

# CONNECTION

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## Police Chief Begins Job with Trust Deficit

NEWS, PAGE 4

## WELLBEING

PAGE 9

## June Graduation Concludes The Year of Uncertainty

NEWS, PAGE 5

## 7 Republicans Vie To Be Governor

NEWS, PAGE 6

While the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors continues to put their full support and confidence in their selection of Police Chief Kevin Davis, interfaith leaders from throughout the County prepare to lead a prayer vigil in the First Amendment area outside the Fairfax County Government Center, an hour before the Board is scheduled to meet.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10 ♦ CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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# CONNECTION

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
**Local Media Connection LLC**

**1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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## WEEK IN FAIRFAX

### Fairfax City Farmers Markets Open this Weekend

Sponsored by the Downtown Fairfax Coalition, the farmers markets in Fairfax City will soon be up and running for the 2021 season. Both are held at 10500 Page Ave., near the Historic Fairfax County Courthouse. (Look for the tents). The Saturday market goes from May 8-Oct. 30, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The Sunday market runs May 9-Oct. 24, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Because of the pandemic, social distancing is practiced. All vendors and customers are required to wear masks, and vendors' booths are 6 feet apart and will have hand sanitizer available.

### Flammable Solvent Causes Fairfax House Fire

Fire officials say a flammable solvent caused a house fire, April 21, in the 4400 block of Gilbertson Road in Fairfax. Units from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and City of Fairfax Fire Department were dispatched that day, around 10:31 a.m.

First-arriving firefighters discovered fire in the basement of a two-story, single-family home, and crews quickly extinguished the flames. Six contractors were in the basement at the time of the blaze, but no one was injured. When the fire started, they all evacuated and called 911.

Fire investigators determined the fire was accidental and started in the basement. They said it was caused by the ignition of the vapors created by flammable solvent used to remove mastic glue for the asbestos floor tiles. The fire then spread to the plastic sheathing along the walls. No occupants were displaced since the house was under renovation. Damages were estimated at approximately \$25,000.

### Two Sites Reopen in Fairfax City

Two sites in Fairfax City have now reopened to the public. The Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St., is open daily, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. And the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Hwy., is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

## The Very Best in Care Is Coming to Fairfax

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# NEWS

## Fairfax Supervisors Didn't Know About Davis History

Community organizations call for Chairman McKay to rescind Davis' appointment.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

On Saturday evening, May 1, with a little more than 36 hours before the effective date of hire, May 3, for Kevin Davis as Police Chief of Fairfax County, Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville) said that the incidents underlying the two judgments against Davis should have been disclosed to Board by Davis himself and the consultant search firm.

"To my knowledge, they were not [disclosed]. ... I was not aware of these incidents until after the selection of Mr. Davis was announced, and a local news station reported on them," Foust said.

"The alleged misconduct underlying these judgments is very disturbing. The Board made its unanimous decision to hire Mr. Davis based on the information that was available at the time. Speaking only for myself, given these subsequent disclosures, I believe Mr. Davis needs to establish that he is still the right person to take on this critically important responsibility," Foust said.

**SATURDAY, MAY 1,** The Activated People, along with eleven other organizations and faith-based groups, sent a letter to Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D-At Large) Fairfax County Board of Supervisors calling for "the immediate rescission of Kevin Davis' appointment as Fairfax County Chief of Police."

"We deserve someone in that office whose character and experience is more effective and more reflective of the values and vision



Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D-At Large)

of Fairfax County," signatories said.

The Activated People Inc. is a "Black-owned and operated independent activist organization and media platform dedicated to promoting racial and gender equity. The Activated People was formed for the purpose of advocating for legislation, regulations, and government programs to improve racial and gender equity, according to its website, <https://www.theactivatedpeople.com/>. Kofi Annan is the president. In the organization's letter, signatories cited the discovery of two lawsuits against Davis as Prince George's County, Md. police officer.

The letter alleges findings of "excessive use of force, kidnapping, the flagrant use of racist slurs, and violent discriminatory actions towards Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC)."

"Amid such drastic need for police trans-



Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville)

formation, accountability, and transparency, Fairfax County cannot afford to place the trust and safety of its residents to someone who has demonstrated such blatant racial bias, impropriety, and disregard for public safety for all," writes the signatories.

The police reform movement must prevent officers found to use excessive force or brutalizing citizens from getting promotions or moving to different jurisdictions to find new jobs.

As of May 2, Kevin Davis's LinkedIn page highlights of experience list Davis as Director Consulting Services, GardaWorld (May 2020-present); Chief Security Officer, Armored Things (Nov. 2018 - May 2020); Police Commissioner Baltimore Police Department (July 2015 - Jan. 2018); Chief of Police, Anne Arundel County Police Department (July 2013 - Dec. 2014); and Assistant



FILE PHOTO

Diane Burkley Alejandro, ACLU People Power Fairfax

Chief of Police, Prince George's County (Oct 1992 - Jul 2013).

"Kevin Davis is not representative of the County's values, our One Fairfax policy, or the critical change in the culture that Fairfax County Police Department needs," the letter concludes.

Earlier last week, community opposition surged against the Davis' appointment and the Board of Supervisors' interview and evaluation in closed-door sessions.

Karen T. Campblin, president of the Fairfax County NAACP, voiced disappointment with the process used to select the new leader for Fairfax County police department.

SEE POLICE CHIEF, PAGE 11

## 'Davis Promises 'Blue Waters Ahead' for County Police

ACLU People Power Fairfax joins the Fairfax County NAACP calling for new search.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

On May 3, Kevin Davis assumed the office of Chief of Police, Fairfax County. In the video, Meet Kevin Davis - YouTube, released that day by FCPD, Davis said it had been a long journey for him in policing from 1992 through 2018. "I've learned a lot. I've grown a lot...I have a far different mindset today than I did in 1992," he said.

According to Davis, policing is in crisis; it is under the microscope, and he doesn't want to sit on the sidelines. He said having been a part of major reform efforts in a "couple of jurisdictions," he knows why reform is needed and how to implement it. "I know how to change behaviors that detract from our relationship with the community. And I think 2021 is the perfect opportunity for me to return to what I love," Davis said.



FCPD

Kevin Davis assumed the office of Chief of Police, Fairfax County on May 3, 2021.

DAVIS said in the video that as he introduces himself to the men and women in the police department, they are not just going to see him occasionally nor as a "virtual police chief." Davis will back up the police officers. He will be with them on the streets, scenes, and all critical incidents in the county.

"I'm going to be communicative. I'm going to involve people in all my decisions because I don't think we need to run away from our

traditions and policing. I think we need to embrace our traditions," Davis said. Also, he is going to explain his decisions, find common ground, and move forward.

After learning that Davis assumed the Office of Fairfax County Police Chief, ACLU People Power Fairfax issued a Press Release that same day saying it joined the Fairfax County NAACP in calling for a new search to fill the Police Chief position. "We believe the process must begin anew," the press release read.

ACLU People Power Fairfax demanded community involvement in the vetting process, saying, "The closed-door deliberations by the Board of Supervisors that led to Kevin Davis' selection, coupled with the Board's failure to address his excessive use of force against a Black man in 1993 and serious misconduct six years later, render the selection process fatally flawed."

Diane Burkley Alejandro, Lead Advocate for ACLU People Power Fairfax stated in the Press Release that Davis has two strikes against him. "The third strike belongs to the Board. Most of us believe in redemption, but the neces-

sary precursors—public disclosure of the incidents at the time the selection was announced, acknowledgement that the conduct was wrong and a Board explanation of why Mr. Davis is still the best candidate—did not take place," she said.

**ACCORDING TO ACLU People Power Fairfax,** it cannot accept the Board's word that Davis is the "best" candidate without "adequate disclosure."

"A public forum involving Mr. Davis would be welcome but is not sufficient. Community trust has plummeted and a cloud of mistrust is gathering over both the Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Police Department," stated the release.

For additional information about ACLU People Power Fairfax, a grassroots organization that advocates for equal justice for all community members, including undocumented immigrants, regardless of race or ethnicity, visit Twitter @PeoplePowerFfx and Facebook @peoplepowerffx or by email at [aclupeoplepowerfairfax@gmail.com](mailto:aclupeoplepowerfairfax@gmail.com).

# Police Chief Begins Job with Trust Deficit

**Faith leaders question 'flawed' selection process and Supervisors' values during prayer vigil.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Approximately thirty interfaith leaders from across Fairfax County gathered in the "First Amendment" area outside the Fairfax County Government Center at noon, Tuesday, May 4. They exercised their Constitutional right of free speech to lead a prayer vigil in response to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' recent selection of Kevin Davis as the County Police Chief. Inside the Government Center, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting was about to get underway at 1 p.m.

"[The hiring of Davis] was a decision made in the dark," said Denise Wilson, President of Baptist Ministries of Northern Virginia.

Moderator Rev. Dr. Vernon Walton, the First Baptist Church Vienna senior pastor, addressed his fellow faith leaders from different traditions, denominations, and worship styles, yet holding a common interest. Walton said that they were there to pray and lift to God the concerns of their people and those of County residents about the selection of Kevin Davis as the new police chief.

"No one, especially a police chief, should begin a job with a trust deficit," said Walton, senior pastor of the First Baptist Church Vienna.

"Specifically, many are concerned about the integrity of the process and the more



Rev. Dr. Vernon Walton, the First Baptist Church Vienna senior pastor, leads his fellow faith leaders in prayer.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

## Board of Supervisors: Davis 'Has Our Trust'

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors released the following statement Tuesday, May 4, in support of Police Chief Kevin Davis:

"Police Chief Kevin Davis was chosen with the full support and confidence of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Following extensive community outreach and input, he was selected after a nationwide search. Chief Davis demonstrated to the Board that he can lead reform efforts, strengthen community relationships, and successfully manage change.

We are aware of the incidents reported in the local media. While they occurred decades ago, we understand the concerns of the community. We expect Chief Davis to respond to questions regarding those incidents in the media and directly with the

community and the Board of Supervisors. He has also demonstrated through his leadership that his past experiences have shaped his focus on reform. He has our trust to guide the Fairfax County Police Department through the challenges ahead and build on the reform efforts already made.

As the Chief, we also expect him to be a strong and effective advocate for the types of reforms that are designed to protect at risk communities from police misconduct. The Board will accept nothing less going forward. We know and agree that this is critical to collectively reforming policing and continuing our journey toward One Fairfax.

The Police Chief is hired by the Board of Supervisors and as such, his performance will be evaluated at least annually.

recent findings that have become public since the announcement of the hire. Many are concerned about the lack of transparency and obvious due diligence in this search process," said Walton. "Speaking the truth is not always comfortable, but it is necessary. Either we are facing a process issue or values issue. Either way, there's a flaw," he said.

Walton referenced incidents involving Davis solely by the years 1993 and 1999 when Davis was a police officer. He did not say the incidents led to lawsuits against Davis with claims he used excessive force. Walton did not need to; those gathered learned from the media and other sources after the County Supervisors selected Davis in a closed door meeting.

Walton said Supervisors acknowledged they were not aware of the 1993 or 1999 incidents regarding the new Chief. "That's a flaw," Davis said. He questioned how the Board could make an informed decision without dialogue. "Either you, [Supervisors] knew of the history of our Chief and have made a determination that it was so insignificant that you are standing by your choice. Or you didn't know of these events. And as a result, you are grieved by the fact that critical information with regard to one's professional career has been purposely withheld, and you want to revisit your decision," he said.

Walton said it is the Board of Supervisors' responsibility to tell the community why they selected Davis, and in light of recent findings, why they are remaining with him. Walton said the trust deficit is not Davis' alone to own. It is a burden the Board of Supervisors also carries.

"The moment there is a questionable stop, or God forbid, something worse, it will also be on your hands [Supervisors] because of your decision-making process. And so, we gather to pray, praying for God's will to be done."



Rabbi Michael G. Holzman, Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, Reston.



Rev. Dr. Scott Ramsey, Pastor at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church in McLean.



Rev. Dr. Vernon Walton, the First Baptist Church Vienna senior pastor.



Rev. Dr. Denise Wilson, Baptist Ministries of Northern Virginia



Rev. Jacquelyn Hollingsworth, (Ret.) Pastor of AME Church.

## Faith Leaders: Why are We at the Vigil

"Justice, transparency that can shed light on truth. That the Supervisors do not operate behind closed doors in the process of a police chief. We, the People, have the right to hear the whole story."

- BISHOP CARROLL A. BALTIMORE, C.A.B. OUTREACH INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES, INC. CHANTILLY

"To shine a light on the truth."

- REV. JACQUELYN HOLLINGSWORTH, RET. PASTOR OF AME CHURCH

"I'm here to ask the County Supervisors to fix their mistake and rescind the contract of the new police chief... We need the right person for the job."

- REV. SEAN S. ROBERDS, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HERNDON

"Lord, you are about that work of building the beloved community...and you are about that work right here in Fairfax County...Let your spirit fall upon all who are citizens of this County. Let your spirit fall upon the Board of Supervisors. Let

your spirit fall upon the Police Department."

-REV. DR. SCOTT RAMSEY, PASTOR AT LEWINSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MCLEAN

"We are here to do what is right and just for the Fairfax County community."

- REV. DR. PAUL A. SHEPPARD FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MERRIFIELD

"It's appropriate for us to be here today as clergy because what we are talking about is atonement ... The mistakes that we have to accept, the hardest ones, are the mistakes we make. Atonement comes when we are given

the opportunity to make the same mistake, we choose a different path. And we can only do that when we know what we've done is wrong."

- RABBI MICHAEL G. HOLZMAN, NORTHERN VIRGINIA HEBREW CONGREGATION, RESTON

"We would like to see justice served by the rescinding of the contract of new Chief Davis. The residents of Fairfax County are depending on us to do the right thing."

- REV. DR. DENISE WILSON, BAPTIST MINISTRIES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Lake Braddock Senior Jake Sizemore won the Music Composition Award of Excellence in the National PTA Reflections Contest for his submission "I Matter for Me."



McKenzie Shedd and her feline friend.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

# June Graduation Concludes the Year of Uncertainty

School system has all the graduation ceremonies lined up for early June.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

For high school seniors, the month of May is time for friends and beach week, but this year is different due to the pandemic, and for Lake Braddock senior McKenzie Shedd, it's hard to believe they are even graduating from the looks of things this fall, with COVID-19 dominating everything in a negative way. "It's nice to be back in person, be able to talk to other people," she said. "I need to be 'in-person' to learn," she said.

The year has been full of uncertainty in all the schools across Fairfax County, and when the officials felt it was safe to be in class – wearing masks, bumping elbows, and maintaining distance from each other – the students came back. It started as two days a week in early spring branching out to four days a week in May. The online classes were okay, but there were other factors.

"When you mix senior-itis and online school, it doesn't mix that well," Shedd added.

HER MOTHER Julie looked back to the fall too. "I'm pretty surprised as to where we are this year," she said. "Pretty amazing," she said, comparing things when her son graduated in 2017. "Senior years were certainly different," she said.

The Fairfax County Public School system scrambled though, and has all the graduation ceremonies lined up for early June at outdoor locations like the school football field, or at Jiffy Lube Live concert venue in Manassas. This does leave things vulnerable to weather, and every graduation has a rain date built in, but there will be many eyes glued to the weather app just to make sure.

Douglas Tyson, FCPS assistant superintendent of Region 1 is on a team led by Dr. Francis Ivy, deputy superintendent, and Mark Greenfelder to plan the graduations and monitor the weather.

"The weather gods are very fickle," said Tyson, and they will watch things with help from NOAA and various television meteorologists before calling the ceremonies off. Students will be limited to the number of family members who can come too.

It's been a challenging year and a "unique strain on all of us," Tyson said, and noted the seniors efforts have been "nothing short of amazing," he said. For the seniors, there still is the prom, graduation and the all-

## Graduation Schedule

### FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL

Tuesday, June 1 at 9 a.m. at Fairfax High School Stadium.

Rain date is Wednesday, June 2 at 10 a.m.

### HAYFIELD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Friday, June 4 at 10 a.m. at Hayfield Secondary School Stadium.

Rain date is Saturday, June 5 at 10 a.m.

### LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY SCHOOL

Thursday, June 10 at 9:30 a.m. at Jiffy Lube Live

### ROBINSON SECONDARY SCHOOL

Friday, June 11 at 2 p.m. at Jiffy Lube Live

### SOUTH COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Thursday, June 10 at 2 p.m. at Jiffy Lube Live

### WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Tuesday, June 1 at 9:30 a.m. at Jiffy Lube Live.

night grad party to go, and then it's on to adulthood.

The formal at Lake Braddock Secondary is called "Starry Night at Nats Park," where they are having a board game night on the ball field, and then the all-night grad party at St James and graduation ceremony at Jiffy Lube on June 10. McKenzie is looking forward to this, before she heads off to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, where she'll be on the rifle team. The event at Nats Park "will be a fun way to hang out with friends," she said.

All these restrictions gave birth to the car parade, which is one by-product of the pandemic that might stick around for years to come. Last spring, everyone got creative, decked the car out in all the graduation gala, and drove around in a parade, honking the horns and waving. "It's fun, gets the neighbors out," said Julie Shedd, looking back at all the creative things the school system has done to make it through the pandemic and providing an education. "It's turned from a 'loss' to a 'different'," Shedd said.

THE FCPS administrators are hoping to get back to classes five days a week, and they are watching the pandemic to adjust the schedule, but for now, that is the plan. They have changed from six-foot distances between students to a three-foot plan, which might be more realistic given the number of people inside a school building. "As long as students are wearing masks and adhering to all CDC layered prevention strategies, evidence suggests that three (3) feet is a sufficient physical distance for students to stay healthy and lessen risk of virus transmission in most circumstances," FCPS information stated.

"FCPS has a physical distancing plan that creates stability for FCPS students and families. Under the plan, changes in the rate of COVID-19 transmission in our community has less of an impact on the amount of physical distancing required in schools," it said on the FCPS website.

## Frontier Drive Extension Fairfax County

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Monday, May 17, 2021, 7 p.m.

[www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive](http://www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive)

Find out about plans to extend Frontier Drive (Route 2677) from its southern terminus at Franconia-Springfield Parkway (Route 289) to Loisdale Road (Route 789) to relieve congestion and improve access to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station, the Springfield Mall and Town Center area, the General Services Administration (GSA) complex and the new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) building on Springfield Center Drive. The project will include a four-lane divided roadway (combination of new construction and improvements to existing Springfield Center Drive) with a shared-use path on one side and sidewalk on the other. The project will also include new braided ramps at the Frontier Drive/Franconia-Springfield Parkway interchange, a new intersection at Metro Access Road with Frontier Drive, reconfigured sections of the Metro station circulatory road and access to parking garage entrances, but all existing access points will be maintained.

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at [www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive](http://www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive). The project team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

**Review** project information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-1794 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

**In compliance** with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771, an Environmental Assessment is being prepared for this project and will be available for review at a future public hearing.

**Give your comments** during the meeting, or by **May 27, 2021** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Mr. Zamir Mirza, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov). Please reference "Frontier Drive Extension" in the subject line.

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Federal: STP/F-5B01 (030)

*In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held  
Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at the same time.*



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<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

# 7 Republicans Vie To Be Governor

May 8 convention to determine direction of party heading into November.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

Republicans haven't won a statewide race since 2009, when Attorney General Bob McDonnell received 59 percent of the vote against Democrat Creigh Deeds. Since then, Republicans have been shut out of the Executive Mansion. Ken Cuccinelli lost to Terry McAuliffe in 2013, and Ed Gillespie lost to Ralph Northam in 2017. Now Republicans are about to determine their statewide candidates in a May 8 convention, which will take place at 37 locations.

"This is a great year for Republicans, and we have a good chance to win the Executive Mansion," said Frank Fannon, a former Republican member of the Alexandria City Council. "A lot of people are not excited about a recycled Terry McAuliffe running for governor again."

The candidate with the most votes in the first round of counting may not end up as the winner. That's because Republicans are using a process called ranked-choice voting to make sure that the nominee has support from more than 50 percent of the delegates. When the voting ends at 4 p.m. on May 8, votes will be hand counted and then sent to Richmond, where party leaders will use mathematical formulas to give more weight to parts of the state that

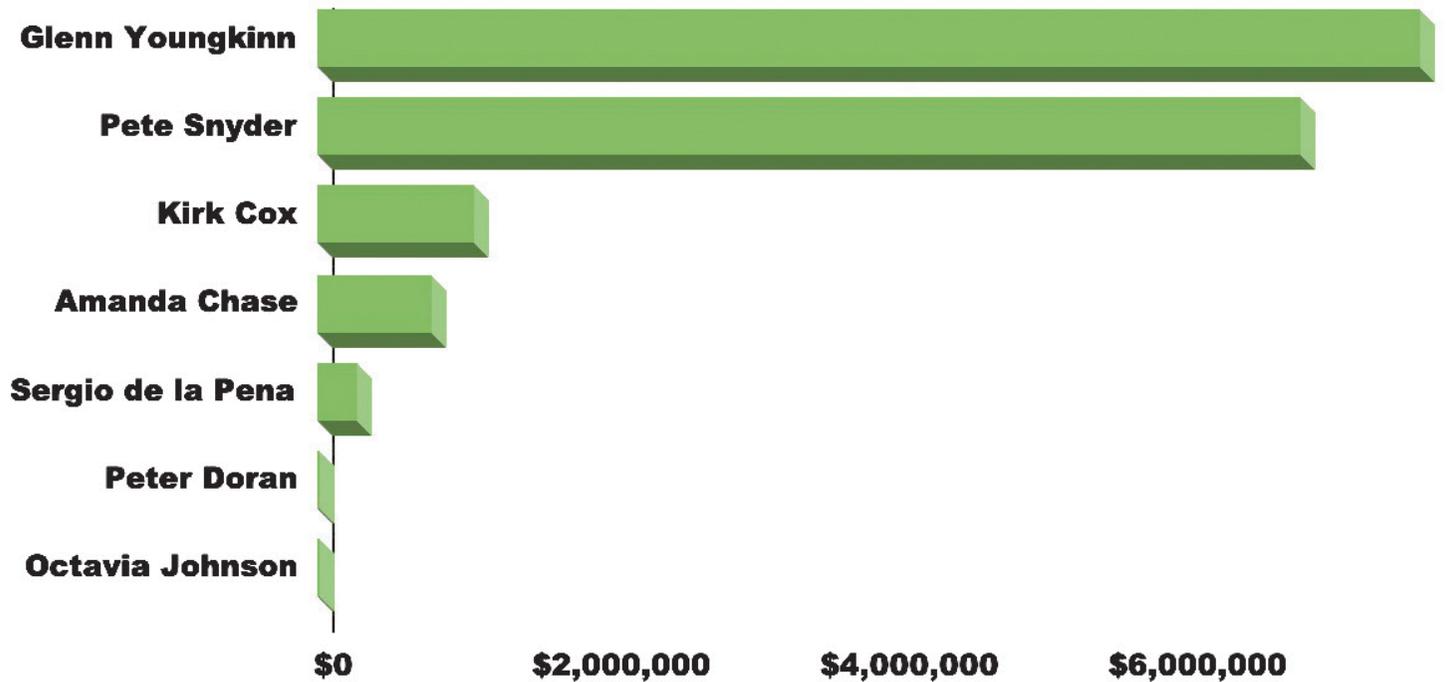
**"We've seen a lot of interest in this convention. It's a sign that the two-party system is alive and well."**

— Pete Benavage,  
chairman of the Alexandria  
Republican City Committee.

support Republican candidates for president and governor. They'll also be going through several elimination rounds, distributing the second choice of voters whose first choice has been eliminated.

"There is a lot of concern about one candidate in particular, Amanda Chase, who has perhaps strong support among a particular faction within the Republican Party but not broad-based support," said Mark Rozell, dean of the Schar School of Policy and Government. "Some believe in a multi-candidate race she could come out as the nominee, but in a ranked-choice voting system, she would likely have no chance at all of

## Republican Candidates for Governor



source: Virginia Public Access Project

winning the nomination."

Seven candidates will be on the ballot for governor, a crowded field that seems likely to send the ranked-choice voting into several elimination rounds before a winner is determined. For voters who are interested in participating in selecting which of those seven candidates for governor will be the nominee, the deadline to register has already passed, but Republican officials say they've seen out-sized interest in participation. Under normal circumstances, the convention would have a limit to how many delegates from Alexandria could participate. But this year the cap was eliminated, and candidates were allowed to help potential new delegates register. As a result, Alexandria has 703 credentialed delegates.

"We've seen a lot of interest in this convention," said Pete Benavage, chairman of the Alexandria Republican City Committee. "It's a sign that the two-party system is alive and well."

**GLENN YOUNGKIN** is a former lobbyist for the Carlyle Group who has raised more money than any of the other candidates, \$7.7 million, thanks in part to a \$5.5 million loan from the candidate. He's also received large donations from real-estate developers, subcontractors and



## Convention Locations

- ❖ 8th Congressional District Convention Location  
National Right to Work Building  
8001 Braddock Road, Springfield VA 22151
- ❖ 10th Congressional District Convention Location  
10th District Republican Headquarters  
20098 Ashbrook Place, Ashburn VA 20147
- ❖ 11th Congressional District Convention Location  
NOVA Community College, Annandale campus  
8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale 22003

lawyers. He's never run for office before, although he's trying to use that as an asset by selling himself to voters as a candidate who's not a politician. On the campaign trail, he talks about opposing abortion rights, supporting gun rights and ending the public safety protocols put into place by the current governor during the pandemic.

"When this governor opened up massage parlors and ABC stores and kept my church closed last year, I knew he didn't share the same values I do," said Youngkin in a candidate forum. "So we're going to stand up for our First Amendment rights. But we're also going to stand up for the unborn, but we're also going to stand up for our Tenth Amendment rights and the overreach from Washington right now."

**PETE SNYDER** is a businessman who's probably best known for founding a social-media marketing agency known as New Media Strategies. He's raised \$6.8 million, thanks in part to a \$5.2 million loan from the candidate. He also received a \$1 million donation from CapFi Partners CEO Mark Kimsey of Great Falls. In 2013, he was an unsuccessful

candidate for lieutenant governor at the Republican convention that selected E.W. Jackson as the party's nominee that year. On the campaign trail, Snyder talks about opening schools five days

a week with a teacher in every classroom and opposing efforts to use taxpayer dollars to pay for in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants.

"Illegal immigration costs taxpayers billions, and it brings crime and gangs into our communities," said Snyder in a campaign video about immigration posted to YouTube. "Northam and McAuliffe won't take violent illegals off our streets, but I will. When I'm governor, I'll enforce the law and deport violent criminals."

**KIRK COX** is a former Speaker of the House of Delegates who has represented Colonial Heights since he was first elected in 1989. He's raised about \$1 million, including large donations from Republican Party



SEE REPUBLICANS, PAGE 7

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Republicans

FROM PAGE 6

leaders and general contractors. During his time in the House, he supported a controversial plan to raise taxes for roads during the McDonnell administration and, more recently, expanding Medicaid to help low-income people get health insurance. On the campaign trail, the one issue that animates him more than anything else is his opposition to abortion rights.

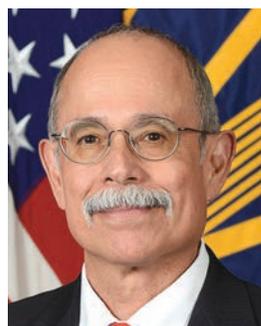
"I will stand up to the pro-abortion radicals," said Cox in a campaign video posted to YouTube. "I will never stop fighting for the promise of life."

**AMANDA CHASE** is a state Senator from Chesterfield who unseated incumbent Sen. Steve Martin (R-11) in 2015. She's raised about \$800,000. Chase is probably best known for speaking at the Jan. 6 rally before the insurrection at the Capitol. She later defended the people involved by saying "these were not rioters and looters, these were patriots." On the campaign trail, she's tried to cast herself as "Trump in heels," repeating baseless assertions that the 2020 election was stolen.



"What I believe I bring is something we've never had before. We've never had a Republican woman to seek the Republican nomination for governor," said Chase in a candidates forum. "You know 50 percent of the population is women, and that's a democratic we need. We also need suburban women. I am a suburban woman."

**SERGIO DE LA PENA** is a retired Army colonel who served as a deputy assistant secretary of defense for the western hemisphere during the Trump administration. He's raised about \$263,000. On the campaign trail, he talks about how his experience as an immigrant might help bring new people into the party and win over voters in Northern Virginia.



"I came from Mexico. I was raised in a house with dirt floors and no running water, picking cotton at 10," said de la Pena. "I fought socialists and communists the entire time I was in the Army, and I continue to do so even to this day because what we've seen is that they've gone from bullets to ballots."

**PETER DORAN** is a former think tank executive and author. He's raised about \$16,000. On the campaign trail, he talks about phasing out the state income tax.



"I spent my career helping countries that have been destroyed by socialism to chart a new path and to get strong," said Doran in a campaign video. "I'm running for governor because I think it's about time that we have a candidate with a winning conservative vision leading our commonwealth."

**OCTAVIA JOHNSON** is a former sheriff of Roanoke who's raised about \$900. In 2014, she ran an unsuccessful campaign against Sam Rasoul for House District 11.



"Everybody has heard of all the other candidates. They know what their message is," said Johnson in a television interview. "Now they're going to hear Octavia Johnson's message, and that will help them to decide who is stale bread and who is fresh bread."

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# 'Using Our Community to Tell Real Stories'

Woodson High presents the musical, 'Working.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

As everyone learned during the pandemic, America's workers play vital roles in keeping the country running. And Woodson High's spring musical, "Working," is a celebration of them all.

"So many people are struggling, trying to do their jobs," said Director Terri Hobson. "So this show honors the everyday worker." It's done via vignettes, monologues and songs, but each character is connected to the others. This play is also Hobson's last at Woodson, since she's retiring in June.

It'll stream, Friday-Sunday, May 14-16. For the link and ticket information, go to [www.wtwdrama.org](http://www.wtwdrama.org). The cast and crew of 30 have rehearsed since February, and on-location filming has occurred at sites including Hamrock's Restaurant in Fairfax City, Interstate Van Lines in Springfield and the Fairfax Marriott in Fair Oaks.

"I love my talented cast," said Hobson. "They've really stepped up and taken on this crazy, new challenge of on-location filming to make this show unique. They've produced art in a way nobody was used to. But giving them directions and trusting them to do the filming within the play's overall vision speaks to the strong tradition of Woodson High Theater and its community."

Sophomore Rachel Sper portrays Freddie, a teen who delivers fast food. "This is her first job," said Sper. "It's not exciting, but she does it to help support her family. Her father refuses to work, while her mom works double shifts. But Freddie likes making deliveries on her bike, because then, she's not under the watch and control of her family or her manager. She's just on her way."

Sper said Freddie's extroverted and enjoys interacting with the customers. "Her job lets her separate from her homelife and be in a happier place," she explained.

**HER FAVORITE NUMBER** is "Delivery," in which Freddie describes how she feels while doing her job. "It was written by Lin-Manuel Miranda and is really upbeat," said Sper. "I like how it creates a story within a few minutes. I enjoy playing Freddie because, as a teen, I can relate to her. And I just applied for my first job, so it's an exciting role for me." She said audiences will enjoy the creativity the cast and crew put into this show, as well as Hobson's, for having it filmed in different places, instead of before a blank screen.

Playing Maggie, a cleaning woman, is sophomore Hana Kewaisy. "Her goal is to set up her daughter for more success than her," said Kewaisy. "She comes from a whole line of domestic workers but hopes her daughter will break that cycle. Although she doesn't like her job, she's spunky, bubbly and soulful."

Kewaisy sings the song, "Cleaning Women," with two other actors; and in it, she's hopeful about her daughter's future. "The music style is Motown, soul and upbeat," she said. "I like playing Maggie because of this song and her positive personality and because it's my first musical at Woodson. Filming brought out the perfectionist in me because I'd redo the scene until it was to my liking."



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEAN GRANT

Playing cleaning women in Woodson High's musical, "Working," are (from left) Diya Selvan, Hana Kewaisy and Alyce Visioli.

Senior Katelyn Bonaccorsy was one of a small crew of videographers, as well as the stage manager and screen manager. "We asked people to meet at the locations and record on both phone and video camera," she explained. "And some students filmed at home, by themselves. We have a massive folder on Google, and everyone uploaded their videos." Then West Springfield theater teacher Maevé Nash edited them all, with Hobson's input.

Bonaccorsy did all the tech work. "I was able to sneak in aspects of live theater – adding special lighting whenever we filmed onstage," she said.

**THE HARDEST PARTS**, she said, were communication and coordination via posts and emails and "making sure people understood what I was trying to get across to them, instead of talking to them in person." The best parts, said Bonaccorsy, were "the times we were able to film people on location and in person."

"It was a great way to show the community around us because we were telling real stories, so using our community was really fun," she continued.

Playing flight attendant Terry Mason, plus two other roles, is senior Rachel Furr. "Mason's interesting because you think of flight attendants as particular about their looks, and acting a certain way," said Furr. "But she comes from a small town and tells how her job's a lot less glamorous than people think. There's a lot more grit work."

She described Mason as "easygoing, friendly and bubbly – a fun person. She's an average person, but a real one with a lot to say. I enjoyed playing her. These aren't your typical characters in a play; they're more like real people with diverse personalities."

In this show, said Furr, "Personalities come through without big costumes and special effects. It's more raw and real; you may not like everyone, but you can identify with them. And in this format, we had to let our own acting and emotions reflect the characters, without relying on an ensemble to help us. It was about what we expressed to the camera. It was more difficult, but our acting got to shine through."

# 'Breaking Barriers' Spring Dance Showcase, Saturday

The entire Fairfax Academy dance program, led by instructor Meredith Barnes, spent this year learning about dancers and choreographers who broke barriers. Whether they did it within the dance community, or in American culture, they stood up for justice and equality for all.

And this Saturday, May 8, at 5 p.m., Academy dancers from 13 different FCPS high schools will livestream their dance performances inspired by artists they researched and studied this year. This event is free, but donations are appreciated, and go directly back into the Fairfax Academy's dance program.

To donate and/or to view the program on the Academy's YouTube channel, go to [https://](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0kn3am3QbNFues2Fob9AjA)

[www.youtube.com/channel/UC0kn3am3QbNFues2Fob9AjA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0kn3am3QbNFues2Fob9AjA). This year, guest artist Constance Dinapoli, of The Paul Taylor Dance Foundation, taught one of his classic works to some of the advanced dancers, and six original dances will be presented during the spring showcase, including, "Clovon Kingdom," choreographed by Taylor.

"Despite the challenges of learning and dancing during a full quarantine, our Academy dancers rose," said Barnes. "We rehearsed in groups and worked hard, in hopes that we'd be able to bring it all together in the end. I'm happy to say that the barrier created by virtual dance class is now shattered."

— BONNIE HOBBS

# Fairfax Academy's MCT Fest Is May 8

The Fairfax Academy's annual MCT Fest (music plus computer technology) is a concert-style event comprising all original songs, lyrics and music by MCT students. And this year's spring showcase – both in-person and livestreamed – is slated for this Saturday, May 8, from 1-3 p.m.

The in-person show will be presented at the Veterans Amphitheater, outside and behind Fairfax City Hall, at 10455 Armstrong St. (Rain date, May 16). In-person tickets are on a first-come, first-served basis, as only 100 attendees – including the MCT students – are allowed.

Tickets for both formats are available online; a \$15 donation is suggested for the in-person show, and a \$10 donation for the YouTube performance. All donations go back into the Music Computer Technology program at the academy. Providing entertainment during intermission will be Korean Nanta Drums students, plus Korean fan dancers from Fairfax Academy's Korean program.

MCT Fest 2021 includes 10 acts encompassing blues, a

capella, rock, pop punk, beat boxing, DJing and garage-band style music, while incorporating student singers and songwriters from the MCT program. The performers all attend MCT classes at Fairfax Academy and represent 10 different FCPS high schools.

Every aspect of this event is student-managed, with guidance from MCT instructor Christopher Johnston and the Spotlight on the Arts Commission. And all the songs will be performed by the students who wrote the music, themselves.

For in-person tickets, go to: <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/2691325/mct-fest-2021-in-person-performance-fairfax-fairfax-academy-theatrecommunications-and-the-arts>.

Livestream tickets via ETIX are available at <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/7170913/mctfest-2021-livestream-performance-fairfax-fairfax-academy-theatrecommunications-and-the-arts>. To view the livestreamed event, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0kn3am3QbNFues2Fob9AjA>.

# Meeting Increased Mental Health Needs

## Affordable treatment options highlighted during National Mental Health Month

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**R**esulting from the tumultuous and emotionally charged year past year, there's been an uptick in reported mental health conditions. The demand for mental health treatment for conditions such as anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation have increased by nearly 40 percent over the past year. During May, Mental Health Awareness Month, those in the profession are working to raise awareness, educate the public and fight stigma around mental health.

"The stress of the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and other civil rights atrocities over the past year have certainly driven more people to seek out behavioral healthcare services, said Kurt Larrick, assistant director, Arlington County Department of Human Services. "Surveys show a major increase in the number of U.S. adults who report symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression during the pandemic, compared with surveys before the pandemic."

"It is tough to secure affordable treatment," added Allana Taylor, Director of Student Counseling Services at Marymount University. "This is true, especially in this area where private providers are able to fill their caseloads with clients who can afford to pay out of pocket."

Community Services Boards (CSB), a public agency with a mission of providing affordable mental health services to both children and adults, is one resource in Virginia. "CSBs are the best alternatives ... for low-cost services," said Taylor. "Every county or locality has a CSB. They provide publicly funded mental health, substance abuse, and intellectual disability services. CSBs offer a sliding fee scale based on income. Those who typically have minimal income, can be seen for low to no cost."

"The CSB offers a range of telehealth and in-person services including individual and group therapy ... psychiatric services and crisis stabilization," said Lisa Flowers of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. "Individuals are assessed and based on need are provided a treatment recommendation to the appropriate level of care."

On college campuses mental health is often neglected by students. On college campuses many students feel embarrassed or ashamed when it comes to discussing their personal struggles, says Jennifer Kahler, director of Counseling and Psychological Services at George Mason University.

"[Students] often have a misconception that they only should seek help when or if their problems are



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

**Those who are experiencing mental health challenges are encouraged to seek assistance from agencies and therapists with income sensitive services.**

## Locating a Community Service Board Near You

CSB/BHA Directory - Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB)

**FAIRFAX-FALLS CHURCH CSB**

Phone: (703) 324-7000

Coverage Area: Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, City of Fairfax

Website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/#gsc.tab=0>

severe, not realizing seeking help earlier can often prevent the issues from becoming more severe," she said. "The stigma of seeking help for mental health issues, as well as the stigma of having mental health needs remain a problem at Mason as well as universities throughout the U.S."

In addition, students are busy and feel as though they do not have time to seek counseling.

As part of STEP-VA, a long-term state mandated initiative designed to improve the community behavioral health services available to all Virginians, Arlington's Department of Human Services and Community Services Board, implemented same day access for behavioral healthcare services before the pandemic, says Larrick.

"With same day access, individuals who are interested in seeking mental health or substance use treatment services can get a service eligibility assessment on a walk-in basis, without an appointment," he said. "[When] the pandemic hit we had to change things around. We still do same day access, but instead of coming in person, we provide the services virtually or over the phone."

While acknowledging that stumbling blocks to mental health care still exist, Flowers says that mental health professionals, "are committed to tackling these barriers and continuing to let people know that [they] are going to do everything they can to help, to establish a rapport and to generate trust and meet the needs of those we serve and our communities."

"It is tough to secure affordable treatment. This is true, especially in this area where private providers are able to fill their caseloads with clients who can afford to pay out of pocket."

— Allana Taylor, Director of Student Counseling Services at Marymount University.

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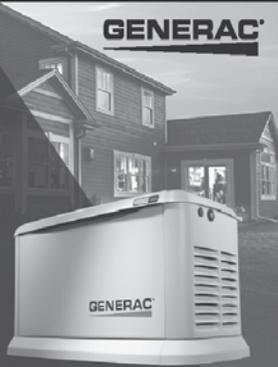
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#### Salvador "Buddy" Aguilar Masanque

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Buddy was born in Donsol, Philippines and moved to the Northern Virginia area in 1975. He worked in men's retail as an accountant, owned Flash Quality Photo for 10+ years, and Carmax until he retired.

Buddy loved the piano, travelling the world, and spending time with his family. He leaves behind his wife of 38 years (Josephine), six children (Clarissa, Joseph, Michael, James, Francis, Mark), and seven grandchildren (Nick, Maddie, Miles, Gabriel, Rowan, Caleb, Caspian).

Buddy will forever be remembered for his shy smile, gentle eyes, loving heart, and unconditional love.

### Obituary

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### Legals

### Legals

#### Public Hearing for the Town of Clifton, Virginia Proposed FY2022 Town Budget June 1, 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Clifton, Virginia will conduct an electronic Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. using Zoom teleconferencing audio and video service as permitted by law to consider the proposed FYE2206 Town Budget. The Public Hearing will be conducted in accordance with the Town of Clifton's Emergency Uncodified Ordinance to Establish Methods to Assure Continuity in the Town of Clifton Government and Conduct of Town Council Members Meetings During the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Emergency under Virginia Code § 15.2-1413.

The FY2022 proposed Town Budget will be posted on the Town's website [cliftonva.gov](http://cliftonva.gov) and a hardcopy will be posted at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton, VA 20124. All interested parties are encouraged to email the Town Clerk at [clerk@cliftonva.gov](mailto:clerk@cliftonva.gov) to receive instructions on how to access the electronic forum in order to express their views with respect to the proposed FY2022 Town Budget. Written comments on the proposed Budget may be submitted via email to the Town Clerk and via regular U.S. mail by sending them to P.O. Box 309, Clifton, VA, 20124 no later than May 30, 2021.

### Legals

#### City of Fairfax

Urgent Election Notice

The registration deadline to vote in the June 8, 2021 Democratic Primary Election is May 17, 2021.

Applications must be postmarked by this date or received in-person by 5 p.m. You may also apply online by 11:59 p.m. at <https://elections.virginia.gov>.

Office hours: M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
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				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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### EVERY SATURDAY

Community Market Opens. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. Featuring over 20 vendors, new and returning.

### DIAPER DAY DRIVE

Springfield Town Center is celebrating Mother's Day by supporting families in need in the Fairfax area. From now through May 16th, Springfield Town Center will raise awareness and host collection boxes for diapers and related supplies benefiting struggling families with small children. Springfield Town Center has partnered with Fairfax Diapers to host a Mother's Day Diaper Drive that will support local families that are experiencing a diaper need. Diaper donations can be dropped off at LOFT or Macy's at Springfield Town Center from now through Sunday, May 16th. Support a family by bringing an unopened diaper package of any size or brand to either retailer to be donated.

### STARTING MAY 2

Lorton Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lorton VRE Parking Lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd., Lorton. The Fairfax County Lorton Farmer's Market offers the season's best produce, meats, eggs, honey, artisan breads, coffee, a wide range of prepared foods, pickles, fresh juices, microgreens, and more. Visit the website" <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/lorton>

### SATURDAY/MAY 15

Lake Accotink 5K and 10K Race. 8:45 to 11 a.m. At Lake Accotink Park, Springfield. Event by Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation and Bishop's Events. For tickets, go to: [www.bishopseventregistrations.com/event/2021-spring-lake-accotink-5k--10k](http://www.bishopseventregistrations.com/event/2021-spring-lake-accotink-5k--10k)

### NOW THRU MAY 20

Free Citizenship Classes. 7-9 p.m. Online Zoom Classes. Free on-line ZOOM classes sponsored

by Lord of Life Lutheran Church and Congregation Olam Tikvah. Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9 PM, April 6-May 20. ZOOM link will be sent to registered students. Students register at [www.lordoflifeva.org](http://www.lordoflifeva.org).

### GREENDROP GRAND OPENING

The new GreenDrop for charitable donations has come to the Greater Springfield Volunteer Fire Department's parking lot, 7011 Backlick Road, Springfield. Time to clean out and declutter, help the Earth, recycle and help a charity. Donations of clothing and household items will benefit the Red Cross, the Purple Heart or the Nat'l Fed of the Blind. Visit the website: [www.gogreendrop.com](http://www.gogreendrop.com)

### SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER LAUNCHES "SUPPORT BLACK-OWNED BRANDS"

Springfield Town Center is making it easier for guests to support Black-owned businesses and brands all year through the launch of "Support Black-Owned Brands and Businesses 365." Springfield Town Center has created a home on its website highlighting Black-owned retailers, restaurants and pop-up shops. The website also creates awareness for fashion brands, cosmetics, fragrance lines, entertainment, athletic and other products for sale within other retailers at the mall. Visit the website: <https://springfieldtowncenter.com/calendar/view/5403>

### ONGOING

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

# Police Chief Controversy

FROM PAGE 3

"We are disappointed in how the new police chief was selected and how the public was excluded from the process. This lack of transparency gives us several concerns about the new chief and the future of the police force," said Campblin. "Unlike the 2013 hiring process for the former police chief, Fairfax County residents were excluded from the candidate evaluation and interview sessions," she said.

**IN AN APRIL 29 STATEMENT**, McKay said that community outreach included over 275 community meetings and calls, over 450 emails to stakeholders, and a survey that received over 3,000 responses.

Diane Burkley Alejandro, Lead Advocate of ACLU People Power Fairfax, said that they have and had concerns with the lack of community collaboration in an open public interview, evaluation, and hiring processes for police chief at the Board of Supervisors level. She said, "We sent a letter [March 10, 2021] on behalf of the Coalition asking that the interview process be public or, at a minimum, that there be a public representative on the interview committee."

Alejandro added that the precedent

for public involvement at that level was established when Fairfax County Police Chief Edwin C. Roessler Jr. was hired in 1993. "Even though the Board says they want to be in closed session because it is personnel, the law does not require that. It permits, but it doesn't require."

Alejandro said community members and police reform advocates wanted to hear or read the answers police chief candidates gave to questions and why Supervisors would choose a given candidate as the best choice.

Speaking of Davis, Alejandro said, "What's in his heart of hearts? And equally important can he gain the trust of the people of color in Fairfax, given what came out."

Sujatha Hampton of Great Falls, Education Chair of Fairfax County NAACP tweeted that the @FairfaxNAACP statement on the new police chief hire is comprehensive and long, but she didn't want anyone to miss this part of the message calling it the crux:

"The Fairfax County NAACP does not have confidence in the process by which the new Police Chief was hired-or its results - and requests that the County, in collaboration with the community, conduct a transparent search for a new Police Chief together," wrote Karen T. Campblin, President Fairfax NAACP.

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## Cats in the Belfry



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Have I mentioned in print lately that we, resident owners of "Belly Acres" in Burtonsville, are back to being a five-indoor-cat household? A few months back on a Sunday afternoon, my wife Dina offered up the seemingly harmless explanation for her need to go out that day. She said she was going to the local CVS for a few things, things which I had no interest or need to be involved in, so off she drove, with yours truly having nary a worry in the world. Little did I realize what actually was going on.

I don't recall exactly the time element because when my wife goes to the store - of any kind, without a chaperone, I know from decades of experience that left to her own devices, she won't be returning home anytime soon. So how ever long she was gone, I hadn't a clue or a concern. I know the drill. She's a big girl, but she is deliberate. At her main adult employer, the former Tivoli's Restaurant in Roslyn, the owners jokingly nicknamed her "Speedy," because she wasn't. Nonetheless, she was however, a valued, trusted and appreciated employee.

Eventually, I saw Dina drive down our driveway. She parked in her usual spot alongside the house. A few seconds later she walked empty-handed into the house and asked for my assistance in unloading whatever was still in the car. "Whatever," unbeknownst to me, were the two two-year-old tabby siblings she had just "rescued" waiting patiently in their cat carriers on the back seat. Dina could barely control her excitement as she opened the back door for me. At first glance, it became quite obvious what the 'whatever' was: it was Louie and Mia. I grabbed one of the cat carriers and walked into the house. Dina had not really mentioned, until she did, that she had been wanting to increase our cat count to five after last year's two losses: Biscuit and Chino, who both died within six months of one another, from complications due to their diabetes. Brothers in more than arms, Biscuit and Chino, who were nicknamed "The Buff Boys" due to their color, were the sweetest, most loving and affectionate cats one could ever hope to have.

Six months or so since the surviving brother, Biscuit had succumbed to his illness, Dina began her search for a new pair of cat siblings. After a few fits and starts and an application that was rejected, Dina's month-long

search was finally rewarded on this Sunday. She met the owners in Beltsville, Md. where they exchanged the necessary pleasantries. The couple had to give up the cats because their infant daughter was allergic to them/their dander. Regrettably they needed to find a new home for these two cats whom they had nurtured since they were kittens. They were very generous with their supplies. They gave us wet and dry food, litter, a litter box and some toys. After a few sad goodbyes, Dina drove off for home, cats in tow where cluelessly I had been minding my own business.

We each brought in a cat carrier and once inside, opened their doors and introduced the cats to their new home. Out they scampered and of course began to sniff. Our other cats were nowhere to be found which given the territorial disputes which often occur when new cats are introduced to an existing cat home, was fortunate in that their first steps were not in retreat from some unexpected cat attack. Though I wasn't of similar mind with respect to Dina's feeling that we needed more cats, I have nevertheless embraced their arrival. There is no doubt that their presence has brought new life (no pun intended) into our home. Now, everywhere I go, or look, there seems to be a cat to talk to (or a hissing/growling fight to break up). No matter. It's nothing that experienced cat owners wouldn't expect. And though I was definitely surprised when I saw the two cat carriers secured in the backseat, now nearly two months later, I couldn't imagine our life without them.

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

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