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Food for Neighbors Five Years

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Katie Foley, 13, a Herndon Middle School student, organizes a snack bin for Food For Neighbors, a nonprofit that helps teens who are food insecure. "It's a good chance to help people out," she said.

Herndon's Downtown on the Cusp

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



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NEWS



PHOTOS BY STELLA MACLORE/COURTESY RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER.

Akua Allrich and The Tribe will perform at Reston Community Center on Nov 20, 2021 at 8 p. m.

CenterStage with the Warmth of Winter

Akua Allrich and The Tribe returns with a celebration of the winter season.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

As winter approaches the dark nights become longer, the air more chilly and the indoors beckons, warming seasonal entertainment begins to entice. With the change of seasons, CenterStage invites patrons to “The Dancing Light Celebrating the Warmth of Winter,” from Akua Allrich and The Tribe, in a celebration of their return to Reston.

“Reston CenterStage has a wonderful energy. I love working with the amazing staff and performing for the community there.” said Allrich. “Everyone is so open and positive, I believe any artist would be excited by the opportunity to create art in such a warm environment.”

Thrilled to return to live, in-person performance after more than 18 months with pandemic health and safety restrictions, Allrich aims “to inspire with my music and bring a sense of joy to the listener. My sound is an amalgamation of Pan-African cultures; including Jazz, Blues, Soul, various traditional African rhythms, funk, etc.”

“It has been a very difficult journey through this pandemic for all of us, so I sit in the grace of my blessings.” added Allrich. “I really craved the exchange of energy as a performing artist. That is something that gives me the inspiration to create and grow as an artist.”

For those less familiar with Allrich, she is a jazz vocalist and Washington, DC, native with musical roots and grounding in jazz and pan-African music. She has performed in music venues throughout the DC area and well beyond, including The Kennedy Center as well as Reston CenterStage.

“The colder seasons have always been a great way for families and communities to come together and create warmth with and from each other.” noted Allrich. “So while it is colder and darker, I wanted to



Akua Allrich and The Tribe will perform at Reston CenterStage on Nov 20, 2021 at 8 p. m.

Where and when:

Reston Community Center presents Akua Allrich and The Tribe – “The Dancing Light Celebrating the Warmth of Winter” at CenterStage, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston, VA. Performance on Saturday, Nov. 20 at 8 p.m. Ticket Price: \$15. Non-Reston Ticket Price: \$20. Call 703.476.4500 or visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com. Note: Patrons required to wear a mask. For detailed health and safety guidance go to www.restoncommunitycenter.com

highlight the amazingly resilient ways we are able to create after the harvest season has ended, and the beauty that comes from the need to create that warmth.”

Asked what audiences can expect at her Reston appearance, “We are going to fill the space with amazing energy from songs that represent that vibe. The music is an eclectic mix of tunes that incorporate Jazz, South African and West African rhythms, rhythms of the Caribbean, and the Americas. It’s going to be fun, emotional and inspiring.” And perhaps even the opportunity to dance, never know.

Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Site



Date	Item
November 2015	Town issues RFP for Downtown Redevelopment Project
November 2016	Town selects Comstock for Downtown Redevelopment Project
October 2017	Town requests \$1.2m in County EOR funding for project
June 2018	County Board approves \$1.2m for project from EOR
January 2020	Town Project Rebid – Take 1
August 2020	Town Project Rebid – Take 2
December 2020	Land closing
December 7, 2021	Board Review of \$5m in EOR Funding Authorization
December 2021	Ground Breaking
August 2023: Garage	Substantial Completion
December 2023: Arts Center	
March 2024: Entire Project	

The nine-year timeline

Site of the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project anchored by the Town-owned arts center.

Supervisors Voice No Opposition to Town's \$5M Request

Chill the Bubbly, groundbreaking for Herndon's Downtown Redevelopment Project could be in 2021.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of a six year series.

Nearly 104 years after The Big Fire of 1917 destroyed much of Herndon's downtown, the near-final hurdle to history looms. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is scheduled on Dec. 7 to review the Town of Herndon's request of \$5 million in Economic Opportunity Reserve funding authorization to cover a gap in the Town's economic model and make its Downtown Redevelopment Project a reality. Given the anticipated approval, the course is set for the project's long-awaited groundbreaking on or about Dec. 31, 2021.

On Oct. 26, during the Board of Supervisors Economic Advisory Commission meeting, Chair John W. Foust (D-Dranesville) said Herndon's downtown revitalization was important to the Board because it creates the type of community that would attract the 21st-century workforce. "[This] is how we are going to be a successful economy going forward," Foust said. Seeing and hearing no objection to the \$5 million request, Foust said, "I'm assuming we're okay with bringing it to the board and taking a vote." While the Town must follow up with the County Board and staff on specific issues raised during the meeting, the Board review of the \$5 million in Economic Opportunity Reserve Funding authorization is scheduled for Dec. 7, 2021.

During the Oct. 26 EAC meeting, William "Bill" Ashton, town manager of the Town of Herndon and Scott Sizer, Incentives and Catalytic Projects Department of Economic Initiatives, Fairfax County Government, presented. According to Ashton, forward movement on the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment hinges on receiving the \$5 million from the County's EOR. The grant would



Town Manager William "Bill" Ashton, Town of Herndon



Scott Sizer, Incentives and Catalytic Projects Department of Economic Initiatives



Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville District)



Supervisor Penny Gross (D-Mason District)

help close a project gap variance of \$23.6 million. Under an agreement with developer Comstock Herndon Venture, LC, the Town agreed to share 50 percent of the project gap totaling \$12.3 million each.

Ashton said that although the Total Project Estimate in 2016 was just under \$80 million when the Request for Proposal Process went to bid initially, in 2019, that price tag jumped to \$111.4 million. Higher costs for lumber, steel, concrete, especially precast concrete in the region for data centers and other uses "drove costs to curve up considerably."

Ashton added that during COVID, Comstock rebid the process with the hope that the economic slowdown would create some room. Ashton said that yielded only a \$2 million savings, bringing it down to \$109.1 million TPE. "And that's roughly where it sits today," he said.

Working with Comstock on some value engineering and reducing one underground level of the parking garage dropped it to a \$24.6 million gap. At that point, the Town and Comstock split that gap in half between the two parties. Comstock is to address \$12.3 million, and the Town is to address its share of the project gap of \$12.3 million.

The Town is putting into place the following adjustments: less utility/permit fee reduction, -\$2.35 million; less real estate tax abatement, -\$1.91 million; deferred recreational proffer, -\$0.49 million; elimination of the arts center mezzanine, -\$0.25 million; and Town of Herndon/Developer Partner, -\$2.30 million; totaling \$7.3 million. That results in a gap of \$5 million.

"Which is why we are here today," said Ashton.

Ashton said that the obligation to build out the Arts Center is the Town's responsibility. "The county has put \$1.2 million toward it; the balance is the town's responsibility," Ashton said. "Funding source will depend on several factors, to include overall cost, timing, and funding demands of other capital projects."

Scott Sizer presented the economic analysis for the Board. Sizer reminded the supervisors that they approved a \$1.2 million EOR funding request in June 2018, but it was not released. So, with the new request of \$5 million EOR funding, the total contribution from the Board would be \$6.2 million. The County portion of the project would be 5.7 percent. No commitment of funds would be for operations, solely capital improvements to the project.

The Town engaged JLL to evaluate the

Changes

Highlights of the current Herndon project characteristics compared to the 2017 approved project plan- The Arts Center is reduced from 18,000 square feet to 16,265, and the mezzanine is eliminated; the garage that originally featured 761 spaces with 339 provided to the Town is reduced to 726 spaces of which 330 are reserved for the Town and it is redesigned with a reduction in one underground level of parking; the number of apartments is reduced from 281 apartments to 273 apartments. No affordable housing is included in the project.

project's real estate evaluation. Based on JLL's March 2021 staff analysis and the County's sensitivity analysis, the project would result in an annual increase of \$886,500 in Fairfax County General Fund Real Estates taxes in the first year of occupancy. Under Town of Herndon ownership, the site provides \$0 real estate taxes.

The County's payback period is expected to be in year eight, depending on the sensitivity analysis. The project would continue to generate new revenue. "It is anticipated that future revenue after Year 11 will be about a million dollars a year going forward," Sizer said.

Foust closed by saying when the Town of Herndon invests, the County benefits because the tax rate in the County is \$1.15, and the tax rate in Herndon is 0.265 cents. "This project, in my opinion, is going to result in property value increases across the top. It's not limited to the new development," he said.

Supervisor Penny Gross (D-Mason) asked Ashton: "Arts centers are expensive to build and maintain... Tell me a little bit more about what you envision for this arts center?"

Ashton-listed an approximate 200-seat black box theatre; community space in addition to art space as well as gallery space, and some opportunities for interactive art classes.

Gross followed up: "How do we make our art centers available to the general public, so they don't have to go buy a ticket to go see something?"

"We have a fully programmable outdoor space... about 50 feet wide... That will be obviously free to the public because it is a public space," Ashton said. Also there will be opportunities for scholarships to that programming.

See www.connectionnewspapers.com for more questions and answers.



From left, Herndon Middle School students, Garrett Evan, 13; Bennett Shivers; and Jack Foley, 13; accompanied by Sarah Foley, unload a trunk full of Food For Neighbors Red Bags. "It's good to help out the community," said Bennett Shivers



Katie Foley, 13, a Herndon Middle School student, organizes a snack bin for Food For Neighbors, a nonprofit that helps teens who are food insecure. "It's a good chance to help people out," she said.



Colleen Luczak, FCPS school counselor at Herndon Middle School

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Five Years Supporting Teens Experiencing Food Insecurity

Food For Neighbors engages community to help feed students.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Simply because long lines for free food are no longer making front pages of newspapers as the pandemic enters its 20th month and Fairfax County Public Schools [FCPS] has resumed in-person learning for a reported 99.5 percent of its 2021-2022 students, the demand for food in our community, particularly among youth and teens, has not gone away. Food insecurity persists, even though enrolled FCPS children attending in-person are provided with a nutritious meal for breakfast and lunch each day at no cost to all families. The school system also provides no-cost, bulk meal kits, containing five days of breakfast and lunch and seven days of afternoon snacks and supper meals at designated pick-up locations across the county for students attending schools virtually and community members.

On Saturday, Nov. 6, Food for Neighbors, celebrated its fifth anniversary in front of Herndon Middle School, in conjunction with the organization's bi-monthly Red Bag Program. "If this program did not exist, it would put much pressure on social and guidance staff who are already overworked," said Chrissy Turgean of Herndon.

Co-founder Karen Joseph recognized the service of local individuals from Reston, Herndon, and Chantilly who serve as the organization's engines, as well as partner businesses and Fairfax County Public School staff. As Joseph prepared to do so, cars loaded with Red Bags continued to arrive, and



On Nov. 6, Food For Neighbors hosted its Red Bag collecting and sorting event to benefit five FCPS middle and high schools: Herndon High, Herndon Middle, Reston's Langston Hughes Middle and the PTSA Food Pantry at South Lakes High School, and Mountain View Alternative High in Centreville.

volunteers rushed to unload the food, drinks, and hygiene items.

"We have 108 drivers out on the roads, and we're collecting from over 1,200 households today," Joseph said. "To date, the Herndon area has collected about 80,000 pounds of food that we've distributed over these five years. Overall, in the growth of the organization, we've collected over 200,000 pounds of food," she added. According to Joseph, the Herndon Middle School location was one of five active sorting sites throughout the day collecting individual, ready-to-cook meals and snack items for distribution to students in need at 25 middle and high schools.

Joseph praised Colene Luczak, a school counselor at Herndon Middle School; Donna Sosa, a school social worker at Herndon High School; Katie Benson, a school social worker at Mountain View Alternative High in Centreville; Aimee Monticchio, the principal of Langston Hugh Middle School; and Roberta Gosling of Reston, the co-founder of the South Lakes High School PTSA Food



"We have 108 drivers out on the roads, and we're collecting from over 1,200 households today."

— Co-founder Karen Joseph

Pantry. She presented each with a Food for Neighbors banner to display at their respective schools.

Joseph also recognized the volunteer team from Sprouts Farmers Market in Herndon. "Our community partner since they opened their doors in Herndon a few years ago," Joseph said. "We have been the recipients of their grants every year in the area for the past three years, which is huge for us. And not only that, but you guys often send your staff here and your crew to help us move all these heavy bins and this food around."

Megan Thompson of Reston, who attended the event, said, "In our community, we

have many unaccompanied minors who we support through the Food for Neighbors program."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], food insecurity includes a lack of food and a lack of quality, diversity, and desirability in the diet. Even though the USDA issued pandemic flexibilities for schools and daycare facilities through June 2022 to support healthy, nutritious no-cost meals to all children, school meals may be the only meals available to certain in-person students.

Food For Neighbors reports partnerships with the following Fairfax County Public Schools. There are others in Loudoun County.

Bryant HS, Edison HS, Falls Church HS, Herndon HS, Herndon MS, Irving MS, Jackson MS, Key MS, Langston Hughes MS, Lewis HS, Mountt Vernon HS, Mountain View Alternative HS, Quander Road HS, Sandburg MS, South Lakes HS, Twain MS, West Potomac HS, West Springfield HS, Whitman MS



On your mark! Get set! Stroll!

'Do It Your Way' For South Lakes Food Pantry

More than 225 participants strolled, skipped, and even raced along a grueling 650-step course around Lake Anne Plaza on Sunday to support efforts to fight food insecurity in the South Lakes High School community. The 4th Annual Do it Your Way 0.5K included a donut stop halfway through the course, a photo op on the Bob Simon bench, and prizes for best costume, most spirited, largest teams, and farthest away participant (Rome, Italy). VIPs, celebrity starters, and lots of fans who cheered on the race participants.

Celebrity Starter and South Lakes High School Principal Kim Retzer said, "It's been so rewarding to see how successfully the SLHS PTSA Food Pantry has supported so many of our students."

This tongue-in-cheek "race" is designed as a community-building event and FUNdraiser to support the South Lakes High School PTSA Food Pantry. In addition to race participants, many local sponsors provided their support, including Reston Community Center, Good Shepard Lutheran Church, Trader Joe's Reston,

Restoration Church, Dev Technology Group, Long & Foster Reston, and Century 21 Redwood Realty Reston. Lake Anne Brew House hosted the event, and Aspen Jewelry Designs donated a beautiful pendant for the raffle.

The South Lakes High School pyramid has more than 4,200 students on free and reduced lunch. The PTSA Food Pantry is targeted toward helping families fill in the weekend gap. Since the Food Pantry opened in April 2017, it has distributed more than 60,000 bags of food and toiletries weighing in at more than 800,000 pounds. The Food Pantry currently serves more than 200 students and families each week through high school students shopping at the pantry, family curbside distribution, and grocery gift cards to families identified by school social workers across the South Lakes pyramid. Proceeds from this event provide funds to purchase food, toiletries, and other necessities for the PTSA Food Pantry. To learn more about the Food Pantry you can go to: <https://www.southlakesptsa.org/pantry>

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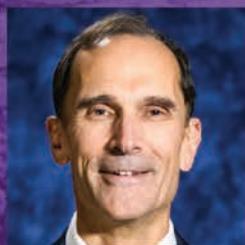
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Schools Lost on Nov. 2

BY PAT HYNES

The winner of the Virginia governor's race, Glenn Youngkin, would have you believe that teachers can't be trusted to teach historic truth or inclusive literature without victimizing white children. He would have you believe that school librarians push pornography on children and that parents have no right to challenge books. He wants you to think that school principals can't support trans students and keep girls safe in the bathroom at the same time.

None of that is true. The vast majority of parents know that none of that is true. Polls show that parents overwhelmingly trust their children's teachers and school leaders to provide safe, effective learning environments for their children. And every day, in classrooms across

every part of Virginia, educators earn that trust.

Unfortunately, most media and Democratic politicians failed to effectively challenge these destructive, divisive lies. Bullying school boards, teachers, librarians, and our most vulnerable students worked for Youngkin and the GOP. They are already doubling down for the 2022 midterm elections.

It's time for public school teachers, parents, and students in Virginia to get organized and get loud. We have to assume that politicians, parties, and many in the media will do no better going forward. We must make our own voices too loud to ignore.

Here's the truth about schools in Virginia:

Teachers empower students when we teach the whole, unvarnished truth about U.S. and Virginia history, from the first slave ships at Point Comfort, through the Capital of the Con-

federacy and Massive Resistance, to the systemic inequities that remain today.

Teachers empower students to think critically and empathically by exposing them to traditionally under-represented voices and stories in literature.

Teachers create safe, joyful learning environments for all students when they respect preferred names and pronouns.

Parents and students in Virginia overwhelmingly expect teachers to do these things because it's just good teaching.

Schools lost in Virginia on Nov. 2.

It's time for educators, parents, and students to speak up and protect our most important public institution.

Pat Hynes is a former member of the Fairfax County School Board, a teacher in Arlington and a Reston resident.

The People Have Spoken

DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

After the elections last week, the "blue" state of Virginia suddenly turned "red." Just look at a map of the Commonwealth with the cities and counties colored red if they voted Republican and blue if they voted Democratic, and the state is overwhelmingly red again. After the 2019 elections Democrats controlled the three statewide offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general and the two houses of the General Assembly. After the elections last week Republicans will control all those offices with the exception of the State Senate as soon as the winners are sworn in in January.

Under blue Democratic leadership over the last two years the state made transformational progress on issues of ending discrimination, enacting gun safety legislation, protecting a woman's right to choose, requiring a move to clean energy, ending the death penalty, easing access to the polls, and more. Will the change in political leadership in the state imperil these advances for which progressives took such pride, or will the state change direction or simply move

at a much slower pace?

The people have spoken, but what message will those assuming leadership positions have heard? Virginia had the reputation during most of the 20th century of having very restrictive laws related to registering and voting. The Commonwealth now has the most open and accessible laws on registering and voting in the country. Will there be an effort to restrict voting under the guise of preventing unknown instances of fraud? Will there be a forensic audit of the 2020 election results in which President Biden carried the state by ten percent as one of the new governor's advisers is quoted in the press as saying should happen? Does fraud in elections only occur when the other side wins?

What will happen with human rights in the new administration following one in which the rights of women, Blacks, and LGBTQ+ people have had such an emphasis with non-discrimination legislation and hate crime laws? Certainly we will not be re-erecting Confederate statues, but will we under the guise of eliminating the imagined "Critical Race Theory" rewrite history to take away references to slavery and racial discrimination in the state?

Will charges of soft on crime stop or reverse the meaningful work that has been done to reform the criminal justice system to eliminate racial discrimination and to expand programs aimed at rehabilitation? Will we continue the effort to distinguish criminal behavior from mental health episodes?

As is often the case in a democratic republic, the message from the people is not always clear nor is there agreement on how that message is to be interpreted. The message is sent following millions of dollars having been spent and endless television and digital commercials having been run to convince the public of the correctness of the side one is on. Casting the vote is one step in the process of influencing government policy and actions. As the new administration unfolds and the General Assembly convenes there will be additional opportunities for the public to be heard. We must use these opportunities to be clear on the direction we want the Commonwealth to proceed.

Thank you to all who supported me in my re-election campaign. I look forward to hearing from you and being your voice in the legislature. I am honored to represent you!

Redistricting Moves to the Supreme Court of Virginia

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

While the Nov. 2 election has dominated recent headlines, the process to redraw state and federal legislators' districts has been moving along six months late due to delays in receiving U.S. Census data.

Ever since Elbridge Gerry signed a bill to draw several Federalists out of their seats in 1812, gerrymandering has been a problem in the United States. I have always

believed that redistricting is one of the most significant fundamental problems in American democracy, and it has become especially problematic with the power of computer-aided mapping coupled with Big Data. Voters should pick their elected officials instead of elected officials picking their voters.

Based on this principle, I have always supported nonpartisan redistricting. In the 2019 Virginia General Assembly session, several

members introduced a constitutional amendment requiring nonpartisan redistricting, but after it emerged from rewrites in the legislative process it became bipartisan redistricting, which is very different. In 2020, legislators approved the measure a second time. I was one of two Senators who voted "no" because I do not support the involvement of elected officials or partisans in redistricting and I be-

SEE REDISTRICTING, PAGE 9



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Creating a Holiday-Ready Kitchen

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As the holiday season begins in less than two weeks, a home's kitchen is the center stage for holiday parties and even casual gatherings with friends. But many people feel that their kitchen could use an overhaul. Local designers offer suggestions for making the best of your space.

"Though a remodeling project is unrealistic given the time constraints, minor tweaks can spruce up or refresh a kitchen," said Angela Morrison, designer and founder of Morrison Style in Vienna. "You don't have to redo your entire house for the holidays. You can easily do a few easy things to make it look updated for the holidays."

After giving her kitchen a quick makeover in advance of a Hanukkah party that she hosted for her children's friends and their parents three years ago, Linda Goldstein, a Bethesda based mother and interior designer, says that she developed several strategies for making a big impact on a dated kitchen in a minimal amount of time.

"I tried several design tricks, so I know that they work," she said. "I have shared these with my clients who have short lead times, but they want to have a kitchen that looks decent for the holidays. You can make mini adjustments that have a big impact and don't cost a lot of money."

Before tackling any design project, Fairfax based designer Julia Tull of Tull and Foley Designs believes in starting with the basics.

"During the holidays we are cooking a lot more food at one time, it's important to make a note of the things that are currently on your countertops and see what can be packed away to free up much needed space. Crockpots and waffle irons can be stored elsewhere."

Something as simple as a fresh coat of paint can transform a kitchen with a minimal investment in time and money. "Over even just a few years, paint can start to look dingy and dirty, and this can really bring down the look and feel of your kitchen," said Jennifer Moriarty, an interior design student who lives in Alexandria. "Instead of leaving it, take a day or two and add a fresh coat of paint to your cabinets and kitchen walls."

Updating hardware can give an outdated kitchen an updated look. "Replace the kitchen pulls and handles," said Moriarty. "It's not a bad idea to splurge on them and reuse them if you decide to remodel your kitchen in the near future."

Replacing a kitchen's window treatments can transform a room instantly, easily and inexpensively suggests private interior designer Anita Stanley of Woodbridge. "The design options are plentiful," she said. "Very few things transform the style of a room like window treatments."

Replacing outdated or worn flooring might be a long-term project, but Chris Katkish, general manager, InSite Builders & Remodeling in Bethesda suggests a quick fix.

"Consider using Peel and stick tile for flooring," he said. "Not a permanent solution but could be just enough to get through the holidays."

Replacing lighting will brighten a kitchen space and create an updated look. "Add inexpensive under-counter LED lighting," said Katkish. "Toe kick lighting is not very common, but a great way to make a space pop."

Lighting can make even the most dated cabinets look chic, said Linda Berkson of Berkson Interiors in Vienna. "Under cabinet lighting brings attention to the beautiful tile work of your backsplash and adds a festive glow to your kitchen," she said. "Under cabinet lighting kits are easy to install and can be found on Amazon."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Adding holiday accessories to a kitchen countertop can create a festive space.

Holiday lights are for more than trimming the tree. "As the days grow shorter, lighting becomes more comforting," said Morrison. "Put mini lights on top of your cabinets. You buy different color lights and swap out the color for the particular holiday. Orange lights work for Thanksgiving, blue for Hanukkah and red and green for Christmas."

Try adding accessories in holiday colors, suggests lead designer Jen Patton of Patton and Patton Interiors. "You can swap out things like potholders, vases, dishware, and candles from everyday patterns to holiday-inspired ones," she said. "Add a few cheerful touches of red, green, and silver. Maybe you could add a garland on the wall or a small vase with pinecones, festive berries, and candles for a centerpiece."

"If you have the space, you can hang a wreath on one of your walls or drape garland on top of a cabinet," said Patton.

"Do you get a lot of cards?" asks Berkson. "Perhaps attach them to cascading grosgrain or another type of ribbon and turn a plain wall into a festive display."

Even those with Formica countertops that are reminiscent of the 1970s, can create the illusion of elegance and festivity. "If you don't like your counters and don't have the time or money to redo them, you can always cover sections with holiday placemats or nice cutting boards," said Patton.

When the counters are satisfactory, they can be versatile. "Take one section of a countertop and make it the drink center," said Tracy Morris, Tracy Morris Design, based in McLean, VA. "That way, you will not have guests making drinks where you are trying to cook. Line up the bottles, fill a decanter and show your guests a great time."

Use the space to create stations that are streamlined and inviting. "It's a quick way to update the kitchen for the holidays and keeps [guests] out of the work space, but still part of the conversation," said Allie Mann, designer and senior interiors specialist with Case Architects & Remodelers in Falls Church, VA.

Those fortunate enough to have a kitchen island can enjoy the luxury of an additional canvas on which to express holiday creativity. "Consider using it to lay out a buffet," said Nadia Subaran of Aidan Design in Bethesda. "It could also serve as a great kids' table."

As with other facets of the impending holiday festivities, practicing expectation management with kitchen design is essential for a peaceful Yuletide season. "You have to be realistic about what can and can't be done," said Berkson. "You can embellish your kitchen table and counters with simple seasonal décor, but you can't redesign it in two weeks. Try to get easy kitchen maintenance done now and make a mental note of any bigger projects you'd like to complete next year."

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'A Holiday Classic with a Heartwarming Message'

Centreville High presents musical version of 'A Christmas Carol.'

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Believing it's never too early to ring in the holiday season, Centreville High presents "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, Nov. 19-20, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Nov. 21, at 2 p.m. All tickets are \$10 at the door or via www.TheatreCentreville.com.

"Join us for the first CVHS musical in six years," said Director Christie Blewett. "Our theater students have devised their own script to create a musical version of this classic holiday tale, incorporating Christmas carols into the show. The cast and crew are dedicated to making the start of the 2021 holiday season as bright and meaningful as can be."

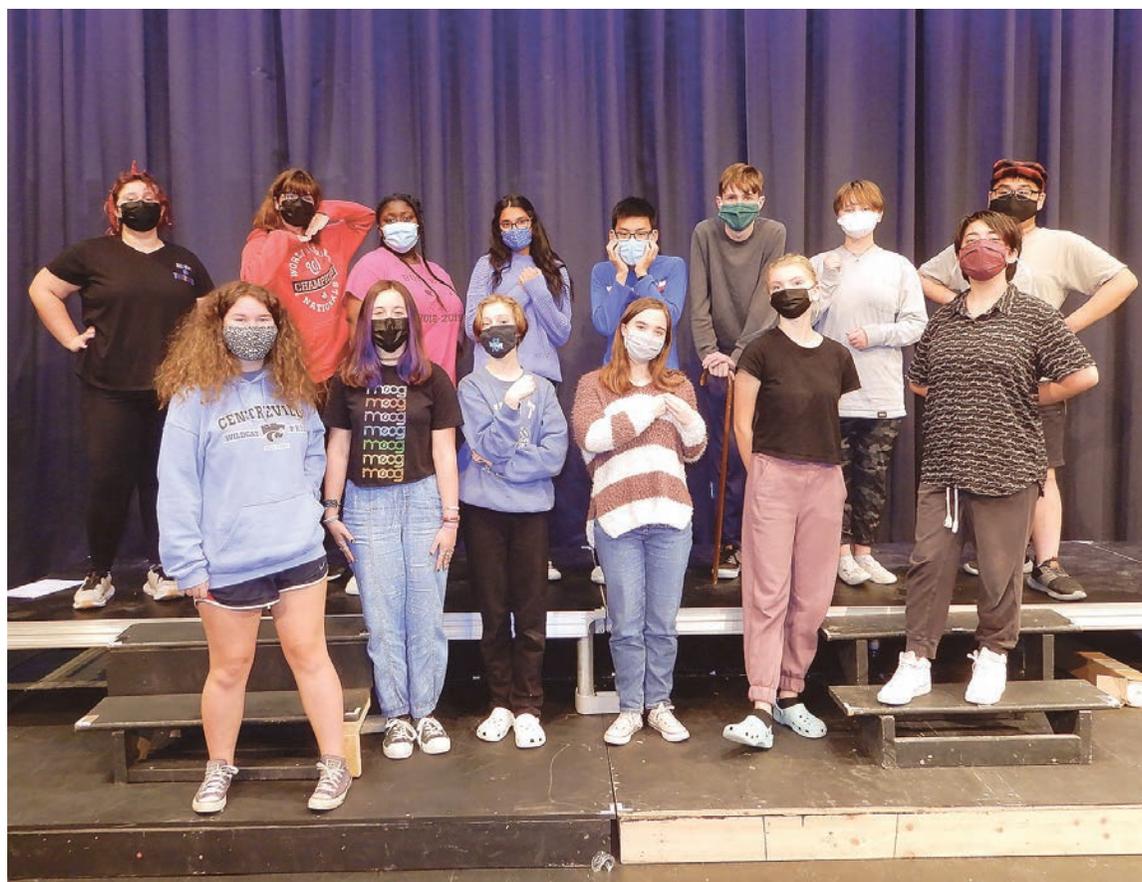
Besides the Centreville students comprising the cast and crew members, the show includes 19 elementary- and middle-school students from Liberty Middle and Union Mill and Bull Run elementary schools. "They play the roles of young Scrooge, Scrooge's sister Fan, Scrooge's friend Nick, Ignorance, Want and the lad who fetches the Christmas turkey," said Blewett. "And all shows are masked, socially distanced and guaranteed to be family friendly."

Portraying Ebenezer Scrooge is junior Evan Williams. "Scrooge is a grody, old man who's had his heart turned sour by past Christmases that left a bad mark on him," said Williams. "His fiancé, Belle, broke up with him then, and his business partner, Jacob Marley, died at Christmastime. He wants to change but doesn't see any reason to. He's pushed people away, so he doesn't want to celebrate the holidays with them because they bring back bad memories."

Williams enjoys his role because "I get to portray an old person and can act really grumpy and show some comedy in that, as well. I also like playing off the other characters – they contribute to my part." And he especially likes the song, "It Feels Like Christmas," because "it has a really Christmassy and jolly spirit and is cheerful and upbeat."

As for this production, he said, "It's a holiday classic. And the audience will appreciate the heartwarming message this show brings: Be kind to others and always help them."

Junior Katie Wood plays Mrs. Cratchit, mother to 19 children, including the disabled and sickly Tiny Tim, and wife of Bob Cratchit,



Ensemble members of Centreville High's "A Christmas Carol."



From left, Evan Williams (as Scrooge) rehearses a scene with Christian Chong and Katie Wood as Mr. and Mrs. Cratchit.

who works for Scrooge. "She's incredibly outgoing and wants the best for her children," said Wood. "She wants them to grow up with

all the opportunities that, sadly, they don't have because of the poor wages Scrooge gives her husband. She's also loving, but when

in this show." His favorite song is the opening one, "Scrooge," taken from the Muppets' version of "A Christmas Carol." Said Kunkel: "I like its dark, frigid energy – which fits my character, who's poised and proper."

He said audiences will enjoy Centreville's unique twist on this show. "The actors' interpretations make the characters their own, and people will like seeing how everything comes together in one production," said Kunkel. "The costumes give that Victorian vibe; many were handmade, and you can see the love and care that was put into each one. I wear a Victorian-style, ruffled shirt, long tailcoat and top hat, true to the Dickens time period, right before the Victorian era."

Adama Sawi, a freshman, portrays the Ghost of Christmas Present. "He's jovial and represents Santa Claus," she said. "He also plays an important role in teaching Scrooge about how the Cratchits have been living – and how his awful treatment of them has caused them to be in absolute poverty. This ghost also shows him the happiness of the Christmas spirit and how to get into the holiday mood. Then the audience sees Scrooge change and soften."

"I enjoy playing this part and showing my character's fun, kind-spirited heart," continued Sawi. "And I get to see the Cratchit kids and really put Scrooge in his place and help him become a better person."

She especially likes singing, "It Feels Like Christmas," because "It makes me feel like a star, and it's something everyone can enjoy. I also like the chorus of 'Scrooge' and how the townspeople are united in disliking him." She said attendees will enjoy the audience interaction, choreography and songs. And, added Sawi, "Our show's based on the Muppets' version, and people will like seeing it performed live."

Sophomore Gabriel Amiryar is the stage manager. "We're all working together as a team to build this show," he said. "And after COVID, it's great to come back together and create positive bonds and a great environment, and I think we've all done a really good job."

Amiryar said the scenes take place in Scrooge's house, the Cratchits' home and Scrooge's workplace. "Our sets are Victorian era – fancy, but rustic," he said. "It's a seasonal and happy show that everyone should come and see."

she needs to stand up for herself and her family, she will."

"I adore playing her," said Wood. "It's a great opportunity for me to branch out and play someone mature. I really like working with the children and focusing on parts of the story that are less dark and deal with aspects of how a family grieves. And this show also celebrates the holidays."

During the musical, she sings "It Feels Like Christmas" with her theater class, as well as a solo, "Bless Us All," at the end. It's her favorite song because "It's a hopeful closing number and leaves you feeling full of the spirit of the holidays."

Wood said the audience will like "the creative choices the actors have made to portray their characters in a more abstract way. They'll also love the dance numbers' energy, in contrast to the darker and more emotional parts of the story."

This show has two narrators, Jaeden Kunkel and Will Jenkins. Kunkel, a junior, said they're "almost puppeteers, narrating the action and telling what the actors are doing. We'll also give extra context, such as explaining how they're feeling or why Scrooge knows a certain place."

He said it's "fun narrating and allows me to push my boundaries as an actor and make the audience relate to me as much as they do to the actors. This is my first, big role, and I'm really excited to be

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Redistricting Moves to the Supreme Court of Virginia

FROM PAGE 6

lieve the proposal was inadequately thought out. The amendment was placed on the ballot and approved by voters 65.6% to 34.31% in November 2020.

This summer, the Virginia Redistricting Commission was created and began work redrawing state Senate, House of Delegates and Virginia's Congressional districts after census data became available in late August. Four senators, four delegates and eight citizens were appointed, equally balanced between Democrats and Republicans. The Commission gridlocked on every important vote from the first day. It had two chairs, two lawyers and two map drawers. They could not agree on a committee process, on Virginia law or the requirements of the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. They produced multiple separate maps for every district and were unable to reconcile any of them because they ostensibly disagreed on the law and would

not negotiate.

Once the commission process fails, the Constitution requires the Supreme Court of Virginia to draw districts. Democrats and Republicans are required to submit three or more proposed special masters, legal representatives of the court who have no "conflicts of interest." The Supreme Court is required to pick one person to serve as a special master from each list, people who will be charged with putting together the maps within 30 days of their appointment. No one knows how that will work given that courts typically only pick one special master in court-administered proceedings.

Last week, the House and Senate Democratic Caucuses submitted three names. Each were experienced academics who had been previously selected by judges to redraw districts that suffered from legal or constitutional violations. The Republican Caucuses took a different tack. They proposed three partisans who have never

been appointed by any court in America to serve: (1) the Executive Director of the National Republican Redistricting Trust; (2) a Republican consultant who drew the hotly litigated 2010 Wisconsin Senate map for the Wisconsin Republicans and is now drawing maps for Texas Republicans; and (3) a data researcher who was paid \$20,000 by the Virginia Senate Republican Caucus two months ago for "consulting services."

The Senate and House Democratic Caucuses asked the Court to set deadlines for all caucuses to submit maps and for public hearings before and after the maps are proposed to give the public an opportunity to comment on the proposals. We also asked the Court to set up an online commenting system so that all comments can be filed and accessed electronically instead of submitted on paper and only reviewable in the Supreme Court Clerk's office in Richmond. The Republican Caucuses refused

to join our request.

No one is really sure what the process will be at this point. However, the Supreme Court is accepting comments in writing at its clerk's office. Please stay tuned to my Facebook, Twitter and Blog for information about how to participate. Redistricting now will happen very fast and these districts will be in place until after the 2030 census.

Many predict that there will be major changes to state Senate and U.S. Congressional districts in Northern Virginia given their current boundaries and population changes since the last census. Major changes are possible for some House of Delegates districts. The proposals and comment process, as allowed by the Supreme Court, will take place between Thanksgiving and Christmas or maybe beyond.

Please stay tuned and contact me if you have any questions at scott@scotturovell.org. It is an honor to serve in the Virginia Senate.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

THURSDAY/NOV. 11

First Veterans Day for New Flag at Frying Pan Farm Park. At 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Visitors to Frying Pan Farm Park will see something that's been in the works for a long time: the United States flag on a brand new and freshly installed flagpole. Jack Pitzer, the president of the Friends of Frying Pan Park who has volunteered at Frying Pan Farm Park for more than 40 years, felt so strongly that the site deserved a flag that he made a restricted donation to the Fairfax County Park Foundation to fund it. That donation was earmarked specifically for this project. The farm is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, including weekends.

THURSDAY/NOV. 11

Veterans Day Ceremony. 11 a.m. At Great Falls Freedom Memorial, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The annual Veterans Day Ceremony will be held at

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ROUNDUP

Scouting for Food Donations and Volunteers

Boy Scouts in the Sully District will be collecting food, this Saturday, Nov. 13, for Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' food pantry in Chantilly, which serves local families. Residents should leave nonperishable food items on their doorsteps by 8:30 a.m., and Scouts will come by and pick it up.

They'll then sort the items, from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., in the outdoor parking garage behind 14280 Park Meadow Drive in Chantilly, and volunteers are greatly needed to help them do it. Anyone who can lend a hand is encouraged to contact Debbie Culbertson at volunteer@wfcma.org to sign up for a time slot, or just show up at the sorting location. It can be cold, so dress in layers; all volunteers must wear masks.

'Hidden in Plain Sight' Training

Hidden in Plain Sight is an interactive program for adults to learn about the signs of risky behavior in teens and young adults. Topics include drug and alcohol use, mental-health concerns, eating disorders and risky sexual behaviors. It'll be presented Wednesday, Nov. 17, from 7-9 p.m., in the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Sign up at <https://bit.ly/fcpdhips>.

It's a hands-on learning adventure for parents and guardians only. Their eyes will be opened to notice important clues right in front of them – beginning with a setup of a teenager's bedroom which contains nearly 100 "red flags" that indicate risky behavior.

They'll see why these clues are important and receive up-to-date statistics, plus information about local trends. Law-enforcement officers will share experiences they've had in the community identifying risky behavior and helping place youth on the right path to a healthy life.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. The ceremony will honor all who have served our country in the Armed Forces. The event will include patriotic songs by the Langley Madrigals and remarks by retired Army Major General George Close. The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. The ceremony is open to all. Ample parking is available in the library parking lot. Visit the website: gffreedom.org



PHOTO COURTESY OF HERNDON ATHLETICS

The 2021 HHS Varsity Volleyball team poses after their victory at semi-finals on Saturday.

Herndon Volleyball Heads to States

Hornets advance to regional championship.

BY CHRIS BERGERON
HHS SPORTS REPORTER

Herndon is going to states! The Herndon Varsity volleyball team clinched a berth into the Virginia 6A state tournament with a win Saturday night versus the Chantilly Chargers in the region semi finals. Herndon lost the first set to the Chargers 20-25, but were able to win the next three beating the chargers in 4. The final set finished with a score of 25-14 as senior captain outside hitter Akasha Anderson got closer and closer to one thousand kills over her 4 years at Herndon. The kill to end the region semi's was Akasha's 959th kill. Anderson will have at least the regional finals, and the first round of the state tournament to get those 41 more kills. Anderson was awarded the Liberty District, and Northern Region Player of the year. Senior Captain and Setter Katie Cazenias credits the team's chemistry as a big part of the success this year as they finished the regular season with a 15-5 record, 2nd in the district tournament and now a guaranteed spot in the state tournament "Our chemistry on and off the court as a team is unmatched this year. We have such an amazing group of girls." This is the first ever state tournament appearance for Herndon Volleyball, Cazenias said "It doesn't feel real that we're going to states, I'm just so proud of everyone on the team because we have truly worked so hard for this." This was also the first time they advanced to the district championship and region championship. Herndon will travel to McLean High School on Tuesday November 9th to play the Highlanders who are 3-0 against the Hornets this year. Junior outside hitter Phoebe Adams looks to help change that. "We have played them three times now. We know what their strengths are and will be able to exploit them. We have practiced hitting certain ar-

reas to score and get over a bigger block than what we normally see." This is a historic year for the Hornets volleyball program and as they hope to get their first region championship this week.

Herndon Varsity Football Falls in Final Game

The Hornets took on the Marshall Statesmen at home Friday, Nov. 5. The Hornets were already missing numerous starters that were out due to injury. The Hornets would have to have a mistake-free game in order to compete with a tough Marshall team. The Hornets got off to a rough start and were held scoreless for the entirety of the game, taking a blow when starting QB Liam Willson left the game due to injury. The Hornets were unable to keep up, resulting in a 38-0 Marshall victory.

Success for Hornet Cross

Last Wednesday was the 2021 Northern Region Cross Country Championship Meet. Herndon High School had three runners representing the Hornets: for girls, Gillian Bushee and Tea Geary; and for the boys, Brandon Bunch. Brandon Bunch ran a strong race with a time of 16:16 and placed 21st to finish out his cross country career at Herndon High School. Tea Geary placed 13th and met her goal of running sub 19 minutes, with a time of 18:46. Gillian Bushee came in 2nd place with a time of 17:34 and qualified for the state championship meet this Saturday. Gillan is competing for the state title Saturday Nov. 13 at 10:30.

Herndon Freshman Football Concludes Impressive Season

The Hornets Freshman Football team capped off their season with a 41-0 win over Marshall on Wednesday, Nov. 3. The offense couldn't be stopped and the defense held strong, putting up their fifth shutout of the season and finishing their season with a final record of 7-1. The Hornets outscored their opponents by a combined 245 points across all eight games.

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"I Hope Nothing Bad Has Happened"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As heart-warming and sincere as this sentiment is, it's a bit of a window into my presumptive future. Similar in effect to the obituary I happened upon once in The Washington Post years ago. Randomly perusing the Obituary section, my eyes wandered up and to the right, and there it/he was: Samuel Tyson. You don't know him? Neither do I. But there it was beneath his photo, my exact date of birth including year: 9/30/54. It shook me up, I can tell you that. Seeing one's date of birth in the agate type of an Obituary section does give one pause: so that's what my date of birth is going to look like in the Obituary section. Yikes. It wasn't exactly a look into my future, but it was my birthdate.

This title was part of an email sent to our publisher inquiring about my whereabouts since the sender/reader hadn't seen my column for a few months. Again, so this is how some people might react when my column is no longer being printed, as in I'm no longer writing it, or anything else for that matter because I'll be "gishtorben," (Yiddish for dead). Again, a slice of death. It reminded me of a voice message my oncologist left me June of '20 - during the height of the pandemic. Because of an internal mechanism at my HMO, files on the computer are shrouded/darkened to indicate a patient's death. My oncologist came upon my computer file and it exhibited these patient-died clues. Shocked. My oncologist called my cell phone - hoping to talk to my wife, Dina, and when no one answered, proceeded to leave a nearly minute-long condolence message concerning my surprise death. Hearing that message was uncomfortable, sort of. Again, another slice of death moment. And not that we all don't occasionally have these near-misses in life, but when you're a cancer patient who originally received a "13 month to two year" prognosis, a "terminal" diagnosis if there ever was one; death/people dying/your proximity to any of it takes on an entirely new life - so to speak. You try not to get consumed by it, but when you've been told - quite unexpectedly, at age 54 and half that your life expectancy has just taken a 30-year hit, given your parent's age when they both died, the news tends to attach itself to you. As much as you try to be normal/you're pre-diagnosed self, after the medical facts are presented, jokes just aren't as funny, music isn't as uplifting and dancing - for me anyway, seemed particularly pointless. But since that's no way to live, I made a conscious effort to try to find humor in all of it and be as positive and upbeat as I could. Easier written than done.

That's because cancer/a serious medical condition is no laughing matter; "serious as a heart attack" to invoke an all-too-familiar refrain. But unless you find a way to navigate the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (make that misfortune) to quote Cerphe from his old "WHFS" days, life becomes dreary and not worth living. Somehow, one must find light in the all-encompassing darkness and push back against the forces of negativity/death. There's a spiral out there and the more you're able to fight back - emotionally, and not become a victim of your own circumstances, the greater your chances of finding some kind of happiness/accommodation/assimilation in your life. Still, having a less-than-ideal medical prognosis/diagnosis is all it's cracked up to be. Nevertheless, making the best of a bad situation seemed the only logical option for me. My diagnosis was bad enough on its own, I didn't need to make it any worse by droning on about it. I had to accept it and move on, which is exactly what I did. And now I find humor in the blackest of contexts.

Unlike the popular country-music song from a few years ago that sang "Live like you were dying," I want to live like I was living. I don't want to be affected by my disease. I've found a way to live with it, not simply to die from it. Life's too short. Don't I know it.

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

Republican Sweep

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Virginia has a long tradition of offering a counterpoint to presidential elections starting after the election of Democrat Jimmy Carter for president in 1976. Virginia responded by electing Republican John Dalton. Ever since then, it's been a pretty predictable pattern. After the Reagan Revolution in 1980, Virginia elected Democrat Chuck Robb governor. The election of Democrat Bill Clinton brought on the election of Republican George Allen, and the answer to Republican George W. Bush was Democrat Mark Warner.

Only one candidate for governor has been able to break the spell — Terry McAuliffe, who bucked the trend in 2013 by defeating Republican Ken Cuccinelli on the heels of Barack Obama's reelection. Democrats were hopeful that McAuliffe could pull it off again. But his campaign attempting to tie Republican Glenn Youngkin to former President Donald Trump failed as a wave of voters raised objections to anti-racism curriculum in schools and transgender students using the bathroom of the gender their choice.

"Unfortunately, Virginia's long-standing trend of electing a governor from the opposite party of the president continues," said Noam Lee, executive director of the Democratic Governors Association. "Sidestepping the issues that mattered to voters, the GOP lied and schemed to hide their candidate's extreme positions, and their far-right agenda won out."

Youngkin declared victory at a raucous victory party in Chantilly, thanking his family and outlining his agenda for the next four years. At the top of the list was education reform. He made no mention of critical race theory, the law-school concept that he has vowed to ban from public school classrooms. But he did promise the largest education budget in history, and he said he would expand charter schools. He also said he would deliver the largest tax refund ever, and he vowed to eliminate the grocery tax.

"This is our moment," said Youngkin. "Together, we will change the trajectory of this commonwealth."

The blame game has already started



PHOTO JAMAL NELSON/TWITTER

Republican gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin addresses a crowd Oct. 30 at Market Square in Old Town Alexandria. Youngkin upset Democratic nominee Terry McAuliffe in the Nov. 2 general election.

"Together, we will change the trajectory of this commonwealth."

— Governor-elect Glenn Youngkin

among Democrats, who are critical of the McAuliffe campaign for focusing too much attention on Trump and for not fighting back harder against allegations that critical race theory is taught in Virginia classrooms. As Democrats saw power slipping from their grasp Tuesday night, they were particularly angry that Republicans were able to seize on the issue of education — a campaign issue Democrats have long considered their own personal realm.

"You cannot lose education," said Brian Moran, a former Democratic caucus chairman in the House who now works in the Northam administration. "It's bread and butter: Health care, education and safety. That's what Democrats talk about, and that's what we care about. We cannot forfeit those issues."

Since Democrats seized control of the General Assembly two years ago, they've been able to achieve drastic change.

They've legalized marijuana, abolished the death penalty, restricted predatory lending, implemented gun violence prevention measures and overturned restrictions to

abortion. For many voters, that may have been too much too soon. The election of Youngkin and the Republican ticket is certain to be viewed as a repudiation of the agenda that Democrats pushed during their brief era of legislative power.

"It's official: Virginians have completely rejected the failed policies of the liberals running Richmond and voted for a brighter future full of supported small businesses, empowered parents and safer streets," said Dee Duncan, president of the Republican State Leadership Committee. "We supported the right candidates, developed the right messages, and executed the right strategies to overcome a two-to-one spending disadvantage driven by national liberals like Barack Obama, Eric Holder, Nancy Pelosi and Stacey Abrams."

Youngkin launched his campaign initially aiming squarely at economic issues, promising tax cuts as part of a very traditional Republican playbook. But then events caught up with the campaign. A high-profile prosecution in Loudoun gave opponents of transgender students using the bathroom of their choice an opportunity to question safety. And a national movement against so-called critical race theory erupted at local school board meetings across Virginia. Then McAuliffe stuck his foot in his mouth in the

Democrats lose statewide for the first time since 2009.



PHOTO ALISCIA ANDREWS/TWITTER

Hundreds turned out in Old Town Alexandria Oct. 30 for a rally for Republican gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin.

second debate saying he didn't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.

"I think Terry made an unfortunate remark, and that started it," said Del. Kaye Kory (D-38). "Before that, there really was not any talk about this on this scale."

After the debate in Alexandria at the Schlesinger Center, Republicans recalibrated their campaign to be aimed right at the issue of parental rights. That gave them an opportunity to ride the wave of concern over anti-racism curriculum in the classroom, which they call critical race theory even though that's not taught in Virginia classrooms. And every new detail in the Loudoun prosecution was amplified on right-wing media. McAuliffe's own words were endlessly repeated in Republican television ads, and the McAuliffe campaign was late in walking the statement back.

"We are grateful to Virginians who place their trust in us," said Republican House Leader Todd Gilbert after Republicans won enough seats to take control of the House of Delegates. "We look forward to immediately going to work with Governor-elect Youngkin and his administration to restore fiscal order, give parents the voice they deserve in education and keep our commonwealth safe. Our work begins now."