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McLean
CONNECTION

A+
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Spring Fling Fashion
Show Held at Tysons

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A professional model shows off the latest Spring fashions from Bloomingdale's during the New Dominion Women's Club Spring Fling Fashion Show on Sunday, March 18, 2018 at Bloomingdale's in Tysons Corner Center.

'It's Our Time to Act'

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Student Peace
Awards Presented

News, PAGE 4

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'It's Our Time to Act'

Students at Langley High School spark support for National Walkout Event.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Alina Ghobadi and Ben Goodson are both 18 year-old seniors at Langley High School in McLean. Neither can recall a time "before this, when school safety and lockdowns against possible 'active shooters' hadn't become, at the least, the background [consideration] of a school day," as Goodson puts it. "But you always think it can't happen at your school," adds Ghobadi.

There have been dozens of violent incidents at schools across the country in recent years, but the latest, where 17 students were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. by a former student armed with a semi-automatic weapon, really touched Ghobadi, and she reached out to Goodson for help in "showing our solidarity with Parkland, and making a statement. Enough is enough. It's our time to act."

THE TWO, who have known each other since the eighth grade, decided to do their best to galvanize their fellow students into joining the National School Walkout Day on March 14, the one-month anniversary of the Parkland tragedy. They met with teachers and school principal Frederick Amico to discuss their intentions, and while they weren't given a "free pass" to leave class for the 17-minute protest (one minute for each of the students who were killed), they were not given a categorical denial.

"We were asked to use a study period to avoid disrupting classes," said Ghobadi, "but we felt it was important to do this at the same time as others around the country. Together, our voices are stronger. If there is a consequence, then I guess we will have to bear it."

Goodson agreed. "The years go by. More kids are killed. Nothing happens. We have to speak and act together, and then maybe we will be heard and something will be done."

Neither Ghobadi nor Goodson were impressed with the action taken by the House of Representatives on the same day as the Walkout. By a vote of 407-10, the House passed a "School Safety Bill" that focused on better coordination between schools and law enforcement, and offered funding for training, including of students, in the detection of the early signs of potential violence, as well as for anonymous reporting systems. The bill, which is backed by the National Rifle Association, makes no mention of guns or any type of gun restrictions or regulations. This omission contributes to the resolve of the two high schoolers to speak out.

"It's ridiculous not to address gun regulation as part of the solution," insisted Goodson, who also sees the House bill as ignoring the dangers for those of us beyond the campus confines. "We're not saying that people don't have the right to have guns for



PHOTO BY ALEX DRISCOLL

From left, Langley High School walkout co-organizer Alina Ghobadi stands with fellow students Roumina Adab, James Rau and Emily London. Profoundly affected by the school shooting in Parkland, Fla., that saw 17 students lose their lives to a teenaged gunman with an assault rifle, Ghobadi decided it was time to speak out for school safety and sensible gun regulations.



PHOTO BY SUMAIYA HAQUE

Ben Goodson, a senior at Langley, co-organized the student protest. "It's time for us to try, to make our voices heard. It's crazy that nothing has been done, shooting after shooting, death after death."

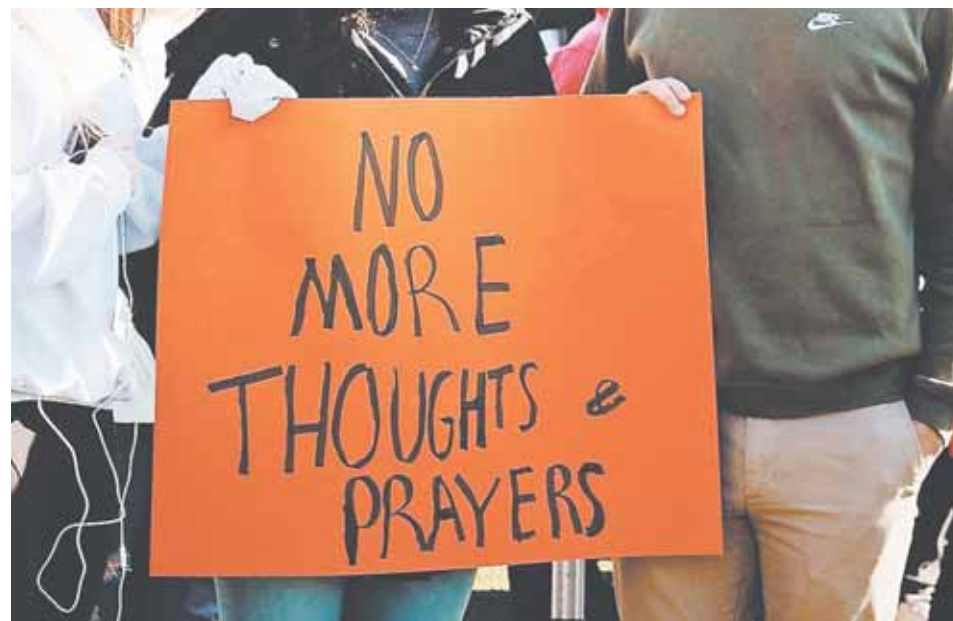


PHOTO BY SUMAIYA HAQUE

One of many signs that students held at the National Walkout to honor the Parkland, Fla. victims, and to advocate for better gun regulations.)

protection or hunting," said Ghobadi, "but what are you hunting with assault rifles?"

"Exactly," said Goodson, who upholds the Constitution and its Amendments, but believes that the language of the 2nd Amendment "doesn't make sense today." He notes that today's weaponry "can be loaded and repeatedly fired a lot faster than a musket," and that the spirit of the Amendment "came from fighting back against a hundred years

of a tyrannical government. I think things have changed a bit since then," he said. Like Ghobadi, he doesn't see assault weapons as having a place in a modern, civilized society.

BOTH STUDENTS also question why gun ownership is treated with less oversight than getting and keeping a driver's license, with classes, a database, taxes, renewals and insurance as requirements. "And tests to de-

termine mental health and fitness. These are just basic common sense," argues Ghobadi.

As for the proposals to arm teachers against attackers, neither thinks that is a reasonable solution, "or even a good idea." Both think putting more guns in classrooms is "just asking for trouble" and see the move as pushing schools to be "more like prisons than places of learning."

"Teachers already have so much to do and think about. Adding armed protector to their jobs is not the answer," said Ghobadi.

What's next for these two concerned young people? They were encouraged by the support their Walkout efforts had among their fellow students. "We weren't sure anyone would join us," said Ghobadi, but when, by their estimations, about 25 percent of the school population took to the athletic fields for the action, "we felt really good, proud of our generation," added Goodson, who plans to join the national March For Our Lives protest in D.C., one of hundreds of protests scheduled worldwide to take place on March 24. Ghobadi will be out of town next weekend, but hopes to join up with a local march near her destination. Writing letters, continuing to speak out, and supporting voter registration among their peers is also on their agenda.

"I hope we can help things change," said Ghobadi. "Since Parkland, now when I head out in the morning, I make sure to say 'Mom, I'm going to school. I love you.' Nowadays, you just never know what might happen."

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



A group photo of the recipients of the 2018 Student Peace Awards from 23 Fairfax County schools.



Langley High School: Katherine Mansourova and Junnah Mozaffar were honored for establishing a chapter of Amnesty International at school and encouraging activism among members. They are with U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11) and state Del. Ken Plum (D-36).

2018 Student Peace Awards

Students from 23 Fairfax County schools recognized for promoting peace and conflict resolution.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Students from 23 Fairfax County Public Schools were named recipients of the 2018 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County, which were handed out in a reception held Sunday, March 11, at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax.

Since 2006, the awards have recognized youth who introduce programs in their schools on many different issues that promote peace and conflict resolution throughout the county. In the 2017-2018 school year, the recipients each received \$200, plus another \$100 to be given to any nonprofit organization of his or her choice.

"It's an honor to be here to help recognize you today for your outstanding work to promote peace throughout Fairfax County and beyond. Your areas of focus cover a wide range of topics and methods, but all unite in one common goal, and that is to encourage and to strengthen peace and unity among all of us," said Sharon Bulova, Board of Supervisors chairman. "In Fairfax County, we consider our diversity to be our greatest asset. It is what makes us special."

Special guests included Bulova; U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11); state Del. Ken Plum (D-36); School Board Member Ilryong Moon; School Board Chair Jane Strauss; School Board Member Ryan McElveen; and Guest Speaker Janessa Gans Wilder, founder and CEO of the Euphrates Institute, who flew in from California for the event. The host and organizer was Margaret Fisher.

Bryce Liquerman, 16, of McLean, a Junior at McLean High School, worked with

Special Olympic athletes by coaching softball and soccer teams. "I help spread the word in the community that people shouldn't be awkward around them and people should be very accepting of people who are different mentally and physically," he said. "We're all people; it doesn't really matter, we're all the same I've led a lot of activities like doing tournaments and team events with many different Special Olympic athletes who have partnered a lot with other kids in our community."

Arnaz Carter-Newman, 17, of Reston, who attends Cedar Lane High School, worked with a Positivity Project. "We just hope to pass on the message that no one should be having a bad day. Everyone should be having a better day; everyone should be in a better mood," he said. "When you produce negative energy, then other people around you want to produce negative energy. When you produce positive energy, you start spreading positive energy and then everyone around you gets more happy."

Janan Iranbomy, 17, of Falls Church, who attends Marshall High School, served on the Fairfax County Student Human Rights Commission and was president of Marshall's Amnesty International group. "I started a Fairfax County campaign called the 'Embrace Diversity Campaign' where we involved all students from Marshall and other Fairfax County high schools to have a campaign to unite the diverse community that we have in Fairfax County and just celebrate the unity in the community," she said.

Katie Oliveira, 18, of Vienna, who attends James Madison High School, is one of the presidents of Madison's Amnesty Interna-



McLean High School: Bryce Liquerman was honored for his work as a Special Olympics coach, and with the school's Sources of Strength group that helps students deal with pressure and anxiety related to school and home. He is with U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11).



Marshall High School: Janan Iranbomy was honored for her work to co-found Humans of Marshall Educate, a website that highlights the diversity at her school, and the Embrace Diversity Campaign. She is with U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11).

tional group along with Allison Janowski. "We worked really hard this year to do a 'Write for Rights Campaign' at our school, which is one of Amnesty International campaigns to get prisoners of conscience released from prison internationally," she said.

"And we also led some debate days which we tried to promote healthy discussion within our school from many different groups of people in the school to create a healthy debate and a safe space for people to speak their mind."

NEWS

Blood Donation Opportunities

Though spring has officially arrived, the American Red Cross blood supply is still recovering from severe winter storms in March. Donors of all blood types are urged to roll up a sleeve and help save lives. Volunteer blood donors from across the country are needed to help ensure lifesaving blood products are available for patients this spring. Make an appointment to donate blood by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Upcoming blood donation opportunities in the area, March 20 to April 15

Herndon
4/4/2018: 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Amazon Web Services, 12900 Worldgate Dr, Suite 800
4/9/2018: 2 p.m. - 7 p.m., St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 432 Van Buren St.
4/11/2018: 1:30 p.m. - 7 p.m., ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St
Reston
3/28/2018: 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Reston Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Dr.
4/4/2018: 3 p.m. - 8 p.m., St Thomas a Becket RCC, 1421 Wiehle Ave
4/6/2018: 8 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Dr
4/6/2018: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Extended Stay America, 12190 Sunset Hills Rd
Burke
4/2/2018: 3 p.m. - 7 p.m., Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 6304 Lee Chapel Rd
Fairfax
3/20/2018: 10:45 a.m. - 5:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/21/2018: 12:45 p.m. - 8 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/22/2018: 12:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200

3/23/2018: 7:45 a.m. - 3 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/24/2018: 7:45 a.m. - 3 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/25/2018: 7:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/26/2018: 1:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/27/2018: 10:45 a.m. - 5:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/28/2018: 12:45 p.m. - 8 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/29/2018: 12:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/30/2018: 7:45 a.m. - 3 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
3/31/2018: 7:45 a.m. - 3 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
4/1/2018: 7:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
4/2/2018: 1:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
4/3/2018: 10:45 a.m. - 5:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
4/4/2018: 12:45 p.m. - 8 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200
4/5/2018: 12:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m., Fairfax Blood Donation Center, 2720 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 200

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When Is Passover Supposed to Be?

BY RABBI LEIBEL FAJNLAND
DIRECTOR CHABAD OF RESTON-
HERNDON



This was the question recently asked of me by a close friend who is not Jewish. I, of course, was totally caught off guard by the question. I had no idea what he was asking. So, I asked him what he meant.

He replied: "Well, I have lots of Jewish friends. And over the last nearly two decades I have attended many Passover Seders. Almost every year, the conversation turns to either how 'early or late' Passover is that particular year. So, if every year Passover is either 'early or late', when is Passover supposed to be?"

For the uninitiated, the ancient Hebrews were enslaved to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, a little over 3,300 years ago. Passover commemorates the miraculous redemption from this slavery and the birth of the Jewish nation. Though the events took place a very long time ago, we believe that not only do they provide us with eternal lessons and instructions on how to live our lives, even in the most modern of times. We believe that they are also events that are to be relived and re-experienced by every one of us, in every time and place. So, to me, the question runs deeper:

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Costs and Benefits of Arming the Teachers

To the Editor:

The lead editorial by Monte F. Bourjaily, IV ("No Guns in the Classroom," Connection March 7-13, 2018) warns of many ills that would attend the arming of school personnel. Whether that is a good idea or not, it bears consideration that hundreds of U.S. school districts have done so for some years, apparently without untoward consequence (at least so far), as detailed by a recent New York Times news article (available at <http://nyti.ms/2oLEem0>). That experience should not be overlooked in forming a necessarily probabilistic judgment as to whether the benefits (such as more rapid response to active shooters and general deterrence) are likely to outweigh the costs (such as the potential for accidental shootings and general unease).

As for the supposed "gag rule," the Dickey Amendment does not prohibit research into the effects of gun violence, only CDC advocacy for gun control, reading in relevant

part: "none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may be used to advocate or promote gun control" (available at <http://bit.ly/22zCqKD>, pdf page 245).

Griselda Farthing
Great Falls

Alzheimer's Is a Growing Public Health Crisis

To the Editor:

According to the Alzheimer's Association, 140,000 Virginians over the age of 65 live with Alzheimer's. Additionally, Latinos are at one and a half times greater risk of Alzheimer's than older whites. Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease in the United States. Alzheimer's costs the country more than \$259 billion a year.

My grandfather, my "Abuelito" in Spanish, was an outgoing, social, and active man and a caring grandfather. One day, he was wandering nearby on surrounding streets, unable to find his way home after one of his daily walks. Luckily, a neighbor recognized him and knew where we lived. She brought

him back to our house. My parents could not afford the increasing care he needed as a person living with Alzheimer's. My family decided he would return to Peru, where my aunts served as his caregivers.

I remember Abuelito sometimes picked me up from school. Every once in a while, we walked to McDonald's to get his favorite Big Mac meal and he would buy me a Happy Meal, too. We used to go trick-or-treating together every Halloween. He gladly held my plastic pumpkin filled with candy. Due to Alzheimer's, I was unable to spend more quality time with my grandfather. We could not take day trips together to Luray Caverns or to the National Aquarium. I missed out on listening to him tell stories about his life experiences and family history.

Please join me in calling on U.S. Rep. Don Beyer to support an additional \$425 million for Alzheimer's research funding at the National Institutes of Health, with the goal of achieving breakthroughs in prevention and treatment. Together, we can end Alzheimer's. Visit www.alz.org/nca for more information.

Jacqueline Calderon
Alzheimer's advocate
Falls Church

Herndon-Reston Community Seder

This year, join friends and family at the Chabad Community Passover Seder. Relive the exodus, discover the eternal meaning of the Haggadah, and enjoy a community Seder complete with hand-baked Matzah, wine, and a wonderful dinner spiced with songs & insights.

First Seder Night Friday, March 30, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
In the Herndon Kmart Center, 396 Elden St. Herndon 20170
For more information or to reserve (a must) call 703-476-1829 email rabbi@chabadrh.org. or visit www.chabadrh.org

"When, indeed is Passover supposed to be?"

Well, it turns out, the Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, comes from the same root as the word for "limitations or boundaries." Read this way, we can experience an "Exodus from Egypt" by "emancipating ourselves from our limitations and boundaries."

Every day we are faced with self, or societal-imposed limitations. It may be as big as some world-changing cause with which we would like to get involved, but feel like it is "beyond us." Or, it may be something as simple as a smile and a "hello" to someone next to us in line at the market, or in an elevator. Irrespective of the deed, it is our "limitations" which hold us back from a myriad of acts of goodness and kindness. And yet, it is precisely these acts which can change the world forever, and usher in an era of humanity, understanding and peace, exceeding our wildest dreams.

So, it seems that the correct answer to the question is: Passover is supposed to be every

minute, of every day. And, one certainly does not have to be Jewish, or celebrating Passover to experience their own "Exodus."

How about we start right now? Think of something noble and great you have hesitated to do, and do it. And watch the world change around you, for good!

Happy Passover to all!



Passover observances include conducting a Seder. The Seder is a fifteen step, family oriented, tradition and ritual packed feast.

The focal points of the Seder are:

- ◆ Eating Matzah.
- ◆ Eating bitter herbs to commemorate the bitter slavery endured by the Israelites.
- ◆ Drinking four cups of wine or grape juice, a royal drink, to celebrate the newfound freedom.
- ◆ The recitation of the Haggadah, a liturgy that describes in detail the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The Haggadah is the fulfillment of the biblical obligation to recount to our children the story of the Exodus on the night of Passover.

Change in Richmond Brings Metro Funding

To the Editor:

As a long-term resident of Northern Virginia, I have been frustrated year after year to hear of a funding crisis for Metro or breakdowns affecting safety and reliability. In Virginia we were always faced with a hostile legislature that was controlled by downstate interests who did not see value in supporting mass transit. Meanwhile Metro suffered from the lack of a secure funding source.

This year we see a different picture with the results of last November's election which found the Democrats just one vote short of winning control of the House of Delegates. Elections matter and now we see the real impact of an election that empowers the Northern Virginia delegation to deliver support for Metro funding.

I was pleased to see the Northern Virginia delegation in the House and Senate take leadership on the Metro funding issue.

Sue Boucher
Falls Church

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Manners in the Tech Age

Etiquette classes aim to teach lost art of manners.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

On a sunny, autumn day a group of 10-year-old children sat around an formal dining room table at a home in Arlington. The boys wore blazers, pressed khakis and shiny loafers, while the girls have donned festive dresses, nude stockings and wore grosgrain ribbons in their neatly combed hair. They had arrived at the home for a lesson in etiquette, but most of them would have rather been someplace else.

"I have to leave early for a soccer game," said Jimmy, who didn't bother hiding his glee over missing part of the class.

In an era when it's commonplace to order pizza on a smartphone and coordinate play dates by text, old-fashioned etiquette can appear obsolete. A recent survey of teachers shows that 73 percent of instructors believe that students are less polite than when the teachers themselves were students. In the age high-tech conveniences, children can become over scheduled and under socialized, which has led to an uptick in the number of parents who are enrolling their children in etiquette classes, say protocol instructors.

"Parents have a tremendous interest in etiquette classes because so many parents realize that they don't have that knowledge themselves, said Dorothea Johnson, who founded the Protocol School of Washington and is the author of the book "Modern Manners: Tools to Take You to the Top," which she co-authored with her granddaughter actress Liv Tyler.

"I think most parents know that good manners and etiquette will be important to their [children's] future," added Henryette Neal who teaches etiquette classes for children through the Fairfax County Park Authority. "Young people will be educated, but without proper social skills they will not be able to present themselves properly." Neal is also the owner of Steppin Out Charm and Imaging Studio.

The result of fast-paced lifestyles combined with over-loaded schedules is a generation of children who place more value on social media savvy than on knowledge of social graces. Family dinners are replaced by fast food, says one parent. "Who needs good manners to gobble down a slice of pizza," said Carole Mincey of Alexandria, whose 14-year old daughter and 11-year old son have taken etiquette and ballroom dance from Mrs. Simpson's Classes, one of the area's invitation-only etiquette schools. "Because everyone is so busy and technology is so advanced, reality television shows are setting standards of behavior and handwritten thank you notes have been replaced by emails and texts."

Good manners are as important to a child's future success as academics, says another parent. "I feel like if people know what do to do in social situations it empowers them," said Sarah Henry of Chevy Chase, mother of a 10-year old daughter and a 12-year old son. "If you're unsure of what to do it can make you feel intimidated. So it's all about empowering chil-



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Henryette Neal teaches etiquette classes for children.

dren with knowledge. And it's good for them to be exposed to proper etiquette in case they're not getting it at home. And if they are getting it at home, etiquette classes can reinforce it."

Interactive class sessions help keep their children engaged in the etiquette lessons. "The key is to keep the children occupied," said Johnson. "For example, when teaching proper introductions, I would call two children up to the front of the room and have them introduce themselves to each other."

In addition to learning such common courtesies such as saying "Please," "Thank you" and "You're welcome," children learn to write thank-you notes and introduce themselves to others by making direct eye contact and offering a firm handshake.

"Knowing how to give a proper handshake is important. When I took my seven-year-old granddaughter Liv to formal events, her little hand went out as she was being introduced to someone," said Johnson. "I could take her anywhere because she had impeccable manners."

Henry says that in a class that she coordinated for her daughter's Girl Scout troop, part of the curriculum included having the children form a receiving

line with parents where they practiced handshakes and eye contact.

"We also printed proper table setting samples online and give the girls n plastic forks spoons, knives, napkins and a copy of the place setting," said Henry. "We talked about how to talked about the placement of the utensils, how to hold a knife and fork properly. One of my pet peeves is watching people hold a knife like it's a stick."

These are good life lessons, says Neal. "Etiquette classes are important because people still need to be respectful of others, and it starts with our children," she said. "A simple please and thank you is important."

"Young people will be educated, but without good social skills they will not be able to present themselves properly."

— Henryette Neal, etiquette instructor

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The Event Committee of the New Dominion Women's Club' Spring Fling Fashion Show (from left): Kitty Gonzalez, Christy Murray, Valerie Edgerly, Desi Woltman, Jane Bohlin, Paige Farrington-Himes and Marianne Polito.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

(From left): Carol Brunner, Del. Kathleen Murphy, Supervisor John Foust (Dranesville), and Jennifer Salopek at the fashion show.

Spring Fling Fashion Show Held at Tysons

About 60 guests help raise \$8,000-\$10,000 for four local charities.

The Spring fashion statement this year is the color yellow and soft pastels with ruffles thrown in for good measure. That's what we learned when the New Dominion Woman's Club (NDWC) held its 11th Annual Spring Fling Benefit Fashion Show on Sunday, March 18, at Bloomingdale's at Tysons Corner Center, which provided the clothing.

With NDWC celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year on April 5, the fashion show raised between \$8,000 and \$10,000 that will be distributed to four local charities: The Friends of Pleasant Grove; McLean Project for the Arts; Safe Community Coalition; and SHARE of McLean.

Some of the special guests were Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust, State Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34), emcee Bill DuBose, and Paul Kohlenberger, President of the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce, who modeled some clothes.

"The show is a lot of fun for all of us to put together every year. It's the kind of event that brings the club together," said Kitty Gonzalez, Vice President of Communications for NDWC. "It's really a high-energy



Paul Kohlenberger, President of the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce and model; Desi Woltman, Event Chair; and Bill DuBose, emcee.

event. We have five models who are friends or members of the club and we have professional models as well that help."

Del. Murphy added: "I'm very proud of the work that the club does on behalf of all of the people of McLean. It's a wonderful



NDWC Member Kimberly Briggs shows models Spring fashions from Bloomingdale's.

organization; it's been around for years and years and years, and they do really good work, so I'm always glad to come and help support them."

Event Chairman Desi Woltman said the

fashion show has become the breadwinner for NDWC's beneficiaries. "It's our big event; it's been very successful and we owe most of our success really to the great partners we've had throughout. We want to thank Effie Elkorek, the personal shopping manager at Bloomingdale's; and Annalisa Varian, the PR manager. They are super professional; they make it very easy and fun."

About 60 guests could sip mimosas and sample finger-foods catered by Ridgewells Catering while perusing the raffle items, which included a Lancôme Gift Basket, Dooney-Bourke handbag, and tickets to the McLean Project for the Arts Spring Benefit. Tickets for the show were \$75/adults; \$40/students.

The Platinum Premier sponsor was Bill Page Toyota; Silver sponsors were Chesterbrook Residences; District Financial Advisors; and other sponsors Monica Gibson of Keller Williams Realty; McLean Pool and Spa; Wheat's Landscape; and McLean Properties, as well as in-kind sponsors Bloomingdale's and Safeway.

NDWC also supports the Reading is Fundamental program; Adopt a Highway; and they're having a big food drive for SHARE with Giant Food on April 7. For more information on the NDWC, visit the website at <https://www.ndwc.org>.

— STEVE HIBBARD



A professional model shows off the latest Spring fashions from Bloomingdale's during the New Dominion Women's Club Spring Fling Fashion Show on Sunday, March 18, 2018 at Bloomingdale's in Tysons Corner Center.



Organizers (from left): Susan Sallaway, Carrie Sallaway, Kitty Gonzalez, Hanan Daqqa, and Desi Woltman.

NEWS

A full house at the Doubletree Hilton to hear the foreign policy views of U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock's opponents who will vie for the Democratic nomination on June 12.

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/
THE CONNECTION



Four Comstock Challengers Discuss Foreign Policy

George Washington University student moves crowd to tears.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

Suzie Egolf of Herndon was glad she had come to the Foreign Policy Candidate Forum on Sunday, March 4, at the Tysons Corner Hilton Doubletree Hotel.

"I came here because I really knew nothing about these candidates who are running for Rep. Barbara Comstock's seat in Congress," she said. The June 12 primary was coming up. She didn't think she really needed to know what their foreign policy positions were, but at least she would get a chance to see them in action so when she voted she could pick the right candidate. Then she realized, as she listened to positions on intervening in Syria, the Iran-Nuclear deal, and North Korea, that the role of every

congressperson in deciding whether we go to war or not, seek peace or not, just got a lot more important.

State Sen. Jennifer Wexton (D-33), Lindsey Davis Stover, Daniel Helmer, and Alison Kiehl Friedman addressed a standing-room-only crowd of Congressional District 10 voters to address questions about foreign policy. Wexton acknowledged humorously

that she hadn't been involved in a lot of foreign policy decisions during her tenure as a state senator, unless you count cross border issues with Kentucky and Tennessee.

Helmer, who was a Rhodes Scholar, noted his foreign policy is directly related to his time abroad as a soldier. Davis Stover and Friedman both held jobs in the Obama administration with direct policy engagement. Friedman led a team combating human trafficking at the Department of State, and Davis Stover served in the Department of Veterans Affairs, working on increasing access to care for veterans.

Egolf wasn't put off by Friedman's "California connections" and "outside money," buzzwords sometimes used to de-



Fawad Barak spoke to the crowd about his father's Jan. 20 death in Kabul and his determination to see justice done and live out his father's American dream.

SEE FOREIGN POLICY,
PAGE 14

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY 2020 Programs



Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

The Governing Board and Staff of the McLean Community Center are **seeking input from residents** of Dranesville Small District 1A at a Public Hearing on Programs for FY 2020 (which runs July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020). MCC programs are scheduled to return to the newly renovated Ingleside facility in 2019.

The Board and Staff are interested in hearing residents' suggestions for class offerings, community events, theater programs, art exhibits, tours, youth events and teen activities when they return home to the Center.

If you would like to speak at the hearing, call the Center to have your name placed on the speakers' list.

You also may submit comments in writing to: george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov.

The hearing will be followed by the regular monthly meeting of the Governing Board.



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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

“Harvey.” Through March 24, Friday-Saturday, 8-10:30 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The McLean Community Players will present Mary Chase’s Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy, “Harvey.” Matinees on Sundays, March 11 and 18. \$18-\$20. Email info@McLeanPlayers.org or visit McLeanPlayers.org.

Art Exhibit. Through March 31 at Great Falls Library (Small Conference Room), 830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. View an exhibit of watercolors by Artist Betty Ganley featuring her love of nautical scenes. Visit bettyganley.com.

Children’s Art Exhibit. Through May 14 at Great Falls Village Starbucks, 9863 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls Studio Arts and Great Falls Village Starbucks present Colvin Run Elementary School children’s artwork. The presentation was selected by Lauren Grimm and Rachel Wiseman, art instructors.

Great Falls Farmers Market. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. Music, vendors, fresh produce, fresh prepared food, delightful bakery, spices from around the world, wild-caught fish, grass-fed, free-range meats, organic-fed poultry and eggs. Email kathleen@greatfallsfarmersmarket.org for more.

Free Tai Chi. Every Saturday, from 7:55-9 a.m., Introduction and Beginners’ Practice, meet on the outdoor basketball court located

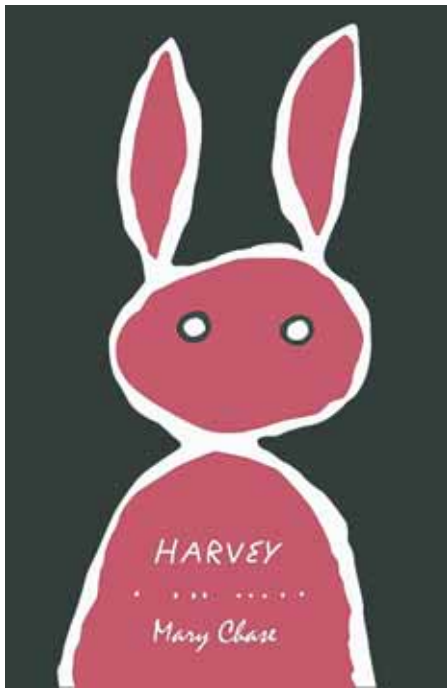
‘Harvey’

The McLean Community Players will present Mary Chase’s Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy, “Harvey” on weekends, through March 24, 2018, at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. \$18-\$20. Email info@McLeanPlayers.org or visit McLeanPlayers.org.

directly behind the Dolley Madison Public Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. in McLean Central Park, McLean. Call 703-759-9141 or visit www.FreeTaiChi.org for more.

Colvin Run Mill open 11-4 p.m. daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Fairfax County’s operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students 16+ with ID, \$5 children & seniors.

MCC Summer Camps. Register children for MCC’s enriching summer camp programs for children ages 3 through 18. Summer Camp Registration Visit www.mccleancenter.org.



THURSDAY/MARCH 22

The Enola Gay. 7:30-9 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Learn about the history of the Enola Gay and her most famous mission from Scott Wiley, Docent at the Stephen F. Udvar-Hazy Center. Free. Call 703-938-0405 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/3456120.

FRIDAY/MARCH 23

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon. At Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Hanna Emrich, an established artist, will be presenting a demonstration of special collage techniques. Call 703 356-9519.

SATURDAY/MARCH 24

Free Tai Chi. 7:55-9 a.m. at St. Luke’s School Gym, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Free introduction and beginners’ practice every Saturday morning. Call 703-759-9141 or see FreeTaiChi.org for more.

Build a Bat House and Go for a Wagon Ride. 9-10:30 a.m. for the Build a Bat House; 10:30 a.m.-noon for Wagon Ride. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. For ages 3 to adult. Cost is \$8. Everyone must register. A fee of \$15 per bat house is payable to the instructor the day of the program. Meet at the park’s nature center. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Healthy Strides Wellness Book Club. 11 a.m.-noon at Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. “The Prediabetes Diet Plan,” by Hillary Wright. This club is for adults, and meets at different Fairfax County Public Library sites each month. No registration is required to attend. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/healthy-strides.

SATURDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 24-31

Fairfax County Parks. Egg-citing activities are breaking out at parks throughout Fairfax County in March. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-news/2018/psa055.

On Saturday, March 24 – Children age 1-6 are invited to the Easter Eggstravaganza at **Frying Pan Park** to hunt for eggs that contain treats and prizes and visit with farm animals. \$8 per child. Add a wagon ride for \$2 per person. **Sully Historic Site** is offering an egg

hunt, egg-related games and an Easter craft for children age 1-8. \$8 per child. Wagon rides cost another \$2 per person.

On Sunday, March 25 —°Stop by the Easter Egg Hunt at **Sully Historic Site**. The historic site is offering an egg hunt, egg-related games and an Easter craft for children age 1-8. \$8 per child. Wagon rides cost another \$2 per person. **Lake Fairfax Park** will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt for children age 1-6. \$8 per child.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center is running a Dinosaur Egg Hunt on March 25, 29, 30, 31 and April 1. Enjoy a dinosaur-themed program and outdoor egg hunt while visiting Dinoland in Nature Playce. For children age 2-8. \$8 per child.

Clemyjontri Park is offering an Easter Egg Hunt, crafts and photo ops with the Easter Bunny for children age one to nine. \$7 per child. Add a carousel ride for \$2.

There’s also an Egg Hunt that day at **Nottoway Park**. Register at the picnic shelter for egg hunts for children age 1-9. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. Schedule: ages 1-2, 10:30 a.m.; ages 3-4, 11 a.m.; ages 5-6, 11:30 a.m.; ages 7-9, 12 p.m. \$10 per child, registration 9:30-11:45 a.m. \$10 per child – cash only at registration.

SUNDAY/MARCH 25

Stretch and Sip: Custom Kinetics Yoga and Brews Event. 10 a.m. at 7921 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Enjoy a holistic yoga seminar with yoga instructor Aubrey of Custom Kinetics followed by beer at Tysons Biergarten. Call 703-462-9258.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13

St. John’s Episcopal Church
INVITES YOU TO GOOD FRIDAY
AND EASTER WORSHIP

March 30 - Good Friday
Noon-3:00 pm MEDITATIONS AND MUSIC
Meditations by the Rector
on the Seven Last Words of Christ
Music on the Seven Last Words of Christ
sung by the St. John’s Choir
with organ accompaniment
You are welcome for any part of this service.
7:30 pm GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY AND MUSIC
Solemn Vespers
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
sung by the St. John’s Choir
with organ, strings, trumpets, and timpani
All are welcome. No tickets are required.

March 31 - Easter Vigil
8:00 pm THE FIRST EUCHARIST OF EASTER

April 1 - Easter Day
7:30, 9:00, 11:15 am HOLY EUCHARIST
Music with brass and timpani accompaniment
5:30 pm - HOLY EUCHARIST
Contemplative Eucharist
For more information:
www.stjohnsmcman.org
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1:30 PM Spanish Liturgy

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| March 25 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. | March 29 7:30 p.m. | March 30 7:30 p.m. | April 1 Sunrise 6:30 a.m. 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. |

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

THURSDAY/MARCH 29

The Monarch Migration: Marvel of Nature. 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Featuring photos and videos by Robin Kent of the monarch butterflies who take a 2,500-mile journey from as far north as Canada to Mexico. Contact Robin Kent at kentro@cox.net or 703-759-3839.

FRIDAY/MARCH 30

"Clue." 7 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Join The Alden staff as they quote along with the dialogue from "Clue" (PG). Admission and popcorn are free. Bring your own non-alcoholic beverage. Don a secret identity, select a room, but leave lead pipes and ropes at home. Prop bags are \$5 each. Supplies are limited and advance purchase is recommended. Visit mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 31

MCC Spring Fest. 10 a.m.-noon at St. Luke's School, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Carnival games and arts and crafts projects, soccer demo, roaming duck, bunny and squirrel characters as well as magic tricks by The Amazing Kevin. Parent and child Easter Egg Hunt. For children ages 3-8. Hosted by McLean Community Center. Visit www.mcleancenter.org, and use Activity No. 4501.318. Call the Center at 703-790-0123, TTY-711.

SUNDAY/APRIL 1

Take Back the Forest. Volunteer to combat invasive plants this spring.

The Fairfax County Park Authority has many volunteer opportunities available to work in local parks to remove non-native invasive plants from the parkland and replace them with native plants. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/invasive-management-area. Or contact Erin Stocksclaeder at 703-324-8681.

MONDAY/APRIL 2

"The Wall's Embrace" Film Screening. 7 p.m. at The Angelika Film Center, 2911 District Ave., Fairfax. Produced and directed by Nancy Frohman of Potomac, Md., the film explores the psychology behind the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and its power to heal. Visit www.goldendoodleproductions.com.

APRIL 4-MAY 6

Solo Art Exhibit. "A Study of Manhattan: Power, Dominance and Excitement" by Great Falls Studios Artist Robert Gilbert. At The Torpedo Factory at the Art League in Alexandria. The Gallery is located at 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Visit torpedofactory.org.

THURSDAY/APRIL 5

Betty McIntosh's OSS. 7:30-9 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave., East, Vienna. Dr. Ann Todd will discuss her book OSS Operation Black Mail, the story of Betty McIntosh, a journalist who served during World War II on the China-Burma-India front in the organization that became the CIA. Books will be available for signing and sale. Visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/3721993.

SATURDAY/APRIL 7

Shape Note Singing. 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Join singers from across the country for spirited, four-part, participatory, unaccompanied singing from classic shapenote tunebooks. Midday potluck; bring a dish to share. Experienced singers, newcomers, and listeners are all welcome. Loaner books available. Registration at 9:30 a.m. Free. Also Sunday, April 8. Visit dcshapenote.squarespace.com/big-singsings. For questions, contact Matt Roberts at saotomesan@yahoo.com.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12

Artist Reception. 6:30-8 p.m. "A Study of Manhattan: Power, Dominance and Excitement" by Great Falls Studios Artist Robert Gilbert. At The Torpedo Factory at the Art League in Alexandria. The Gallery is located at 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Visit torpedofactory.org.
Artist Reception: "Bon Appetit." 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. The public is invited to enjoy light refreshments and meet the artists at a reception celebrating the "Bon Appetit" exhibition. Watercolor artist Cathy Williams will present a demonstration during the reception.

SATURDAY/APRIL 14

Model Railroaders Open House. 1-5 p.m. at the Vienna Depot, 231 Dominion Road NE. Free admission. Call 703-938-5157 or visit www.nvmr.org.



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Here's What's Happening at MCC

Presented by The Alden
"Sing Faster: The Stagehands' Ring Cycle" Movie
Saturday, March 24, 2 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
Free admission

The Old Firehouse
Spring Break Trips
Monday, March 26-Friday
March 30, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
Prices vary by destination

Presented by The Alden
Clue
Spring Break Quote-Along Movie
Friday, March 30, 7 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
Admission and popcorn are free.
Prop bags are \$5 each.

spring fest
Saturday, March 31, 10 a.m.-noon
New Location! St. Luke's School
7005 Georgetown Pike
\$5 per person; under 36 months free.

The Old Firehouse
Teacher Workday Trip
Hershey's Chocolate World
Monday, April 2, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$70/\$60 MCC district residents

The Old Firehouse Family Movie Night
"Despicable Me 3" (PG)
Friday, April 6, 7-9 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$3 per person. Preregistration is recommended.

Presented by The Alden
Christylez Bacon:
The Human Beatbox
Friday, April 13, 8 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$20/\$14 MCC tax district residents

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News

Foreign Policy Debated

FROM PAGE 11

scribe Friedman in the press. Friedman led the pack in fundraising thanks at least in part to an early endorsement from the feminist activist and writer Gloria Steinem.

"I hope people realize how Barbara Comstock gets a huge amount of money from special interests; " she said, "so I wouldn't discount Alison [Friedman] just because she is the best funded. She's got a lot of experience and is a 'big picture' person. The fact she is friends with Steinem isn't important to me, but the fact she has powerful connections that could be helpful for her campaign and for our district is." What worried Egolf was "how much money Barbara Comstock would pour into an effort to discredit candidates like Alison."

Egolf did not see a stand-out in the crowd of candidates — only four were present. "They mostly talked about what they did — their experience in the State Department or in the war. But I got tired of hearing the same lines: "When I was in Iraq, I did this, or when I was in charge of this, I did that. I want to know what they really know about our district. I'm going to go back home and research each candidate, and what they really know about District 10, and how much experience they have here, as opposed to somewhere else, actually living here and understanding the district."

The audience asked each candidate to offer a response to moderators' questions to see how they differ. They didn't differ much. On Syria, Wexton said the U.S. should take in more Syrian refugees. Helmer stressed we don't solve problems with the U.S. military in an undeclared war. Friedman suggested we need to be engaged so Russia doesn't move into a vacuum there. Stover said ISIS in Syria is a threat to the U.S. so a long-term strategy is needed: she added that when we use the military, we had better be prepared to fund the men and women who come home.

On Guantanamo, Helmer wanted to close it because it's contrary to our values, Wexton agreed, Friedman agreed, and Davis Stover added it is a recruitment tool for the terrorists — close it. Stover, citing her grandfather, a WWII vet, said she would be an advocate for veterans; she was chief of staff to the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee and a senior adviser in the Obama administration. She cited homeless vets and female vets as major preoccupations.

Barbara Van Voorst, of "J Street" and an Arlington resident, noted during her interaction with the candidates that "whichever of you comes out on top on June 12, I can assure you, on June 13 there will be hundreds of Arlingtonians knocking on doors to help

get you elected." She asked a question about the current situation in Israel and the Palestinian state, and heard from all candidates that a two-state solution is the answer.

Helmer received loud applause when he spoke about gun control and talked about carrying an AR-15 on the streets of Baghdad and how a weapon like that doesn't belong on the streets of the U.S. He was passionate about immigration, holding onto the Iran Deal, and healthcare, and he made it clear that war should be a last resort, not a step lightly taken. All the candidates decried "foreign policy by Twitter" and Friedman evoked the concern that we might engage in a first strike use of nuclear weapons because of a bad twitter day. Davis Stover endorsed more diplomatic action and enacting a law that would prevent the U.S. from having a first strike capability, "something it would be possible to do right now."

All the candidates decried the "border wall" — Davis Stover called it a symbol of hate which had no place in this country; Friedman called it a stupid idea; Wexton pointed out Mexico's role as a major trading partner; and Helmer rejoined: build more schools instead.

On the Iran Nuclear Agreement, Helmer's statement that nuclear weapons are not the only component of the U.S. relationship with Iran, and that the U.S. needs to increase other areas of engagement with Iran, whether or not the agreement remains, followed a chorus of pro-agreement statements.

CANDIDATES appeared to agree the U.S. is ceding its leadership position and that it has a hollowed out State Department which as a result is missing opportunities.

The forum's highlight wasn't a candidate, he was a student at George Washington University: Fawad Barak, who was born to an Afghan refugee, Rahim Barak, who fled the Soviet invasion of his country in 1979, made his life in the U.S. and just recently returned to Kabul, to see his family. The 58-year-old was excited to head home to Afghanistan for the first time in 30 years. He checked into the Intercontinental hotel and, on Jan. 20, was eating with friends when Taliban insurgents shot him in the head, his son said. Fawad Barak sees the event as a catalyst for him to pursue the democratic process and "see justice done."

Barak talked about a father who worked four jobs a day, who never had a day off, and whose dream was to see his son graduate from university. Barak's remarks brought many to tears, and everyone to their

SEE DEBATE, PAGE 15

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Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road, Vienna. Call 703-938-6753 or visit www.antiochccvienna.org.

- ❖ Sunday, March 25: Palm Sunday (10:30 a.m., regular service)
- ❖ Thursday, March 29: Passover/Seder Dinner (6:30 p.m.), RSVP with the church
- ❖ Friday, March 30: Good Friday (7:30 p.m.)
- ❖ Sunday, April 1: Easter Sunday (10:30 a.m., regular service)

St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Call 703-356-4902 or visit www.stjohnsmclean.org.

- ❖ Sunday, March 25: Palm Sunday (7:45, 9, 11:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist)
- ❖ Monday and Tuesday, March 26 and 27: 6:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist
- ❖ Wednesday, March 28: 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist and Healing Service
- ❖ Maundy Thursday, March 29: 5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Foot Washing in service designed for children and 7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist and Stripping of the Altar with music and choir

Debate

FROM PAGE 14

feet, as he received a standing ovation.

Barak was at the meeting of District 10 candidates because he was invited to the meeting by eMgage, a family of civic and political institutions dedicated to strengthening the engagement of Muslim Americans in the civic and political process. They advocate voter engagement, issue advocacy, and political activity.

THE FORUM was sponsored by organizations who represent voters with an interest in foreign policy: J Street; NIAC Action (NIAC Action is a grassroots, civic action organization committed to advancing peace and championing the priorities of the Iranian-American community); the AAPI Victory Fund, (the first Super PAC of its kind, the fund is focused on mobilizing Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) eligible voters and moving them to the ballot box); Foreign Policy in America (FPIA), a grassroots non-partisan 501c4 organization, launched in 2017 to champion a strong, principled foreign policy; Emgage Foundation; and the Council for a Livable World, which for more than 50 years, has been advocating for a more principled approach to U.S. national security and foreign policy.

For more information about Emgage Foundation, see www.emgageusa.org or www.emgageaction.org; for more about J Street, see www.jstreet.org; for more about NIAC Action see www.NIACaction.org, for more about A Council for a Livable World, see www.livableworld.org, for more about a Foreign Policy for America, see www.fp4america.org; for more information about the candidates, see www.alisonforvirginia.com, www.lindseyforcongress.com, www.helmerforcongress.com, or www.jenniferwexton.com.

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Almost Exactly Four Days ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... was the length of time during which we were powerless a few weeks back when the wind nearly brought down the house; yet it was no laughing matter. I might have written this column sooner but until Tuesday, March 6 – when the power finally came back on, we were semi-frozen to the bone. The old-fashioned thermostat in our living room indicated 42 degrees at its most frigid.

Aside from the obvious physical discomfort – made a bit more bearable while wearing hats, gloves, coats and scarfs – inside, the toll the cold took on my mental acuity was much less manageable. My brain still worked, but not overtime. It was, to invoke a “Star Trek” reference: “On impulse power,” somewhere between barely functioning and imminent danger.

This power outage was the most significant we had experienced at “Belly Acres” in the 26 years since we took ownership in late May 1992. And though this four-day non-sojourn was difficult, it was for us not a return down power-outage lane. We have been lucky in our time here; very little has upset the apple cart. Considering the hundreds of trees that surround our house, and the many thuds they all made as they fell and hit the ground that extremely late Friday night/early Saturday morning, the miracle is that not one of them hit the house, or either of our two cars parked in the driveway.

I wouldn't say I woke up in the morning to find our house relatively unscathed because as of 3:30 a.m. when I felt the house shudder for the first time, I never was able to fall back asleep as I kept bracing myself for incoming trees and limbs. Given the potential damage and hassle a direct hit likely would have caused, a power outage seemed a minor inconvenience, all things considered.

As it happened, when the power came back on, I was not at home. I was en route to the Glenmont Metro station in Wheaton to pick up Dina. When I came to a stop at “Kiss and Ride,” I looked at my cell phone and noticed a “missed call” from one of my neighbors. I immediately called back and soon heard my neighbor, Helene, singing “We're in heaven, ...,” with the explanation – not in verse – that power had returned to New Birmingham Manor (the official name of our 10-home dead-end street). BG&E, our utility company, had finally come by to cut/trim the tree that had been uprooted in the storm and fallen across the power line which electrifies our neighborhood.

As difficult as it had been for some of us, it had not been nearly as difficult for the four neighbors who had generators and thus were prepared and able to keep the lights on and the heat circulating. One of whom was kind enough to call around the neighborhood and offer hot showers as well as refrigerator and freezer storage to anyone interested. Given that the previous week was a post-chemotherapy week for me when I'm not eating much and shopping at supermarkets even less, we had minimal food in the freezer – all of which ended up being a loss, and a bit less than usual in the refrigerator which, after putting the contents into two coolers filled with ice, ended up being a gain.

Oddly enough, I haven't re-inventoried the refrigerator/freezer as yet. I don't know if I'm being paranoid or just plain lazy, but I haven't felt inclined to stop and shop, not even at the Giant. I imagine the feeling will pass because after eating out every night; some fast, some slow, over the last week or so, I'm probably way over our imaginary budget and way under prepared for the next go around. But as is often heard on basketball courts on playgrounds all over America: “No harm. No foul.”

The four days without power weren't particularly pleasant but we survived the ordeal nonetheless and may have even learned something in the process: our long underwear still fits.

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



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