

Muslims to gather at Capitol for inaugural event

By Charles Pearl
Contributing writer

Muslims from across the state will gather in Frankfort on Wednesday for the inaugural Muslim Day at the state Capitol.

People of the Islamic faith will tour the Capitol building, meet and speak with legislators who represent them, receive training on how to advocate for issues affecting the Muslim community, listen to guest speakers, including state legislators and national representatives of the Council on American Islamic Relations, and have a silent prayer in the Capitol rotunda.

The free event starts at 9 a.m. and continues until 4 p.m. It's sponsored by the Kentucky Chapter of CAIR and multiple city partners in respective Muslim communities. Lunch will be provided by the Islamic Center of Frankfort.

Ashiq Zaman, president of the Islamic Center of Frankfort, says he's "very excited about the first statewide Muslim gathering in our capital city."

"Muslim communities have organized locally in almost all corners of Kentucky for a while," he said. "We find Muslim-owned businesses and restaurants serving halal (permissible) food pretty common."

"Muslim communities run Islamic centers, charitable organizations and even Islamic schools are becoming common in major cities in our state. However, I am not aware of any attempt to organize Muslims statewide."

Zaman has a master's degree in civil engineering and is a branch manager for the state Department of Revenue. He said he appreciates CAIR for taking the initiative to organize Muslims statewide through the upcoming event in Frankfort.

"I am sure many Muslims will visit the state Capitol and meet their legislators for the first time," Zaman said. "Personally, it will be an opportunity for me to learn the process of civic engagement."

He said he also looks forward to meeting other Muslim community leaders.

"At a time when Muslims are increasingly becoming the innocent targets of prejudice and hate, I feel compelled to participate in events



STATE JOURNAL FILE PHOTO
ISLAMIC CENTER PRESIDENT: Ashiq Zaman and his wife, Saika Aktar, pose for a photo in their home in Frankfort. Zaman is president of the Islamic Center of Frankfort.

like this for adopting and promoting just and equitable policies in the state," Zaman said. "I also hope to clear up many common misconceptions about the Muslim community and Islamic faith through this event."

Waheeda Muhammad, chair of the Kentucky Chapter of CAIR, has said one thing that really helps is for people to know a Muslim one-on-one, "and that's part of encouraging Muslims to get out, to be involved in society, because if people know you personally, that's their image of Islam."

She said the event will encourage Muslims to get involved in government, including running for office.

Muslim visitors also plan to advocate for certain legislation, including stronger anti-bullying laws.

CAIR invited Gov. Andy Beshear to meet with the group. However, Sebastian Kitchen, deputy communications director for the governor's office, said Thursday Beshear will be unable to attend the event.

Muhammad said Muslim Day at the Capitol is not government-sanctioned and no taxpayer funds are being used. She hopes it will become an annual event. A statement from the governor's office said, "Any organization that files a request and receives a permit through the Ken-

tucky Division of Historic Properties can use the Capitol rotunda. They are not reviewed or approved by the governor's office."

Statewide, in early January, around 100 adults and 74 students had signed up to attend Muslim Day, Zaman said.

About 40 families attend the Islamic Center of Frankfort, "and we are expecting at least 10 persons from our center to attend for the whole day, and others will attend part of the day."

Zaman also serves on the Frankfort Interfaith Council, a group of 20 women and men voluntarily working to promote respect and understanding of all religions. Other Muslims on the local interfaith council include Mohammad Razavi, a native of Iran; Aejaz Shaik, formerly of India; and Titin Farida, formerly of Indonesia. Shaik's son, Afeef Shaik, a senior honor student at Franklin County High School, is working to create a youth interfaith council, which would bring together students from local high schools "to openly discuss religion in a relaxed and fun setting."

Charles Pearl, a retired State Journal staff writer, is a freelance writer and a member of the Frankfort Interfaith Council.

professionalism and dedication," Minton said. Clary was named clerk in 1995.

—Associated Press

OFFICIALS TO BEGIN 3-YEAR STUDY OF ELK

LOUISVILLE — Researchers are launching a three-year study of elk in the state. The University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources are teaming up on the study, which begins this month and will focus on elk reproduction and survival, WFPL radio reported.

The animals were native to Kentucky before being wiped out before the Civil War by unregulated hunting. They were reintroduced in eastern Kentucky about 20 years ago and the population has grown since then to about 10,000 animals spread over 16 counties.

—Associated Press

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Today

7 p.m. Take a **Night Sky Tour at Josephine Sculpture Park**. This month's topic is The International Space Station. Dan Price, NASA Solar System Ambassador, will give a presentation in the Art Barn, followed by observation at 8 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 19

5 p.m. The Frankfort-Franklin County Ministerial Association will host its 14th annual **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Memorial Celebration** at First Corinthian Baptist Church, 214 Murray St. The guest preacher will be Dr. Nathan Moore, Historic First African Baptist Church, Lexington. The FFCMA will also award a community grant to the Frankfort Youth Bengals Organization Inc.

Tuesday, Jan. 21

9:30 a.m. The **Capital City Retired Teachers' Association** will meet at Emmanuel Baptist Church on Collins Lane. The group gathers at 9:30 a.m. for fellowship and breakfast. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. Featured schools will be Bondurant and Elkhorn middle schools. The program will be an update on legislative happenings as pertains to

retired teachers.

11:30 a.m. The **Bluegrass West Chapter of Kentucky Public Retirees**, will meet at the VFW Post 4075, 104 Second St. Lunch will be served at the start of the meeting. The speaker will be Susan Thomas from Smooth Transitions of Central Kentucky.

11:30 a.m. The **Franklin County Schools Board** will meet at Bondurant Middle School, 300 Bondurant Drive, for a working meeting.

Noon. The **Frankfort Optimist Club** meets at the Office Pub and Deli. Guest speaker Tom Bennett will discuss historic sites in Kentucky.

5:30 p.m. The **Parkinson's Support group** will at The First Christian Church 316 Ann St. The group gathers at 5:30 to share a snack and the guest speaker will begin at 6 p.m. The speaker will be a representative from the Parkinson Support Center of Kentuckian. For more information, contact Lane Lewis at 502-319-3921. The group is open to those interested in Parkinson's disease.

Wednesday, Jan. 22

Noon. The **Rotary Club of Frankfort** meets at the Capital Plaza Hotel. For information, contact Maree Barney-Sutley at 907-388-1606 or mareesutley@gmail.com.

BLOTTER

The following calls were received by the Frankfort Police Department, Frankfort Fire and EMS and the Franklin County Sheriff's Office on Thursday:

A motor vehicle accident with no injuries was reported on Cedar Way at 7:04 a.m.

A burglary was reported on Tracy Lane at 8:13 a.m.

A burglary was reported on Spring Street at 9:11 a.m.

A burglary was reported on Mallard Drive at 9:39 a.m.

A missing person was reported on Spring Street at 10:10 a.m. A father reported having not seen his son since Monday. The juvenile was located at his school.

A theft was reported on East Main Street at 11:33 a.m.

Fraud was reported on West Second Street at 12:25 p.m.

A missing person was reported on Swigert Avenue at 12:31 p.m. A juvenile female had been missing for three days.

Harassment was reported on Morehead

Drive at 12:41 p.m.

An assault was reported on Morehead Drive at 1:27 p.m. The caller reported being thrown to the ground and injured by someone he knows.

A hit-and-run was reported on Old Lawrenceburg Road at 3:37 p.m.

A controlled burn was reported on Bark Branch Road at 3:37 p.m.

A sexual offense was reported on Ryswick Lane at 4:16 p.m.

A burglary was reported on Pea Ridge Road at 4:26 p.m.

An intoxicated driver was reported on Coldstream Drive at 5:04 p.m.

A missing person was reported on Tupelo Trail at 5:10 p.m. The caller reported a juvenile son missing.

A missing person was reported on Spring Street at 7:50 p.m. The caller's son was missing.

Shoplifting was reported on John Davis Drive at 7:59 p.m.

A drug offense was reported on By-pass Plaza Drive at 11:50 p.m.

STATE BRIEFS

Interesting news in and beyond Frankfort

LONGTIME KENTUCKY SUPREME COURT CLERK TO RETIRE

A fixture of Kentucky's Supreme Court for 25 years is retiring. Susan Stokley Clary, the clerk of the Supreme Court, will retire Feb. 1.

Clary has been clerk for three chief justices and is responsible for the custody, control and storage of all Supreme Court records. The clerk is also court administrator and general counsel for the court, and calls Supreme Court proceedings to order in the chamber.

Chief Justice John Minton said Clary is synonymous with the state's highest court.

"She has served the Judicial Branch with the utmost

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9:15 am Sunday School

10:45 am Corporate Worship

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JOIN US FOR THE 14TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING WORSHIP SERVICE, SUNDAY, JANUARY 19TH AT 5:00 PM.

First Corinthian Baptist Church,
214 Murray Street, Frankfort Guest Preacher,
Dr. Nathan Moore, Historic First African Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky.
Sponsored By The Frankfort-Franklin County Ministerial Association.

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