

Great Falls CONNECTION

Front row from left, Maria Volpe -philanthropy member and gala co-chair; June Kelly, philanthropy VP and gala chair; Heather O'Malley, SafeSpot CEO; back row from left, Karyn Ryan-philanthropy member; Diane Lahey-philanthropy member; Debbie Klett- philanthropy member; Bootsie Humenansky- SafeSpot board member; Denise Balzano- SafeSpot board chair; Stephanie Anderson- philanthropy member; Teresa Yurt-philanthropy member; and Annette Kerlin-SafeSpot board member

Great Falls Women Donate \$53,000

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Will Gas Tax Holiday Help?

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Bluebell Festival!

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NEWS



PHOTO BY DON NEWTON

Heather Lyn O'Malley, CEO, SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax, provides a presentation at the Great Gatsby Gala hosted by the Women's Club of Great Falls Philanthropy Group for the benefit of SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center, held on March 12, 2022.



PHOTO BY DON NEWTON

The Great Gatsby Gala Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer, Phil Simonides helps raise funds for SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center.

SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center Receives \$53K Donation

All-time high fundraising by Great Falls Women's Club Philanthropy Group.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. On Sunday, April 10, the Great Falls Women's Club Philanthropy Group presented a check for \$53,000 to SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax. The donation marked an all-time high fundraising amount by the Philanthropy Group for a single organization.

"This donation will have a positive, profound effect on Fairfax children who have experienced the tragedy of sexual or severe physical abuse," said Heather Lyn O'Malley, managing director of SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax. "Child abuse is a significant public health issue. And without donors like the Women's Club of Great Falls Philanthropy Group, we would not be able to put children on a path to justice and healing," she said.

SafeSpot helps children process and recover from the pain and trauma of sexual or severe physical abuse that needs specialized healing. It is the hope and healing over

the course of sessions for child abuse victims that the dollars raised by the Women's Club of Great Falls Philanthropy Group will help provide. With support, children and families can begin to heal.

Parents and caregivers are active participants in their child's therapy. At SafeSpot, comprehensive services to children and families are provided at no cost to the family. "I am overwhelmed by the enormous effort and generosity of the members of the Women's Club of Great Falls. Their remarkable donation will allow SafeSpot to expand our services and have a significant impact on the lives of abused children in our community," said Bootsie Humenansky, SafeSpot board member.

The pandemic's long-term effects will take years, if not decades, to assess, according to O'Malley in SafeSpot's "2021 Impact Report." She says that the immediate consequences were never in doubt, however. Vulnerable children would be more likely to be abused. In the pandemic's first year, referrals to SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax decreased.

The true impact of the isolation the chil-



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Front row from left, Maria Volpe -philanthropy member and gala co-chair; June Kelly-philanthropy VP and gala chair; Heather O'Malley, SafeSpot CEO; back row from left, Teresa Yurt-philanthropy member; Debbie Klett- philanthropy member; Diane Lahey-philanthropy member; Karyn Ryan-philanthropy member; Denise Balzano- SafeSpot board chair; Bootsie Humenansky- SafeSpot board member; Stephanie Anderson-philanthropy member; and Annette Kerlin-SafeSpot board member.

dren felt from January to December 2021 was not felt until the children returned to school in 2021. O'Malley said that from January to December 2021, the number of forensic interviews conducted by their team of specialists increased by 26 percent.

On the day of the check presentation, O'Malley said, "In 2021, we served 564 children and their caregivers with a forensic interview and family advocacy services. Furthermore, we provided trauma-focused therapy for 62 children and their caregivers that received the most trauma from the abuse they were in."

SafeSpot prioritizes the children. They are not required to recount and relive their experiences multiple times during interviews. The Children's Advocacy Center's primary service is forensic interviews conducted by a multidisciplinary team of law enforcement, Child Protective Services, medical professionals, and prosecutors. When SafeSpot conducts a single forensic interview for the entire team, all components come together. The questions are structured to avoid re-traumatizing the child or jeopardizing the investigation.

"While we may want to think that our community is safe for all children, the sad truth is that one in ten children will experience abuse before they turn 18," said Malley.

Fossil Fuel Fiesta

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

A majority of savings from Gov. Glenn Youngkin's proposed three-month gas tax holiday would not go to Virginians according to data compiled by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy and the Commonwealth Institute. By looking at the experience of Illinois and Indiana, the groups determined that the oil industry and out-of-state drivers would drive into the sunset with a majority of the benefit. That would leave Virginians with an estimated 46 percent of the profits.

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"If we get rid of the state retail gas tax, which is around 26 cents per gallon, the price of gas would not automatically go down by 26 cents per gallon," said Chris Wodicka, a senior policy analyst at the Commonwealth Institute. "So that difference would effectively go to oil companies for them to add to their bottom line."

Rather than pass savings along to motorists, oil producers would end up raking in about a third of the profits. But that doesn't mean Virginia drivers will get to reap the rest of the benefits. Because Virginia is a tourist destination with three interstate

Governor proposes gas-tax holiday, but will Virginians benefit?

highways, about a quarter of the remaining savings would be taken by people who don't live in Virginia.

"A significant slice of Virginia's gas tax isn't paid by Virginians in the first place. It's paid by tourists headed down to Williamsburg or Virginia Beach. It's paid by truckers headed up and down I-81, passing along their higher transportation costs to, in many cases, out-of-state residents."

A HISTORIC \$2.6 billion surplus created a massive windfall for lawmakers, who are usually fighting over dwindling resources.

This year, though, they got to fight over how to spend a giant pot of money. Republicans argued for tax cuts; Democrats pressed for services. Lawmakers left town last month without coming to an agreement, and then the governor suggested a three-month gas tax holiday.

"Virginians need tax relief and it's time for the General Assembly to act on the multiple tax relief proposals," said the governor in a written statement. "With gas prices and inflation squeezing families' pocket books

SEE FOSSIL FUEL, PAGE 5

GREAT FALLS CONNECTION ♦ APRIL 13-19, 2022 ♦ 3

A Basic Foundation

DELEGATE KENNETH R.
"KEN" PLUM



Last week was spring break for my two elementary school-age grandchildren. When they visited us mid-week and learned that I would be away for the last two days of the week to attend the Virginia Forum, they wondered aloud why I would want to attend something that sounded like school when it was supposed to be vacation time. I explained that I like learning new things and that I always learn something new about Virginia's history when I attend the Forum. It is like school, graduate school that is, when historians and scholars present papers and discussions are held on the latest research on Virginia's past. The critical discussions would never meet the standards of the censors that occupy the State Department of Education who with the approval of the governor are about getting controversy and divisive theories out of the classroom.

The other reason I attend the Virginia Forum every year that I did not take the time to explain to my young grandchildren is that I be-

lieve a basic and sound foundation for our future can only be accomplished to the degree to which we honestly examine and understand our past. Certainly the history of the Commonwealth is filled with the glorification of events, a Lost Cause movement to cover up the reasons for and consequences of major events, and political movements that tell the stories that will keep certain interests in power. Nonpartisan and essentially nonpolitical historians, researchers, and scholars at Virginia Forum examine in astonishing detail the events of our past with a close examination of documented facts. So much of the state's written history is totally male-dominated and whitewashed. At the Forum we learned of the incredible research and writing of Suzanne Lebsack who helps us understand the important role that women who we have not heard from previously played in the building of our state and country. Others presented papers on white supremacy that prevailed during most of our history.

Knowing factually what happened in the past can help us from making the same mistakes

again. A governor was elected with the promise of getting rid of parole in our justice system and thereby lowering crime. He succeeded in effectively eliminating parole, and we have prisons stuffed with people who with little or no risk could be returned to society as productive citizens.

The legislature is now attempting to have honest debate about the impact of a no-parole policy, but that easy-answer political slogan still resonates with people who are not well informed. Parole needs very much to be reformed, not eliminated, in order that it can be part of a criminal justice system that is restorative. Nonpartisan history of the problem can help us understand how it can be a positive part of our criminal justice system.

Another governor got elected on a simple slogan of "End the car tax." He was successful in getting nearly a billion dollars — which continues to be appropriated even today — that the state uses for paying the local car tax. It was a very unpopular tax, but the political answer denies the education budget a million dollars every year.

To the extent to which we can honestly understand the past, we can build a strong basic foundation for the future.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Request: Lower Tax Rate by 10 Cents to \$1.04

My wife and I have been homeowners and taxpayers in Fairfax County since 1968. We are retired and living on a fixed income. Therefore, I wish to protest the increases in the Fairfax County budget and real estate taxes. From the year 2000 to 2020, real estate taxes have increased approximately three times the inflation rate and household income. This year my assessment increased 12.84%. The County Board wants to keep the real estate tax rate at \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value which means that the average tax bill would increase by \$666. Based on the tax rate of \$1.14, my tax bill will be \$1,142 greater than last year which is outrageous. I understand that overall tax assessments increased an average of 9.5% countywide. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Consumer Price

Index (inflation rate) for the year 2021 was 4.7%. So, for many years I have seen the real estate taxes usually increase two to three times the inflation rate, year after year and decade after decade.

I request that you lower the tax rate by 10 cents to \$1.04.

Last year in FY22, the Adopted Budget Plan of General Funds Disbursements was \$4,527,325,441 and for FY2023 the General Funds Disbursements is \$4,776,728,869, an increase of \$249,403,428. or 5.2% over FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan. This increase is greater than the inflation rate of 4.7% for calendar year 2021. For many years, I have seen the County and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) budgets usually increase two to three times the inflation rate, however this year is an exception. Nevertheless, in an overall \$9 billion budget, you should be

able to reduce it.

The County is proposing to issue more bonds in 2023 and future years. For FY 2023, the County debt for bond interest is \$43.9 million or 2.8% of the county budget. In the good times as the economy booms, why does the County feel they must keep issuing bonds? I have read that Fairfax County wants taxpayers to approve a \$180 million bond issue for WMATA this November but has so far failed to respond on how these funds will

be used. Is this true?

The FCPS has had reductions in students over the past two years and is now down to approximately 178,000 students. As I understand, the FCPS has had a reduction of around 10,000 students and yet the FCPS budget continues to rise. Why is that?

Charles McAndrew

Oak Hill

Board Member of the Fairfax

County Taxpayers Alliance

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

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Hunger Conversation Project.
5-6:30 p.m. At Andrew Chapel
United Methodist Church, 1301
Trap Road, Vienna. Conversation with Ramona Carroll from the Fairfax County Department

of Neighborhood/Community Services about hunger in Vienna and the surrounding community. Stay to pack care bags for those in need. Free. Visit the website: andrewchapelumc.org

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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NEWS

Fossil Fuel Fiesta

FROM PAGE 3

across Virginia and the nation and with over \$1 billion in unanticipated revenue in our transportation fund, the General Assembly must act now.”

Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) briefly tried a parliamentary move he hoped would have prevented lawmakers from considering any bill introduced by the governor during the special session. But after a consultation with Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Sears, who has the power to rule the amendment out of order, Surovell abandoned his amendment to the procedural resolution. After lawmakers left town, Sen. Steve Newman (R-23) and Del. Tara Durant (R-28) introduced legislation on behalf of the governor to implement a three-month gas tax holiday.

“Higher gas prices really hurt people, and people really notice it. It is so much more visible a tax than what’s withheld from your paycheck,” said Stephen Farnsworth, director of the Center for Leadership and Media Studies at the University of Mary Washington. “As a result, politicians have to be acutely sensitive to gas prices.”

THE ESTIMATED COST of the three-month gas tax holiday is \$437 million. The governor plans to pay for the holiday using money from the Commonwealth Transportation Fund, which is expected to take in \$1 billion in unanticipated revenue. The bill seems poised to pass a Republican-controlled

“Higher gas prices really hurt people, and people really notice it. It is so much more visible a tax than what’s withheld from your paycheck. As a result, politicians have to be acutely sensitive to gas prices.”

— Stephen Farnsworth,
director of the Center for Leadership
and Media Studies at the University of
Mary Washington

House, although Senate Democrats may end up rejecting the bill. Democrats say the Republican governor should not have called lawmakers back to Richmond when budget conferees had not yet reached a compromise.

“The governor thinks he’s still the co-CEO of a company — he’s not, he is the governor of the commonwealth of Virginia, and his glaring incompetence is beginning to harm Virginians,” said DPVA Spokesperson Gianni Snidle. “The governor is wasting taxpayer dollars to play political theater and it needs to stop.”

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Fairfax County Park Authority holds its Bluebells at the Bend Festival at Riverbend Park on Saturday, April 9.



Hikers head back toward the Riverbend Visitors Center.

Annual Bluebells at the Bend Returns

Festival at Riverbend Park 2022.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Park Authority held its Bluebells at the Bend Festival 2022 on Saturday, April 9. The famous wildflower bluebell walks rivaled the use of the eagle scope set up on the Potomac Heritage Trail for visitors to catch a glimpse of bald eagles. A mated pair has returned on Minnehaha Island and built a nest, visible from the trail.

The island is a three-acre plot of land in the middle of the Potomac River that Potomac Conservancy has protected with a conservation easement. One parent has been seen fishing for food, while the other has been seen warming up the eggs or eaglets.

When children were not hiking the trails or using the scope, they were entertained by exhibits, music by Andrew McKnight, a puppet show, meeting live animals, nature crafts, magnet fishing, and a ninja course.

Families attended the festival for multiple reasons. Brook Crespo of Springfield brought her children Ava, 7, and Max, 4. "We came before the pandemic, and Ava loved it. So, we came back," Crespo said.

Katherine Connell, an Arlington resident, came to buy nursery-grown bluebells for her preschool class at Clarendon Child Care Center. The Friends of Riverbend Park was selling potted nursery-grown bluebells on the deck of the Visitors Center for the benefit of Riverbend Park.



Alexandra Guano, Adriana Ramirez, Daniel Alvarez, 5, and Miguel Alvarez, 3, of Fairfax and Annandale.

"This is for our spring planting done by 2 ½ to 5 year-olds," Connell said. The plant, Connell said, would be large enough for the children to handle, and they would be able to watch the flowers bud and bloom.

Adriana Ramirez of Fairfax and Alexandra Guano of Annandale, along with Daniel Alvarez, 5, and Miguel Alvarez, 3, had never been to the Bluebell Festival and thought it would be an excellent outing on a beautiful spring morning, as did the Ger family.



The Ger family (from left) Lyla, Jonathan, Mason, Derek, Dreama and Blair enjoy the scenery at Bluebells at the Bend- Festival at Riverbend Park 2022.

NEWS

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



Ava Crespo, 7, and Max Crespo, 4, of Springfield, check out small critters that live in the stream with Danielle Wynne at the exhibit for watershed education and outreach. Wynne is an ecologist with Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

Festival at Riverbend Park 2022



Katherine Connell of Arlington reaches out for the bluebell plant from Hugh Morrow III, president of Friends of Riverbend Park.



Youngsters visit the outdoor classroom meeting a turtle that appears very interested in them.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
SCOTT	16685	619	BIG STONY CREEK ROAD	BRANCH	3/30/2022
BLAND	3048	604	WALKERS CREEK ROAD	BIG WALKER CREEK #3	3/28/2022
WASHINGTON	19036	616	WALNUT GROVE ROAD	NORDYKE CREEK	3/28/2022
SMYTH	17394	16	B.F. BUCHANAN HIGHWAY	WHITE OAK BRANCH	3/23/2022
WASHINGTON	18891	58	GATE CITY HIGHWAY	BRANCH	3/23/2022
CRAIG	5503	615	CRAIGS CREEK ROAD	MILL CREEK	3/11/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact, haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

Coalition for TJ Files Emergency Request to Vacate the 4th Circuit Stay

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On April 8, Pacific Legal Foundation, counsel for Coalition for TJ, filed an emergency request in the Supreme Court of the United States in the case Coalition for TJ v. Fairfax County School Board. According to the coalition's lawsuit, the admissions process is designed to reduce the number of Asian American students admitted to TJ, violating their constitutional rights. The case is to vacate the March 31 stay pending an appeal by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (No. 22-1280) by U.S. District Judge Claude Hilton.

Coalition for TJ v. Fairfax County School Board challenged the new admissions plan (2020) for students applying to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ).

"The Fourth Circuit's decision to allow TJ's discriminatory process to continue will cause significant harm to the students who are going through the admissions process for the next school year," said Pacific Legal Foundation attorney Glenn Rope in a statement on April 8. "The district court decision found a clear constitutional violation, and we hope that the Supreme Court will agree that this stay should be vacated, and the discriminatory process halted while the case proceeds."

TJ is an elite magnet school. As the Virginia Governor School for Science and Technology in Northern Virginia, the Virginia Department of Education supports the school. Fairfax County School Board administers the program and TJ serves other school districts, including Arlington, Loudoun, Prince William counties, and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. TJ has been named among the best high schools in the country.

On March 31, 2022, a three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, under the direction of federal Judge Toby Heytens and concurred by Judge Robert King, voted 2-1 to grant a stay pending an appeal to the Fairfax County School Board (the School Board) and Scott Brabrand, in his official capacity as Superintendent of the Fairfax County School Board, against Coalition for TJ. Judge Allison Jones Rushing, the panel's third judge, voted to deny the March 31 motion.

The 4th Circuit order on March 31 did not overturn the U.S. district court's decision by Judge Claude Hilton Feb. 25, 2022 disallowing the new admissions policies. But the or-

der was put on hold while considering the school board's appeal.

The School Board may continue to use the challenged admissions plan for students applying to TJ, according to the March 31 judgment.

Coalition for TJ issued a statement following the 4th Circuit judges' 2-1 decision, stating that "Judge Toby Heytens and Judge Robert Bruce King of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals have made a grave error in allowing Fairfax County Public Schools to continue its illegal admissions process that discriminates against Asian American students applying to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. If the judges' decision stands, we would see Fairfax County Public Schools usher in a second class of students to America's No. 1 public high school through an unconstitutional race-based admissions process."

Judge Heytens filed a concurring opinion for the March 31 vote, writing in part, "I believe the public interest favors a stay given the timing and logistical constraints inherent in repealing the current admissions policy and implementing a new one so close to the end of the current admissions cycle. Thousands of students and their families will be thrown into disarray for the next several months if the district court's order is not stayed."

On Oct. 25, 2021, applications for the TJ Class of 2026 opened with applications due by Dec. 15, 2021. Students should receive notification of their admission status this month, April 2022, according to FCPS.

In her dissenting opinion, Judge Rushing stated, "Everyone — even temporarily frustrated applicants and their families

— ultimately benefits from a public-school admissions process not tainted by unconstitutional discrimination."

According to Judge Heytens, undisputed data presented to the district court demonstrate that a higher percentage of Asian American students were admitted than applied, even under the current plan. He wrote in his opinion, "Taking all this into account, it seems the more prudent course is to allow the current admissions cycle to proceed according to settled expectations and require a change, if any, beginning with the next class."

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology admissions had been questioned for decades because of the demographics of the student body which included only a tiny percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

For example, in 2015, Fairfax County Public Schools said 8 percent of applicants and 1.2 percent of those admitted qualify for free and reduced meals. Of all students in Fairfax County, by comparison, more than 28 percent received free and reduced meals at the time.

Numbers of Black and Latino students were also very low. The admitted class of 2019 was 2.4 percent Hispanic, 1.6 percent Black.

In 2003, nearly 20 years ago, the Fairfax County School Board established a Blue Ribbon panel of experts to study the disparities and make recommendations. But revamped admissions policies made little change in the disparities.

It wasn't until qualitative changes in the admissions process in 2020 that change

was reflected in the makeup of TJ's student body, with students entering in 2021 for the class of 2025. Black students increased from 1.23 percent (2020-21) to 7.09 percent. Hispanic students increased from 3.29 percent (2020-21) to 11.27 percent. The number of economically disadvantaged students [those eligible to receive reduced-price or free meals at school] increased from slightly greater than 0.5 percent (0.62 in 2020-21) to 25.09 percent.

Every middle school in the Fairfax County Public School division was represented at TJ as seats in the Class of 2025 were allocated for the top 1.5 percent of applicants from every middle school's eighth-grade student population. Students from historically under-represented schools increased to 30.73 percent versus 5.56 percent (2020-21).

The Coalition for TJ filed a federal lawsuit against the School Board with the help of the Pacific Legal Foundation, claiming that the School Board's changes were specifically designed to reduce the percentage of Asian American students who enroll at TJ, to equalize the school per Fairfax County's racial demographics.

The New York Times reported that the Pacific Legal Foundation is behind multiple lawsuits that challenge elite public high schools changing their admissions policies to diversify their student body. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/us/school-admissions-affirmative-action.html?smid=url-share>

In February, a federal judge struck down the new admissions policy. But late in March, the U.S. Court of Appeals issued a stay, allowing the current applications, already in process for the class of 2026, to move forward under the invalidated admissions process.

The Coalition for TJ filed on April 8, 2022 an emergency request with the U.S. Supreme Court to vacate the Fourth Circuit's stay (March 31, 2022).

According to Pacific Legal Foundation, the Supreme Court is expected to rule on the coalition's emergency request in the coming weeks.

Even if the Supreme Court does not vacate the stay, the Fourth Circuit or Supreme Court could ultimately agree with the district court judge that TJ's revised admissions policy is unlawful, says Pacific Legal in its online statement. Pacific Legal Foundation adds that it expects a Fourth Circuit decision on the school board's appeal around the end of the year.



Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ), located in Alexandria.

SCREENSHOT

CALENDAR

NOW THRU APRIL 28

A collection of paintings by Layla Gray and Coty Dickson entitled "The Four Seasons" is on display at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066. The public can view this collection of favorite seasonal paintings in the library's large meeting room from now through Thursday, April 28, 2022 during regular library hours. Contact Coty Dickson at cotyndickson@gmail.com for additional information.

NOW THRU APRIL 16

Photos with the Easter Bunny. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean, Fashion Court, Level 1 near Nordstrom. Tysons Corner Center welcomes the Easter Bunny back on March 18th. Visit the Bunny for an unforgettable family photo experience. The option to pre-book your appointment is available and recommended to reduce wait time. The Bunny will be available Monday - Saturday from 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Sunday from 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.

NOW THRU APRIL 30

The Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park invite the public to participate in its 2022 photo contest. Help celebrate all that is special about the farm with the second "Focus on the Farm" fundraiser. Open to photographers of all ages and abilities, capture the beauty and farm life at Frying Pan Farm Park. The categories include nature, landscape and scenery, and farm animals. Photos must be taken, and entries submitted between March 1 and April 30, 2022. You can enter up to 10 photos. The fee is \$7 per entry for adults, and \$5 per entry for children up to age 16. Go to the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park website for information; or email the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park at friends@fryingpanpark.org. Frying Pan Park is located at 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Call 703-437-9101.

APRIL 1-17

"Nat Turner in Jerusalem." Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m. At NextStop Theatre Company, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. This powerful play delves into an important moment in American history, which has continued to shake the conscience of the nation for almost two centuries. Through powerful performances, audiences are invited to take part in a deep exploration of human morality and the grim reality of the past. Visit the website: <https://www.nextstoptheatre.org/nat-turner-in-jerusalem>

APRIL 14-MAY 8

"The Mamalogues." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. In this satirical comedy, three friends share the joys, challenges, and anxieties of being middle class single Black mothers in predominantly white suburbs. The story celebrates motherhood and community while exploring racial profiling on the playground and supporting your kid who is perpetually the Only Black Child (OBC). Follow their journey as they lean in and steer their children from pampers to college while navigating their own road toward retirement. Visit www.1ststage.org.

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In rehearsal for VTC's "Death of a Salesman," opening April 22, are actors Patrick Killoran as Biff, Tom Flatt as Will Loman, Gayle Nichols-Grimes portraying Linda and Michael Angeloni as Happy.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Clifton Lions Club Family Pancake Breakfast. 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. Cost is \$10 per adult; \$5 per child. Proceeds go to charity.

FRIDAY/APRIL 15

Blood Drive. 1-6 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. McLean Community Center is helping the American Red Cross with Diverse Blood Donations! It is urgent for donors of all ethnicities to support patients in need. Join MCC and support the community with your lifesaving blood donation. All donors will receive a \$10 Amazon Gift Card via email. For an appointment, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Model Train Open House. 1-5 p.m. At Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Road, NE, Vienna. Stop by the Historic Vienna Train Station where you can see and hear HO scale model trolleys and trains including Thomas and some of his friends on display and in operation. Great family fun and activity for the young and young-at-heart. Hosted by the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders. See www.nvmr.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Hoppy Egg Hunting. 9:30-11:30 a.m. At Bready Park, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Egg Hunt Times: Age 5-7 at 9:45 a.m.; Age 3-4 at 10:30 a.m., and walking-2 at 11:15 a.m. Activities include an egg hunt, craft projects, story time, a petting zoo, coloring mural, potting station, and photos with the Easter bunny. Bring a basket or bag to collect eggs. Pre-registration is highly encouraged. Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation or call 703-787-7300.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Green Reston. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. At the plaza in front of RCC Hunters Woods. Join in a fun and eco-friendly family event to mark Earth Day. Come learn about sustainable living and eco-friendly alternatives for household items. Kids' events include decorating a birdhouse to take home, face painting and making a container garden. Free; registration required. To register, visit myRCC.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

MCC Adult Board Candidate Meet & Greet. 10-11:45 a.m. Come meet the candidates for our upcoming board elections in the McLean Room at McLean Community Center, McLean. We have nine adult candidates running for three board

seats. This is an opportunity for you to chat with our candidates, ask them any questions you have regarding their candidacy, share your feedback on what you love about MCC, as well as what you'd like to see improved.

APRIL 16-17

Easter Eggstravaganza. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Roer's Zoofari, 1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. Roer's Zoofari invites the Reston community to its annual Easter Eggstravaganza. Adult Admission - \$30, Child Admission - \$20, Member Adult - \$5, Member Child - \$5. Visit the website: <https://www.roerszoofari.com/easter-2022/>

APRIL 22 TO MAY 7

"Death of a Salesman." Presented by Vienna Theatre Company. At 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Show times are: 8 p.m.: Fridays and Saturdays: April 22, 23, 29, 30; May 6, 7, 2022; 2 p.m.: Sundays: May 1, May 8, 2022. Arthur Miller's 1949 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama about the tragic shortcomings of an American dreamer, is widely considered to be one of the greatest plays of the 20th century. Purchase tickets at viennava.gov/webtrac, in person at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE during open hours, or before each performance if available. Visit www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

APRIL 22-24

ValeArts Show. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Old Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Fox Mill Road, Oakton. The exhibit, Colorful Journeys, will be bursting in springtime colors at this historic venue. Admirers of all ages are welcome to view paintings in oil, watercolor, mixed media, encaustic, and acrylic to delight the eye and stir the senses. All paintings are for sale. Visit <https://www.valearts.com> for more information.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Earth Day McLean—Act Locally. 9 a.m.—noon. At McLean Community Center, McLean. Free admission for MCC district residents; registration is required. This drive-through, outdoor, environmental action event provides a convenient way for McLean residents to better the planet. Several local community businesses and organizations will provide four key facets of environmental health in the spirit of shredding, reusing, recycling and planting.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Parks and Sugarland Run Cleanup Day. 9 a.m. to noon. At Runnymede

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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Purple for Military Kids

Day

April 20

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) recognizes all military-connected children in April during the Month of the Military Child. This yearly tradition is part of a national celebration to recognize military children for their resilience, strength, and sacrifices.

April 20, 2022 is designated as Purple Up! For Military Kids Day. FCPS has over 13,500 military-connected youth as part of its student body. These children enrich the school community with their wide-ranging life experiences.

Show support for military children, Purple Up! on April 20. Wear purple as a visible way to show appreciation for military-connected youth. Why purple? Purple symbolizes all branches of the military as a combination of Army green, Marine red, along with Coast Guard, Air Force, Space Force and Navy blue.

Resources for Military Families

More information on supports for Military families: https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/resources-military-families?utm_campaign+=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) offers a welcoming and engaging environment for families, educators and community members. The PRC provides access to information and resources to support the success of all students, including those with learning challenges, special needs and disabilities. Military families may be interested in the Military Connected Families padlet, as well as the lending library, webinars and other resources. Contact the PRC for more information

Call 703-204-3941

Email prc@fcps.edu

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

SHEPHERD'S CENTER SPRING CLASSES

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia will hold Spring classes from April 21 to June 9, 2022. All Classes will be held virtually on Zoom and in person at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Registration: April 4-19, 2022. The Spring 2022 semester schedule includes 40-plus classes with a wide range of subjects -- from a Health and Wellness series to National and World Affairs. The following classes are but a few of the classes to choose from:

- ❖ April 28 – "Sorting Fact from Fiction" – Larry Lipman, AARP
- ❖ May 5 – "Monarch Butterflies – Life Cycle and Migration" – Scott Schroth
- ❖ May 19 – "Whale Watching in Baja" – Paul Wormeli

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NEWS

Limited Opportunity to See Washington DC Temple

For the first time in nearly 50 years, the Washington DC Temple will be open for public tours. This is a rare opportunity to come inside this holy building. Visitors will discover how the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints view the Temple as sacred, as a sanctuary from the tumultuous world, and as a place to become more like our Savior.

Visitors will experience the beautiful architecture, art, and a feeling of peace, purpose and hope. Three quarters of a million people visited the original open house in 1974. During that Special Preview Week, the Temple was visited by the First Family, the US Vice President, White House staff, most of the members of US Congress and Supreme Court, Cabinet officers and thousands of state and local government officials, judiciary, international officials and clergy. During the weeks that followed, hundreds of

thousands of people from the general public went through the Temple. Soon, for a limited time, people will have the same opportunity. Hundreds of thousands of visitors are expected to visit this iconic location during this open house.

People of all ages, faiths, and no faith are welcome to come inside the Temple between April 28 through June 11, 2022, Mondays-Saturdays (no Sundays) 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Entrance is free and does not require a ticket to enter. A free timed parking ticket (one per vehicle) is needed to park a car. If coming by Metro to the Forest Glen Station, a free shuttle ticket is needed from the station to the Temple. Groups should make special reservations. For information and tickets: www.dctemple.org.

After June 11 the Open House will conclude and the Temple will again be closed to the general public.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

Park, 195 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. Join your fellow community members and help cleanup parks, Sugarland Run watershed, and stream locations. Meet at Runnymede Park for supplies and assignments, then work on your own to help care for one of the eleven parks or three trails in Herndon. They'll be picking up litter, removing non-native invasive plants, and otherwise refreshing our parks as we head into spring. Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation, or call 703-787-7300.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Roomful of Blues. 8 p.m. At Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. A Roomful Of Blues is filled with soaring blues, zydeco twists, late-night ballads, Latin-tinged funk and a touch of vintage, fifth-gear rock 'n' roll. Tickets are \$25-\$35. Website: www.jamminjava.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Doodle POP 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. A mischievous duo starts to doodle... and ends up creating a whole imaginative world! They invite the audience along on their sea adventure with a tiny little turtle. What will happen as we follow their vivid drawings into this beautiful watery world, and will they return the turtle to the sea safely? Doodle POP is a touching and playful nonverbal show that uses live musicians to perform the accompanying score and sound effects. Created by BRUSH Theatre of South Korea.

APRIL 23-24

Yard Sale and Giveaway Day. Gate Post Estates is will be coupling a Giveaway Day with their annual yard sale. The yard sale will take place on Saturday, April 23, beginning at 8 a.m., and the Giveaway Day will be the following day, on Sunday, April 24, beginning at 10 a.m. For the Giveaway Day, residents will place any items they wish to donate to the community in front of their homes and mark them with a "Giveaway" or "Free" sign. Gate Post Estates is located off of Route 29, across from the Centreville Baptist Church.

APRIL 23-24

Spring Book Sale. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Dr., Centrev-

ille. Saturday, April 23 and Sunday, April 24, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Children's books, teen and adult fiction, classics, poetry & literature, DVDs, audio books and CDs. No scanners or other electronic price-checking allowed. Cash, check and credit cards accepted.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Vocal Quartet Concert. 4-5:30 p.m. At Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. Concert by the vocal quartet Third Practice, featuring the Hermit Songs of Samuel Barber and other works from the Renaissance to the present day that express longing for both solitude and connection. Visit the website: <https://holyccomforter.com/music/>

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

10th Annual McLean Chocolate Festival. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, McLean. Taste the specialties of area chocolatiers and enjoy fun for the whole family. The youngest attendees can enjoy a children's game room. The McLean Chocolate Festival is a fundraiser for the McLean Rotary, with proceeds benefiting many local organizations. Cost: \$2 admission. Visit: www.mcleanchocolatefestival.com.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Celebrate Pilates Day. At RTR Pilates, 9849 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Register for one of three free trial reformer classes at RTRPilates.com/PilatesDay. Check out the studio, shop great retail, sip champagne and meet our community.

MAY 21-22

Girls on the Run Spring Registration. GOTR NOVA will be offering an in-person, 10-week curriculum for the Spring 2022 season. Two in-person 5Ks presented by Cigna will be held on May 21st and 22nd in Sterling and Ballston, respectively. Teams will continue to be school and community-based to further our outreach efforts in being accessible to every girl across Northern Virginia. Currently, 105 teams throughout Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Loudoun, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William are open for Spring 2022 registration through March 1, 2022. For more information about spring registration and sites for Girls on the Run of NOVA, visit www.gotrnova.org.

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Going, Going, I Wish They Were Gone

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



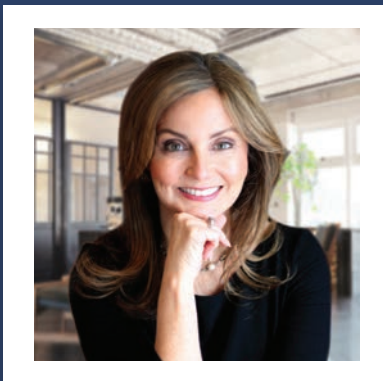
All those Charmin and Cottonelle television commercials for "the go"/"down there care." As my late mother used to say about so many nauseating subjects: "It's enough already." I realize toilet paper is a staple, especially during a pandemic, but is it necessary that there are so many television advertisements? They're appearing so often that I've even seen these competing companies/products advertise during the same commercial break. Not exactly back-to-back, but very nearly so. Talk about overkill. If these brands aren't careful, they're going to kill the goose that laid ply at their doorstep.

I mean, how much prodding/encouragement do I need every day to assist me with my toilet paper decisions? Not nearly as much as I'm getting, that's for sure. How many more times must I see that adolescent bear wiggle his butt? And how many more times must I hear about treating "the skin that I don't see as well as I treat the skin that I do see?" No more, please? I have enough visuals of forearms being wiped to last me a lifetime. I know that toilet paper sales are a huge business with endless repeat customer buys, but I've reached my point of no return. As in there's no more return on their advertising investment in my household. We have been saturated with toilet paper problems/solutions so much so that if I never see another television commercial, funny or not, it will be soon enough for me.

Besides, I'm a grown man. I know what works for me - and what doesn't. And that awareness most definitely includes toilet paper and all its features and benefits - and innuendos. I may be stubborn or a creature of consumer habit - or merely protective of my privacy, but all this recurring toilet paper market penetration/saturation is becoming too much to bear. I'm not a prude in the least, but I do feel as if there are certain subjects/descriptions which are off limits - or rather should be. However, the recent spate of toilet paper verbal and visual manipulation has crossed the line I never thought needed to be drawn because it was clear to everybody that it already existed. Apparently, the rules of advertising aren't aware of these lines.

I understand that market share and profit are crucial to a commercial ventures' success/viability. But to invoke a famous question from the 1954 McCarthy hearings: "Where's your decency?" Gone. That's where if the frequency and substance of these toilet paper advertisements are allowed to continue. Enough is enough, which for Scott brands is 1000 sheets. For me however, it's really none of anybody's business what I do in the privacy of my own bathroom. Whether I use an off-brand, single, double, or triple ply or paper infused with aloe. I'm happy to be left to my own devices. I'll figure it out and the less the advertisers have to do with it, the better.

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



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