

# *The* **DEMOCRAT**

*Newsletter of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee*

October/November 2017

Ready to Vote!



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by an appropriate committee resolution.



## **Message from Sue Langley,**

*Chairman of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee*

We are fresh off our victory on August 29, when Karen Keys-Gamarra picked off another Republican-held seat in the special election for At-Large School Board. We now turn our focus to this year's general election.

The November 7<sup>th</sup> ballot includes an impressive slate of Delegate candidates, both incumbents and challengers; re-election of Attorney General Mark Herring; a new bid for elective office by Justin Fairfax for Lieutenant Governor; and a promotion for Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam to Governor. This year, we have a real shot at taking the last three Republican house seats in Fairfax County and turning the entire Fairfax delegation of 17 delegates blue. Every Fairfax voter is already represented by a Democratic State Senator.

Democrats often vote in Presidential years and then stay home for the next 3 years. *We cannot afford to repeat this history in 2017*, or else the other side wins. We also need a huge turnout in order to have the votes to retake the House of Delegates this year. Every effort you can exert between now and Election Day will contribute to another Democratic win. We need a clean sweep at the top of the ticket and significant wins in our house races around the state. That won't happen without your determined volunteer efforts. We need to send a loud and clear message across the Potomac River. Every contact you make now will make a difference in this year's outcome.

Once the election dust settles in early November, the biennial organization of FCDC, which started with my re-election as Chair in 2016, winds down, culminating in the reorganization of the Magisterial District Committees in early December. When my current term is complete, it is time to step aside and to let new blood guide the Committee for the next two years. The selection of a new Chair and other Officers will occur on January 9.

I have had the honor of serving as your Chair for two terms. Reflecting on the past four years of committee service, we can all celebrate a long list of accomplishments, including electoral victories that cement Fairfax County as no longer purple but now clearly blue.

Finally, the Holiday Party toasts the season we enter after Thanksgiving. On Sunday afternoon, December 10, Sharon and Seth Stark will open their lovely home to the committee for this year's gathering. This will be FCDC's last official Committee event this year. Please join us.

*Democratically yours [#Resist],*

*Sue Langley*

*Chair, Fairfax County Democratic Committee*



# How Did Karen Do It?

*She Actually Won EVERY District*

Our August special election sent shivers through the Republican establishment in Fairfax County and Virginia. In the first summer special election won by Democrats in recent memory, we elected Karen Keys-Gamarra in a two-to-one landslide. We got the word out and Democrats turned out in huge numbers, pushing turnout over 10%, twice what was anticipated.

Karen won every magisterial district and prevailed in 227 out of 244 precincts, plus the absentee vote. Nearly half the precincts she fell short in missed the mark by only a handful of votes, in many cases by one or two votes.

In an election with four candidates, Karen received over 80% of the vote in many precincts and over 90% in several others. She even held her opponent to 0% in one precinct. That's right; the Republicans were

denied a single vote in Mason District's Holmes precinct! Great work Mason District!

I want to thank all of FCDC for stepping up to the plate in this race. At the time of our endorsement meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup> I realized that the winner of our endorsement would have a daunting task ahead of them. That winner would have just two months to develop a plan and execute it by setting up a campaign organization, raising money and getting out the mail, and ultimately the vote, for a county-wide election. This is in a county that is larger than eight states and the District of Columbia. **Think about it, in the end this election required more resources and effort than a state-wide election in eight states.**

Since FCDC already had the infrastructure, we had to step up and fill that void. We stood up a team, helped Karen with her fundraising and mail, and contributed resources.

Karen raised more than four times her Republican opponent and about \$30,000 of that came from FCDC. The magisterial district committees contributed a combined nearly \$15,000 of FCDC's contribution. I would like to thank each district for their contribution to this important race:

Braddock	\$3,000
Hunter Mill	3,000
Dranesville	1,000
Lee	500
Mason	500
Mount Vernon	3,000
Providence	1,000
Springfield	500
Sully	1,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,400</b>

Our magisterial district chairs and Precinct Captains stepped up to the task and got the word out about this race in their communities. I want to thank the Precinct Operations committee for working the doors, phones, and community events, and the Voter Registration and Education committee for being out in the community and at Metro stations handing out information about this race. We handed out 75,000 grip cards promoting this race.

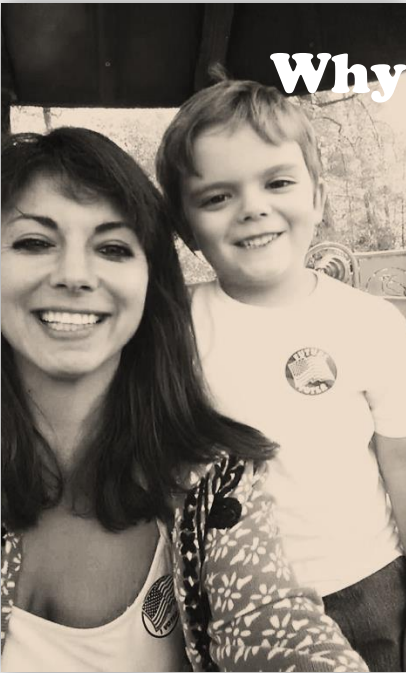
I also want to thank the individuals who worked closely with the campaign to promote the race by helping with the mail program, social media, and other campaign management functions. This campaign was a team effort. The coordinated and delegate campaigns, our friends from Arlington, City of Alexandria, Falls Church City, Prince William, and various part of NOVA, as well as elected officials all played key roles.

Our communications team was also instrumental in getting the local press to cover the way the Republicans engaged in a terrible waste of taxpayer money by unnecessarily forcing this special election. They concocted this election in an effort to create momentum for the governor's race, which was why Gillespie held a fundraiser for Karen's opponent. The election generated plenty of momentum, just not in the direction they had hoped.

Karen will be a great addition to the School Board. She was sworn in on September 14, and got to work immediately promoting her inclusive agenda, which is in contrast to the Republican she replaced.

I hope FCDC's role and approach in this election can be a model going forward in our 2019 elections and, certainly, in future local special elections.

- Sue Langley, Chair, Fairfax County Democratic Committee



## **Why Voting in this Election Matters**

Even though the November 7 election is not a federal election its importance to Fairfax County residents cannot be overstated. All the State Assembly members as well as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General will be on the ballot.

Their decisions have a significant impact over our lives.

One of the most important reasons to get out and vote this election is the redistricting of Congressional and State Assembly seats to be taken up by the next Governor. There have been numerous attempts to gerrymander Democratic districts to decrease the likelihood of Democrats maintaining the majority of the Fairfax County Congressional Delegation, as well as to minimize the number of Fairfax County State Assembly seats held by Democrats. Redistricting only occurs once every ten years after each Census. The next will be as the result of the 2020 Census.

This election will start to shape the political chessboard we navigate for the next decade.

According to One Virginia 2021, "Virginia is ranked as one of the most gerrymandered states in the country both on the congressional and state levels based on lack

of compactness and contiguity of its districts. [1] Virginia is ranked the 5th worst in the country. [2] Throughout the Commonwealth, counties and cities are being broken in half or into multiple pieces to create heavily partisan districts."

Another specter that looms large in this election is the mandate on President Trump's administration. Virginia was the only southern state that voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016. Trump has not forgotten that and, according to at least one media report, is challenging the integrity of Virginia's electoral system. This is also at a time where the Republican candidate for Governor is falsely accusing Ralph Northam of being soft on gangs. Some of these gangs, such as MS-13, prey on the undocumented communities. If members of these communities feel fearful of deportation – as would likely happen under Gillespie – then it is little wonder they may be less inclined to help police.

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Yet another reason to vote in this election is to prevent a trifecta from occurring in Virginia. Trifectas are when one party – in this case Republicans – control the governorship as well as both branches of the state legislature. As the Virginia legislature is currently heavily slanted towards the Republicans, the only person able to stop their extreme agenda from becoming law is Ralph Northam. Electing the Lt. Governor will prevent a trifecta occurring in Virginia for at least four more years.

Please, whatever your reasons... go out and vote for the complete Democratic ticket (Northam, Fairfax, Herring, and your Democratic Delegate candidate). Keeping Virginia Blue is up to all of us!

- Mary Paulet





## Early Voting – Great Opportunity

*And You Might Be Eligible!*

For several decades before moving to Fairfax in 2015, I lived in Arlington while working in Fairfax. When early voting was expanded to include those of us working in another county, I couldn't wait to take advantage of it. **I loved early voting!** Why? I could easily vote after work or on Saturday at my convenience. Gone was the stress of worrying that on Election Day, I would not make it to the polls, because I was sick, or had

to work late unexpectedly, or got stuck in gridlocked traffic driving home on I-66. Sadly, now that I both live and work in Fairfax County, I'm not eligible to vote early. However, you may be eligible, and if you are, I strongly recommend you take advantage of it!

Here are answers to basic questions, along with hyperlinks to more detailed information on the FCDC, Fairfax County Office of Elections, and Virginia Board of Elections web sites.

### Who can vote early?

There are 20 different ways you can qualify for early voting. Among the more common ones are active duty military, election official, away from home at college, away on vacation, working full time outside the county, and illness or disability. Here is [the complete list](#).

### How do I vote early?

You can vote early in person or by mail. Basics are below.

### How do I vote early in person?

Bring a [valid voter ID](#) to the Fairfax County Government Center or satellite location in your magisterial district. Addresses and links to maps are [here](#). Hours (Monday 10/16 – Saturday 11/4):

- FCGC: Mon-Fri 8AM-7PM, Sat 9AM-5PM.
- Satellite locations: Mon-Fri 3:30PM-7PM, Sat 9AM-5PM.

### How do I vote early by mail?

File an application with the Fairfax County Office of Elections, then receive your ballot in the mail, fill it out, and send it back to the Office of Elections. If you want to vote by mail, it is best to do so as soon as possible, to ensure plenty of time for mail processing and delivery (to you and then back to the Office of Elections).

- **Applying for a mail-in absentee ballot.** Applications are being accepted now and must be received at the Office of Elections by **October 31<sup>st</sup> 5PM at the latest** (7 days before the election). You can apply on line, or by printing off and faxing or mailing a completed application form. The online application link and PDF form are both available [here](#).
- **Returning an absentee ballot.** Once the Board of Elections receives your application, they will process it, and assuming you are eligible, mail you an absentee ballot. Once you get it, fill it out completely and mail it back. The Office of Elections must receive your ballot by **Election Day November 7<sup>th</sup> 7PM at the latest** to have it counted.

- Florence Upson



### *What was your first impulse?*

For Amy Dorra, who was so committed to voting for Secretary Clinton that she flew to Philadelphia from Austin- to make sure that she could vote- it was to take a leave of absence from her career in fashion marketing, grab her savings, and travel in South America for four months. She marched with other Americans in Oaxaca, Mexico on January 21. (She explained to the local women, who were justifiably suspicious, that she was in no way a supporter of Trump).

Ultimately, she returned to the United States, ready to become part of the solution. She had been politically active all along, volunteering for many candidates, some local and some national, including Mr. Obama. Now Amy was ready to double down.

She communicated with many wise activist women, women involved with Planned Parenthood, NARAL, Emily's List, and others. She networked with others who were, like Amy, graduates of Brown. A friend- who was on the faculty of George Washington University- told her to go to Virginia. The need, the race, was here.

## **Think Back, If You Dare**

*... To the Days Immediately After the Presidential Election*

Amy has utilized the skills developed during her career in retail. She feels that people who come from the world of consumer sales can translate their ability to convince others to buy their products, to convincing others to vote for their candidates.

She became a "fellow" in the campaign of Ralph Northam. She was inspired by the work that FCDC did in the successful campaign to elect Karen Keys-Gamarra, despite the efforts by the other side, to suppress the vote in the inconveniently scheduled school board election.

Then, in a moment of serendipity, our Mary Tycz met Amy, was impressed by her, and suggested to Kaye Kory that Amy was just the person to manage Kaye's campaign for re-election as a state delegate and help her beat her rather scary opponent.

Now Amy is here in Northern Virginia, working hard for Kaye. After we win in Virginia on November 7th, she is off to Alabama to help defeat Roy Moore.

Amy would be the first to tell you that she is an optimist. She describes a lovely scenario in which Joe Biden runs in 2020 with Kamala Harris, wins, and then steps aside in four years so that Kamala can win in 2024. Whatever the reaction each of us had to the results last November, I would guess that none of us can top the life changes made by Amy Dorra. but we can definitely aspire, and be inspired, and keep marching on.

- Burma Bochner





# The International Democrat

*Homeward Looks from a Frequent Traveler*

## **Nation-Building -- or Not -- in Afghanistan**

The president says nation-building has no part in his strategy for Afghanistan. But without it, can we win the war? Decades of working in nation-building have taught me a simple lesson: it is a partnership, not a gift. Foreign aid can help governments, but it cannot take their place. If the people do not trust in the regime, no amount of foreign assistance will repair the breach.

We should have learned this in Vietnam, where billions of American dollars for Vietnamese “hearts and minds” could not purchase loyalty to a government that was corrupt and unrepresentative.

We should have learned it again in Iraq, when our massive reconstruction program, in which I played a small role, failed to take hold in the chaos left by an invasion that had vaporized the state.

We should be learning it anew every day in Afghanistan, where warlords mock the formal government, where officers steal their soldiers’ pay, and where corrupt contractors rip off millions in foreign aid funds.

The best nation-building I ever saw was in Liberia in the early 1980s. It was a tiny program called the Self-Help Fund which paid one-half, never more, of the cost of community facilities like schools, pumps and markets. All non-specialist labor had to be provided by local citizens at no charge to the project.

But how do you scale up projects with local communities into programs that address the existential needs of countries menaced by insurgencies? Unfortunately, you cannot if basic bonds of trust and loyalty don’t tie the populace to the government.

States don’t have to be liberal democracies for nation-building to take root, but they have to exercise a material level of both authority and credibility within their borders. Some post-conflict countries run by autocrats, like Cambodia and Rwanda, have (mostly) used foreign aid to build economies with a solid foundation benefiting all sectors of the population, winning their people’s allegiance.



In the case of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani is a courageous leader, but he represents only a minority of the country's fractious tribes. Backing him with force is not a long-term solution. Just ask the Russians, whose protégé, Mohammad Najibullah, fell from power and was killed in 1996 in the wake of the Russian withdrawal.

The paradox in Afghanistan is that the roots of the Taliban insurgency go as deep as those of the elected government. Moreover, we are strengthening those roots. The cause of the Taliban draws strength with every death of a *talib* fighter at the hands of an American soldier.

The president is right not to rely on nation-building to win the war in Afghanistan. But he is wrong to think that our military can defeat the insurgency on behalf of a government that lacks a popular mandate. The right answer is to rethink what we mean by victory.

Fortunately, our national interests in Afghanistan are narrow. Its natural resources are modest and its economy is minuscule. Its most important role, in history and today, is to act as a buffer separating larger powers. So long as Afghanistan stays independent and refuses to succor international terrorists, we should stay out of it.

Yes, the Taliban oppress women and hold other values abhorrent to Western civilization, in addition to protecting the export of opium. But if we invade every country whose civilization clashes with our own, the fighting will never end. In the world as it is, we must limit the interests we defend or we will not succeed in defending any.

When they ruled, the Taliban threatened US national security only by giving safe harbor to Al Qaeda. After their swift defeat in 2001, it is doubtful they will repeat this mistake. In fact, their commitment not to do so is the only condition necessary for the US to declare victory and leave, letting the Afghan combatants sort out the rest.

The US will not solve the crisis in Afghanistan, either by nation-building or by killing the Taliban. It is not our crisis to solve. How much longer will we intervene in a war we cannot win?

— Brad Swanson (*The International Democrat welcomes feedback at [bradswanson@verizon.net](mailto:bradswanson@verizon.net) and [thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org](mailto:thedemocrat@fairfaxdemocrats.org)*)



## **Democrats' Commitment to Diversity**

*Clear With House of Delegate Picks*

For Northern Virginia political junkies, the first names “Danica,” “Dante” and “Karrie” have become as familiar in recent months as the celebrities “Cher” or “Gaga.” The upsurge in activism in an off-year election is unprecedented. Novice candidates who may have struggled for attention and resources in another election cycle have been blessed with an outpouring of commitment and organization from groups such as Indivisible, Flippable, Next Gen and, of course, the Democratic Party and its activist core.



While Northern Virginia activists are rightfully focused on the districts we can flip right here, such as the ones targeted by the candidates mentioned above – Danica Roem in Manassas, Dante Tanner in Clifton and Centreville, Karrie Delaney in Chantilly and South Riding, and also David Reid in Ashburn and Kathy Tran in Springfield and Mason Neck - Democrat candidates have flooded the ballot like no time in recent history, and not only do we have an unprecedented number of candidates challenging Republican incumbents, we also have candidates of exceptional quality.

In addition, in contrast to the messages of divisiveness played out each day in the national news, we have a remarkable representation of our democratic values. In a clear nod to the Women's March, 30 of the 60 contested House of Delegates seats have a female candidate. And our candidates represent America in other meaningful ways. Democratic primary voters elected candidates who are of African, Hispanic and Asian heritage. They are pastors, teachers, social workers, single mothers, park rangers, farmers and nurses, as well as millennials and grandmothers, LGBTQ and environmental advocates.



## Candidates With a Good Chance to Win

*Outside of Northern Virginia (Let Your Friends Know!)*

### **Shelly Simmonds**

*(Newport News, VA)*

*She is an educator, serving on the school board, and a latecomer to the race after the former Democratic candidate dropped out. The Republican simply avoids controversial votes, leaving the district essentially with no representation. The demographics favor a flip, and she can make this happen. Visit <https://www.simondsfordelegate.com/>.*

### **Jennifer Carroll Foy**

*(Just south in Prince William and Stafford counties)*

*This is the race outside NoVA we can all contribute a day to and really make a difference.*

*Foy's race was just ranked the number 1 chance for a flip to Democrats by Blue Virginia (Kathy Tran and Roem are 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>). Foy is a Public Defender in Arlington, graduate of Virginia Military Institute, and a foster mom. Hillary Clinton won this district handily. Her opponent is opposed to Medicaid expansion. Visit <https://www.jennifercarrollfoy.org/>.*



### **Chris Hurst**

*(Running against the Republican incumbent in Blacksburg and Radford)*

*He is a striking candidate, coming into the race on a platform to improve education, tackle opioid abuse, and reduce gun violence. And he's got a compelling story. In 2015 he was the news anchor in Roanoke as his girlfriend and reporter was shot and killed on the air by a deranged gunman. He decided he needed to find solutions to problems, not just report them, and this path led him to run for office. This district is a tough one, but he's garnered support both within and outside his district.*

These are just three of the many qualified and competitive candidates outside Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, running in races from the Eastern shore (Willie Randall) to Wise County (Alicia Kallen) who, with our help, may be serving us in the

2018 legislature. You can find out more information by following Rip Sullivan's Flip a District Friday on the Blue Virginia website or on [The Virginia Public Access Project](#).

– Holly Hazard



## Meet ALL the Fairfax Dems on Your Ballot This November

*Getting Info from Campaign Websites*

Did you know that the FCDC web site has a [page](#) with links to the web sites of all the Democratic candidates appearing on the ballot anywhere in Fairfax County? In addition to serving as a place to make donations, campaign web sites also have wealth of information about the candidate's

biography, record in office, and positions on key issues. They are worth checking if you have questions about the candidates, and if you don't find the information you want, most have a way to contact the campaign.

This information can be valuable in conversations with other voters. Persuasion is all about convincing each voter that our candidates will do a better job representing them than the opposition. Often that means being able to provide information about the candidates that we do not already know. If we can find that information on the campaign web site while talking to the voter, that provides the best opportunity to win the voter's support. If not, we can contact the campaign and pass it on to the voter once we get it.

Ultimately, this helps whether we are doing canvassing and/or phone banking shifts for the campaigns, or having informal conversations with friends and relatives. And there is no need to limit ourselves to Democrats and/or progressives. There are plenty of good reasons for moderates and even pragmatic mainstream conservatives to support our candidates this year. In close races like we are expecting this November, we want all the votes we can get!

Visit [fairfaxdemocrats.org/blog/2017/01/10/2017-elections/](http://fairfaxdemocrats.org/blog/2017/01/10/2017-elections/) to read about all the candidates running in this November's election – stay informed! – Florence Upson

## FCDC Lost & Found

*From the Headquarters Committee*

We have jackets, sweaters, hats, baking pans, reading glasses and more in our 'Lost & Found.' Jackets and sweaters are hanging in the Front Office closet along with items that are hung there temporarily by volunteers and visitors to the office on a daily basis. So, please be sure an item belongs to you before taking it. On the shelf in that closet is a box containing other items left behind. These forgotten items will be donated to a charity shop in mid-January. A Revere bowl, on the back part of the front desk, holds a 'lending library' of



reading glasses that have been left in the office. If you are missing a pair, check in the bowl. Contact Mary Tycz with questions at [headquarters@fairfaxdemocrats.org](mailto:headquarters@fairfaxdemocrats.org).

## FCDC Building Information

8500 Executive Park Avenue, Suite 402

The front door to our building is unlocked during the following times.

Sundays	Locked all day
Mondays	6:15 am – 7:30 pm
Tuesdays	7:00 am -7:30 pm
Wednesdays	6:15 am – 7:30 pm
Thursdays	7:00 am -7:30 pm
Fridays	6:15 am - 7:30 pm
Saturdays	7:30 am – 6:00 pm

If you are a Steering Committee Member wishing to access the building when it is locked, your name will be on a list held by the security company. Pick the phone receiver to the left of the door and hold the lengthwise bar on the inside of the receiver constantly. A security company rep will answer; tell her/him that you are with FCDC (or Fairfax County.....) and provide your name. When your name is confirmed as being on the list, the rep will remotely unlock the door for you. If this process does not work for you, please report it to Mary Tycz at [headquarters@fairfaxdemocrats.org](mailto:headquarters@fairfaxdemocrats.org).

## Maintenance Emergencies in the Office

Todd Thurwhachter needed the emergency information when he was working at the office alone late on night in August. Soaked ceiling tiles fell on the front desk where he had been sitting moments before. He did a heroic job of protecting the computer and catching continuing drips in a receptacle for the night. You might need the information one day, too.

The following info is posted on the Front Desk bulletin board at all times (though sometimes hidden by other posts).



Emergency Maintenance – NON-OFFICE HOURS, Call 703-671-4600

Emergency Maintenance – DURING OFFICE HOURS, Call 703-356-6900, Ext. 0

Additionally, please notify Mary Tycz at 571-215-7688, [headquarters@fairfaxdemocrats.org](mailto:headquarters@fairfaxdemocrats.org).



## Donate to Teens in Need

*Visit the Tree at the FCDC Office to Donate*

This year, as last, Jennifer Oh has arranged for members of FCDC to donate gift cards to teens who are served by Fairfax County Social Services. Often financially needy teens are forgotten during the holidays when it is popular to donate toys to children.

There will be a tree in the Front Office of FCDC decorated with tags that have names of teens and what they are interested in for gifts.

Please look for it in November. Last year we received a wonderful thank you note and photo from the staff of FCSS for our member's generosity. Contact FCDC Central Communications Committee Chair Jennifer Oh if you have questions at [c3@fairfaxdemocrats.org](mailto:c3@fairfaxdemocrats.org).