

INSIDENOVA

PRINCE WILLIAM

Prince William Today

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MEMBER:



# Bill, Moses and Mariah: The names matter

If forgetting is a kind of death, remembering is a resurrection. Names accidentally lost to history are easier to bring back than those expunged, so when the legacy of the purged is uncovered, it is a moment not only of celebration but also of reflection.



KRISTINA NOHE

The renaming of Batestown Road, the preservation of Thoroughfare and the Juneteenth parade at the Dumfries slave cemetery have given Prince William County cause for both celebration and reflection.

Prince William was a slave-holding county, an uncomfortable history that has yet to be reconciled with our modern incarnation. A first step was taken in renaming Mine Road in Dumfries to Batestown Road.

Batestown was founded by Henry Cole, the largest Black landowner in antebellum Prince William, and named after Sally Bates, the widow of Thorton Kendall, another free Black man who owned the land in the 1820s. By the 1850s, Cole owned more than 150 acres in Prince William, and during Reconstruction, he bought even more.

During the Civil War, Cole welcomed hundreds of freed Blacks to Batestown. By the end of the 1860s, there were over 550 residents, but just 40 years later, that number had fallen to 150. Forty years after that, as part of the New Deal construction of Prince William Forest Park, the federal government purchased or condemned 127 properties, gutting Batestown.

For there to have been freed slaves, there had to have been enslaved people. That uncomfortable history has been buried in the unmarked graves of the many slave cemeteries dotting the county. However, the hidden past can be found



Visitors view the Batestown community history on display at Merchant Park in Dumfries during an event to mark the renaming of Mine Road as Batestown Road.

PAUL LARA | INSIDENOVA

if one is willing to look for it, such as is happening in Thoroughfare.

On September 3, 1804, John Hammit sold Bill, an enslaved man, to William Gaines. Bill, although it is unclear if this is the same person, is mentioned in a May 26, 1856, inventory and appraisal of Thomas Gaines' property along with four other enslaved men, three enslaved women and one child.

Within the Gainesville District, named for the Gaines family, is Thoroughfare, a community founded by former slaves. Until recently, Thoroughfare existed almost exclusively in the memories of its residents' descendants.

Once a name is erased, it can be nearly impossible to restore. The names of people buried at the Dumfries slave cemetery have been forever lost, and yet, on June 19, a crowd gathered there to commemorate those who lived through the unspeakable horrors survived by enslaved people like Moses.

We know of Moses through the advertisement Elizabeth L. Carter of Prince William took out June 10, 1837, in the National Intelligencer in Washington: "Ran away, a negro man, Moses - he has lost one of his ears." We can surmise this was not Moses' first escape attempt, because slave owners would cut off the

ear of an enslaved person they deemed a flight risk to mark them as a runaway and make them easier to recapture.

For centuries, the history of the enslaved people of Prince William has been in the hands of others as storyless names mentioned in wills, inventories or advertisements for their recapture. After the Civil War, history was sanitized to create the mythology of the Lost Cause.

Tucked away was the will instructing the guardian of 11-year-old Prince William resident Richard Warden to sell the child's slave, Mariah Sr., on his behalf because the 40-year-old slave was "worth more now than when Richard reaches age 21."

Meanwhile, the same document states that Mariah Jr., presumably the enslaved man's son, and the other four slaves be split up and sent to different farms. To intellectually know that families were ripped apart is not the same as reading their names and knowing it happened here.

Prince William should continue to uncover what has been hidden because while others may have tried to erase the past, its legacy lives with us today.

*Kristina Nohe is a political activist, adoption advocate and homeschooling mom who is proud to be from Prince William County.*

## READERS REACT

### UVA HEALTH PURCHASE WILL BENEFIT COMMUNITY

On July 1, UVA Health became the full owner of Novant Health UVA Health System, an integrated network of physician clinics, outpatient services and medical centers in Northern and Central Virginia.

We are excited about this change, as closer alignment with UVA Health - and its reputation for leading-edge clinical care throughout the state - will allow our local facilities to continue providing exceptional care to our communities.

As we enter this new era, we will build on the strong foundation created by the two parent organizations over the past five years. Novant Health gave the local health system unwavering support and guidance to fulfill its commitment to providing high-quality care close to home. It is a partnership our team in Northern Virginia and Culpeper will forever be grateful for.

Our team members, physicians and advanced practice providers have demonstrated strength and perseverance over the past year while navigating the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19. We are excited about the prospect of even more community members having the opportunity to experience the personalized, quality care that has earned national recognition.

The health system's commitment to patient safety earned three "A" grades in The Leapfrog Group's spring 2021 Hospital Safety Grade report. Our health system was also recently honored by the American Heart Association, American Stroke Association and Blue Distinction Centers+, among other national organizations.

On behalf of the entire Novant Health UVA Health Prince William Health System board of trustees, I want to extend our deepest thanks to Novant Health and its leadership for playing a critical role in establishing the quality care delivered throughout Manassas, Haymarket, Warrenton, Culpeper and surrounding areas.

As UVA Health becomes the sole owner of the health system and expands access to specialized care and clinical trials, residents can continue to expect the same great care they've come to know at our facilities. We are excited to partner with a high-quality and exceptional institution to improve access to great healthcare in the years to come.

*Dr. Vik Khot  
Former chair, board of trustees  
Novant Health UVA Health Prince William Health System*

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MEMBER:



# It's time to learn a different three R's

The Prince William County Public Schools' Code of Behavior has one rule that stands out: "Model positive and inspiring behavior that I see in adults."

There has been very little positive or inspiring behavior at Prince William's recent School Board meetings, which have descended into chaos, complete with shouting, profanity and ultimately the removal of citizens by law enforcement.

Pandemic parenting is hard, it is scary, and it is overwhelming. There is no "What to Expect During a Pandemic" parenting guide.

Our victories are small, like getting all the kids out the door without someone shouting, "Oh no! I forgot my mask," as you pull into your destination. And our challenges are daunting, like deciding whether the risks of in-person schooling outweigh the negatives of online learning.

Every day, thousands of parents turn over the care and education of their children to our teachers and school administrators. There is no escaping the emotional element in school-related issues: We are emotionally invested in the well-being of our children. However, some are actively trying to push our emotional barometer towards our baser, more negative inclinations. Politicians and candidates in search of voter-motivating issues and social media pages looking to harvest new followers have trafficked in hyperbole and unproductive vitriol.

Schools are not simply education factories; they are foundational cornerstones of our community. As such, our community should be coming together to solve the myriad of problems our schools face: teacher shortages, the "devious licks" TikTok challenge, a lack of bus drivers, falling test scores, a rise in student COVID cases, violence on school grounds – and the list goes on. Parents, stakeholders, teachers, administrators and the School Board may all come at these issues from different places, but together they should be a united front dedicated to productive dialogue.

The fact that the School Board is limiting citizen comment time has many negative potentialities: misalignment of the power dynamic between elected official and citizen, the high probability that one group could monopolize all of the limited



KRISTINA NOHE

speaking slots, thereby drowning out other concerns, and the stifling of community questions that do not appear on the agenda.

The role of elected officials is not just to sit on a dais and shape policy; it is also to listen to concerns and criticisms, proposals and praise, and ramblings and reactions of the people who they represent. Sometimes that means long nights or, if that is too arduous, extra meetings in which the only agenda item is citizens' time.

The public comment policy change will further erode the trust between the citizens of Prince William and their School Board. How can the community trust a board that tells them they don't want to hear from them? Sure there are emails and videos, but if the School Board communicates that they are too busy to listen during meetings, what faith should the public have that those same officials would listen to their concerns when no one is watching?

However – and it is an extremely loud "however" – the hand of the School Board is being forced by those who fail to live up to the standards their children are expected to follow while at school. Recent meetings have been an embarrassment with shouting, name-calling and profanity – a real-world Frankenstein's monster of the worst qualities of every comment section brought to life by the spark of tribalism.

The reticence of the board to meet in front of a frothing crowd is understandable; Jan. 6 was only nine months ago, and the shooting at the congressional baseball practice was only four years ago. Children in classrooms are not the only ones who train for a live shooter event.

For years we've turned to our schools for reading, writing and arithmetic, but none of that will do any good if we do not also model respect, restraint and responsibility. The School Board must be willing to listen to the public, but that public must "model positive and inspiring behavior" so that our children can learn from us all.

*Kristina Nohe is a political activist, adoption advocate and homeschooling mom who is proud to be from Prince William County.*

## READERS REACT

### HOLD INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

The failures of both USA Gymnastics and the FBI to appropriately address the sexual offenses of Larry Nassar enabled his crimes. This is institutional abuse, and it is not a new story. Organizations routinely side with employees and people in positions of power over the allegations of children, prioritizing their reputation over the safety of the children in their care.

The time for change is now, across the United States and here in Northern Virginia.

We know sexual abuse occurs in youth-serving organizations, but when we choose to ignore that it's happening in our community, we enable this abuse to continue.

Organizations that blame individuals as "bad apples," fail to believe children's disclosures of abuse or simply encourage an abuser to retire or "relocate" instead of addressing the issue are the problem. As one survivor said, "Do we blame the alligator – or the person who keeps feeding it children?" We believe it is the responsibility of every organization, and every adult, to protect children.

SCAN of Northern Virginia stands

with survivors. We know institutional harm is a second betrayal. We don't want apologies, excuses or damage-control statements; we want action and change.

SCAN's new Institutional Abuse Prevention program plans to make institutions accountable, adults better prepared and children safer in all the spaces they occupy. While we prepare to launch in Loudoun County this fall, know that our first and only priority is to make our community safe for all children, and we will not stop working and pushing until we succeed in Northern Virginia.

– Leah Fraley  
Executive Director, SCAN of Northern Virginia

### COMMENTS ON PROPOSED BASEBALL COMPLEX SALE

A story about Greater Manassas Baseball League supporters rallying the Manassas City Council after Micron indicated its intent to buy the field complex had people talking on our Facebook page. Here are a few of their comments:

"Kids need things to keep busy or they will find things they shouldn't be doing."  
– Amanda Swartz Murphy

"Such a shame, selling out the youth to

the big corporations."

– Steve Schmid

"The statement from the [council] 'we cannot guarantee a 1 to 1 replacement...' is what really boils my blood. Build it the same, build it better, or don't sell it."

– Joshua Wedge

"Whatever happened to the complex that the P-Nats used?"

– Mary Ann Tallon Jenkins

"Micron should build a beautiful complex for youth baseball and tournaments if they want to buy GMBL! Find a location and build up an up-to-date complex for youth baseball!"

– Ruth Hoefler

"Honestly baseball isn't even that popular anymore. More kids play football, basketball and soccer nowadays. Lots of baseball fields are empty and really only used for Little Leagues. I feel like we just hold on to baseball for nostalgic reasons not because people actually like playing it. ... I think we should be making more soccer fields and basketball courts than trying to keep the old baseball fields intact."

– Reuben Alex Chavez

# Extend a hand to our new neighbors

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## Another generation of refugees

Wars end in history books, but their aftershocks ripple through lives indefinitely. When the last bombs drop and the last plane evacuates, the topography of life can be unrecognizable for those who survived.

America has been a refuge since a group of Puritans escaping religious persecution landed on the shores of Massachusetts in 1620. Since then, millions have fled famines, wars and genocide with the goal of rebuilding their lives in America.



KRISTINA NOHE

Six months after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, 15-year-old Jake Zargarpur and his family left everything they knew and escaped what would become a decade-long war. They spent 2½ years in refugee camps. Jake Zargarpur remains grateful – “but a refugee camp is still a refugee camp.” He lost almost half his body weight and went through that first winter in Germany without a coat.

When he was 18, the Zargarpurs arrived at JFK Airport in New York, with few services available to help the family acclimate to their new home. Thankfully, they had an uncle living in the United States who helped them find housing and get settled. Three days later, speaking no English, Zargarpur found a job working at a gas station in Long Island. He worked 16 hours a day, 112 hours a week, and along with the income from his brothers’ jobs, the family was able to begin rebuilding their lives.

Zargarpur, now a Prince William County resident and local business owner, was among the volunteers at the Annandale campus of Northern Virginia Community College in August as the ripples of this war began to carry a new generation of refugees to his adopted home.

Most of them were wearing the same clothes they had been wearing when they escaped from the Kabul airport days earlier carrying the totality of their earthly belongings. Zargarpur described the scene as chaotic as he jumped in to help ease their transition by reaching out to local imams and community groups to secure halal food, clothes and supplies. The biggest challenge initially was the speed at which the situation was evolving.

As the shocking images of the evacuation at the Kabul airport begin to fade from people’s minds, the journey for most of the people who lived through the experience is just beginning. There are now over 5,000 Afghans living at Marine Corps Base Quantico.

“The Marines are doing an incredible job,” said Zargarpur, who has taken a leadership role in the resettlement effort and often fields hundreds of messages a day helping to coordinate volunteers and supplies at military bases across the country.

“We don’t call them refugees; we call them guests,” Zargarpur said, adding that this is an effort to safeguard people’s dignity. “Today they are our guests, but soon they will be our neighbors.” Easing that transition has been a major goal of the Muslim Association of Virginia, but much is still needed.

At one base, families are using 1,000 bottles of baby formula a day, and there is a constant need for diapers. Locally, there is an urgent need for car seats, which can be used but not expired. Recently, 4,000 winter coats were donated to the refugees at Quantico, but there is a desperate need for hats, gloves and men’s shoes. Finally, educational toys and tools would be greatly appreciated, especially items that will help children learn English.

As people move from Quantico into homes of their own, they will need furniture and other household goods. Potomac Mills has donated 5,000 square feet of storage space so the collection of these larger items can begin now to ensure that houses can be furnished as they are procured.

*Kristina Nohe is a political activist, adoption advocate and homeschooling mom who is proud to be from Prince William County.*

## Welcome to America

The exit from Afghanistan was messy. We tried to get as many of our Afghan allies and their families out of the country as possible. They left their homes with what they were wearing and could carry. I can only imagine what getting off the plane at Dulles International Airport must have felt like. Now, we have to help them settle in and move on.

There are a lot of moving parts in this effort to help our allies. I talked to Maggie Zargarpur, the program manager for the Muslim Association of Virginia’s role in making those moving parts fit together. She is coordinating the efforts of local groups, businesses and around 100 volunteers to receive, organize, sort and prepare donations for distribution.



AL ALBORN

Zargarpur, the daughter of Jake Zargarpur, shared that because the Afghans were settled on U.S. military bases, the short-term logistics of feeding, clothing and providing healthcare had to be dealt with. Pregnant women came with babies that would need to be delivered. Kids are still kids who want to learn and need to play. The sick and elderly need medical care. I suspect that post-traumatic stress disorder, common among military veterans, is a big issue in these families.

Once settled into some semblance of normalcy, the next challenge is housing and jobs. Some come with easily transferable skills. Others may have language barriers. Among any population, there will be entrepreneurs who will quickly figure out how to provide some product or service our community needs. They will create jobs, use their skills, contribute to our tax base and provide income for housing.

Ideally, our Afghan allies and their families will be resettled in communities that already have a large population of fellow countrymen and women. Zargarpur shared that Virginia has one of the largest Afghan populations in the United States. It can be safe to assume many will choose to remain in Northern Virginia because of a familiar culture to ease assimilation, along with local support.

Zargarpur shared that many faith-based, secular and government groups are working together to help take care of and resettle our Afghan allies and their families. The Muslim Association of Virginia is headquartered at the Dar Al Noor Islamic Community Center on Hoadly Road. The association works closely with the Virginia Council of Muslim Organizations, a partner of the Virginia Interfaith Center. Dar Al Noor is the designated collection site for donations of goods or money.

Zargarpur paused a moment and reflected on the community support for this project. She noted the high level of participation among businesses, groups and individuals who live in Prince William County to help our newest residents. It struck me as a test of our diverse community’s heart, soul and spirit. We passed.

A lot of husbands, wives, sons, daughters, friends and neighbors made it home because of the assistance our Afghan allies provided. Now they need help from us. Needs change with the supply chain and the seasons.

Our friends and allies in Afghanistan helped us when we needed it. Now, they need a little help from their friends here in the United States. They can count this old vet among their friends. Welcome to America.

*Al Alborn is an award-winning columnist and member of the Virginia Press Association. His column appears every other week. You can learn more about Al at www.alborn.net and LinkedIn.*

### HOW TO HELP

» Donations can be brought to the Dar Al Noor community center, 5404 Hoadly Road. Visit the Muslim Association of Virginia’s Facebook Page for the best times to drop off donations because they change weekly.