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# Reston CONNECTION

Edna Turnblad (played by Ireland DiBacco) and cast of Langston Hughes Middle production of 'Hairspray JR' in April.

## 'Hairspray JR' at Langston Hughes Middle

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8

'Celebrating the  
Magic of Giving Back'

NEWS, PAGE 3

Remembering and  
Honoring Nabra Hassanen

NEWS, PAGE 4

WELLBEING

PAGE 7

PHOTO BY KIMBERLY BERRY OPINION, PAGE 12 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10





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## ‘Comcast Cares Day’ Celebrated

On Wednesday, April 18, volunteers from Comcast gathered at the Washington, D.C. Ronald McDonald House for a day of volunteering as part of the 2018 Comcast Cares Day. Comcast volunteers cooked meals and desserts for families staying in the house and spent time organizing supplies, doing yardwork and cleaning up the outside of the facility. The Ronald McDonald House provides a ‘home-away-from-home’ for families that have sick children receiving medical treatment at local hospitals. Comcast Cares Day, which takes place each April during National Volunteer Month, is Comcast NBC Universal’s companywide celebration of their year-round commitment to service and the nation’s largest single-day corporate volunteer effort in the country.



## WEEK IN RESTON

# Local History: Talk on Marketing of a New Town Reston

Reston native and veteran graphic designer Chris Rooney will present a talk on the print advertising campaigns of Reston during its first decade and how they relate to the creative revolution of Madison Avenue in the 1960s. Advertisements that originally ran in the Washington Post and Washington Evening Star reveal a wealth of insights on the new town as it sought to define itself to D.C. area readers – those same readers needed to populate Reston as well as businesses willing to relocate or set up shop in what was formerly wooded farmland in the outer suburbs of Virginia.

The event will take place Thursday, May 10 at 7 p.m. at Reston Community Center (RCC) Lake Anne Jo Ann

Rose Gallery.

Programs of the Reston Historic Trust & Museum are supported in part by Reston Community Center.

Curated from over 70 newspaper advertisements, the talk will examine them in chronological order from the initial teaser ads in 1963 when construction of the Reston’s first village center began to 1971 when the new town’s population reached its first 10,000 residents. The event will be capped off with the presentation of leave-behind book to the Reston Historic Trust & Museum that displays all of the presented advertisements, most of which have not seen the light of day in over fifty years. For details, visit <https://www.restonmuseum.org/programs>.



## ‘Celebrating the Magic of Giving Back’

**Some 144 individuals and groups honored at Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards.**

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

About 400 people attended the 26th annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards on Friday, April 27, at the Waterford in Springfield where some 144 individuals and groups were honored. With the theme “Once Upon a Volunteer, Celebrating the Magic of Giving Back,” the breakfast included the “Who’s Who” of Fairfax County’s leaders in business, education, government and nonprofits. It was sponsored by Volunteer Fairfax, members of the Board of Su-

pervisors and Chairman Sharon Bulova. The volunteers, who do everything from helping with technology mentoring, supporting at-risk seniors and working to combat homelessness, gave a total of 328,760 hours of service worth \$7.9 million in support of the Fairfax County community. Peggy Fox, Virginia Bureau Chief at WUSA9/CBS affiliate, served as event emcee.

Many different awards were given out, including 2018 Benchmark Awards for volunteering 100, 250, 500, or 1,000 hours; 2018 Community Champions who were selected by the Board of Supervisors honoring a volunteer in their districts who was

dedicated to improving life in the county and beyond; and 2018 Competitive Awards for youth, adult, and seniors in individuals and groups.

“Today is all about recognizing the wonderful volunteers we have in Fairfax County,” said Elise Neil Bengtson, CEO of Volunteer Fairfax. “We’re giving them a platform so the county can understand better where volunteers fill gaps and meet the needs of the community and nonprofits at the same time. Without volunteers, we could not get everything done that we do. We have a tremendous wealth of experience and education in this area so even when you’re older and retired, you can do amazing things and feel good and stay energized in this county and be an active participant.”

Added Rick Garza, Volunteer Fairfax board president: “This is a signature event

for Volunteer Fairfax and Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax to just honor so many people who devote their time outside of their working hours helping others, helping our community be a better place.”

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, who offered a Fairfax County Proclamation to Volunteer Fairfax, which was established in 1975, added: “Fairfax County has a unique culture and that includes volunteerism through the roof ... We would not be able to do as much as we do with volunteers if we didn’t have an organizational body pulling people together, connecting people and making volunteerism happen. Congratulations Volunteer Fairfax and thank you so much for everything you do for our community.”

For more on Volunteer Fairfax, visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

### County Residents Named Community Champion

The following citizen volunteers from the area were chosen by members of the Board of Supervisors from each of their districts as a Community Champion. This award recognizes volunteers who are committed to improving Fairfax County through service that fulfills or addresses a pressing community need.

**May Bernhardt** is an active supporter of the community not only as an individual but also through her small business, Mayflowers. Over the years, her personal creations have added an element of graciousness and style to organizations fortunate enough to receive her floral creations. Among her many philanthropic activities, she demonstrated her commitment to raise support and funds when she and her staff joined the Cornerstones planning committee to end

**William “Ed” Pickens** is Dranesville District’s outdoor volunteer. If it involves trails, beautification, or stream cleanups, he is the man to ask and the man to get the work done. Each year, he has provided hundreds of volunteer hours involving work with the Fairfax County Park Authority to design, build, and maintain two natural surface trails, Pimmit Run and Scotts Run, as well as initiate major improvements on the Cross-County Trail. In addition to managing other volunteers, he identified and coordinated over 50 trail projects with the Boy Scouts and supervised over 40 Eagle Scout projects, serving as a mentor to those who work beside him. Anyone who enjoys hiking along the many trails in Fairfax County reaps the benefits of his multi-year efforts to expand and maintain the county’s trail network. From ardent hikers to casual walkers, every trail user gets a safer and more enhanced experience as a result of his efforts.

“Mr. Pickens is not a person who seeks



**Supervisor Cathy Hudgins honors May Bernhardt, Hunter Mill District.**

homelessness. With her in-kind donations of her professional goods and services, she continues to support nonprofit organizations – exemplifying the Reston spirit of philanthropy “live, work, play, and serve.”

District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins said, “The growth of a community lays on the compassionate actions of its members. May is a true example of how individuals can make a difference by selflessly giving their time and talents.”



**Supervisor John Foust honors William Pickens, Dranesville District.**

acknowledgement of his contributions to our community. Instead, in his quiet and patient way, he performs yeoman’s work to improve the county’s trail network. His work with Eagle Scout candidates on trail projects is inspirational and encourages civic engagement,” said District Supervisor John Foust.

The **PRS CrisisLink’s CareRing** program assists vulnerable older adults in maintaining independence and community connections by increasing mental and social well-being. Through scheduled calls daily or several times throughout the week, CareRing Volunteers phone clients for social support while also assessing any risk of depression or cognitive decline. These volunteers build trusted and healthy social relationships with clients who may be at risk of isolation. The volunteers embrace clients’ thoughts and feelings, making sure they know someone cares about them and that they are not alone. In 2017, CareRing volunteers served over 1,000 clients, handled over 35,000 calls, and exchanged over 33,000 text messages. The impact of this

The **Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program is a Citizen Corps volunteer program managed under the auspices of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. The CERT program prepares ordinary citizens to safely help themselves, their families, and their communities during emergencies. They also provide emergency preparedness and public safety related services on an ongoing basis. Over the last year, 694 active CERT volunteers improved the county’s overall emergency response posture through a variety of trainings while also providing a multitude of emergency preparedness and public safety related services. In addition, hundreds of volunteers applied their skills to support community activities and events such as lost child assistance and traffic management. CERT members attended 47 outreach events across the county, informing approximately 7,653 residents about opportunities and activities to better equip them-



**Adult Volunteer Group: PRS CrisisLink’s CareRing volunteers with Board Chairman Sharon Bulova.**

group is best described by a CrisisLink client whose letter to volunteers read, “I love when you call me to see how I am doing. It cheers me up and gets me going for the day. I tell you with all my heart and soul, I will never forget your kindness and love.”



**Fairfax County Government Volunteer Program: Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) with Board Chairman Sharon Bulova.**

selves, their families, and their neighbors in the event of an emergency.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Volunteer Liaison Jeffery Katz said, “Fairfax County’s CERT program is a prime example of ‘Neighbors helping Neighbors.’ 2017 was another year of unprecedented growth and innovation during which our CERTs further improved our County’s disaster preparedness.”



# Remembering and Honoring Nabra Hassanen

**‘Being human means having a heart, toward any race or religion,’ said 18-year-old Abdel-Latif of Palestine.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

It’s been almost one year since 17-year-old South Lakes High school student, Nabra Hassanen of Reston left the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) mosque after a Ramadan prayer service with a large group of friends early in the morning of June 18.

She died shortly after, in what police say was an extension of road rage but some community members say was an assault fueled by bias against Muslims.

As the anniversary of Hassanen’s death nears, on Saturday, April 28, 2018, an event was held at the Reston Community Center to honor her life. The non-profit organization Pious Projects organized it with Reston community members.

A spokesperson for Pious Projects, Jumana attended the event. She had been working with Hassanen’s father and with other families helping them work through losses.

“I am...trying to guide them through their heart-break and bring them something positive in the end,” Jumana said. To honor Hassanen, Pious Projects and the community had made a documentary to commemorate her, which screened at the event. They also set up an online campaign where individuals could donate funds to help build wells and a mosque in Hassanen’s name in Mali, Africa.

As the center filled with people, two teens agreed to tell why they came that day. Danya Abdel-Latif, 18, of Palestine said, “For me, it’s more than just showing up here. It’s about showing support for anyone. Not just because Nabra was a Muslim, but what the event represents - being human.” Abdel-Latif took a moment and gathered her thoughts. “Being human means having a heart, toward any race or religion.”

Seated next to Abdel-Latif was Nura Behgoman, 16, of Afghanistan, along with her mother. Behgoman is a student at Herndon High School. Asked why she came that day, on a beautiful sunny Saturday, Behgoman replied, “The sun is out for Nabra.”

Behgoman then paused and said, “When it first happened, it was a big shock for the community, and in a way, it brought us closer. It was definitely hard at first. You always hear about things happening, but you never expect it to happen to someone in your own community.

“It’s important we are all here to show support for Nabra and her family and friends, because, in Islam, everyone is supposed to be there for everyone,” said Behgoman. “No matter the race, gender or religion.”



**Left, Nura Behgoman, 16, of Afghanistan and a student at Herndon High School and Danya Abdel-Latif, 18, of Palestine and a student at Park View High School, attended the event to honor Nabra Hassanen’s life and support her family as the anniversary of her tragic killing nears. ‘You never expect it to happen to someone in your community,’ said Behgoman.**

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



**Community members and Jumana, pictured, of the nonprofit organization Pious Projects helped organize the event, which included the screening of a documentary to commemorate Nabra Hassanen.**



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Last weekend, Scrawl Books hosted event with author, Jesse J. Holland.**

## Scrawl Books Proves Small Business Makes a Big Impact

On the eve of Small Business Week, Scrawl Books celebrated Independent Bookstore Day with author Jesse J. Holland, signing advance paperback copies of his sold-out novel, *Who is the Black Panther?*. It was an exclusive opportunity for Reston, and the store’s third author visit that day.

Since opening in Reston Town Center in November 2016, Scrawl has hosted scores of events with authors, performers and community groups. It also occupies a Pop-Up at the Wiehle-Reston Metro station.

“Independent bookstores play a unique role,” said store owner, Rachel Wood. “We are part of the community we serve, and connected to our customers through schools, neighborhoods and common experiences. Our business is built on creating connections and responding to community interests.”

Wood spent more than 20 years as a librarian and collec-

tion development specialist, forging relationships with authors and publishers. Today, the bookstore enjoys frequent visits from best-selling writers like Holland and Newbery-Award winner, Kwame Alexander. Alexander launched his collaborative novel, *Solo*, at Scrawl and ensured the store would be a priority stop on his recent book tour.

Scrawl’s schedule includes book launch parties, discussions and signings with well-known authors like L. M. Elliott, Erin Teagan and Jessica Spotswood; workshops; and fundraisers for local schools and organizations. The store posts “Staff Picks,” book reviews and recommendations that customers often commend.

“I’m happy to see Reston gain recognition as a place that embraces books and reading,” Wood said. “I’m grateful for the support Scrawl has received from the publishing community, as well as our local readers and writers.”





PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS

Almost 2,000 people, including 900 singers, packed Hayfield Secondary School for the 46th annual All-County Chorale Festival.

## Do-Re-Me SING!

Voices ring for All County Choral Festival.

**T**he young singers have been honing their voices for months, singing in large and small groups every week since January.

On Saturday, they finally got the chance to showcase their work, as nearly 900 sixth-grade singers — hand-picked by their elementary school's music teachers for their vocal talent — sang together at Hayfield Secondary School for the 46th annual All-County Choral Festival.

"It is truly an honor for the students performing today to be a member of this select group of vocalists," said Kelly M. Harbison, president of the Fairfax General Music Educators Association and a music educator at Canterbury Woods Elementary School.

Led by guest conductor Dr. Jamie Hillman, the students sang a variety of music — from George Handel's classic "Sing for Joy!" to Joan Varner's "When I Am Silent," a tribute to young Holocaust victims.

The song, and the voices of 900 sopranos, moved many in the audience to tears.

"These young singers were truly amazing,"

said Hillman, who previously taught music at Phillips Academy and Boston University.

"They've only had one day to practice as a complete group, and they came together flawlessly. Their energy and enthusiasm was inspiring."

In addition to the 900 singers, Hayfield's auditorium was packed with twice as many family members, including School Board members, school principals and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott Brabrand.

"I told parents 'prepare to be wowed by these singers.' I think we were all blown away by the talent and organization it took to accomplish this," Brabrand said.

Organization was key as music teachers used songs and audience sing-offs to quickly reunite singers with their families and move 2,000 people out of the auditorium in under 15 minutes.

"The festival was a rousing success at every level. We're all proud of these students and our music teachers for this festival," Brabrand said.

— VICTORIA ROSS



Nearly 900 sixth-grade singers — hand-picked by their elementary school's music teachers for their vocal talent — sang together at Hayfield Secondary School.

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May 9 is Bike to School Day.  
Here are some safety tips to remember.

- Allow 3 feet when passing a cyclist. Motorists may legally cross the double yellow line if the oncoming lane is clear.
- Be careful at intersections. Look both ways for people biking and walking before making your turn.
- After parking, look over your left shoulder for approaching cyclists before opening your car door.

Join us for the National Bike Challenge - May 1-31  
Bike to School Day - May 9 and  
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The Navy Junior ROTC Color Guard of Herndon High School presents the colors at the Home Dedication Ceremony for service member Captain Gavin White who was injured in combat.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Home at last and with a smile. When Captain Gavin White realized his house had become an obstacle course of constant frustrations, he reached out to the Semper Fi Fund for guidance. On the table behind Captain White and his wife, Karissa rests a beam from the south tower of the World Trade Center, a gift from the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Tower Foundation.

# Captain White Comes Home

Local businesses help renovate Herndon home for catastrophically injured service member.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

One day in 2013, while Captain Gavin White led a patrol in Afghanistan looking for improvised explosive devices, one found him. With that one step, White's life and the life of his wife, Karissa, changed forever. He remembers hearing the blast and calling out to his combined Afghan U.S. Patrol, "Who's hit?" Then hearing the words, "You are, Sir."

Captain White sustained catastrophic injuries. His right leg eventually was amputated; he lost the use of his left leg. White suffered chronic pain and other injuries, and he endured sixty surgeries. He would try to walk the hospital halls, White recalled, "...through grinding teeth and tears of pain and frustration."

White grew stronger, and with his wife, they moved into a house in Herndon, only to realize it was an obstacle course of unending frustration for him.

"Problems began to appear in my house," said White who sat in a wheelchair outside of it, up on a temporary stage. Karissa sat beside him. Behind White, a 30-foot long American flag flew, suspended on a long wire. The flag shielded the view of the house. "I knew I needed help, and had to ask for it."

**THIS DAY**, April 12, 2018, was the Home Dedication Ceremony. In front of White, a crowd of more than 100 people stood silently. The night before, the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation Building for America's Bravest program had put the finishing touches on their four-month renovation.



Fairfax County Police Motorcycle Patrol officers escort Captain Gavin White and his wife Karissa to their newly renovated 'smart home' in Herndon.

tion of the Whites' home in Herndon. It was now a "smart home" for Captain Gavin White and his wife due to the efforts of many businesses such as the Reston Home Depot, Wolf Furniture, J.C. Penneys and more.

Before the renovation, White could not reach the cupboards; the narrow hallways were challenging to maneuver through in his wheelchair. White could not use the stove with any ease. "At one point, every time I wanted to use the bathroom, I had

to get out of my chair to the floor and walk on my hands to get to the toilet."

"I reached out to the Semper Fi Fund," said White as he spoke to the crowd. He continued: "People need a place where they can feel comfortable, where they can relax and where they can be at ease. For most people, it's their home. Until today, this was just a house where I lived. Now I feel like it's my home."

The Semper Fi Fund had put White in touch with the New York nonprofit organi-



Captain Gavin White unsuccessfully tries not to tear up as he and his wife Karissa enter the front door of their home and see it for the first time since they left it four months earlier.

zation, Stephen Siller Tunnels to Towers Foundation. The organization's stated mission is to "Honor the sacrifice of firefighter Stephen Siller who laid down his life to save others on September 11, 2001."

On hand at the Dedication Ceremony stood Stephanie Ferguson of the Semper Fi Fund. Ferguson said, "We are the land of the free because of you Captain Gavin White."

Frank Seller told the crowd, how his

SEE CAPTAIN, PAGE 9

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# Erasing the Stigma

Mental Health advocates work to tear down barriers to treatment.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**I**t was during college when Laura Greenstein began to notice that something was not quite right. “I noticed that things that were creating anxiety on a daily basis, they weren’t just situational,” she said. “My anxiety was grabbing onto anything that it could. If I was running late, I would start to panic. Any small thing became a big issue.”

“My mother has always been supportive, but when [my anxiety] got to a certain point some close friends and family began to stigmatize it,” said Greenstein, who now works for the National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) in Arlington. “They would say, ‘You’re not doing enough.’ It was difficult to feel that I wasn’t being fully accepted.”

After months of therapy and recent session with a psychiatrist who prescribed medication, Greenstein said that she is beginning to feel some relief. She even began blogging about her experience. “This was my first time sharing my story,” she said. “It’s been a really validating process. Being open can really improve your outlook.”

During May, Mental Health Awareness Month, Greenstein and other mental health advocates are sharing the ways in which negative perceptions about mental illnesses can impact those who suffer from it. NAMI

reports that approximately 1 in 5 adults and children in the United States are experiencing mental illness in a given year. Only 41 percent of those adults received mental health treatment, while slightly more than half of children aged 8-15 received those services. One of the roadblocks to treatment, say mental health professionals, is the stigma surrounding mental health.

“Micro-aggressions towards individuals with mental illness are very common, such as assuming that someone with a mental illness is inferior, stupid, or not in control of their own behaviors,” said Jessica McLaughlin, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at Montgomery College. “Because of our society’s misperceptions of mental illness, many individuals struggling with mental health problems feel ashamed and isolated. They may even feel like it is not appropriate to seek help. “[And] being on the receiving end of these hurtful comments and beliefs actually worsens symptoms.”

With a theme of “Cure Stigma,” NAMI activists are encouraging people to educate themselves and eradicate the stigma which can be a roadblock to those who suffer from mental illness to get the treatment they need. They were afraid of being labeled, so they suffered in silence. This is particularly true with teenagers and preteens, advises Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D., a child psychologist

who specializes in anxiety disorders. “A mental illness stigma may cause a teen or pre-teen to be hesitant to admit to her or himself that they are having a mental health problem, to share with a parent, teacher, or pediatrician about their problem, and to seek mental health treatment,” she said.

The stigma surrounding mental illness is an important issue that often goes unrecognized, says McLaughlin. “Individuals with mental illness face both overt and covert discrimination,” she said. “For example, there is an assumption that people with mental illness are violent or crazy, which is not true. However, our belief in these myths can affect someone’s ability to find employment or obtain housing.”

“Education is a powerful tool in combating mental health stigma, and community-wide, mental health awareness campaigns are helpful,” added Isenberg. “Individually, kids often search online to check out what their symptoms mean. Education from credible websites, and those of mental health organizations often provide clarity and guidance for those seeking help.”

Allowing those who might be experiencing symptoms of a mental illness to speak freely about their condition without fear of judgment can remove barriers to treatment advises McLaughlin. “That means asking how we can help, listening with an open mind, and being nonjudgmental,” she said.

Sometimes it can be a tremendous help just to let someone know that they have someone to lean on and that they are not alone.”

People can also fight the stigma of mental illness by being accepting and supportive of people who are experiencing mental health issues, and by modeling this acceptance for their children, suggests Isenberg. “Employers can encourage employees to use mental health days as needed, and to permit longer lunch hours or flexible dismissal or arrival at times to accommodate therapy appointments,” she said. “Similarly, schools can work with families to allow kids to use free periods, lunch periods, etc. to attend therapy when an after-school time is not available and the need for treatment is significant.”

A family’s attitude about the mentally ill can affect a child’s willingness to ask for help, advises Isenberg. “A child who comes from a family that does not consider mental health issues to be real or problematic may be reluctant to share with her or his parents,” she said. “Similarly, kids whose friends stigmatize mental health issues, or kids who don’t talk much about personal issues with friends, are often unsure about sharing with their friends. On the contrary, kids who believe their families and friends will be sensitive and supportive to them are more likely to be open with them about any concerns they are having.”

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

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# ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

**Exhibit: This and That.** Through May 7, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily at The Artists' Undertaking Gallery, 309 Mill St. in Historic Occoquan. "This and That." an features copper work by Anne Jordan of Fairfax; oil paintings by Steve Myles of Reston; and turned wood by Greg Wandless of Fairfax. Meet the artists, Saturday, April 14, 1-5 p.m. Call 703-494-0584 or visit [www.theartistsundertaking.com](http://www.theartistsundertaking.com).

### "Thoroughly Modern Millie."

Through May 12 at Reston Community Center's CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. May 4, 5, 6\*, 11, 12, 2018. Curtain time is 8 p.m. except for May 6 which are matinees with a 2 p.m. curtain. Cost is \$27/adults; \$23 students/seniors. Visit [restonplayers.org](http://restonplayers.org).

**Reston Farmers Market.** Open Saturdays, through Dec. 1, 8 a.m.-noon at 1609 Washington Plaza N., Reston. Fairfax County Park Authority markets are strictly producer-only meaning that vendors must grow or make from scratch everything they bring to market. Call 703-642-0128 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets).

**Homegrown Yoga.** Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Alison Adams is bringing Homegrown Yoga to ArtSpace Herndon. All levels welcome. Drop in and take a class. \$25 two week unlimited pass or drop-in available. [www.homegrownpoweryoga.com](http://www.homegrownpoweryoga.com)

**All-comers' Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running.** Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. Call 703-689-0999 [potomacriverrunning.com](http://potomacriverrunning.com).

## MAY 1-JUNE 30

**Twitterpated: Animated Adoration at ArtInsights.** At ArtInsights, 11921 Freedom Drive, Reston. ArtInsights celebrates Devoted Couples of Disney, with images of Lady and Tramp, Pongo and Perdita, Mickey and Minnie, Thumper and Miss Bunny, Belle and The Beast, and more, including new releases by official Disney concept and production artists.

Call 703-478-0778 or visit [artinsights.com](http://artinsights.com).

## THURSDAY-FRIDAY/MAY 3-4

**Big Truck Days.** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday and 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Friday. At the Public Works Maintenance Complex, 1479 Sterling Road, Herndon. The Town of Herndon's Department of Public Works hosts its annual "Big Truck Days," an opportunity for children to see the town's big trucks and heavy equipment on display. Free; bring non-perishable food donations. [www.herndon-va.gov/PublicWorks](http://www.herndon-va.gov/PublicWorks) or call 703-435-6860 or via email at [public.works@herndon-va.gov](mailto:public.works@herndon-va.gov).

## FRIDAY/MAY 4

**TGIF: Free Fridays.** 5-7 p.m. at GRACE, Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., #103, Reston. Creative Fun at GRACE. Visit [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com) or call 703-476-4500.

**Baby & Me (Yoga).** 10:30 a.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Bring your baby and reap benefits from this nurturing yoga workshop designed for the two of you. Age 6 weeks to 15 months with adult. Call 703-689-2700.



Langston Hughes Middle School students presented their production of 'Hairspray JR.' in April.

## Langston Hughes Students Present 'Hairspray JR'

Hairdos and excitement were on the rise and Reston was shaking and shimmying when local students at Langston Hughes Middle School performed 'Hairspray JR.' The family-friendly show captured the spirit and turmoil of 1962 Baltimore through laughter, dance, romance, and tuneful songs.

"Hairspray JR." is a dynamic musical with an important message: that acceptance comes in all shapes, sizes, and nationali-

ties. Through their production the students explored ideas like civil rights and discrimination in the context of a period of tremendous social and historical significance in the United States.

The story follows Tracy Turnblad (played by Claire Callaway), a full-figured girl with big hair and a big heart, who has only one passion – to dance. When her determination and rock 'n roll moves land her a spot on a local television dance program, she is transformed from



Corny Collins played by Nathan Miller and the Council Members singing 'The Nicest Kids in Town.'



Tracy Turnblad (played by Claire Callaway) singing "Good morning, Baltimore!"

an outsider to an irrepressible teen celebrity. This trendsetter in dance and fashion uses her fame to win the affections of heartthrob Link Larkin (played by Michael Norford), challenges the program's reigning princess Amber (played by Danielle Kessler), and rallies against racial segregation.

Director: Cheryl Dewenter; Musical Director — Sarah Milhoan, Choreographers — Grace Yakubisin and Karina Yakubisin.

—KIMBERLY BERRY

## Herndon Social Justice Concert Christian Perez Chamber Ensemble.

1-3 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Two singer songwriters fiercely represent equality and everything they stand for through their music and lyrics. \$20. Visit [artspaceherndon.org](http://artspaceherndon.org).

**HHS Band Benefit Concert.** 6 p.m. at Herndon Town Green, 777 Lynn St., Herndon. Hosting Normandy Kick-Off Celebration. Features live performances by "The 5:55" and more. Support their trip to Normandy to represent the USA at the 75th Anniv of D-Day. Donations accepted at entrance and [www.herndonband.org/normandy](http://www.herndonband.org/normandy).

## SUNDAY/MAY 6

**March for Babies.** 8 a.m. registration; 9 a.m. walk. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Support the March of Dimes for the health of all moms and babies with a 3-mile walk, then celebrate the efforts with lunch, DJ, and family fun. Call 571-257-2305 or visit [marchforbabies.com](http://marchforbabies.com).

**Indigo T-Shirt Dyeing.** 2-4 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. With Elizabeth Gibson. Ages 7-13; cost \$20 per student. Visit [www.artspaceherndon.org](http://www.artspaceherndon.org).

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 9

**Kendra Gives Back Party.** 6-9 p.m. at Reston Town Center, 11924 Market Street, Reston. Hosted by Herndon High School All-Night Grad Committee. Enjoy light bites and bubbly as you shop for Mother's Day Gifts. Some 20 percent of purchases will benefit the Herndon High School All-Night Grad Celebration. RSVP to [gina.gallagher1@verizon.net](mailto:gina.gallagher1@verizon.net).

**Dinner Lecture on Stress.** 7-8:30 p.m. at GreenFare Organic Cafe, 408 Elden Street, Herndon. Dr. Jyothi

Rao, Integrative Physician, will discuss Stress -The Good vs The Bad," its impact on the body and the role cortisol and the adrenal glands play. Enjoy a healthy organic plant-based meal at GreenFare Organic Café in Herndon. Call 703-689-0506 for details or visit [GreenFare.com](http://GreenFare.com).

## SATURDAY/MAY 12

**Spring Farm Day.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Milk a cow or goat, hear the antique farm equipment putter, play old timey games, and enjoy crafts in a family-friendly atmosphere. Call 703-437-9101 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park).

**British Invasion: The Beatles & Beyond.** 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. at Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Rock out with The Reston Chorale and friends from the Piedmont Symphony and Rock Band to musical hits from across the pond. \$25/Adults; \$20/Seniors; Free/Youth and Active Duty Military. Tickets at [www.restonchorale.org](http://www.restonchorale.org) and 703-476-4500, ext. 3.

## SUNDAY/MAY 13

**Exercise with Athleta.** 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Reston Town Center in the Pavilion, 11900 Market St., Reston. Free. Down Dog Yoga for Mother's Day. Call 703-668-0256 or visit [stores.athleta.net/store-4866/](http://stores.athleta.net/store-4866/).

## MONDAY/MAY 14

**Golf Tournament.** 1:30 p.m. Shotgun Start at Hidden Creek Country Club, 1711 Clubhouse Road, Reston. The 2018 Celebrate Great Falls Foundation Golf Tournament. Proceeds benefit Great Falls, Forestville and Colvin Run Elementary schools. Afternoon registration 12:15-1:15 p.m.

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 4-6

**Cinco De Mayo.** At ArtInsights, 11921 Freedom Drive, Reston. A portion of all limited-edition art and framing sales will go to animal rescue charities. Call 703-478-0778 or visit [artinsights.com](http://artinsights.com).

## SATURDAY/MAY 5

**Native Plant Sale.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Runnymede Park, 195 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. Vendors for the sale are Watermark Woods and Nature By Design. The event is sponsored by Friends of Runnymede Park. Visit [www.frpweb.org](http://www.frpweb.org).

## SING! Books with Miss Emily.

10:30 a.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Join Miss Emily for singing storytime with illustrated songs. Cosponsored by the Friends of the Reston Regional Library. Age 2-5 with adult. No registration required. Call 703-689-2700.

**Pet Fiesta! Exhibition and Pet Adoption.** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Reston Town Center Pavillion. Super pet adoption, paws-ively fun pet contests and fashion show, exhibitors of pet resources, pet rescue and non-profit groups. Presented by and benefiting GoodDogz.org. All on-leash pets welcome. Free admission, rain or shine. Visit the website [petfiesta.org](http://petfiesta.org).

**Author Event.** 11 a.m. at Scrawl Books, Reston Town Center, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Author and dog lover, Maria Gianferrari celebrates Reston Town Center's "Pet Fiesta!" with Scrawl Books. The author will read from "Hello, Good Bye Dog," lead a craft and share stories from her Penny and Jelly series about a dynamic kid-dog duo who do everything together. Visit [www.scrawlbooks.com](http://www.scrawlbooks.com).

Foursome - \$600; Single Golfer - \$175. Visit [www.greatfallsgolf.org](http://www.greatfallsgolf.org).

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 18-20

**Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. each day at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. More than 200 artists will show off their works. Presented by GRACE - Greater Reston Arts Center. Admission \$5/adults. Free garage parking. Visit [northernvirginiafineartsfestival.org](http://northernvirginiafineartsfestival.org).

## SATURDAY/MAY 19

**Kids in the Park.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Claude Moore Recreation & Community Center, 46105 Loudoun Park Lane, Sterling; Claude Moore Park, 21544 Old Vestal's Gap Road, Sterling; and Heritage Farm Museum, 21668 Heritage Farm Lane, Sterling. Celebrate National Kids to Park Day, a fun-filled day including a scavenger hunt at all three sites, farm tour, moonbounces, arts and crafts, games, food trucks and more. Free admission. Call 571-258-3600

## SUNDAY/MAY 20

**Red Shoe 5K Run & Walk.** at Dulles Station in Herndon. The family-friendly event will feature a timed 5K course suited for both runners and walkers (all competition levels welcome), and a Kid's Fun Run for kids 8 years and younger. Sponsored by Ronald McDonald House Charities. Registration fees are \$35 for Adult 5K registration, and \$25 for Kid's Fun Run (8 and under); \$40 on race day. Visit [www.RedShoe5k.org](http://www.RedShoe5k.org).  
**Sunday Spring Tea Fundraiser.** 2-4 p.m. at Crowne Plaza, 2200 Centreville Road, Herndon. Arts Herndon Fundraiser to Benefit Arts Herndon's scholarships and programming. Silent Auction Baskets, live music, door prizes and more. Register at [artspaceherndon.org](http://artspaceherndon.org).





**Frank Siller, older brother of Stephen Siller, the New York firefighter who lost life helping others in the south tower of the World Trade Center on 9/11, tells how Stephen lived the guiding words he attributed to St. Francis, Assisi: "While we have time, let's do good."**



**Jason Alexander, Store Manager of the local Reston Home Depot looks toward Captain Gavin White and thanks him for his service and sacrifice for the country.**

PHOTO BY MERICA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

## Captain White Comes Home

FROM PAGE 6

younger brother Stephen had heard over his scanner of a plane hitting the north tower of the World Trade Center. Stephen returned to the Brooklyn's Squad 1 fire station, grabbed his 60-pound backpack full of gear and drove his truck to the entrance of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, but it was closed. He strapped the backpack on and raced on foot through the tunnel to get to the World Trade Center. Stephen entered the south tower and was never seen again.

Siller said his brother lived by the guiding words attributed to St. Francis Assisi: "While we have time, let's do good."

Siller explained the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation is a nonprofit organization, which honors "military and first responders who continue to make the supreme sacrifice of life and limb for our country."

The organization performs their service through their Building for America's Bravest program and with the support of many other organizations and program sponsors, such as those here that day, among them the Reston Home Depot through their Home Depot Foundation, JC Penney, Wolf Furniture and more. Tunnel to Towers builds mortgage-free smart homes for the most catastrophically injured service members.

The Reston Home Depot was one of the many program support-

ers. Jason Alexander, Store Manager of the Reston Home Depot, thanked Captain Gavin White for his service to the country. Alexander explained the Home Depot Foundation and Team Depot, their strong army of associate volunteers, are dedicated to serving veterans and was proud to support the project's needs. Alexander said Home Depot Foundation had improved 37,000 veteran homes and facilities since 2011, promised to give a quarter of a billion dollars for veteran-related causes by 2020, and \$50 million is committed to training 20,000 tradespeople by 2028.

**AFTER THE REMARKS**, the Whites were ready to see their new home, but not before being presented a gift by the Stephen Siller Tunnels to Towers Foundation in gratitude for White's service and sacrifice.

In Frank Sillers' hands rested a piece of blackened steel beam from the south tower of the World Trade Center. "It holds the spirit and souls of so many. We entrust it to you, Captain Gavin White," said Seller adding the words, "Who better?"

On the curb, a specially equipped van donated by GMC waited for White. Volunteers turned toward the ropes. They lowered the flag, unveiling the renovation. Welcome, Captain Gavin White. You are home.

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**NEWS**

**Girl Scouts Exhibit  
at SpringFest  
Earth Day Event**

The fourth-grade Girl Scout troop 3173 exhibited at Fairfax County's annual SpringFest Earth Day event. They were the youngest exhibitors. The girls are residents of Oakton and Fairfax, and attend Waples Mill and Hunters Woods ES.

These Girl Scouts have been working diligently to spread the word about plastic water bottles and the pollution they cause in the ocean.

After learning that plastics are expected to outweigh fish in the ocean in 2050 and that a garbage island twice the size of Texas is floating in the Pacific, Troop 3173 Girl Scouts decided to create a display to simulate the ocean of 2050 polluted by plastic bottles. As SpringFest attendees walked through the Plastic Bottle Ocean, girls explained that the average person in the US uses 173 plastic water bottles per year and only 23 percent are recycled. These fourth-grade Girl Scouts then invited people to raise their right hand to recite a verbal pledge not to use disposable, single-use water bottles and sign the pledge poster. People who signed the pledge were invited to take a Water Drop squeeze toy (stress ball) and comic books provided by Fairfax Water, and stickers and pencils made of recyclable materials provided by Clean Fairfax Council.

Many SpringFest attendees visited the exhibit including Clean Fairfax Council's Executive Director Jennifer Cole and mascots Bumblebee and Frog, all of whom signed the pledge. This Plastic Bottle Ocean display was particularly relevant and timely given this year's Earth Day theme was End Plastic Pollution.

Girl Scout troop 3173 is part of the Girl Scout Council of the



**Clean Fairfax Council's Executive Director Jennifer Cole signing the pledge not to use disposable, single-use water bottles**

PHOTOS BY SARA HOLTZ



**Many SpringFest attendees visited the exhibit including mascots Bumblebee and Frog.**

Nation's Capital (GSCNC). Clean Fairfax Council, the SpringFest organizer, educates the citizens of Fairfax County on litter prevention and control, supports the county recycling program, discourages graffiti, promotes sustainability and provides environmental edu-

cation to residents, businesses and students. Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water utility chartered by the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

— SARA HOLTZ  
GIRL SCOUT TROOP LEADER

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# BULLETIN

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

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Volunteers Needed for Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival.** At Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Greater Reston Art Center's (GRACE's) largest annual fundraiser. Draws up to 30,000 visitors and there is free garage parking all weekend. Over 500 volunteers are needed. Volunteers perform a variety of roles including setting up with the logistics crew, welcoming and booth sitting for participating artists as part of the Artist Hospitality entourage, welcoming visitors and accepting donations for GRACE as a Festival Ambassador, or helping young artists with their creations in the Family Art Park. Visit [restonarts.org/fineartsfestival](http://restonarts.org/fineartsfestival).

**The Herndon High School PTSA** is in need of a treasurer, but anyone interested in serving on the board is welcome. The HHS PTSA works to provide connections between students, teacher and parents. They offer mini-grants to teachers, scholarships and achievement awards to students as well as appreciation events for staff. Email [HerndonHSPTSA.Treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:HerndonHSPTSA.Treasurer@gmail.com)

**STEM Professionals Needed.** Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in six Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

**Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed.** Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. Mentors provide companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at 703-324-4547 or [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov)

## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

**Parent Support Partners**, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nam-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nam-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

## SATURDAY/MAY 5

**Workshop for Siblings of Children with Special Needs.** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Key Middle School, 6402 Franconia Road, Springfield. This Sibshop workshop is for 8-13-year-old siblings of children with special needs enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools. A pizza lunch will be provided. Visit [www.fcps.edu/spedconference2018](http://www.fcps.edu/spedconference2018).

**Free Sober Rides.** Saturday, May 5, 7 p.m. through Sunday, May, 6, 4 a.m. Area residents, 21 and older, may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a code in the app's "Promo" section to receive a no cost (up to \$15) safe ride home. Promo code will be posted at 5 p.m. on May 5 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com). The SoberRide code is valid for the first 1,500 Lyft users

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 9

**Pushing the Frontiers of Dyslexia.** 6-7:30 p.m. at Cortona Academy, 13505 Dulles Technology Drive, Ste 3, Herndon. Cost is \$10/ person. Monthly Dyslexia Parent Support Seminar! Neurofeedback. How does this relate to Dyslexia, and what are the applications for homework, test-taking, and studying? Visit [cortonalearning.com](http://cortonalearning.com).

## THURSDAY/MAY 10

**Open House and Public Hearing.** 5:30 p.m. at NVTA Office, 3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority has released 60 candidate projects for its inaugural FY 2018-2023 Six Year Program for public comment. The open house will start at 5:30 p.m. and the public hearing will commence following a 7 p.m. presentation. Pre-register to speak: phone: 703-642-4652; email: [TheAuthority@TheNoVaAuthority.org](mailto:TheAuthority@TheNoVaAuthority.org); or in person on May 10, 2018 from 5:30-7 p.m. Visit [www.TheNoVaAuthority.org](http://www.TheNoVaAuthority.org).

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## You Mean Next Week Tuesday?

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Today, Sunday, April 22, I am not on any real – or imagined, deadline pressure, quite different than my previous column (“You Mean Tomorrow Tuesday?”), published April 25. This column isn’t due until nine days from now, since my copy editor returns from vacation that Tuesday. And of course, since there’s no abbreviated/immediate-type deadline, and it’s a relatively quiet weekend at home (as opposed to the “triple threat” Tuesday I wrote about last week), Chino, in addition to any of our other four cats, are nowhere to be found. Certainly, they’re all sleeping. I mean, it is 12:30 pm. In fact, as I get up to investigate, Chino is sleeping on the very same chair he ended up on last week. This week however, when I have minimal deadline pressure, Chino has minimal Kenny interest. At present, he is not the least bit involved in the creative process, other than as a point of reference, that is.

And just as Chino is minding his own business – for now, I am able to mind mine and stay on task. It is so much easier to do so when my writing pad is not the exact midpoint and/or crossroads for where Chino is and for where he wants to be. Therefore, I have no excuses for not maintaining a creative flow as pen is put to paper. No cat interruptions or interference whatsoever. To quote my late father, I have no “encumbrances” – at the moment.

More so even than Chino walking right to left across my desk (and back of course). I just received an email from my oncologist, yes on the weekend, telling me that my two scans taken on Wednesday, April 18, continue to show “stable.” News, with which I’m extremely fond of writing – properly, I can live. As much as I could likewise live with tumor “shrinkage” as well, I am ALWAYS pleased when I see my new favorite word: “stable,” in any communication from my doctor. For a cancer patient still undergoing treatment – as I am, or for any cancer patient in remission, a “stable” result is hardly the problem. The problem is growth and/or movement or appearance elsewhere in the body. (For lung cancer patients, movement to the brain, which occurs in approximately 30 percent of patients, is the predominant worry. As such, I get a brain MRI regularly.)

So, no scan-result pressure. No post-chemo side-effect pressure. No newspaper and/or deadline pressure. And no cat-related pressure compounding any of the aforementioned pressures. Ergo, the ‘pressure’ is officially off. And when the ‘pressure’ is off, my creativeness is on. Though this may not be the best column I’ve ever written, it’s certainly been one with the least amount of ‘encumbrances.’

And speaking of my father, Barry, who died in in 2006, and now my mother, Celia, who died two years later, almost to the day, what I am particularly grateful for is the timing of my diagnosis/prognosis: it all happened after they had died. They never knew. My first symptom manifested four weeks after my widowed mother was laid to rest. They both know now though as I regularly update them when I visit their gravesites at the cemetery. And though the conversations are mostly one-sided, still, it brings me comfort and a peculiar sort of joy to share the details of my treatment and the miscellaneous pressures I experience, some of which I’ve mentioned and some of which I haven’t. Many of those my parents knew about, and were often topics of discussion – while they were alive.

I was lucky then and I continue to be lucky now. Great parents before and an amazingly fortunate post-cancer-diagnosis after. Whoever I have to thank: thank you.

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



## Challenges to an American Ideal

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

**“T**he current landscape of the nation has been darkened by storm clouds of hate speech, white nationalist ideology, bias-motivated violence, and rising intolerance,” according to a report of the Inclusive America Project titled *Pluralism in Peril: Challenges to an American Ideal* (Aspen Institute, 2018) sponsored by the Aspen Institute Justice and Society Program. Recently I had the pleasure of interviewing Meryl Justin Chertoff, Executive Director of The Aspen Institute Justice and Society Program, and to participate in a roundtable discussion of this issue at the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center in Sterling. The interview can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yctqwxq6>

Pluralism refers to the right of all Americans to practice their faith in freedom and security. As indicated from the quote of the Aspen Report in the opening sentence of this column, there are attacks on religious freedom from many directions and in many forms in recent years. Some even question the mean-



### COMMENTARY

ing of religious freedom in our country suggesting that they should have freedom of their religion—most often Christian religion—and not all those other practices that other people want to call religion. After all, the most extreme argue that this country was founded on a belief in God, meaning of course God as they define him or her in their religious beliefs.

A basic problem in defending American pluralism seems to me to be the ignorance on the part of some of basic constitutional protections and how they were secured. Virginia was settled as a land venture by investors who were looking for a way to make money in a colonial empire. First settlers were part of the state church of England as Anglicans or they had no religion at all. As more settlers arrived the minority religions such as Baptists started to arrive, and they objected to having part of their tax money go to the church. Religious conflict occurred as more settlers recognized an op-

portunity to free themselves from a state-imposed religion.

Soon after Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, he wrote what became known as the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, the most important piece of legislation ever passed in the Virginia legislature and I believe in any legislative body. Just as the Declaration had declared political and economic freedom from the mother country, the Statute of Religious Freedom in one sentence of more than 700 words declared in part that “no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.”

The challenges to our pluralism must be countered by our unwavering support of our own beliefs as well as the right of others to their own religious beliefs. As the report on pluralism found, “this work requires decency, sympathy, appreciative curiosity about difference, and concern for our shared beliefs.”

## Addressing Citizens’ Density Concerns

**M**y thanks to the many concerned citizens who have worked to share your thoughts regarding Reston’s future. My goal has always been and will continue to be identifying what is best for Reston and continuing Robert Simons’ vision for a “Planned Community” where people can live, work and play.

The proposed amendment to the Planned Residential Community (PRC) Zoning Ordinance for Reston that is currently under consideration is designed to implement the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan for Reston. Fairfax County’s Planning and Zoning staff is recommending that the maximum persons per acre be increased from 13 up to 16, with 16 persons being appropriate for full implementation of the Plan’s recommendations.

The plan approved in 2015 was specifically written to protect the existing stable residential communities and reinforce the preservation of Reston’s two golf courses. In addition, it provided opportunities for additional growth

in some areas planned PRC.

These potential growth areas include the Village Centers, the St. Johns Wood apartments, the retail area north of Baron Cameron where the Home Depot is located, Reston Town Center North, portions of the Reston Town Center and a few other PRC parcels located in the Transit Station Areas.

At the Feb. 13 meeting, several issues were discussed. In particular, both Reston Association (RA) and the Coalition for a Planned Reston (CPR) requested a response from Fairfax County’s planning staff to the specific recommendations contained in letters from both groups. I will acknowledge that the response was slow in coming; but a commitment was made to respond and the planning staff did so in a detailed and thoughtful manner. It is unfortunate that CPR and RA declined to meet on April 2 to discuss the staff’s response and to outline next steps and the process going forward.

As you may recall, Hunter Mill Planning Commissioner John Carter suggested that we all roll up our sleeves and work to resolve the

issues before us and it was decided that addressing key issues in small group settings would be pursued. My support for this approach has not changed. I would like to propose that we meet, as soon as possible, to establish a set meeting schedule, to have these in depth issues discussed.

Moving forward, I have asked Goldie Harrison of my staff to reach out to RA, CPR and County planning staff to schedule a meeting to discuss the process going forward, followed by work sessions with small groups focused on topics such as infrastructure implementation, transportation, schools and parks.

As was evident again this year at the Founder’s Day celebration, Reston is a special place that we all love and I am confident that we can all work together to resolve the issue of the maximum density allowed in the PRC zoned area and the concerns of the community regarding the Reston Master Plan.

CATHERINE M. HUDGINS  
SUPERVISOR (D-HUNTER MILL)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Medicaid Expansion: It’s Time

To the Editor:

The 2017 elections demonstrated that Virginians believe that individuals cannot work, take care of their families, or pursue happiness if they cannot see a doctor when they are sick. The candidates

who heard this message and ran on expanding access to healthcare, won. Those advocating for expansion are more than willing to compromise with lawmakers who may have legitimate policy concerns.

We know that 33 other states have already opted to insure their working poor. It is time that our federal tax dollars stay here in Virginia to help cover approximately 400,000 hard-working families earning up to 138 percent of the

poverty level. Making health insurance available to more Virginians is the right thing to do and the sensible thing to do. The Federal government is offering to cover no less than 90 percent of the costs of insuring Virginia’s working poor. Virginia’s hospitals are committed to covering the remaining 10 percent of the costs. Additional money flowing to Virginia under Medicaid expansion will enable the state to increase funding for

schools and other needed services. Another benefit of Medicaid expansion is the likelihood of smaller rate increases in our health insurance plans. Studies have shown that in states where more people are insured, the cost of uncompensated care drops. Yes, we will all benefit if more of us have access to healthcare. It is time to act!

Barbara Favola  
State Sen. (D-31)

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