J, Fairfax. Join Board & Brush Creative Studio for an open house and introduction to a fun new DIY workshop concept in Fairfax. Free food, drinks and the first 50 guests will receive gift bags full of Board & Brush



PHOTO BY GLENN COOK/COURTESY VIRGINIA DANCE COALITION

Encore Dance Company in performance.

Dancefest 2018 to Celebrate Northern Virginia Dance

Virginia Dance Coalition presents DanceFest 2018 at George Mason University (GMU), 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, on Jan. 19 and 21, 2018.

❖ Gala Performance at GMU Harris Theatre on Jan. 19, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$25.

❖ Workshops including master classes and seminars at GMU DeLaski Performing Arts Building on Jan. 21, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tick-

ets: \$40 for observer tickets for teachers and parents. Full two-day packages begin at \$125 for college students with ID, to \$140 for VADC member to \$170.

❖ Showcase performance of emerging talent at the GMU Harris Theatre on Jan. 21, 2018 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets \$20.

❖ For early bird rates, tickets, and registration go to www.virginiadancecoalition.org or call 703-409-7988

Fairfax giveaways. One lucky person will win a free workshop for 10. Visit boardandbrush.com/fairfax/.

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.

Qigong and Tai Chi Easy. 2-3 p.m. at King of Kings Lutheran Church, 4025 Kings Way, Fairfax. This six-week class will include Tai Chi Easy and other Qigong practices, with a focus on balance, flexibility and vitality — in all aspects of life. The class is suitable for all levels. Movements can be modified to suit individual needs. New students are welcome. Cost \$90. Pre-registration required. Call 703-378-7272 or email churchoffice@kofk.org. Questions about the class contact Pauline at reidpr@hotmail.com.

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.

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.

SATURDAY/JAN. 27

10th Anniversary Celebration. Noon-4 p.m. at City of Fairfax Regional Library 10360 North St., Fairfax. Celebrate 10 years in the beautiful new library space. Please

join for an open house featuring music, refreshments, crafts, a balloon artist, and much more fun for the whole family. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

Irish Dancing Show. 7 p.m. in the George Mason University Center for the Arts' Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. "Stepping OutÓ 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

Railroad Story and Craft. 1:15 and 2:30 p.m. at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have a day of fun for younger visitors with a railroad-theme story and a related craft. The Museum is open that day from 1-4 p.m. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2, 16 and older, \$4. Cost of activities included in admission. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

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.

Burke Historical Society. 8 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

MONDAY/JAN. 29

Acting, Art and More. 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Spend the teacher workday indulging a creative side. Join for a full day of drama, art, and music with arts instructors who will share their craft in a fun, relaxed

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

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Blythe Champion and Leah Martin, riders at The Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program, with shovels at the groundbreaking ceremony last Wednesday, Jan. 10.



Kelsey Gallagher, the executive director of The Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program, promotes partnership with area schools to introduce children to joy of riding.

PHOTOS BY HANAN DAQQA/THE CONNECTION

Therapeutic Riding to Expand in Area Groundbreaking ceremony for new facilities for Clifton-based program.

BY HANAN DAQQA
THE CONNECTION

Good news for children and adults with disability, Youth at Risk and military families: The Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) broke ground on the first phase of their whole scale capital improvement project and set the footprint for the indoor arena and barn on Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2018.

The first phase will include extensive infrastructure and foundation work; a new, larger, lighted outdoor riding ring; expanded parking and improved access; and an accessible playground.

Blythe Champion, 30, has been riding at The Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) in Clifton for 19 or 20 years now. She has brain damage from infections.

"For me it is more of an emotional thing...I know the horses and I have a great relationship with Booker. I get on him and he is kind of ...sometimes I have trouble getting into canter but he is the kind of horse I will get on him and he can tell 'Okay, Blythe's legs go back, oh, I know what she wants, here we go...'

"It does not help me improve anything, because the brain damage is not going to change but I know for fact how it helped other riders. It helped them with their strength, their balance, their coordination. We had riders with autism. It helped with their speech and also it helps PTSD wounded warriors. It is very stressful and emotional all the time for them, so riding brings back basically a positive feeling in their lives," said Champion.

When asked about partnering with Fairfax County Public Schools to bring children with special needs



Groundbreaking ceremony for Phase I was held Jan. 10, 2018.

to the farm as part of the school day once a week, Kelsey Gallagher, the executive director of NVTRP, said: "We just begun exploring [partnering with public schools as a possibility] when kids are in the farm they are motivated, they work harder, try harder, they are more engaged. Recently, we started a partnership with a private school in Prince William County. They bring kids for part of the school day... there are a lot of children who are on the autism spectrum. Once a week, they come out for two hours... they have different academic or social goals working with the horses...[their goals] can be anything from leadership skills or interpersonal skills. We have different types of services, so for the schools, they pay a fee to participate. We fundraise for over half of our budget.

Our therapeutic riders, children and adults with disabilities, that come to us on their own, they pay about the third of that cost to put on the lesson. We have partnerships with different groups and they pay a fee for lessons. Youth at Risk riders and our military, we fundraise for them to ride at no cost... Loudoun County's budget supports the Special-Ed program to go out and ride."

For more information on the Build to Thrive campaign and ways you can support the project, visit www.nvtrp.org or contact Development Director Wendy Baird at 703-764-0269.

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Northern Virginia Lawmakers Push for Menstrual Equity

General Assembly to consider bills providing feminine hygiene products in schools and prisons.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

When a City of Alexandria woman was booked into the Fairfax County jail, she wasn't wearing white underwear, the only color allowed. It's not like she packed a bag, and she didn't know that she would be arrested on a shoplifting charge. So when the deputies confiscated her underwear she started worrying about what would happen when she started menstruating.

"They give you these pads after they have not given you any underwear, so there's really no place to hold the pads," she said. "If you start a menstrual cycle while you are in there with no underwear, they don't give you anything to protect yourself."

While she was behind bars in 2015, inmates were limited to two pads a day. She says they were the cheapest kind available, which means they were very thin and more than two were often needed. She said she heard some of the other inmates begging for more pads, but the deputies would not provide them.

"So I've had to sit on one pad for half of the day and then use the other pad to sleep through the night so that when I wake up in the morning I could get two more pads," she said. "It definitely makes you feel less than a person, like I'm not even worth a 50-cent pad."

HER EXPERIENCE in the Fairfax

County jail is common say leaders of a nonprofit group known as Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters — known by the acronym BRAWS. That's why they are pushing members of the General Assembly to pass a number of laws to provide "menstrual equity," a growing movement in state capitals across the country.

"It's not right to charge them, especially charging prisoners who really don't have much access to money at all," said Del. Kaye Kory (D-38), who has a bill that would require jails and prisons to provide feminine hygiene products on demand. "So it's wrong. And we shouldn't do it."

Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86) has two bills that work toward menstrual equity. One would add femi-

nine hygiene products to the list of products that are exempted from sales tax during the annual back-to-school tax holiday. The other bill would eliminate the sales tax for these products altogether.

"A woman doesn't have a choice whether or not she wants to buy menstrual products," said Boysko. "And because she's taxed

on it that's unfair and it's discrimination and so it's a parity issue and a fairness issue."

THE ISSUE HAS been gaining steam for several years, although lawmakers are still trying to get their bills out of committee and onto the floor. Del. Mark Keam (D-35) has been working on this issue since 2016, and he says every year the effort gains more support-

ers. He's currently working on a bill that will require public schools to provide feminine hygiene products in restrooms.

"Boys may snicker and joke about it, but the reality is that these are serious psychological as well as physical problems that girls have to deal with," said Keam. "I've talked to many young women who said this has happened to

them and it's so embarrassing, and they can't study or focus on what's happening in the classroom."

Keam acknowledges that his bill would be an unfunded mandate for school divisions across Virginia. That's one of the reasons state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) is taking a different approach — a budget amendment that would provide funding for groups like BRAWS to

distribute feminine hygiene products to prisons and homeless shelters.

"It's an area that's probably been overlooked just because it's not a subject that people talk about often in public," said Petersen. "Really what we are talking about is more matching funds for the community, and we are basically coming late to the party."

"It's an area that's probably been overlooked just because it's not a subject that people talk about often in public."

— State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34)

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 6

environment. \$60. Register at www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org/one-day-camps-spring-break.html.

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 chocolatefestival.net for a current schedule of activities or call 703-385-7858.


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NEWS



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**Troop 1131 in
Burke Promotes
206th Eagle Scout**

Jackson Pitzer, Boy Scout Troop 1131, St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, Burke and a senior at Lake Braddock Secondary School, passed his Eagle Scout Board of Review to become the 206th Eagle Scout in the troop. His mother, Rachel, and father, Brad, are with him in the photograph. In addition to his scouting, Jackson has been in the marching band and enjoys being on the crew team.

BULLETIN BOARD

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/kindergarten-registration.

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.

CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

Learn more about caregiving, or brush up on a specific topic, in

education programs this year at Insight Memory Care Center, including:

- ❖ **Classes for Caregivers Series** — offered the third Wednesday of each month, programs are geared with family caregivers in mind. Classes begin with the basics, and move through more specialized topics throughout the year.
- ❖ **Wellness Workshops** — offered quarterly on Saturdays, these workshops are designed for caregivers to focus on their own health and well-being.
- ❖ **Engagement Workshops** — offered quarterly on the fifth Wednesday of the month, these workshops teach practical caregiving skills. Come prepared to learn and get engaged.
- ❖ **Caregiver Bootcamp** — Short on time? Caregiver Bootcamp is a full day training session offering many popular topics all in one place. Bootcamps are offered on a Saturday each spring and fall. Visit www.insightmcc.org for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St., Fairfax. **Are You 50 or Better?** Join in the next Lunch N' Life sponsored by the Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke. John Cox, who was a guide at the U.S. Capital Building, will speak on the history of the building. For reservations, call Bea Stephenson at 703-273-5730 by

Jan.12. The cost is \$10; checks payable to SCFB. If transportation is needed, call the SCFB office 703-323-4788. See www.scfbva.org for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20

Community Workshop. 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The community is invited to participate in a comprehensive planning workshop for the former Northern Virginia Training Center site and the adjacent State Police site. Snow date is Saturday, Feb. 3. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. with the program beginning promptly at 9:30 a.m. Lunch will be served. Read more at bit.ly/2CZgLYC.

Caregivers Workshop. 10 a.m.-noon at Immanuel Church on the Hill, 3606 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Senior Services of Alexandria and AARP are hosting Bobbi Carducci, the author of "Confessions of an Imperfect Caregiver" for a discussion about her journey as a caregiver. Insight Memory Care Center and Legacy Navigator will also be discussing programs and resources available for those serving as caregivers. This workshop is free and open to the public; light refreshments will be provided. RSVP to Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836 4414, ext. 110.

FAITH NOTES

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, offers casual worship services on Saturday evenings at 5:30 p.m. featuring contemporary music. More traditional services take place on Sunday mornings at 8:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday School is from 9:45-10:45 a.m. for children and adults. The church also offers discussion groups for adults. 703-451-5855 or www.poplc.org.

Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria, offers traditional Sunday church services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. plus Sunday School classes for all ages at 9:45 a.m. Childcare is available 8:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. 703-971-5151 or

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.

admin@franconiaumc.org or www.franconiaumc.org.

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

JCCNV Mothers Circle program, for women who are not Jewish but are raising Jewish children. Free education in Jewish rituals, practices and values, while respecting the participant's choice to retain her own religious identity. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike in

Fairfax. Contact Laurie Albert, 703-537-3064 or Laurie.Albert@jccnv.org.

Metropolitan Community Church of Northern Virginia, 10383 Democracy Lane in Fairfax, presents worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and choir practice, open to all, on Sundays from 9-10:30 a.m. www.mccnova.com or 703-691-0930.

Church of the Nativity offers a free general bereavement support group open to all adults on the first and third Thursday of each month 7:30-9 p.m. The church is located at 6400 Nativity Lane, Burke. Call 703-455-2400, ext. 17.

Richmond Diary

FROM PAGE 3

Monday, Jan. 15

I had a very busy Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. I attended my first Science and Technology Committee meeting and look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we are effectively leveraging technology and scientific advancements to meet the various needs of our Commonwealth.

I joined my colleagues in the General Assembly, Attorney General Mark Herring, Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax, and Governor Ralph Northam at a rally to prevent gun violence organized by the Virginia Center for Public Safety. I heard moving stories of victims and families and talked with constituents about the need to find common sense solutions to end gun violence.

I also met with constituents from the Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area about support for people with bleeding disorders and spoke with stakeholders about the need to make our Commonwealth more inclusive and to protect and advance voting rights. My office heard from constituents about their rights as gun owners. It was a full day of fruitful conversations about issues that matter to our community.

My husband and children were in the gallery for the opening of session, and I was very proud that they were able to experience this aspect of our democracy. I was excited to publish my first newsletter, which will be disseminated weekly during session via email and on my website (www.kathyfordelegate.com). This is one way that I am keeping my constituents updated about happenings in the General Assembly.

Tuesday, Jan. 16

I had the honor of meeting with constituents and members of the Fairfax County Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Local 2068. We discussed the need to ensure that our firefighters receive necessary healthcare. Firefighters and first responders serve our communities in times of emergencies, and I am committed to standing with them.

My office also heard from constituents concerned about discrimination against people with disabilities. I have had the opportunity to meet with individuals with disabilities in the 42nd District, their families, and advocates, and I will be a strong advocate for their rights.

I ended the day meeting with stakeholders about HB 1111, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) Education Fund, which would support STEAM programs in public K-12 schools. I will work hard to engage my constituents, Democratic and Republican colleagues in the General Assembly, and stakeholders to advance my bills during this session.

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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.



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Dining Room w/fabulous built-in china cabinets; open kitchen with maple cabinets & granite counters; large bedrooms w/ lots of nooks & crannies; plus finished lower level w/rec-room, music studio & craft room. Huge deck overlooks private fenced yard! Loads of updates...you won't be disappointed!



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Fairfax - \$589,900
Classic colonial style split foyer home in terrific location * Wood floors * 2 fireplaces * Updated kitchen that opens to screened porch & deck overlooking large, fenced back yard * 5 bedrooms * 3 full baths * Huge walkout family rm. So convenient to transportation & commuter routes, shopping, schools & GMU.



Fairfax Station - \$750,000
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Fairfax - \$724,900
Beautiful 4 bed, 3.5 bath home on a quiet cul de sac. Large, bright kitchen opens to the family room or extends out to the deck overlooking the private backyard. Finished walkout basement has an office/bedroom and full bath.



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