

Great Falls CONNECTION

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner
(D) speaks at The First
Baptist Church of Vien-
na fourth annual Justice
and Legislative Sunday.

FIRST FORWARD

brethren, I do not count myself to
have apprehended, but one thing I
do, forgetting those things which are
behind and reaching forward to those
things which are ahead I press toward
the goal for the prize of the upward
call of God in Christ Jesus.
— Philippians 3:13-15

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From left: Fairfax County Public School Board member At-Large Rachna Sizemore Heizer talks with attendees at the Justice & Legislative Fair held at the First Baptist Church of Vienna.



PHOTOS BY
MERCIA HOBSON/
THE CONNECTION

Focus on Social Justice

The First Baptist Church of Vienna hosts its fourth annual Justice and Legislative Sunday.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The First Baptist Church of Vienna hosted its 4th annual Justice and Legislative Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020. The congregation opened its doors and invited legislators and members of grassroots organizations to join them for worship services. Afterward, everyone convened in the church's fellowship hall for the "Justice & Legislative Fair," one of the church's signature social justice events. The forum provided the opportunity for the congregation and guests to engage in one-on-one dialogues.

Before the 10 a.m. service started, Frank Bowers of Chantilly and Jim Biggs of Manassas helped set up the fellowship hall and considered what they wanted to ask the legislators. Bower said he planned to ask, "What are you going to do differently in 2020, than the other year of service, 2016, when you dropped the ball, and America got a king to rule over them."

Biggs considered his question. "My beef is I want to know what they are going to do to curb the incarceration rate for minorities. The district attorneys are more interested in closing cases rather than giving individuals fair trails," he said.

Upstairs in the sanctuary, two deacons waited for the legislators to arrive. They, too, considered what they would ask. Deacon Thomas E Twyman, Sr. said, "Health care is the number one issue. And affordable housing."

"I'd like the political atmosphere to turn back as it was when we had Obama, when people tried to work together to solve problems. Now it seems the new president brings out the worst in some. We need to keep our democracy. That means everybody gives in some for the greater good," said Anthony Weaver of Oak Hill.

Shortly before the service began, the legislative guests arrived. They represented all levels of government. Among them, U.S. Senator Mike Warner (D), who provided remarks during the service.

SEN. WARNER recounted the words Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr. frequently said to remind listeners of the long road ahead of them when committed to progressive politics. "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," Sen. Warner said. He told the congregation to take these words to heart when they thought about some things in the news. The senator noted that it had been fifty-two years since Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered. "So many things that Dr. King spoke about, we still need. There is still way too much of a racial wealth gap. There is still too much of a criminal justice system where my daughter is treated differently than your sons and daughters when they interact with the police," he said.

Sen. Warner added that Dr. King said he hoped there would be a day in America when his children and grandchildren would be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. "And, if there is ever a time when in our nation, we need to be judging our leaders by the content of their character, it is now. The church teaches us to respect each other, to be truthful, to treat people, even if we disagree, with respect. I hope and pray that sometimes the individual who currently lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue might take those words to heart as well. These are challenging times in our nation. I want to thank our Lieutenant Governor and legislators. Even though we may be struggling in Washington, we are moving many things forward in Richmond," said Sen. Warner.

Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, Justin Fairfax (D), Delegate Mark Keam (D-35), Fairfax County Commonwealth Attorney Stephen Descano (D), Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill), Fairfax County School Board At-Large member Rachna Sizemore Heizer and many more attended Justice and Legislative Sunday with Sen. Warner. They listened to the senator and Pastor Dr. Vernon C. Walton, who said in his sermon that in a country that had so much, it was possible for so many to have so little.

"It's hard to believe in a nation where so much food is wasted daily, it would be possible particularly children to go to bed hungry at night and have

SEE JUSTICE, PAGE 10

Legislators Reflect on Social Justice Initiatives

— MERCIA HOBSON

Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill), right:

Working on some economic development initiatives, not just to get economic development in places where we're getting a lot of economic development, but on an equity basis, to start bringing it to places in Fairfax County that have not seen it. So let's start bringing emerging technology companies, doing some of those more innovative, creative things in places where we haven't had economic development as we should in Fairfax County.



Virginia Senator Jennifer Boysko (D-33):

I've worked tirelessly for the past five years on expanding who can have a driver's license in Virginia as well as in-state tuition for our dreamers. I was a sponsor of the paid family medical leave bill that will allow people to deal with their crisis without losing their jobs. Tomorrow I will be presenting the Collective Bargaining for public employees, which will give all of them a seat at the table... I'm going to be working to make sure our judges look like the people in Virginia.



Stephen Descano, Fairfax County Commonwealth Attorney:

The question always comes back; how can we build a more just world... My mandate, as the leader of our criminal justice system is to do justice... That's why minute one of my administration I directed my prosecutors to no longer prosecute simple possession of marijuana, because we know that is way to disproportionately get young African American men and women through the front door of the criminal justice system. And that's not justice.



Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville):

There will be an additional 5,000 units to serve people earning 30 to 60 percent of the area median income, AMI. It's a 15-year plan. We are hoping to do more, but that is the base minimum promise to accomplish. To do that, we are adding \$25 million more to the budget this year for affordable housing... I've read dozens of Economic Development Plans from across the country, and ours is the only one that I've ever read that has as one of its major goals to include Gaining Economic and Social Equity. In terms of social justice, I'm out there walking the picket lines and attending the rallies and speaking at the rallies for our bus transit workers. They deserve a better deal than they've been getting.



SEE SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES, PAGE 10

Predatory Student Lenders

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

As a high school student, Katlyn Weiser dreamed of attending George Mason University. She wanted to have a career in public service, being in the room where it happens on Capitol Hill. But instead she found herself under a mountain of debt, struggling to keep up with meeting minimum payments and ultimately being forced to make a difficult decision about her future. She says she'll never forget the day when an agent from loan-servicing company Navient told her that she should probably drop out of school to pay off her student debt.

"I cried," says Weiser. "I cried a lot because I had come so far. I had become the first person in my family to go to college, one of the first people in my high school to go to college, and it was sad to hear that because I had come so far."

Weiser did not listen. She didn't drop out, and she's now a senior at George Mason University. She says she has determined that she can't afford a career in public service, so she plans on being a lobbyist instead. She's one of the student borrowers state Sen. Janet Howell (D-32) wants to help with a bill she calls the Borrowers Bill of Rights. It would use the power of the State Corporation Commission to crack down on



Katlyn Weiser speaks at a press conference in Richmond in favor of a bill designed to crack down on egregious practices of student loan servicing companies.

what she calls the egregious practices of student loan servicing companies.

"We can regulate these student loan servicers to ensure we're protecting our borrowers from shady practices, and believe me there are shady practices," says Howell. "Every other type of debt is regulated in Virginia except student loans debt. This lack of regulation is egregious given one million borrowers are collectively carrying more than \$41 billion worth of student debt."

DEMOCRATS HAVE WANTED to crack down on student-loan servicing companies

Northern Virginia lawmakers hope to crack down on student-loan servicing companies.

for years, but the Republican-led House of Delegates has blocked the effort. Del. Marcus Simon (D-53) has introduced legislation to have the State Corporation Commission regulate student-loan servicing companies for years only to be blocked by the GOP majority over and over. Even when Howell was able to get similar legislation through the Senate, Simon found that the Republican-led House was not interested.

"It's interesting that a number of delegates who have been sympathetic but didn't think this was the right solution voted for the bill in committee this year," said Simon. "So I think we're on a glider path here, although there are a few people who continue to believe that we shouldn't be helping out students for whatever reason."

This year, Democrats are in control of the General Assembly. That's opened the floodgates for a number of issues, and cracking down on student-loan servicing companies is one of them. Howell's bill cracking down on student loan servicing companies passed a Senate committee with a unanimous vote. And Simon has a similar bill that's already passed the House with an 84 to 15 vote.

"When student-loan servicers engage in deceptive and predatory practices, borrowers can face insurmountable barriers to financial security," says Anna Scholl, execu-

tive director of Progress Virginia. "When student loan servicers engage in deceptive and predatory practices, borrowers can face insurmountable barriers to financial security."

THE BILL requires student loan servicing companies get a license to operate in Virginia from the State Corporation Commission, which would crack down on egregious practices like misrepresenting the amount of money due, recklessly applying loan payments to outstanding balances and failing to report payment history to consumer credit bureaus. Violators would be hit with a \$2,500 fee.

"This bill is not about free college," said Seth Frotman, executive director of the Student Borrower Protection Center. "This bill is about making sure borrowers in the commonwealth who took on debt to chase the American dream aren't ripped off in the process."

All of the egregious practices outlined in the bill are already illegal. But borrowers would have to hire a lawyer and file a federal lawsuit to take action, which is not a workable solution for people who are already under a mountain of debt. Instead,

SEE STUDENT LOANS, PAGE 11

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NEWS

'Grand Canyon Rainstorm,' by Dee Leggett, captures the drama of the dark sky and subtle texture of the rock formations. This photo will be on display at the TD Bank in Great Falls through Feb. 29, 2020



'Layers of Light' on Exhibit in Great Falls

"Layers of Light" is a photography exhibit by Dee Leggett portraying examples of the many ways light influences the world we see, adding beauty and drama to our days. The photographs in the show demonstrate how light affects color and how it creates power with shadows and darkness. In the photo, Grand Canyon Rainstorm, the viewer sees how light brings out the subtle texture in rock formations. Through Leggett's photographs the viewer will see color in the clouds and sky in Yellowstone National Park, and reflections of light in the water, especially during sunrise and sunset along the Carolina beach. The diverse display includes the evening light show on the Hungarian Parliament and the noon-time light

show in Antelope Canyon, Ariz.

Visions of Great Falls, Dee's photo journal of scenes and history of Great Falls, contains numerous photos of the falls, as well as many from the Great Falls area, many of which demonstrate the power of light.

Dee Leggett has been photographing nature for over ten years, both in the Great Falls area and around the world. She is a member of Great Falls Studios.

To see more of Dee's work: Contact Dee at 703-861-3335 or DeeLeggett@aol.com

Visit her website at <http://deeleggettphotography.vpweb.com>

TD Bank is open every day, located at the corner of Walker Rd and Georgetown Pike in Great Falls.

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Dazzling Pace of Change in Richmond

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



COMMENTARY

Dazzling is the only word I could think of to describe the amazing work that is going on in the Virginia General Assembly this legislative session. The annual meeting of the legislature is just approaching half-time of its annual session, but already significant policy changes are being debated and adopted. There is little new to the policies that are being adopted; many are in place in other states already. But in Richmond they seem revolutionary!

I have already written about the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in the early days of the session. The movement to ratify the ERA began in the early 1970s but was not successful in Virginia until nearly 50 years later! Since two ratification deadlines have already passed, the fate of the amendment with Virginia being the needed 38th state to ratify is uncertain. Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring is among the leaders seeking a judicial decision to validate the amendment's ratification.

Although the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote was ratified in 1920 and added to the Constitution, Virginia did not add its support to ratification until 1952!

While legislation must be passed by both houses of the legislature and signed by the governor to become law, here is a run-down on what has been approved so far by at least one house. By the time the legislature adjourns in early March this legislation is expected to be approved by both houses and sent to the governor. Numerous bills have been passed to ban discrimination against persons because of their sex; bills to protect LGBTQ+ persons would not have made it out of committee last year. Bills to ban discrimination in housing, public accommodations, employment and credit applications have passed as has a bill to ban conversion therapy.

Likewise, bills to protect public safety from the misuse of guns that would never have made it out of committee previously have passed in both houses of the Assembly. My bill to require

universal background checks has passed as well as bills granting localities the right to ban guns in public spaces, increasing the penalties for leaving guns unsecured around children, and requiring people to report lost or stolen guns within 24 hours. A "red flag" law that allows authorities to remove guns from individuals who have shown themselves to be a danger to themselves and to others has passed.

This week action is expected on bills that will open up the state to more solar and wind power and that will establish standards for the increased use of renewables in generating electricity. Plastic bags may be eliminated or taxed to reduce plastic pollution. I am sponsoring the Governor's bill to advance the clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay that is getting some push-back from the farming community that would be affected by regulations to clean up stream runoff. Numerous bills have already passed to make it easier to register to vote and to vote on election day, including no-excuse absentee voting.

There is more to come. Tune in next week or follow the sessions on live-streaming at <https://viriniagenralassembly.gov/house/chamber/chamberstream.php> for more dazzling action!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not a 'Siege'

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to Delegate Ken Plum's OpEd in the Jan. 22-28 issue of the Connection, titled "Siege of the Capital."

After reading this letter, all I can say is "Wow!" Delegate Plum certainly has very poor opinion of Virginia gun owners. Stating that a peaceful and lawful demonstration by a large number of Second Amendment supporters is a "Siege" is incredible. Clearly Delegate Plum knows nothing about the people he appears to fear. He should get out of his liberal bubble and learn about the people who feel strongly about having their constitutional rights oppressed. They are non-violent and are law abiding.

Delegate Plum should read Virginia's constitution. He states "A well regulated militia made up of state and local police will protect the Capitol building and its occupant legislators from those who would deny freedom to others through their misuse of firearms."

Article 1, Section 13 of Virginia's constitution states:

"That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state, therefore, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the

military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power."

Note that our constitution specifically states that the "militia" is made up of the body of the people, meaning you and me. It is not made up of police officers. It sounds to me like Delegate Plum really wants to establish a standing army to protect him and his ilk from the people.

Our constitution cautions that such a thing is "dangerous to liberty".

Michael Kirchner
Clifton

Don't Abolish The Death Penalty

To the Editor:

It's become quite clear that the movement to abolish the death penalty has reached Virginia. Death penalty opponents have suggested replacing it with life without parole (LWOP). They advocate for it as a more humane alternative to execution. That it's "punishment enough." Except you shouldn't believe that death penalty opponents will keep LWOP.

Recent legislation in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Vermont is seeking to end LWOP, using the exact same arguments that have been used against the death penalty. "Few civilized countries have

LWOP, it's too harsh," et cetera. The movement to abolish the death penalty has become a moving of goalposts, as opponents (who have suggested LWOP) as an alternative, are using the very same arguments they used against the death penalty, to advocate for the removal of the very same alternative punishment that they suggested in the first place! Vox News and The Sentencing Project are now promoting the abolition of LWOP so you shouldn't think it's me fearmongering. The death penalty should stay in Virginia, not just because some crimes are just too heinous to be punished by life without parole, but because it also prevents the abolition of life without parole. If the death penalty is abolished on a Monday, the movement to abolish life without parole will begin the following day. And before you know it, murderers will be back on the streets.

Daniel Garcia
McLean

Becoming a More Equal and Inclusive Community

To the Editor:

I am an American, but my origins lie in a country where you cannot exercise your rights as a human being, let alone as a

woman. Women are forced into marriage at a young age, girls need permission from their fathers or brothers to leave their homes, and embracing your sexuality is unfathomable — and illegal at times.

It is for this reason that I write to you.

As a local newspaper serving the people of Northern Virginia, I ask that you write an article on the Jan. 15 ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in Virginia. It is crucial that we shed light on this recent event in Virginia that, while long overdue, must be celebrated.

On Jan. 15, 2020, Virginia voted on a resolution to ratify the ERA, making it the 38th state to pass this resolution. For decades feminists have been fighting to add a simple yet monumental phrase to the U.S. Constitution: "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Shedding light on this century-long issue will give our daughters, mothers, and sisters not only the recognition they deserve, but it will pave the way for other states and even nations to recognize and embrace equal rights as well. If we—as residents of the state of Virginia—are one step closer to becoming a more equal and inclusive community, then we must hold a responsibility to report on these views and enlighten others along the way.

Rudan Balay
Springfield

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. For more information, visit the web site www.goldengirls.org

Beginners Mah Jongg Class. Tuesdays thru Feb. 18. 12:30-2:30 p.m. At Great Falls Library, 9830 VA-193, Great Falls. Learn to play the fun, fast-paced game of Mah Jongg. Registration is now open for an Adult Beginners Mah Jongg class. The class will run for six weeks on Tuesday afternoons from 12:30-2:30 p.m. beginning January 14 through February 18. Attendees should plan to attend all six sessions. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

"The Royal." Now thru Feb. 23. At 1st Stage in Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. "The Royale" by Marco Ramirez, Directed by Paige Hernandez. Jay "The Sport" Jackson dreams of being the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world, but in the racially segregated world of boxing in 1905, the odds are stacked against him. When a crooked boxing promoter hatches a plan for "the fight of the century," "The Sport" might land a place in the ring with the reigning white heavyweight champion. Show times are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$42 general admission, \$39 seniors (65+), \$15 students and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or 703-854-1856.

WEDNESDAYS/FEB. 5, 12, 19

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Have fun with your child and build early literacy foundations for reading success. Age 3-5 with adult.

THURSDAY/FEB. 6

Teen Advisory Board (TAB). 6 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Gain leadership experience and discuss what the library can do for you. Grades 7-12.

Meme Fest. 6:30 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Game focused on identifying and determining appropriate use of memes. Teens.

FRIDAY/FEB. 7, 14, 21

Karate for Kids. 5 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Join the Karate to gain powerful tools for self-defense, inner-strength and a strong, healthy body. Ages 4 and up.

FRIDAY/FEB. 7

Waterfowl Hike. 9-11 a.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Some water birds stick around all winter and others merely pass through our region. Go on a Winter Waterfowl Hike at Riverbend Park and see what birds you can find. Bird lovers age 14 to adult are invited to hike with a naturalist to search for winter waterfowl along the Upper Potomac River. Participants should bring binoculars and spotting scopes. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Bilingual Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Bilingual Storytime in English and Hindi. Enjoy stories, songs and activities. Birth-5 with adult.

Catholic Charities Ball. 7 p.m. At the Ritz-Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. The event is the largest annual fundraiser for Catholic Charities, providing a significant portion of the resources needed to support 21 programs serving those in need throughout the 21 counties and seven cities of the Diocese. This year's theme is "With Love and Charity." Tickets for both events can be purchased at www.cdda.net.

SATURDAY/FEB. 8

Make Pinecone Birdfeeders. 10-11 a.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Help feed your feathered friends this winter with the "Make Your Own Pinecone Birdfeeders!" program at Riverbend Park. Find



Lilt in Concert

Lilt is Tina Eck on wooden flute and whistle and Keith Carr on 10 string bouzouki, mandolin, tenor banjo and vocals.

SUNDAY/FEB. 9

Celtic Music Featuring Lilt. 5 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. At The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. The Old Brogue Irish Pub and Barnaby Productions, Inc. present the 31st season of family friendly, Winter Traditional Celtic Concerts. Featuring internationally recognized Celtic musicians, the concerts are performed in a listening room by the fireside. Tickets must be purchased in advance; \$20 general admission/\$15 children under 12. Season ticket: \$108. Visit www.oldbrogue.com or call the Old Brogue at 703-759-3309.



Fiery Flamenco

The Alden is presenting New York City-based dance company Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana for a single performance on Saturday, Feb. 8 in McLean.

SATURDAY/FEB. 8

Fiery Flamenco Dance. 7 p.m. At The Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden is presenting New York City-based dance company Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana for a single performance. The acclaimed company, hailed as "America's premier Spanish dance company," promotes the art form by producing quality dance works that foster cultural connections. Tickets are \$40 for the general public, \$35 for seniors and \$30 for residents of Dranesville Small District 1A. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

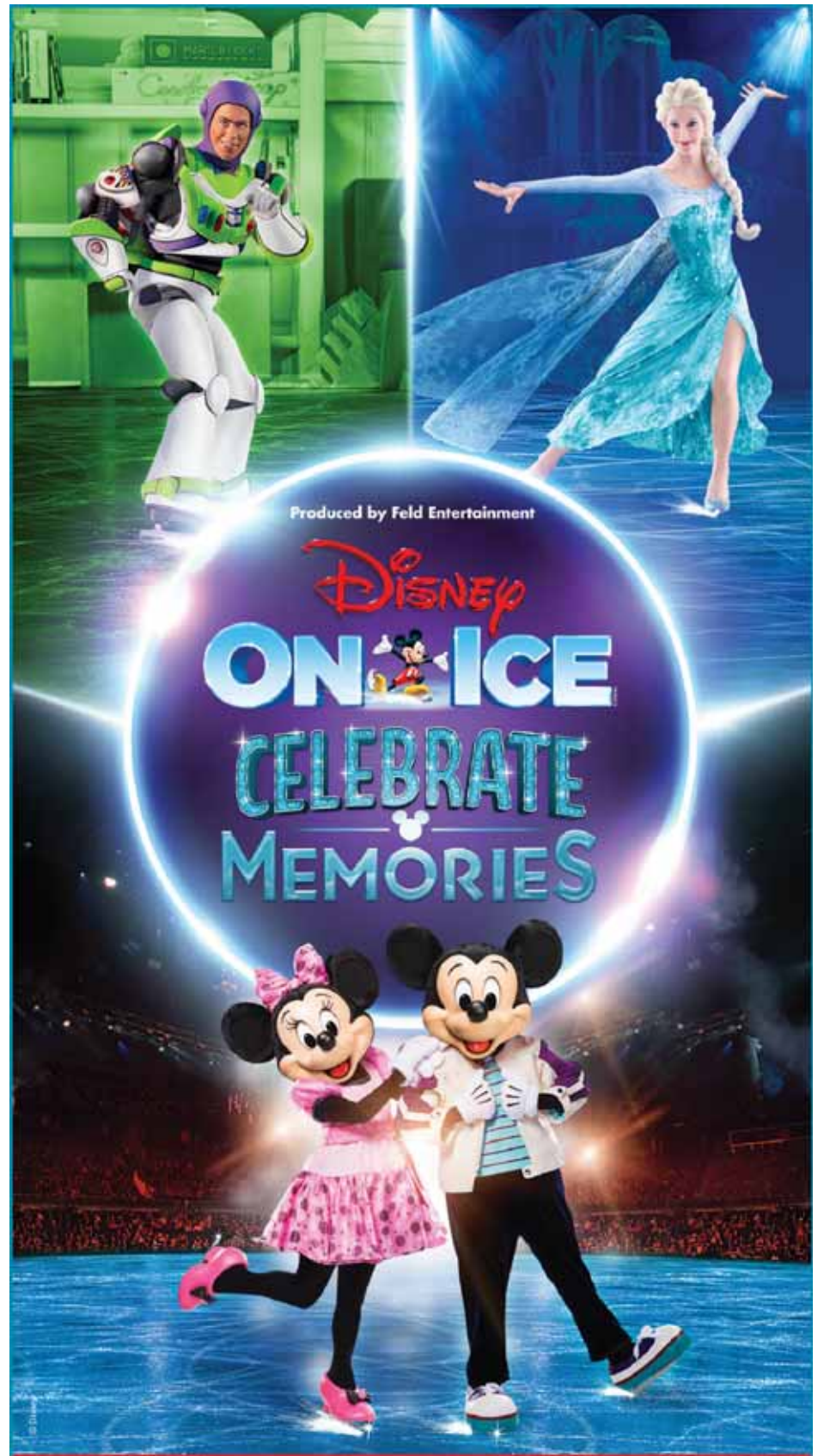
out what birds stick around through the winter and make and take home a pinecone bird feeder to help them get through the cold. Learn about the common birds that may visit your feeder. Cost is \$10 per person. Sessions are designed for participants age 4 to adult. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Star Trek to Astronomy Festival. 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. There will be guided stargazing and opportunities to get a close-up look at the stars through a telescope at the roll-top observatory. Join in games and warm yourself by the campfire as you listen to ancient stories about the constellations. Hot chocolate and snacks will be available for purchase. This event is designed for stargazers age 3 to adult. Cost is \$10 per person. The festival will be canceled if it is raining or snowing. Call 703-324-8618 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm.

SUNDAY/FEB. 9

New Dominion Women's Club Fundraiser. 3-5 p.m. At Chain Bridge Cellars, 1351 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. This is a great opportunity to stock up on wines and bubbly

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8



Tickets Start at \$15!

Restrictions, exclusions and additional charges may apply. Subject to availability. Tickets at market pricing. Purchase tickets at venue box office or ticketmaster.com.

ROYAL FARMS ARENA | FEB 5 – 9

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Here's What's Happening at MCC!

The Old Firehouse



Family Fun Bingo
Friday, Feb. 7, 7-9 p.m.
Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden



Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana
Saturday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m.
\$40/\$35 seniors
\$30 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden



Movies for Children and Families
"Shrek" (2001)
Wednesday, Feb. 12, 12:30 p.m.
Free admission

The Old Firehouse



Friday Night Activities
Double Feature
Friday, Feb. 14
Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$45/\$35 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden



"Jedi Academy"
Saturday, Feb. 15, 1 and 4 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

Closing Notice

George Washington's Day
Monday, Feb. 17

Presented by The Alden



Midday Movies: Foreign-Language Films
"Black Orpheus" (1959)
Wednesday, Feb. 26, 1 p.m.
Free admission



The McLean
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www.aldentheatre.org
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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 7

prior to Valentine's Day and the start of spring. Host Doug House will donate 15 percent of purchases from that day to the NDWC. Can't make it to the event? Stop in anytime that day, mention "NWDC" and Doug will apply the donation. Tickets \$20. Visit the website: ndwc.org/wine-and-cheese-party.html

SUNDAY/FEB. 9 AND 23, MARCH 1

Maple Syrup Boil-Down. Noon to 2 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. How does maple syrup get from the tree to your breakfast table? See the old-fashioned process from beginning to end at the "Maple Syrup Boil-Down at Colvin Run Mill." When the sap starts to rise, the maple trees are tapped at Colvin Run and the drip, drip, drip begins. Now, it's sugaring time! Bundle up, watch and learn as sap is boiled down into sweet syrup over an outdoor, open fire. Sample the delicious maple syrup served over cornbread that's made from Colvin Run Mill's own cornmeal. Cost is \$8 per person. No reservations are required. Call 703-759-2771 or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill>.

MONDAY/FEB. 10

AARP Luncheon Event. 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Mylo's Grille, 6238 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Join AARP at Mylo's Grill to enjoy lunch together with other AARP and McLeanCVA members and their guests. Enjoy a 15% discount on the entire check. There will be no seminar, and no products will be promoted or sold—just casual fun and socializing with other members like you in McLean. Learn how AARP and McLeanCVA are making a difference in Northern Virginia. Visit the website: <https://aarp.cvent.com/McLeanLunchFeb2020>

English on the Go. Registration 6:30-8 p.m. At James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Do you need to learn English but can't find the time? The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia has the right course for you. Cell-Ed English on the Go combines a limited number of classes with an easy-to-follow home learning program. Learn on your phone by texting, no Wi-Fi is required. The class is offered at \$85 per semester. Go to lcnv.org/learn or call 703-237-0866.

MONDAYS/FEB. 10, 24

Baby Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Have fun with baby while building early literacy foundations for reading success. Birth -18 months with adults.

TUESDAYS/FEB. 11, 18

Toddler Tales. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Have fun with your child and build early literacy foundations for reading success. Age 18 months-3 years with adults.

TUESDAY/FEB. 11

McLean Historical Society. 7:30-10 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The program will feature three McLeanites (Dr. Allen Horne, Anna Blue Porter, and Palmer Robeson) who will discuss "Growing up in Rural McLean." The program is free and open to all. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Wilderness Fun. Noon to 1 p.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills



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KAPO Concert

KAPO: Karen Ashbrook and Paul Oorts will perform at the Old Brogue Irish Pub in Great Falls.

SUNDAY/FEB. 16

KAPO Concert. 5 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring KAPO: the music of Karen Ashbrook and Paul Oorts. The Old Brogue Irish Pub of Great Falls, and Barnaby Productions, Inc. present the 31st season of family friendly, Winter Traditional Celtic Concerts. Featuring internationally recognized Celtic musicians, the concerts are performed in a listening room by the fireside. Tickets must be purchased in advance at oldbrogue.com: \$20 general admission/\$15 children under 12.

Street, Great Falls. At Riverbend Park, learn the science and art of building a fire and test your skill with primitive fire bows and modern fire-making techniques. Reward yourself with fire-roasted s'mores. "To Build a Fire" is designed for participants age 4 to adult. The cost is \$8 per person, and children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Later in the day at Riverbend Park, prepare a winter meal with your family around the campfire using colonial and indigenous cooking techniques. Food and drink are provided. The "Klondike Campfire Cookout" is designed for family members age 5 to adult. It runs from 3 to 4:30 p.m., and the cost is \$15 per person. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Singer-songwriter Rorie. 8 p.m. At Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. She will debut her full-length album "Valley in the Mirror" released on Jan. 31.

SUNDAY/FEB. 16

Cooperstown String Quartet. 4 p.m. At Saint Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Uniting faculty from the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and East Carolina University, this quartet has played on several continents and at the most prestigious venues in the world. Their illuminating and penetrating understanding of Beethoven bring you from his early tribute to Haydn (op. 18 no. 1) to his fully-formed, almost radical later style (op. 130). Students 17 and under and active military are admitted free of charge. A pre-concert lecture by Music Director A. Scott Wood will begin at 3:15 pm, 45 minutes prior to the start of the concert. A reception will follow the concert, at which attendees may

meet and chat with the performers and fellow music lovers. Tickets are \$40 and may be purchased at the door, online at <http://www.amadeusconcerts.com> or via telephone at 703-759-5334.

TUESDAY/FEB. 18

History Comes Alive. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. At River Bend, 375 Walker Road, Great Falls. Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) is welcoming back Mary Ann Jung's interactive shows. This award-winning actress and Smithsonian scholar has been recreating history's most fascinating women for more than 35 years with a style like no other. Jung researches and writes her own scripts and performs in authentic costumes, accents and attitudes for her character's eras. This year, learn the story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who was an abolitionist, human rights activist and one of the first leaders of the woman's rights movement. Reservations are required; email Polly Fitzgerald at pollyf1t21@verizon.net or call 703-759-4345. Membership dues (\$25 per person) and applications for 2020 will be available at the Hospitality Table or visit gfseniors.org and pay online.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19

Holy Happy Hour. 6:15 p.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Featuring Music of African American composers with Artist Amy Yurkewitch, clarinet, accompanied by John Nothaft, organ/piano. Each concert begins at 6:15 p.m. and concludes half an hour later with a brief period to enjoy wine and cheese and meet the artists. There is no

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

charge for the musical program or the refreshments. Visit <https://www.lewinsville.org/concerts/> or call 703-356-7200.

Volunteer for the Environment. 6:30-8:30 p.m. At Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. Join in working to combat climate change and global warming. Activities include campaigning on massive data centers and fighting oil and gas pipelines in Virginia. Come be part of the solutions. Free. Email sbonney001@aol.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 20

Brain and Breathing. 10-11 a.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. In this course, you will learn breathing exercises designed to help support brain function. Instructor: Dr. Charles Masarsky of Vienna Chiropractic. Free. Call 701-255-7801.

Adventures in Learning. 10 a.m. At Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. "Let it Go-Dealing With the Emotional Connection to Items" - Terri Blanchette. Cost is \$45 per semester. To Register/Questions: Call 703-281-0538. View the schedule of classes and registration form at <http://www.scov.org/ail-open-house>.

Acoustic Autumn Live Music. 6:30-9 p.m. At Blend 111, 111 Church Street, NW, Vienna. Laissez Fouré is an acoustic swing quartet playing classics from the '30s and '40s. The group consists of acoustic bass, swing rhythm guitar, saxophone/clarinet, and trumpet. In the tradition of New Orleans jazz, the quartet emphasizes an acoustic sound when feasible and plays charts by Armstrong, Ellington, Count Basie and others from the era.

The ABCs of CBD and Medical Marijuana. 7:30-9 p.m. At Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. The discussion will provide medical information about CBD/THC, the differences between CBD and medical marijuana, and how people can legally obtain medical marijuana in Virginia. Free. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/5843108>

SATURDAY/FEB. 22

Boolean Girl Clubhouse. 1-4 p.m. Campus of Virginia Tech Falls Church, Think a Bit Lab, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church. Join Arlington-based nonprofit Boolean Girl at the clubhouse. Hosted in partnership with Virginia Tech, girls and non-binary individuals will learn to code and build electronics in a fun, collaborative setting. Scholarships available for families in need by registering for the Boolean Girl Clubhouse Scholarship. All experience levels are welcome. Cost is \$5-\$65. Email brian.moran@booleangirl.org. Visit the website: booleangirl.org/clubs

Winter Wine & Beer Tasting. 7-10 p.m. At The Great Falls Grange, 9818 VA-193, Great Falls. The 2020 Winter Wine and Beer Tasting (chaired by Missy Perkins) turns the Great Falls Grange into a WINEter Wonderland with Frosty Beer served on the lower level. Sample a variety of red wines, white wines and locally crafted beers featuring wines selected by Rich Ashton of Classic Wines in Great Falls and beers of the Lost Rhino Brewery in Ashburn. This year's beer selections include Papa's Pilsner, which is made from the hops that are grown locally in Chef Jacques' garden at L'Auberge Chez Francois. Tickets are \$50 per person and on sale through 2/20/20 (or until sold out).

Washington Sinfonietta. 7:30 p.m. At The Falls Church Episcopal, 166 E. Broad Street, Falls Church. Conducted by Music Director Joel Lazar, the program will feature three of Beethoven's masterworks: Musik zu einem Ritterballet, Symphony No. 4 in B-Flat Major, and the Triple Concerto. Distinguished artists Aaron Berofsky, violin, Tobias Werner, cello, and Catalin Dima, piano, join the Sinfonietta as soloists in the Triple Concerto. Advance tickets for the performance, \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students, plus a small service fee, are available at washingtonsinfonietta.org. Tickets at the door are \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students. Children under 18 are always admitted at no charge.

SUNDAY/FEB. 23

Relay-Palooza. 1-4 p.m. At Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. Join Relay For Life of Northern Virginia for the annual Relay-Palooza Battle of the Bands kickoff celebration benefiting the American Cancer Society. Local acts may register to perform on the Jammin Java stage and then they need your vote to choose a winner. The winner of Relay-Palooza will get the chance to headline the 2020 Relay For Life event. This is a family-friendly event. Donations benefit the live-saving mission and programs of the American Cancer Society. Ticket purchase: eventbrite.com/e/89780709519. Contact: Anusha Nallapat at nush@vt.edu. Visit the website: relayforlife.org/northernvirginia

Capitol Steps Performance. 7 p.m. At Langley High School Auditorium, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. The Capitol Steps will perform with new material for the 2020 election. Tickets cost \$37. This is a one-time event and the main fundraiser for the Langley High School Class of 2020 All-Night Grad Party (ANGP). Buy online at <https://form.jotform.com/LangleyPTSA/angp2020>.



Valentine Senior Social Event

Jody Marshall will perform on the hammered dulcimer.

TUESDAY/FEB. 11

Valentine Senior Social Event. 12-2 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. The Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon and Vienna Parks and Recreation will present its Valentine Senior Social event. Held throughout the year, The Shepherd's Center Senior Socials afford guests the opportunity to socialize and stay connected in the community. These Senior Social events help to address the Vision Statement of The Shepherd's Center: A World Without Loneliness. Entertainment will be provided by Jody Marshall on hammered dulcimer and Jim Queen on fiddle. Tickets are \$18 per person. To register, call 703-281-0601 by Feb. 3, 2020. Registration is required. No refunds. No walk-ins.



Nora Jane Struthers Concert

Nashville-based singer/songwriter Nora Jane Struthers with Sarah Borges and the Broken Singles.

FRIDAY/FEB. 21

Nora Jane Struthers Concert. 8 p.m. At Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. Nashville-based singer/songwriter Nora Jane Struthers is a rootsy artist with a bent toward mixing traditional country and contemporary rock stylings into her passionate Americana sound. Also on stage, Sarah Borges and the Broken Singles. Tickets \$15-\$25. Visit www.jamminjava.com

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NEWS

Justice and Legislative Sunday

FROM PAGE 3

no food...(through) weekend because school is closed... It's hard to believe that we live amid such great wealth and in a county with such great housing stock, that there would be individuals who literally cannot afford to live among us, even after working 40 plus hours a week... It's hard to believe that we live in a nation where elementary and high school education is free and available to all, but the quality of that education and the quality of the physical building will largely be determined by the zip code of those facilities," Pastor Walton said.

He spoke about school-aged children and those who gather in places of worship but must consider the serious risk and potential of some disturbed individuals who do not respect the laws nor the lives of others. "They cause significant damage to families and even significant damage to entire communities." Before the Justice and Legislative Service began, security guards stood inside the entrance of his church.

PASTOR WALTON added that many individuals were only moved to action when it impacted their lives. However, doing so, they miss the meaning of justice; justice is for all, not for the individual. He said that some individuals were so blessed; so "comfortable" they lost their sensitivity to the persons and individuals who found themselves in the margins.

"If we are not careful enough, ...we can forget we are so blessed. We lose our sensitivity to the individuals that need us the most.... Today it is them. But there is the possibility it could be our day and our time tomorrow. Tomorrow, I would want someone to reach down and help pick me up... It's the poor, the marginalized, those that are struggling without health care, those that have no voice to speak for themselves.

After service, all gathered in the fellowship hall where members of the congregation and legislators mingled, asked questions and shared thoughts. As the event wound down, each legislator and school board member stepped to the microphone and gave a snapshot of proposed laws and actions in their purview.

Legislators Reflect on Social Justice Initiatives

— MERCIA HOBSON

Del. Marcus Simon (D-53): We are looking at words in our codes; code still matters a lot. We, just this year in 2020 on Friday, took the language out of a code that allowed buses to be segregated....Something I've been working on personally, what can we do about these racial covenants that still exist in our land records.



Del. Ibraheem Samirah (D-86), right: I had a couple of bills I've been working on, (and others) we will be working on throughout this year... One is to allow accessory dwelling units in your home. What that means is, if you have a cottage, a basement or an attic, you should be able to utilize that to house a family or an individual for anywhere between \$400 to \$800 a month ...Another way is to allow you to use your home for two families as it is; what we call up-zoning for two family units... These are easy solutions for the affordable housing crisis. They cost \$0 on the state; gives you more money for your pocket; allows your grandchildren, your children and anyone you want to live around you (to do so).

Vienna Town Council Member Pasha Majdi: I'm on the council in Vienna, which I don't talk a lot about here on Sundays. It's relevant this year because... I'm running for mayor. The election is May 5. It's a local, independent election. No Republicans,; no Democrats. It's just your neighbors running for office.



Del. Mark Keam (D-35): In a different time in Virginia, meaning before last November, the words "justice and legislative" didn't go together very often... Many times, your legislative agenda at the state level and sometimes at the county level, did not necessarily reflect the justice aspirations of that term...Thanks to the many of you who have worked so hard to bring us a few friends to put Delegates Simon and Samirah, Senator Jennifer Boysko and myself in the majority party in the Commonwealth of Virginia. What that means, is whether you're talking about Racial Justice, Gender Justice, Workplace Justice, Workers Rights, Environmental Justice, Social Justice, Medical Healthcare, and even Justice at the federal level, Impeachment Justice, we can now finally do the legislation because that's the way your views are expressed in the democratic process.



BULLETIN

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

FRIDAY/FEB. 7

Preschool Transition to Kindergarten for Students with Disabilities. 10 a.m. to noon. At Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. The transition to kindergarten is a big one for kids and can be even more so for children with disabilities. Learn how parents can collaborate with FCPS to ensure their students have a smooth transition to Kindergarten.

TUESDAY/FEB. 11

Valentine's Day Luncheon. 12 to 2 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Cost is \$18/person. Hosted by SCOV and The Vienna Community Center. Registration required by Feb. 3. Call 703-281-0538. You must be registered to attend. No walk-ins please.

NARFE Chapter Meeting. 2 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association) Chapter Meeting. Guest speaker – Marge Van Lierde - "The Road Ahead" - Transitioning into a retirement community. Refreshments will be served. Free. Members and guests. Call 703-205-9041.

Mayor at Your Service. 7:30 p.m. At Town Hall, 127 Center Street, S, Vienna. Town of Vienna Mayor Laurie DiRocco will host three health professionals at the next Mayor @ Your Service event — Shirley Clark, former executive director of the Women's Center; Susan Garvey, executive director of Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna; and Darlene Williamson, founder and executive director of Stroke Comeback Center. This event is free and open to the public

THURSDAY/FEB. 13

Fostering Protective Factors in Children. 10 a.m. to noon. At Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1, Room 100, Dunn Loring. Every adult can foster protective factors and build resiliency in children and adolescents. Presented by Ryan Dickerson, FCPS School Psychologist and Jenn Spears, FCPS Mental Wellness Specialist. Topics include: What does the Fairfax County Youth Survey data show us? Identifying Protective Factors and Assets (Three to Succeed); Strategies for building protective factors and assets; Understanding resilience and how to increase your child's ability to respond to challenges.

MONDAY/FEB. 24

Possible Arts Center at Clemyjontri Park. 7 p.m. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) will host a public open house to discuss the potential for development of an arts and education center at Clemyjontri Park. The meeting will take place in MPA's Emerson Gallery at the McLean Community Center, located at 1234 Ingleside Avenue in McLean.

Student Loans

FROM PAGE 4

this bill makes these actions a violation of state law and empowers the State Corporation Commission to go after bad actors. That way borrowers who feel they've been wronged could file a complaint with the Bureau of Financial Regulation.

"Why are Virginia borrowers having to resort to lawsuits for their consumer protections?" asked Del. Cia Price (D-95). "It is past time for student loan borrowers in Virginia — like me — to have common-sense protections."

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Off Topic, Way Off



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

From cancer to toilet paper. Is that 'off' enough? My reason for writing this column might be because I need a diversion (see last week's column), and because, as is so happened recently, I needed to replenish our toilet paper supply. (It had nothing to do with a winter advisory in the forecast.) As the consumer in the house, I am keen and motivated to spend our money wisely. I look for sales, I use paper coupons, I use digital coupons and of course, I peruse the advertising circulars, in print and online (if necessary) regularly. In addition, I have a number of plastic bonus cards hanging on my keychain. In short, I am prepared and ready for any retail or wholesale opportunity that might present itself.

With respect to toilet paper, I believe us regular users have been victimized by the toilet paper manufacturers. I refer specifically to the increase in the size of the actual roll itself; from single to double to triple to jumbo to mega and now super mega. Since the manufacturers can't exactly increase demand, they've devised a strategy to increase supply - in our homes. And though using myself as an example is hardly empirical evidence, I will nonetheless continue to do so in an effort to justify my accusation.

If you're like me, you probably like to have an ample supply of toilet paper in the house, just in case (it happened once in college; not good). And to that end, the toilet paper manufacturers have offered up multipacks equivalent to as high as 96 rolls, if I'm not mistaken, to address this potential shortage. However, my beef is not with the number of rolls in these multipacks, my beef, as I've said, is with the size of the rolls. In these cases, size does matter.

For years, we've been buying 4-, 6-, 9-, 12-, 24-, 36- and even 48-roll multipacks, some single and some double to stock the bathroom linen closets, so we're used to having a specific number of rolls on hand/in inventory. Now the rolls are double or even triple the size we had grown accustomed to having as back-ups. But we're still, in spite of the gargantuan size of the newer mega/super mega rolls, wanting to have the same number of rolls in the closet as we've always had (I do, anyway). Sort of a comfort level, you might say. The problem is that having the same number of super mega rolls in inventory as previously one had as single or double rolls gives one way more toilet paper in the house than you ever had. In effect, we have over-purchased. The toilet paper manufacturers have used our predispositions against us in order to take a greater share of our household budget previously allocated for toilet paper.

I don't need six super mega rolls in our bathroom. But I do want to see at least six rolls in reserve (aid and comfort you might say). If the six rolls in reserve were single or doubles, their size would be irrelevant. The number of rolls was more important - in my head. And now, because of the toilet paper manufacturer's insistence that size matters, I am forced to buy these spare-tire, donut-sized rolls that I can't possibly use no matter what "snowmageddon" might hit us. But I can't stock my shelves with reasonably-sized rolls because their unit cost is prohibitive compared to the big roll multipacks. As the consumer I am, I am loathe to overpay for such household necessities. So I buy in bulk, stuff my shelves with ply and go about my business. I just wish I had more than a hand in their decision-making.

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

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