

# Prepare To Be Wowed

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Holly Karapetkova, Arlington's Poet Laureate, with "Wordsfor the World," an anthology of poems by Arlington Youth Poets.



## In Their Own Words: Candidates for Commonwealth's Attorney

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PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

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# Q&A WITH COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY CANDIDATES

## Parisa Dehghani-Tafti

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

**P**arisa Dehghani-Tafti is the Commonwealth's Attorney for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. Dehghani-Tafti was first elected to a four-year term in November 2019. She came to the office of Commonwealth's Attorney with a twenty-year record of criminal justice reform as an innocence protection attorney, a public defender, and a law professor.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED  
**Parisa Dehghani-Tafti**

**compare to nationwide trends or other similar jurisdictions to Arlington around the country?**

**A.** Arlington is one of the safest places to live in America. Our own chief of police says you can't look at the raw numbers in Arlington because we have such low crime rates that one incident can have a big impact on the overall numbers [percentages]. I haven't taken a look at the comparisons with other jurisdictions but crime is up all over the country.

**Q. If you could pick just one reason you are running for Commonwealth's Attorney, what would it be?**

**A.** To make the traditional justice system more rehabilitation, more fair, more accurate.

**Q. What is your top priority?**

**A.** I have been doing the work of my priorities for the last two years: mental health court, restorative justice system, reduce racial disparities, don't incarcerate more people than we need to. So many of these pieces link together. The system is so not in line with what we know works.

**Q. [Your opponent, Josh] Katcher has highlighted your office's high staff vacancy rates and you have accused him of misrepresentation. He has said there has been a 50 percent turnover (14 prosecutors) in your office. You have said there are currently two vacancies. Can you reconcile these numbers? Do you know why they left? What difference does it make?**

**A.** Katcher keeps changing the numbers he uses. The number of vacancies we have where we can actually hire attorneys into is much lower. We are not in an unusual situation compared to other service agencies who have had recruitment and retention issues. It's misleading to imply something is wrong in this office. Two left to become judges, three left to get better paying jobs, work from home. I would point out that in the period from June 2020 until now Katcher's staff has had an 80 percent turnover. I am a problem solver so I have looked around the office to build a pipeline for people and hired paralegals to redistribute the workload. And you ask what difference does it make? This is also an opportunity. Don Beyer once told me with his experience as ambassador that some people weren't on board with him, and it took a team. Same thing for me. It is an opportunity to get a new team. We've done so many things in our day to day work. It takes years and now we're just about to soar. At the end of the day, the proof is in the pudding—trial work.

**Q. Katcher has stated that ACPD stats show crimes against people in Arlington are up by 24 percent since 2018 but you have stated Arlington is a safe place to live and this has been backed by some studies. How do Arlington's numbers**

**compare to nationwide trends or other similar jurisdictions to Arlington around the country?**

**Q. Do you think Arlington residents feel safe? What do you think is their top safety and justice priority?**

**A.** The doors I'm knocking on show that people do feel safe, from Green Valley to where I'm living. A lot of people are concerned about the mental health crisis, so many people in jail are mentally ill. They are excited about the new Crisis Intervention Center, beds opening, the prospect of mobile outreach.

**Q. You have said that over 25 percent of Katcher's individual campaign donations are from Republican donors who have given thousands to Trump. How do you know? What difference does it make?**

**A.** I am not saying he is a Republican but that he is supported by extreme Republicans. The difference it makes is that people who support extreme Republicans don't support reform.

**Q. Katcher's brochures indicate he will bring real justice prioritizing the needs of victims. How is this different than your statement that you have empowered victims with a prosecution model that prioritizes compassion and transparency?**

**A.** I have already done everything he says he is going to do like prioritizing drug treatment and creating mental health courts.

**Q. Katcher has said you have never tried a case as a Commonwealth's Attorney that you have think tank experience instead of practical real life experience. What difference does this make?**

**A.** He has no compunctions about saying things that are false. I've never been in a think tank. I've always been a litigator. If you are talking about prosecuting in Arlington it is true I have never tried a case here but what he says is misleading. I've had years of litigation.

**Q. Do you agree with legalizing marijuana?**

**A.** Yes, adult recreational use but not kids and not in public any more than drinking.

**Q. Do you believe in cash bail? Why or why not?**

**A.** Do not. The government hasn't had cash bail in decades.

SEE DEGHANI-TAFTI, PAGE 8

## Josh Katcher

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

**J**osh Katcher is challenging the incumbent for Commonwealth's Attorney for Arlington and the City of Falls Church. Katcher was with the Commonwealth Attorney's office for 11 years, starting as an intern and rising to Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney. He resigned as Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney last summer to run for this office.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED  
**Josh Katcher**

**Q. If you could pick just one reason you are running for Commonwealth's attorney what would it be?**

**A.** We are failing to produce a 21st century reform prosecution agenda. We have an office in free fall. We have 9 fully funded open positions so we don't have adequate resources to address rising crime.

**Q. What is your top priority?**

**A.** Rebuilding the office and actually having an office with transparency. Three-and-a-half years ago we said we had a blackbox of data and it is still true. Only the Commonwealth's Office has the disposition data to know if what we are saying about rising crime is true and be willing to acknowledge rising crime.

**Q. You have highlighted Dehghani-Tafti's staffing issues, and she has charged you with misrepresentation. You have said there has been a 50 percent turnover (14 prosecutors) and she has said there are currently two vacancies that she can actually fill. Can you clarify? Do you know why the staff left? What difference does it make?**

**A.** It starts with the idea that every four years every prosecutor gets fired. In 2020 she picked her own team. But you can't lead a team if you haven't done it yourself; she can't empathize with prosecutors and what they are going through. They get burned out and leave because they didn't get support. They didn't believe management knew what they were going through. I submitted a FOIA request to find out how many vacancies are in the office and in April it came back and said 7. The next day she showed a different graph so I made another FOIA request and it came back in May indicating there were 9 vacancies.

**Q. You have stated that Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) stats report crimes against people are up 24 percent since 2018. Parissa has reported Arlington is one of the safest cities in America. How do Arlington figures compare with nationwide trends, with other jurisdictions of similar size?**

**A.** Data from the ACPD yesterday indicated crimes against persons are up 16 percent and crimes against property up 23 percent since last year. Arlington can be relatively safe but going in the wrong direction. Crimes against persons and property are

going in the wrong direction. I don't have crime information on similar jurisdictions.

**Q. Do you think Arlington residents feel safe? What do you think is their top justice and safety priority?**

**A.** I knocked on 4,000 doors of Democratic voters likely to vote in the primary. People are on edge about their safety and their property. People have different tolerance levels about crime. I think the key issue of concern is who is Arlington going to trust to engage in safety while protecting rights. We need not to go back to one size fits all using incarceration. I believe in reform prosecution. We need greater precision in the way we apply the tools we have, individual and nuanced considering every case. We need more enlightenment; we're not trying to break people.

different tolerance levels about crime. I think the key issue of concern is who is Arlington going to trust to engage in safety while protecting rights. We need not to go back to one size fits all using incarceration. I believe in reform prosecution. We need greater precision in the way we apply the tools we have, individual and nuanced considering every case. We need more enlightenment; we're not trying to break people.

**Q. Dehghani-Tafti has said that over 25 percent of your individual campaign donors are from Republican donors who have given thousands to Trump. How do you get this kind of information? What difference does it make?**

**A.** Not true. She doesn't care. Where can she even get numbers like this? A better point is I have raised more dollars from Democratic donors than she has. She is preying on low information voters. We have seen a real backlash. I don't think she cares at all.

**Q. Your brochures indicate you will bring real justice prioritizing the needs of victims. How is this different than her statement that she has empowered victims with a prosecution model that prioritizes compassion and transparency?**

**A.** We don't have any real philosophical difference. I practice justice for victims and have seen that is not a core priority of hers. I think she would make a fantastic public defender and legislator. That's what she seems to concentrate on.

**Q. You have said Dehghani-Tafti has never tried a case as a Commonwealth's Attorney comparing her background more to think tank experience. What difference does this make?**

**A.** You can't lead a team if you haven't done it yourself. Attorneys will want to work for me. She doesn't understand their day to day experience and their struggles in the job.

**Q. Do you agree with legalizing marijuana?**

**A.** Yes. I have a concern about juveniles getting it.

**Q. Do you believe in cash bail? Why or why not?**

**A.** No. I don't agree with allowing one person to get out because they can afford bail and another doesn't get out because they can't afford bail. Philosophically I oppose cash bail.

SEE KATCHER, PAGE 8



## Delivering on the Promise of Safety and Justice for All

Commonwealth's Attorney Parisa Dehghani-Tafti has dedicated her career to building a justice system that treats everyone fairly and keeps us safe. In the last 3 years, she:

- ✓ Transformed the office to **focus on preventing crime**, not just reacting to it
- ✓ Worked with community partners to **establish treatment programs** for mental health and substance use
- ✓ **Ended the prosecution of simple marijuana possession** for adults
- ✓ **Reduced racial disparities** in our justice system with effective diversion programs

**And she's just getting started. Parisa will continue to:**

- ✓ **Fight to end mass incarceration**
- ✓ Focus resources on **prosecuting violent crimes**
- ✓ **Empower victims** with prosecution that prioritizes transparency and safety

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Read more about Parisa's safety and justice plan at [ParisaForJustice.com](https://ParisaForJustice.com).   

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## YOUTH POETRY

# Raw and Real Poetry by Arlington Youth Poets

**'These poems are moving and striking and most of all, wise. ... Prepare to be wowed.'**

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

**H**olly Karapetkova, poet laureate of Arlington, received a \$50,000 Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship in 2022. This, along with a partnership with local arts organization Day Eight, led to the compilation of an anthology of Arlington youth poetry. She had started imagining how to empower the voices of young people during the pandemic but without substantial resources couldn't imagine how to make the anthology happen.

It might be through images of "feathers striped and torn," "a spider suspended," "marbles of my mind" or "rust on the green bird feeder" but Karapetkova says, "a lot of the work is about family, one of the biggest issues, and identity — figuring out who you are and about romance for sure, one of the most popular topics. And a lot of it is about resilience," Karapetkova says.

"Words for the World, an Anthology of Arlington Young Poets," includes the work of 38 poets from Wakefield, Yorktown, Washington-Liberty and H-B Woodlawn high-schools.

Zach Powers, artistic director at the Writer's Center says, "Don't let the word youth in the subtitle fool you. These poems are moving and striking and most of all, wise. These writers are poets, plain and simple. No adjective needed. Prepare to be wowed."

Karapetkova says poetry gives the youth an outlet. "Although they may not be a star athlete or a straight A student, publication of their poetry gives them a way to be recognized."

The inspiration for this anthology grew out of the pandemic. Karapetkova explained in the introduction, "I watched the pandemic wreck havoc on our community, especially our young people. I began to imagine ways poetry might serve this vulnerable part of our population."

Karapetkova worked with Amasa Maleski, Arlington's inaugural Youth Poet Laureate in 2021; Kashvi Ramani, Arlington Youth Laureate in 2022; and Liam Mason, Arlington Youth Poetry Ambassador in 2021; in reaching out to other poets for inclusion in the publication and in editing the anthology. "Our goal in selecting work for the analogy was to represent as much diversity as possible in terms of subject matter and style. It is multilingual, multicultural, and multiracial."

Sean Kalchbrenner, one of the poets included in the anthology, is working with Karapetkova as his mentor on his Senior Experience. He says, "Holly is awesome. She doesn't prescribe a solution. She begins up a discussion and it opens up what I find. That process is organic."

Kalchbrenner writes mainly short stories but includes his poem "Silk Paracosms" in



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION  
**Holly Karapetkova**

the anthology.

"Our webs a madness  
Theirs a home."

He explains, "Our web is a psychological feeder similar to the way everything connects but we have little control. But the spider has control."

"We will never spin webs such as that.  
There is no order to our weaving."

Amasa Maleski, graduating from Washington-Liberty High School and already recognized with a number of awards, says they started brainstorming with Holly Karapetkova in 2020 about what to do to bring poetry to young people in Arlington. "It was a strange time coming out of the pandemic."

They say poetry is a release. "Concrete images are important. It helps me to regulate my thoughts. To put it on paper makes it more powerful." They continue they were writing daily in 8th grade where their teacher had the students write every day about something that had occurred during the day. "I wrote a lot of those in verse. Thinking about the whole day focused me to zoom in on the extraordinary or eccentric."

They say that Karapetkova's approach is very helpful. "She is an influential mentor, searching for a poem's intent and honoring it."

"Landscape," included in the anthology, begins with a morning prayer.

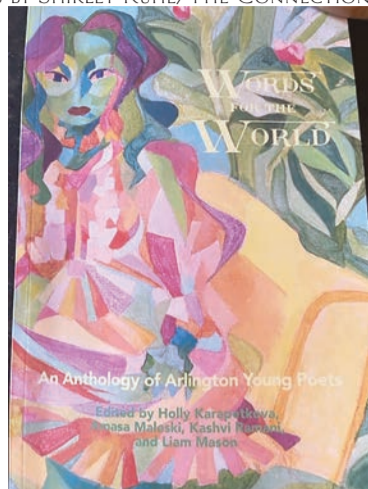
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# YOUTH POETRY

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION



Holly Karapetkova with "Words for the World"



Words for the World, an Anthology of Arlington Young Poets, with the official publication date of June 30.

FROM PAGE 4

"God why is this body not yet a mountain? Shouldn't it always have been?"

They say the mountain represents the ideal body, the unattainable image. Also the speaker's only self image, opposite the ideal.

Karapetkova says she probably started writing poetry herself in middle school. She thinks of herself as a person "who wrote to process, to diagnose unresolved anxiety. Back then there wasn't much help. It is difficult to transition to adulthood, especially in our culture where our children are sheltered and protected to a late age and then suddenly we're adults. We have misdirected our young people to the external. They don't have a sense of purpose."

Karapetkova has written two books of award-winning poetry and over 20 books for children but

"you have to make a living." Her career is teaching in the Department of Literature and Languages at Marymount University. "Teaching gets me excited."

She is currently working on a third book of poetry that focuses on race. She grew up in Atlanta attending a school with busing that she explains wasn't particularly well done. But she says she got to spend a lot of time with Black kids in school.

However, she comments she is having a little difficulty getting interest from a publisher on this book about race. "Generally white poets don't write about race. We are allowed to ignore it and look away."

The poets included in the anthology have held a reading in Arlington and another is scheduled for June 13 at 7 pm at the Central Library. Although the anthology was launched May 24 with a reading by the poets, the official publication date is June 30.

## "FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

Office of 55+ Programs, Department of Parks and Recreation, 300 N. Park Dr., Arlington, VA 22203, 703-228-4747

55+ Programs are in person at 55+ Centers, unless otherwise noted. A 55+ Pass is required to participate (starting at a \$20 annual fee). To join or register, go to [registration.arlingtonva.us](http://registration.arlingtonva.us) or call 703-228-4747.

Tai Chi Ch'uan classes, gentle movements, proper breathing and posture, prior experience encouraged, begin Thursday, June 15, 2 p.m., 11 sessions, \$60.50, Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914105-02.

Introduction to basic Spanish, six-part series of classes begin Thursday, June 15, 11:30 a.m., virtual, Registration # 914650-01. Register for each class.

55+ Travel group will visit the Library of Virginia in Richmond for a guided tour, Thursday, June 15. Cost \$19, Arlington resident; \$22, non-resident. Registration # 902306-05.

Celebrate Caribbean American

Heritage Month with a virtual tour of Antigua and Barbuda, Thursday, June 15, 1:30 p.m. Registration # 914400-10. Presented by Susan Coulton, business development manager, Antigua and Barbuda's Tourism Authority.

Downsizing Fair with experts in appraisals, financial advice, closet organizers and moving coordinators, Saturday, June 17, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914440

Juneteenth commemoration of African American Emancipation Day, Tuesday, June 20, 11:30 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Presentations by local speakers

SEE FLOURISHING, PAGE 8



## 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	16692	622	SINKS RD	COX BRANCH	5/30/2023
CARROLL	4780	881	CROSS CREEK RD/RTE 881	LITTLE REED ISLAND CR #2	5/30/2023
SCOTT	16725	632	POSSUM CREEK RD	BRANCH	5/8/2023
SCOTT	16929	859	ROBERTS CREEK RD	BRANCH	5/8/2023
SCOTT	16698	623	SPEERS VALLEY RD	N FORK CLINCH RIVER	5/3/2023
ALBEMARLE	746	680	BROWNS GAP TURNPIKE	LICKINGHOLE CREEK	5/2/2023
CARROLL	4683	679	WARDS GAP RD/RTE 679	JOHNSONS CREEK	5/2/2023
CAROLINE	24142	207	WBL BOW. GREEN BYP	RTE. 301 (2)	5/1/2023

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](mailto: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.*

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7:00 – 8:00 p.m., Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St, Arlington. Join Arlington/Alexandria Extension Master Gardeners and other expert speakers as they provide information on a variety of garden topics each month. June topics are: 6/7-Preventing Vegetable Diseases; 6/14-Feed Your Soil for Happy Vegetables; 6/21-Good Bugs/Bad Bugs; 6/28 Fresh Produce for the Table. Free. Programs will continue on Wednesdays through September.

## WEDNESDAY/JUNE 14

### Feed Your Soil for Happy Vegetables.

7 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. It's not just getting your veggies the right kinds of nutrition – timing is everything. The right fertilizer at the right time and soil building with compost mean maximum productivity.

## JUNE 15, 17, 22, AND 24

**Arco Iris.** 10:30-11 a.m. At Theatre on the Run, 3700 S Four Mile Run Dr., Arlington. AOTH's new, non-verbal production for children ages 3-6 is inspired by a Zapoteca myth and Quechua legends about the rainbow. Visit the website: <https://www.artsonthehorizon.org/arco-iris.html>

## CONCERTS AT LUBBER RUN

### AMPHITHEATER

Fri, June 16, 8 p.m.: Rose Moraes' Forró Party, celebrating the accordion-driven party music of Brazil

Sat, June 17, 8 p.m.: Veronneau, a multi-lingual, award-winning, world-jazz group

Sun, June 18, 11 a.m.: 123 Andrés, family-friendly music from different parts of the Americas

## ROSSLYN CINEMA

The summer movie series, Rosslyn Cinema, has begun. At Gateway Park, 1300 Langston Blvd., Arlington. Bar service opens at 5 p.m., and the film will begin shortly after sunset – approximately 8:45 to 9 p.m. Beer, wine, seltzers, and more will be available at the pop-up bar, including new beer flights from Virginia-based One Family Brewing.

June 16: Moana (plus free face painting!)

June 23: The Parent Trap (1998)

## LATE NIGHT AT THE MILL

Saturdays, June 17, July 8, July 22, Aug. 5, and Aug. 12. From 8-11 p.m. At Arlington Mill Community Center, 909 S. Dinwiddie St., Arlington. Middle and high school teens, join in on the fun at Arlington Mill Community Center for six great nights of dance, sports, art activities, snacks and more! The center will reopen after hours from 8-11 p.m. for you to hang out with friends, meet new ones and have some fun. The last night, August 12, will be a pool party at Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 17

**Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington: Family Pride Picnic in the Park.** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At MoCA Arlington, Virginia Square, Arlington. Join MoCA Arlington for a family-friendly day celebrating LGBTQIA+ community, artists, and contemporary art. Featuring children's author, Vicki Johnson, and her new book, "Molly's Tuxedo." Expect a live DJ, art activities, and more. Food for purchase available from All About Burgers and Mister Softee. Partnering proudly with Rainbow Families.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 17

**Columbia Pike Blues Festival.** 1-8:30 p.m. At S. Walter Reed and Columbia Pike, Arlington. Winning accolades for her appearances on TV's The Voice and with the legendary Prince,



**Judith Hill will be headlining the Columbia Pike Blues Festival on Saturday, June 17, 2023 in Arlington.**

Judith Hill headlines The Columbia Pike Blues Festival. Also included are husband and wife singer & guitarist Annika Chambers & Paul DesLauriers, Arlington's master guitarist and vocalist Bobby Thompson, Baltimore's Gayle Harrod Band, and acoustic DC-duo Spice Cake Blues. Enjoy family-friendly activities at the KidZone, craft beer and wine, a wide variety of food vendors, and many local arts & crafts vendors in Art Alley.

## SUNDAY/JUNE 18

### Juneteenth Black Heritage Walk. 1-3 p.m.

Columbia Pike. Learn about Black Heritage in Arlington. Discover Black heritage in Arlington to honor Juneteenth. The walk will be led by Craig Syphax, a board member and former president of the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington and will include stops at St. John's Baptist Church, Freedman's Village Bridge and more. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/walkarlington-presents-juneteenth-black-heritage-walk-tickets-635523206017>

## SUNDAY/JUNE 18

### Demonstration Garden Open House. 1-3 pm,

Sunny Demonstration Garden and Quarry Shade Demonstration Garden, Bon Air Park, 850 N. Lexington St, Arlington. Two of the demonstration gardens are teaming up to provide you the maximum opportunity to ask questions about gardening: plants, techniques, sources! Whether your yard is sunny or shady, come have a discussion about how to improve your look and learn about plants that will suit your situation. Free.

## TUESDAYS, JUNE 20, AND 27

### Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens, Tuesdays @ 10 – Hey June Bug! 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.,

Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. Do you know this month insects, birds, wildlife, and native plants are celebrated all over the world? Extension Master Gardeners at Simpson Gardens will be available every Tuesday from 10 to 11:00 am to answer gardening questions about pollinators and more. Learn about butterfly soaks and visit the beautiful Pollinator Garden to watch pollinators in action! Free.

## WEDNESDAY/JUNE 21

**Good Bugs! Bad Bugs! Know the Difference.** 7 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. They're part of the pattern of nature and growing fresh produce. Learn to encourage good bugs and help them combat the bad guys.

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Publishing Since 1784

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**Mount Vernon Gazette**  
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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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## In Sync with the In-Laws



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Granted, Dina and I were on our best behavior. However, we didn't exactly only speak when spoken to, but we did stay away from politics and religion/abortion and so far as expletive-"deleted" uttered, I had a few missteps but nothing anywhere George Carlin's "seven dirty words." Generally speaking, the four of us meshed very well, amazingly even. No awkward moments, no pregnant pauses, no arguments/disagreements and "neither was there heard a discouraging word." In that word our time together was fabulous.

We picked them up Saturday night at Reagan National Airport and drove them to their hotel in Old Town. The talk between us was cordial and friendly enough that we agreed to spend the next day together: at Arlington National Cemetery, particularly visiting the Kennedy gravesites and the changing of the guard at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. And if we had time, we would stop by my favorite memorial (convenient to the cemetery as well): The Iwo Jima Memorial (officially known as The US Marine Corps War Memorial).

The weather was perfect on Sunday. We spent almost four hours on the grounds. They absolutely loved the experience, especially astonished by its size and scope. And since we took the tram/talking tour, we learned about many of the other notable people buried there: Thurgood Marshall, William Rehnquist, Omar Bradley, "Black" Jack Pershing, and the "presiding judge" at the Nuremberg Trials: Michael Musmanno, among so many more. Eventually we made our way back to the parking lot and due to time constraints, skipped Iwo Jima and headed back to their hotel. As we pulled into their hotel's circular drive, the discussion about dinner didn't really happen. It seemed natural that we go our separate ways. We made tentative plans for Monday and agreed to confirm in the morning.

The next day didn't happen as one of our in-laws had a bad sleep and didn't feel up to the rigors of touring/walking around Washington, DC. Tuesday was a different story however as our in-laws were rested and ready. We planned a driving/parking/walking tour of Washington, DC. First, we were able to find relatively convenient parking along the Potomac River near the Lincoln Memorial. We then made all the local Memorial rounds: The Lincoln Memorial, The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, the M.I.A. statue, the nurse's statue, the Korean War Memorial and finished up at the World War II Memorial. Walking back to the car, we stopped by the Martin Luther King Memorial and then the Roosevelt Memorial. After we reached the car (no ticket) I suggested that we drive to Alexandria by way of Rosslyn and see the Iwo Jima Memorial. We parked nearby and then walked right up the immense statue. In this instance, size did matter. Its awesomeness was not lost on our visitors. They continually shook their heads in amazement. Dinner again didn't happen as we had another big day planned for Wednesday: a tour of the US Capitol and the Library of Congress – with a walk-by of the Supreme Court.

Another beautiful day and another jaw-dropping reaction to Washington, DC. Whatever amazement was left over from the previous day gushed over into this Wednesday. To invoke Yoda's syntax: gob smacked they were. The tour and all were nearly four hours long – and with walking from nearby Metro stops, we were all a bit spent and again dinner was spent apart. It all seemed very natural and normal. We were all enjoying each-other's company. The next two days were spent apart as we left our visitors to explore on their own and see whatever drew them to Washington in the first place (it wasn't us).

Our last night together was dinner at a Greek Restaurant on King Street. We sat outside in their moonlit garden. The weather and all were perfect, yet again. Afterwards we walked the few hundred yards back to their hotel where before saying our final good-byes, they asked up their room. Upon entering their suite, we noticed two beautifully decorated gift bags sitting on the dining room table which they eagerly presented to us with effusive praise and gratitude for our participation in their Washington week. We thanked them and kissed each other good-bye. In the hallway walking to the elevator, Dina and I spoke nearly at the same time: "What a wonderful couple! They're the nicest people we've met in a long time."

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

# Q&A WITH COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY CANDIDATES

## Parisa Dehghani-Tafti

FROM PAGE 3

### Q. How do you balance the rights of the accused with the rights of the victim?

A. It is a delicate balance and not always obvious. The perspective has to be what can I do and what should I do as a prosecutor while also taking in the needs and desires of the victims. The reason we have a prosecutor is to do justice which requires we don't bring frivolous charges we can't prosecute. What is at the end of the process; what is the impact on the community? Sometimes a long sentence is best but sometimes rehabilitation is best in the long term.

### Q. If you had the controversial case to do over again of Braylon Meade, the teenager who was killed recently in an auto accident by a drunk teenager, would you have done anything differently?

A. I didn't want to do more harm to this grieving family. My decision would have been the same but my biggest regret is that my intent to do no harm didn't come through to them. I did speak to the family and I answered multiple phone calls. I think the mother wanted the defendant to be transferred to adult court but he didn't meet the criteria. There would never have been a transfer. I could have done the politically expedient thing and put the family through a traumatic day in court reliving all of the details when I already knew the outcome but that's not what a leader does.

It was clear that someone would have to bear the brunt of the decision. I was willing to be the lightning rod for my team. Normally when I sit down with victims I don't talk about legal issues. The family was asking questions about the legal process in this case. It is regretful they thought I was only talking about the defendant instead of feeling their loss. Her son died and the legal sys-

tem is not designed to take care of it. But my decision would have been the same in hindsight.

### Q. Katcher has said his approach is prosecutions on violent crimes, gun crimes, sexual offenses and crimes against children while diverting cases involving the mentally ill, the unhoused, people dealing with addiction and kids doing dumb things out of the criminal justice system. What would your approach be?

A. You know my approach. I honestly don't know what his approach would be. He says some things on his website and other things to whatever group he is talking to. He wants to bring back people from the old administration before I came, people I didn't keep on.

### Q. Why do you think the police union recently endorsed Katcher?

A. Institutions don't like the status quo to change. I'm trying to change the criminal justice system from operating on emotion to operating on science, evidence-based. The political morass right now doesn't reflect how cases are being handled. Katcher can't name a reform he has done. No reform group has endorsed him.

### Q. What question would you like to answer that I haven't asked?

A. I have a record but future plans are most important: working with Department of Human Services to double the size of the mental health courts, create more diversion programs, work with OAR on meaningful community reentry work instead of bail, building an expungement clinic, advocate for common sense gun laws, victim restitution fund in a timely way. There is a lot on the table to do. We've only just started, laid the foundation.

## Josh Katcher

FROM PAGE 3

### Q. How do you balance the rights of the accused with the rights of the victim?

A. Easy. I think a prosecutor is not an attorney for the victim but we have to do certain things. We have to treat the victim with dignity and respect, not giving them the outcome they want, but listening. A lot of people who are prosecutors come from a myopic view focused on the experience of defendants but when you come from that context you overly focus on outcomes. You should engage in full prosecution.

### Q. How would you have handled the Braylon Meade case?

A. The family of Braylon Meade left the meeting with Dehghani-Tafti feeling like all she was focused on was the outcome for the 17-year-old kid who had killed Braylon in a drunk driving accident in Arlington last November. They didn't feel like she listened to them. They were revictimized. One of the reasons why experience in this job is so important is that it takes you time to figure out how to work the system. In the beginning I was too legalistic, cold. It took me a while. You have to make the victim feel they have their moment, go to them and just listen. Don't inflict anything on them, especially in the first meeting. It is a qualitative process for prosecutors who have done a lot of it. You have to start at ground zero and build up a relationship.

### Q. You have said your approach is prosecutions against violent crimes, gun crimes, sexual offenses and crimes against children while diverting ones involving the mentally ill, the unhoused, people dealing with addiction and kids doing dumb things out of the criminal justice system. What is Parisa's approach?

A. It's the same thing. I draw a line between crimes the community wants prosecuted such as murder, rape, gangs, gun violence and cases that arise in the system due to external policy failures.

### Q. Why do you think the police union recently endorsed you?

A. The current Commonwealth Attorney's office has no relationship with the police. Parisa is not interested in prosecuting certain kinds of crimes. The police put together a tough case and see her offering soft plea deals. I have a good relationship with them.

### Q. What question would you like to answer that I haven't asked?

A. Why do I think it is so important to have raised my money from this community? She is getting outside dollars; you will see on Tuesday. People don't feel like the justice system is working for them when money is coming from the outside.

## "FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

FROM PAGE 5

and an Arlington poet. Registration # 914400-21.

The 1951 Moton School Strike led by high school junior Barbara Johns will be discussed by Cainan Townsend, managing director of the Moton Museum, Farmville, VA, Tuesday, June 20, 1:30 p.m., virtual. Registration # 914400-22.

Genealogy 101 class will focus on how to use the card catalog on Ancestry.com, Tuesday, June 20, 11:30 a.m. Lubber Run 55+ Center. Led by experienced genealogist Eileen Bogdanoff. Registration # 914402-01.

Acoustic Café, open to all ages, Tuesday, June 20, 7 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Performances by local musicians. Registration # 914301-01.

55+ Travel group will tour the Hillwood Estate, Museums and Gardens, D.C., Wednesday, June 21. Docent Tours plus three

course lunch at the Merriweather Café. Cost \$71, Arlington resident, \$82, non-resident. Registration # 902306-07.

Opera appreciation group to hear musical selections from "Porgy and Bess" by George Gershwin, Wednesday, June 21, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Professional commentary by George Cecchetti. Registration # 914300-02.

Staying hydrated in the summer, presentation by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Food Volunteers, Wednesday, June 21, 10:30 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914501-05.

Discussion with author, investigative journalist and professor Phoebe Zerwick about her new book, "Beyond Innocence: Life Sentence for Darryl Hunt," Wednesday, June 21, 11 a.m., virtual. Registration # 914400-24.

Tips for hiking with enthusiast Carmen Shippy, Thursday, June 22, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-12.

Current events discussion in Spanish, Thursday, June 22 11:30 a.m., virtual. Must have minimum intermediate knowledge of Spanish. Led by Lubber Run 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez Figueredo. Registration # 914402-10.

Jigsaw puzzle contest, teams of three, Friday, June 23, 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Bring a puzzle to swap with other participants following contest. Registration # 914600-01.

Movie night at Lubber Run 55+ Center, "Sing 2" (2021) (PG), Thursday, June 22, 6 p.m. Registration # 914804-12.

Local travel guru Lowell Nelson will share stories about his recent visit to Sicily, Friday, June 23, 11 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-13.

The history of Arlington's black communities will be discussed by Sean Dennison, Arlington's Historical Society, Friday, June 23, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-23.

Meet up at the Arlington Pride Festival, led by 55+ staff, Saturday, June 24, 1 p.m., Rosslyn Gateway Park. For information about the Festival, go to <https://arlvapride.com>. Registration # 914899-01.

Scale down is a weight loss support group, private weigh-ins, Monday, June 26, 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Aurora Hills 55+ Center book club members will discuss "Cat's Cradle" by Kurt Vonnegut, Monday, June 26, 11:30 a.m. Drop-in.

55+ Travel group will visit D.C.'s National Gallery of Art's exhibit, "Canova: Sketching in Clay," Monday, June 26. Cost \$11, Arlington resident; \$13, non-resident. Registration # 902306-08.

Play card games and rummikub, beginners welcome, Monday, June 26, 1 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Escape Room, games made up of a series of clues and puzzles that must be solved by a team. In this game

the team needs to find thieves who stole priceless works of art, Tuesday, June 27, 7:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914600-03.

Summer safety 101 presented by representatives from Arlington County Police Department and Virginia Hospital Center, Tuesday, June 27, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Topics include pedestrian and personal safety, fire hazards, heat stroke prevention, water safety, food poisoning and more. Registration # 914400-05.

Rock music legends including the Beatles, Herman's Hermits, the Dave Clark Five and more discussed and performed by musician Carl Gold, Tuesday, June 27, 1:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-36 or virtual, registration # 914400-37.

Current magazine articles discussed Wednesday, June 28, 11 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Facilitated by Librarian Vicky McCaffrey. Registration # 914402-15.