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Political Correctness Impeding Diversity

At the July 29th Library Board of Trustees meeting, my appointee Phil Rosenthal made a statement about the need for more diverse views to be represented in the library catalog's highlighted books. He and other trustees pointed out that there is no review process for choosing recommended reads for the library catalog and that has led to an unbalanced selection. Since that meeting I have become very concerned by how partisan interests have defamed Mr. Rosenthal, a long-standing public servant, and are calling for his and others' opposing viewpoints to be removed and silenced. In addition to sharing my thoughts with you below, I would encourage you to view the entirety of Mr. Rosenthal's statement and the Board discussion that follows [here](#) beginning around the 1:36:40 mark.

I have always believed that open honest discussion gets us to better answers. It was this open honest discussion on the need for diversity on one of the library's landing pages that Phil Rosenthal was attempting to generate. While by his own admission he did not use what some people would consider "politically correct" language, the words he spoke were by no means racist, hate filled or discriminatory. Racism is a very serious issue that we need to stand against and should take even more seriously when it is trivialized as a political tool with unfounded accusations. Mr. Rosenthal was simply calling for balance and diversity of thought. Library Board Trustee Darren Ewing echoed the need for diversity on the web page stating: "To Phil's point, this is a catalog homepage, it is completely one sided...If you go on the catalog homepage, it is social justice. There's nothing wrong with social justice, but you got to put it within a framework." In fact, another trustee said, "I have a very personal and selfish interest in pursuing racial justice...but I also have some concerns that all sides aren't being heard, not necessarily just in the library, but in general in the national debate."

Mr. Rosenthal has become the target of a sustained effort by an outside advocacy group that is seeking to become relevant by defaming the character of a long-term community activist and philanthropist who has worked to better the lives of countless individuals. Phil is deeply committed to helping our area's low-income families in their struggles to find adequate housing and food, caring for their children, and improving the lives of residents on the Route 1 corridor who continue to suffer from high crime rates, poverty, and a lack of meaningful job opportunities. Mr. Rosenthal has been recognized with Good Shepherd Housing's Philanthropy Award and the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Association's Citation of Merit, among others. In addition to the Library Board, he currently serves on the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board, Fairfax County A. Heath Onthank Advisory Committee, Good Shepherd Housing and is a Community Board Member for GMU Hillel, the largest Jewish campus organization in the world. Yet this outside advocacy group claims Mr. Rosenthal is anti-Semitic?

For Chairman McKay to call for the removal of Mr. Rosenthal under the guise of [One Fairfax](#) is just as outrageous and unfounded. It is unfortunate that those who preach diversity are intolerant of diversity of opinion. Chairman McKay has gone as far as asking the County Attorney's office to find options for removing Mr. Rosenthal before his appointed term is up. The use of the One Fairfax policy to try to remove appointees that Chairman McKay disagrees with is a dangerous, undemocratic precedent and a slippery slope. This is even more dangerous given nothing Mr. Rosenthal said was racist, hate filled or discriminatory, but instead a poorly articulated request for a presentation of diverse viewpoints.

My office has been contacted by many residents in support of Mr. Rosenthal's statement that there needs to be balance, diversity of opinion, and a review process for library catalog highlights. As an appointee, he represents and addresses their concerns. One Library Board Trustee who agreed with the need for balance already has resigned in the wake of calls for his resignation. I have urged Phil Rosenthal to make the much more difficult decision and to stay on the Library Board to continue to serve and represent the citizens of the county that want diversity of opinion and open, honest discussion.

My hope is that we learn from this and work to engage true diversity of views in our community, not just those we agree with. As a businessman, I wholeheartedly believe that we should not just have career politicians serving our County, we need people from every background. We should be encouraging more people to get involved in the local democratic process, not silencing, and out casting them when they don't use the right terminology. A good man and public servant has been unjustly defamed and maligned. If we cannot have conversations without labeling opposing views as bigoted or prejudiced, how can we expect to move forward as a democratic society? We need to be more charitable to our neighbors as we try to understand their views without rushing to judgment.

The public library is one of the most important institutions in our democracy. For that reason, it is especially important that it offers a balance of viewpoints to remain neutral and nonpartisan in representing many ideologies, religions, ethnicities, and stories. I hope to see the Library Board of Trustees work to more holistically encourage diversity of thought for readers in Fairfax County, but given recent events, I am concerned with their ability to do so apart from partisan interests.

If you are interested in providing feedback to the Library Board on this issue, you can find contact information for your district's trustee [here](#).

Additional Early Voting Sites Announced

In anticipation of large turnout for the Tuesday, November 3rd General Election, Fairfax County plans to open 14 satellite voting sites to accommodate demand. These sites are scheduled to open on October 14. To see a list of locations and planned hours of operation, [please visit this page](#).

Early Voting FAQs from the Office of Elections

Are temperature checks required?

No temperature check will be taken the door.

Are masks required?

Masks are encouraged, but entry will not be prohibited if you do not wear one.

How will staff ensure sanitation?

At the early voting sites, staff will wear masks and staff will sanitize voting sites to ensure cleanliness of site and equipment. Booths will be separated 6 feet apart and after each voter, staff will clean and disinfect machines.

Will curbside voting be available?

Curbside voting will also continue to be available. Only one staff member per car will go outside for curbside voting. Curbside voting staffers will continue to abide by social distancing and hygiene standards.

Libraries Now Open for Express Services

In case you missed it, as of Monday, July 13, all library branches are available for "express" services. Express services will be available at all locations Monday–Tuesday 10 a.m.–8 p.m. and Wednesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–6 p.m., while curbside services will continue to be offered Monday–Saturday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. To learn more, please [see](#).

September Land Use Committee Meeting

On Thursday, September 10, the Springfield District Land Use Committee will be holding its monthly meeting virtually. Agenda items for the September 10 meeting include: The Fair Oaks Comprehensive Amendment and the HHP LLC (Healthy Hounds) dog kennel special exception application, and a staff presentation on agritourism in Fairfax County.

To access the virtual meeting, please contact [Michael Perez](#) for login information.

Women's Centennial Celebration

This past August, we marked the 100th Anniversary of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment as National Women's Suffrage Month. Along with the Board I signed a resolution honoring the legacy of the Women's Suffrage Movement. I invite members of the Community to explore our local history on this topic at the [Workhouse's Lucy Burns Museum](#).

Commission for Women Seeks Student Representative

The Commission for Women is seeking a student representative. The student representative must be able to attend monthly meetings and provide a summary of accomplishments at the end of the year. Interested students should see [this page](#) for information and application instructions.

New Walkway in Burke is Complete

If you have driven on Lee Chapel Road in Burke in recent months, you may have noticed some construction underway. The County recently completed installation of a concrete walkway on the west side of this roadway from its intersection with Burke Lake Road south to Britford Drive. Approved by voters in the 2014 Bond Referendum, this sidewalk will provide pedestrians a new, safer way to walk along Lee Chapel Road and will also offer them access to safer locations to cross Lee Chapel Road than the existing crosswalk at Covered Bridge Road.

I-66 HOV Ramps at Monument to Allow Full-time, Two-way Travel

Starting approximately Wednesday, September 2, The Monument Drive ramps to I-66 East and from I-66 West will convert from alternating, one-way travel to full-time, two-way travel.

Drivers on Monument Drive traveling to I-66 East, and drivers on I-66 West traveling to Monument Drive will be permitted to use the ramps 24 hours a day. The ramp will remain subject to HOV-2 restrictions in effect during peak periods. I was instrumental in getting these ramps open to non HOV traffic during non HOV hours and supported the expansion of their use.

The ramp from Monument Drive to I-66 East will be restricted to HOV-2 Only on weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. The ramp from I-66 West to Monument Drive will be restricted to HOV-2 Only on weekdays between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program Indoor Riding Arena

Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) is thrilled to announce that the organization is moving forward with building the long-awaited Jean and Ric Edelman Indoor Riding Arena on its 17-acre farm, at the corner of Popes Head and Clifton Roads. The facility will include a 17,000 square foot indoor riding arena, classroom, rider observation area, and restrooms. It will be built on the footprint cleared during the first phase of building in 2018/19, which included the construction of the Trefry Outdoor Riding Arena, Kristen P. Cabbage Memorial Playground, parking, and a reconfigured entryway.

NVTRP is a 40-year-old non-profit organization that helps children and adults with disabilities, youth-at-risk, and recovering military service personnel reach their fullest potential by riding and working with horses. This new space will allow clients to ride year-round, regardless of the weather, and also allow for an expansion of services, hopefully eliminating the typical 1+ year waiting list. If you have questions or want to support the project, please contact Executive Director Kelsey Gallagher at kgallagher@nvtrp.org or (703) 764-0269. I am happy to see this project finally moving forward.

New Burke Historical Society Book Published

After innumerable volunteer hours and research by the Burke Historical Society (BHS), Images of America – Burke is now in print and available for purchase. This book includes 190 photographs from private collections, many that have never been published before. As a result of the project hundreds of additional photos are preserved at the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Public Library. The volunteers at BHS work tirelessly to help us preserve and maintain our local history and were a partner in our successful effort to preserve the Silas Burke House.

To purchase your book directly from the publisher please click on this [link](#).

New Grant Program Open for Small Businesses

A new grant program for nonprofits and small businesses is available through Rebuild VA. This program will award grants of up to 3 times the applicant's average monthly eligible expenses up to a maximum award of \$10,000. The application is now open - to start your application, please click [here](#).

Free Mental Health Resources for Businesses

Recovery Program Solutions of Virginia (RPSV) now offers customized virtual support sessions designed specifically for area businesses. The sessions are facilitated by peer specialists who will help team members work through the concerns they are having individually and as a collective. RPSV's services are free to the public.

For more information on RPSV's current programming, please visit rpsva.org. To arrange a customized support group session for you and your team members, please contact Monika Taylor at (240) 498-9685 or via email at mtaylor@recoveryprograms.us today.

Assistance for Washington Gas Customers

Washington Gas is working to continue to find ways for customers to continue to have access to energy and heat. If you need assistance with paying your Washington Gas bill, please see Washington Gas' Payment Assistance page for more [information](#).

Cox Offering Free Internet to Eligible Families

Cox has announced new customers that qualify will receive Connect2Compete, the company's low-cost internet, for **two months at no cost**.

New customers must sign up between July 21 and September 30 for free service, which also includes:

- free technical support
- 2 months of free Connect2Compete service and remote desktop and phone support through Cox Complete Care for eligible new customers who apply between July 21 and September 30, \$9.95/month thereafter
- Free WiFi modem rental

The Cox Connect2Compete program is available to families who:

- Have at least one child that is a K-12 student at home
- Participate in one of these government subsidies programs:

The National School Lunch Program, SNAP, TANF, Head Start, WIC, LIHEAP, or Public Housing Families can qualify for Connect2Compete easily from anywhere whether on their mobile device or desktop by visiting [this page](#).

Inova Offering COVID-19 Services for Medicaid / Uninsured Patients

Through Inova Cares Clinic for Families (ICCF), Inova provides primary care services for patients who qualify for Medicaid, FAMIS or Inova's Financial Assistance Program, and the uninsured. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and have Medicaid coverage or no insurance, call an ICCF clinic to schedule a free telemedicine screening. If needed, a COVID-19 test will be scheduled and administered at no cost.

ICCF Sites in Northern Virginia are listed below:

Inova Cares Clinic for Families – Alexandria

4700 King St., Suite 100 - 571.665.6599

Inova Cares Clinic for Families – Annandale

7617 Little River Tpke., Suite 850 – 571.665.6636

Inova Cares Clinic for Families – Manassas

8051 Sudley Rd. – 571.290.2898

Inova Cares Clinic for Families – Sterling

46440 Benedict Dr., Suite 208 – 571.665.6526

New Glass Collection Bins Available

To assist our constituents with glass recycling, Fairfax has opened two new collection sites in Wakefield Park (Annandale) and Baron Cameron Park (Reston.) The Wakefield recycling site came as a result of the efforts of Girl Scout Troop 120. West Springfield Government Center continues to host its purple glass bin in the rear parking lot that can be directly accessed from Bauer Drive. To find a recycling bin near you, please refer to this site [for more information](#).

On the lighter side

Did you know that Springfield, Virginia's 22152 zip code made the top 10 hottest zip codes according to [Realtor.com](#)? For more information, and to discover the other cities on the list, [please see this page](#).

Four-Legged-Friend of the Month

September's four-legged-friend of the month is Slim! Slim is a 2-year old, medium-sized Hound mix. Slim comes from a rescue and is a former hunting dog. No longer hunting, Slim is a shy dog that is used to being in the outdoors! He is looking for a more experienced homeowner that can house train him and has the patience to help boost his confidence. Slim enjoys positive reinforcement and is friendly around dogs. You can find more information about Slim [here](#).

