

How the Powerless Access Power

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Dining for a Cause in Great Falls

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'A Musical Journey to Germany'

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J.J. Stevens performs Bach's Tocatta in D Minor on organ in the Langley High School Orchestra's performance of "A Musical Journey to Germany" on Dec. 11.

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NEWS



PHOTO BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION

Participants of the Jeans Day 2012 ceremony held at the government center.

Going Casual for a Cause

Nearly 10,000 people and 130-plus organizations participate in Jeans Day 2012 to help end homelessness.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Nearly 10,000 residents representing 130 businesses, Fairfax County agencies, schools and organizations pulled on their favorite jeans Friday, Dec. 14 for the second annual Jeans Day—a powerful community initiative that aims to “Put the ZIP on Homelessness” through building awareness and fundraising.

“This is a fun way to dress, but a serious challenge for our community,” said Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors during the Jeans Day 2012 ceremony held at the government center.

Bulova noted the county’s longstanding commitment to the issue by establishing the Office to Prevent and End Homeless (OPEH) in 2008. OPEH supports the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness which engages nonprofits, businesses, faith-based communities and county agencies in its efforts to implement the 10-Year plan, which focuses on rapid re-housing and prevention by increasing the availability of permanent affordable housing.

“It’s not okay to have people living in tents or in their cars. . . . We have it within our power to end homelessness as we know it in Fairfax County, and Jeans Day is just one of many great ways we are doing just that,” Bulova said.

The day of community give-back was facilitated by the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce (Fairfax Chamber), Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Federal Credit Union. Participating organizations allowed employees or members to wear jeans to work Friday in exchange for a \$5 contribution to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent & End Homelessness.

“Jeans Day is an especially vibrant example of the meaningful impact we make when businesses, nonprofits and government come together to raise awareness about an important issue and take action to help prevent it,” said Fairfax Chamber President & CEO Jim Corcoran. “The Chamber and business community are proud to be a part of this powerful initiative.”

Corcoran, who typically wears business suits as president of the Fairfax Chamber, said he went into a detailed explanation earlier that morning about his casual attire when he was speaking to a group of

Facts About Homelessness in Fairfax County

❖ On Jan. 25, 2012, there were 1,534 people who were literally homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community. Six hundred and ninety-seven of them were individuals and 837 were people in families.

❖ During the past year, the number of people who were homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community declined by one percent (15 people) from the number counted in January 2011. Persons in families decreased by 5.2 percent (46 people) compared to 2011. The number of single adults increased by 4.5 percent (30 adults) compared to 2011.

❖ The majority of the homeless are families and many work full time:

❖ Close to 60 percent of homeless persons are in families.

❖ More than 75 percent of children in homeless families are under the age of 11.

❖ Nearly 60 percent adults in homeless families work.

❖ Lack of affordable housing is the main cause of homelessness.

❖ Monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,134.

❖ A family must earn \$22.25 an hour to afford a one-bedroom apartment.

❖ 82 percent of homeless families earn less than \$14.24 an hour.

More information about homelessness in Fairfax County, and the partnership to end it, is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/>.

high-powered business executives. “The reason I went into such detail was to save my job,” he joked. “Please, don’t anyone suggest wearing a skirt next year.”

“By God, if we have to wear a skirt next year, we’ll call it a kilt,” joked Michael L. O’Reilly, Chairman of the Governing Board of Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. O’Reilly told the crowd that the Fairfax community is especially passionate and committed to the cause of ending homelessness. “For there to be one family, one child who is homeless is simply unacceptable.”

Dean Klein, the executive director of OPEH, said he was energized by the success of this year’s effort. “We have heard so much goodwill and positive feedback about our effort this year. The number of participants really is amazing and we are so pleased we have been able to increase our reach and impact this year. We have had such amazing collaborations from each sector of our community, including business, nonprofit, government, schools, faith and individuals.”

“In Fairfax County, it’s easy to forget that there are homeless families here, homeless children in the schools, and that many people who are homeless here are actually working, but don’t make nearly enough money to afford housing,” said The Connection Publisher Mary Kimm. “The Connection is committed to raising awareness of homelessness and the need to provide permanent shelter, and to recognizing the good works of individuals and businesses in Northern Virginia.”



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Showing Support for Jeans Day 2012: Senator Mark Warner’s Office.



Employees with the Fairfax County Regional Library



FACETS employees



Employees of group Z in Tysons Corner

The backroom of the Old Brogue was full of chatter as friends and families piled in to support The Navy SEAL Foundation at the Military Appreciation Monday dinner on Dec. 10.



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BENITZ/ THE CONNECTION

Dining for a Cause in Great Falls

Military Appreciation Monday dinner series to continue in 2013.

BY JENNIFER BENITZ
THE CONNECTION

Long-time Great Falls resident Bob Nelson was all smiles as he stood in the backroom of the Old Brogue providing warm words and thanks to families and supporters sitting in attendance at the monthly Military Appreciation Monday dinner on Dec. 10.

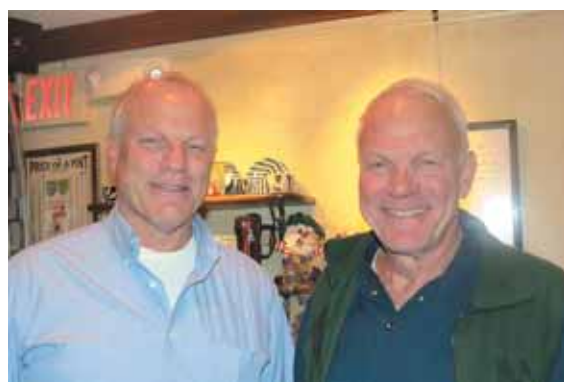
For the past four years, Nelson has been hosting monthly dinners at the Old Brogue to support various military organizations, with about 95 percent of the proceeds raised at each dinner going directly to the organization for which the dinner is held. Last Monday night's dinner was in support of The Navy SEAL Foundation.

"One of the reasons I do this is so you can become aware of these organizations and volunteer if you'd like," said Nelson in his wrap-up speech at the end of the first seating.

NELSON'S BROTHER, Larry, also made an appearance just in time to speak briefly to the diners about the foundation, which is managed by retired navy seals. Since the foundation stood up in 2000, 79 seals have been killed, with the overwhelming majority of them in Afghanistan. The others were killed in various parts of the world, including Iraq, Libya, Yemen, El Salvador or in training. In providing Navy Seals and their families, the foundation pays for the expenses of sending family members to wherever the injured or fallen service member is.

"The organization brings families wherever a funeral or memorial service is held," said Nelson, 68, a retired Navy SEAL. "It spends \$100,000s of dollars a year doing this, but it relies solely on donations."

In addition to providing transportation to memorials and funerals, The Navy SEAL Foundation also provides information about available help if a service member is injured. As a result, the foundation relies heavily on donations, such as funds from Monday's dinner, in order to assist service members



Bob Nelson, (left), a retired foreign service officer, takes a moment to stand with his brother Larry Nelson, a retired Navy Seal, in between dinner seatings on Dec. 10.

and their families.

"The method is people come, eat and drink," said Bob Nelson, 60, a retired Foreign Service officer turned realtor. "We have co-sponsors and we each match 10 percent of the total sales for the dinner's attendees at the end of the night," usually totaling to about \$150-200 for each sponsor.

Although Monday's dinner wasn't as packed as most dinners, the attendance was still high. With an average of 100-110 attendees per dinner, a total of \$5,000 to \$6,000 is usually raised in a single night for an organization. In addition, Nelson also works with Our Military Kids, a McLean-based organization that helps provide Christmas gifts for military families all over the United States through its wounded warrior Christmas Gift Wish List project.

"The first year we worked with 36 families, including 25 kids. It was a piece of cake," said Nelson in regards to finding people to donate gifts. "The second year, we had 65 kids. That was a lot of work. Last year, we had 40 families, so about 96 kids. This year, we have 40 families and about 100 kids. We give [donors] the family's contact information and the idea is to make personal connection.

They like getting the phone calls as much as they like getting the gifts," said Nelson. "The idea is to give a special Christmas for the kids of the injured and fallen."

THE HOLIDAYS may be coming to an end soon, but Nelson continues the monthly dinner tradition in 2013 with the next Military Appreciation Monday dedicated to the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation on Jan. 14 and Stop Soldier Suicide to follow on Feb. 11.



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BENITZ/ THE CONNECTION

Bins filled the garage with the names of the shelter and families posted on the front.

Where Wishes Come True

The Wish List Project attracts more than 130 donors this year.

The Wish List Project proved to be a major success once again as friends, neighbors and community members came together to help make the wishes of 325 individuals, including 75 foster teenagers, come true. With over 130 donors this year, the project's drop-off event was in full force as conversation, Christmas music and donations filled the Mahon home in Great Falls throughout the day on Saturday.

Beautifully wrapped gifts and red bins filled with donations adorned the Mahon's garage and basement and large stockings with the names of each destination hung from the ceiling and walls for easy organization. Meanwhile, friends and neighbors took the time to enjoy each other's company well into the afternoon as food and beverages were available in the kitchen and Great Falls resident Paul Konigsburg briefly played

a few holiday favorites on his violin in the living room.

"I'll be happy when I know everything has been delivered to the shelters," said Ginger Mahon, who spent time on Sunday making the final touches on the project.

Prior to pick-up, she went through the lists from each shelter to make sure everything was present and organized accordingly, as well as counting and distributing the donated gift cards to each family, individual and shelter as needed. With Christmas around the corner, directors from each destination then picked up the donations on Monday morning starting at 10 a.m.

"[Saturday] was everything and more than I was expecting," said Ginger Mahon, founder and coordinator of the Wish List Project. "I am very happy—the response [was] overwhelming."

—JENNIFER BENITZ



Paul Konigsburg, a neighbor of the Mahons and a long-time Great Falls resident, entertained guests by playing some holiday favorites on his violin late Saturday afternoon.

Connecting Saxon Country, Past and Present

Langley High School forms first alumni association.

By ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

While everyone has different memories of their time in high school, it is a time when people meet friends and pick up interests that could be with them for years. With that in mind, members of the Langley High School community have come together to form the school's first official alumni association. "Our goal is to build the alumni community, so people will feel a strong connection to this school, and the students that have come after them," said Colleen Orme, a Langley alumni who lives in Great Falls. "This is an exciting beginning for a formal alumni association, a way to bring together Langley's past with its present, all in anticipation of the school's 50th anniversary."

Langley will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2015, and a full-on renovation of the school is scheduled to break ground in 2014, and will take approximately two years.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Langley High School alumni gather at The Old Brogue in Great Falls at an event hosted by the newly formed Langley Alumni Association.

"This isn't a group that's only trying to raise funds by soliciting alumni, we're more interested in networking, building connections and bringing people back together," Orme said. "But if opportunities to help the school out come out as a natural by-product, then we're OK with that."

SEE LANGLEY, PAGE 7

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10:00 p.m. Festival Choral Eucharist

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Cast of Altar Boyz, from left, Zack Powell as Abraham; Edward C. Nagel as Mark; Jonathan Walker as Juan; Derek Tatum as Luke; and BJ Gruber as Matthew.



PHOTO BY BRAD KALBFELD/ COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE



Founder and artistic director of the American Festival Pops Orchestra, Anthony Maiello, directs the concert of cherished Christmas carols and festive holiday classics.

'Altar Boyz' at Tysons' 1st Stage

1st Stage production of "Altar Boyz" at 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean, features performances now through Dec. 30. The show is performed Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets \$15-\$30. Call 703-854-1856 or visit www.1stStageTysons.org.

Send announcements to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit www.connectionnewspapers.com

THURSDAY/ DEC. 20

McLean High School Holiday Ensemble Performance. 6-7:30 p.m. at the McLean Racquet & Health Club, 1472 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Players for this event are the

members of the McLean High School Philharmonic orchestra. www.mcleanracquetandhealthclub.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 21

Altar Boyz. 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 22

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

Welcome Yule! 4:30 p.m., at Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road, Vienna. The Vienna Choral Society celebrates the season with traditional English carols in a wood-beamed church with hot cocoa and Christmas cookies to follow the concert. \$20, adults; \$15 over 64, under 18; and \$35 for families. www.ViennaChoralSociety.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 23

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 7 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 24

Good For The Jews. 7 p.m., at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. The self-proclaimed players of Jewish music for people who don't like Jewish music. \$20. <http://jamminjava.com/home/events/good-for-the-jews>.

FRIDAY/DEC. 28

Altar Boyz. 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 29

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 30

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 7 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 31

Watch Night. 7 p.m.-midnight at the crossroads

Holiday Pops: Songs of the Season

As part of the Great Performances at Mason series, the American Festival Pops Orchestra Holiday Brass Quintet performs holiday classics with guest narration from Rick Davis on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 8 p.m. at George Mason University's Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$24, \$40, \$48; youth through 12th half price when accompanied by adult. 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

of Broad and Washington Streets, Falls Church. Named after the ancient African tradition of watching in the New Year, the community comes together for small-town festivities including magicians, storytelling, face painting, karaoke, digital dance revolution, live music, restaurants and more. www.fallschurchva.gov.

Ballroom Dance: New Year's Eve "Ring The Bell." 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m., Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Ring in 2013 with all your favorite dance styles; hors d'oeuvres included, black-tie optional. \$50 through Dec. 10; \$60 after Dec. 10. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.com.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 2

Senators and Delegates at Town Hall Forum. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Sen. Favola (D-31), Sen. Howell (D-32), Del. Brink (D-48), Del. Comstock (D-34), Del. Keam (D-35) and Del. Scott (D-53) speak at the McLean Citizens Association meeting on the upcoming legislative session; the officials will also answer questions and hear resident's concerns in an extended question and answer period. www.mcleancitizens.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 5

The Capitol Steps. 8 p.m., at the Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Bipartisan comedy addressing the question for January following an election year: "What new material will the Steps come up with now?" \$45; \$35, McLean district residents. 703-790-0123 or www.aldentheatre.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

21st Annual Economic Conference. 7:15-11:45 a.m., at McLean Hilton Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Presented by Cardinal Bank and George Mason University. Free for 2012-2013 paid alumni members, LLP '12 and ELI/LFI '13 members. Register by Jan. 3 at Danielle@leadershipfairfax.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

Oratorical Contest. 10 a.m., at the Vienna American Legion, 330 Center St. N., Vienna. High school students can register by Jan. 11 to participate. 703-867-1285 or ronp5555@yahoo.com.

An Evening With Dick Gregory. 8 p.m., at the Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A Movement leader from the 1960s and comedian, civil and human rights activist, author, recording artist, television and film personality, nutritionist and veteran committed to non-violent social change speaks in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. \$20, \$10, MCC residents. www.aldentheatre.org.



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NEWS

Langley Forms Alumni Association

FROM PAGE 5

Betsy Shomaker, president of the Langley PTSA, said she is looking forward to seeing the new association engage with Langley graduates of all ages.

“Langley’s Saxon Country is a community, including all faculty, families and Langley students-regardless of graduation year,” she said. “We’re working closely with the alumni to encourage participation at LHS by attending sporting events, performing arts programs, hosting students through our Langley Leap internship program, and promoting the role of LHS alumni in Saxon Country.”

Chris Bass, vice president of the association, Langley alum and current faculty member, says the new association is an exciting way to engage graduates.

“When people are students, you tend to sort of talk bad about your high school, they think it’s lame, but then they end up coming back, realizing what a crucial part of their life it was,” said Chris Bass, a Langley alum and current teacher. “We found a lot of alumni from the 70s and 80s got together

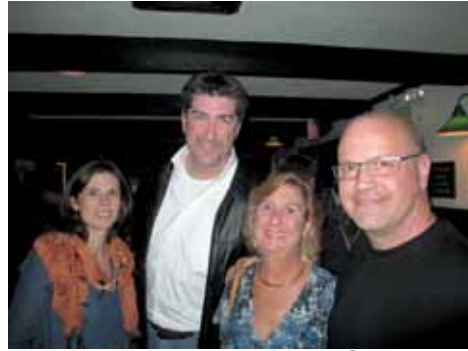


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Graduates of Langley High School gather at The Old Brogue at a recent event hosted by the Langley Alumni Association.

sometimes, but it was a much less formal thing.”

Bass also says their focus isn’t limited to graduates.

“A big part of the association will be to connect to the current students, especially the seniors before they graduate,” Bass said. “That way, hopefully there isn’t a 15 year gap before people start getting involved in the school again.”

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OPINION

Reminder: Shop Locally, Give Locally

Supporting the community.

With less than a week before Christmas, many people have not completed their shopping, and so we remind you of the importance of spending a significant portion of your shopping budget locally. At this point in the season, the high cost of expedited shipping might also serve as an incentive to shop in locally owned stores.

One way to be sure holiday shopping comes with some holiday spirit is to do a portion of your shopping in some of the area's locally owned stores. There is special holiday ambience available by shopping in the heart of a town that is decked out for the season.

Small retail shops are part of defining any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them. A small business owner pays attention to every detail in his or her business in a way that no chain can. Frequently, it is the small retail person who is active in fundraising for local charities, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing holiday events.

Local retail stores, mom-and-pop stores, continue to face tough challenges. Competition from big box stores and online sellers makes the holiday shopping season all the more important to locally-owned retailers.

With less than two weeks to go before the end of the charitable giving year, we also remind you of the critical local needs that are filled by a variety of local nonprofit organizations.

With suggestions from readers, we have updated our lists. We welcome suggestions as we continuously update our local lists of community organizations. You can find a complete list on our website, www.connectionnewspapers.com

Last News Issue of 2012

This is the last regular edition of the Connection for 2012, and it includes the last of our 2012 series on immigration. Next week, delivered shortly after Christmas, is the Children's Connection, devoted to the artwork and writing of area students.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Where to Give Locally

- The Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships has put together a list of 12 ways to support nonprofit partners that are in need of contributions to carry out their mission. Visit www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org
- ❖ Support services for aging in place through Life Circle Alliance www.lifecirclealliances.org/donate.htm
 - ❖ Shop online "Gifts that Give Hope" Alternative Gift Fair for Fairfax County atwww.giftsthatgivehope.org/fairfax providing links to buy gifts that support more than 20 Fairfax County nonprofits including Alternative House, Herndon-Reston FISH, FACETS, Stroke Comeback Center, and more.
 - ❖ Honor the memory of a relative or friend or recognize a birthday, wedding, anniversary, retirement or other special event by donating a bench to a park through the Fairfax County Park Foundation <http://fairfaxparkfoundation.org/support/benchtreet.htm>
 - ❖ Buy a book to fulfill the Library Foundation's Wish List www.amazon.com/gp/registry/registry.html/002-9627810-1915264?id=2P3AKWX1F9FO
 - ❖ Donate the gift of trees through Reforest Fairfax of the Fairfax County Restoration Project <http://www.fcrpp3.org/reforestfairfax/>
 - ❖ Give the gift of Art to benefit the Arts Council of Fairfax County, <http://artsfairfax.org/donate>
 - ❖ Protect a child's smile and health by donating to Project Pearly Whites from the MCCC Foundation, mcccfoundation.org/news/mcp_foundation_launches_project_pearly_whites/
 - ❖ Help end homelessness through the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/opeh.htm>
 - ❖ Give the gift of your time and become a mentor for BeFriend-A-Child, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childrenyouth/befriendachild.htm>
 - ❖ Provide for a family for the holidays through A Way Forward and donate care packages to those who need it most, <http://www.awayforward.org>

- Other Fairfax County organizations that need your help to keep helping others:
- ❖ **Literacy Council of Northern Virginia**, 703-237-0866, www.lcnv.org, Teaches adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and understanding English. Offers one-to-one tutoring programs for adult learners as well as beginning-level ESOL and Family Learning adult programs.
 - ❖ **Computer C.O.R.E.** 703-931-7346, www.computercore.org, Adult Education, Computer Training and Career Development, with classes in Alexandria, Fairfax, Herndon and Annadale
 - ❖ **Our Daily Bread** has been serving needy families in Fairfax County for 25 years. The Holiday Program helps those in need with food for the holidays and gifts for their children, making last year's holiday season brighter for approximately 3,000 families. www.odbfairfax.com/holiday
 - ❖ **Food for Others** distributed more than 2.4 million pounds of free food to families in need in Northern Virginia in the year ending June 30, 2012. The non-profit provides a safety net for people who face emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. www.foodforothers.com
 - ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO)**, 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year. www.echo-inc.org.
 - ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Sales from the shop generate funds for LCAC and clients also shop there. Now collecting gift cards and food baskets for Christmas, and warm coats. 703-339-8611 www.lortonaction.org.
 - ❖ **Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE)** —

- ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation. 4114 Legato Road Suite B, Fairfax, VA 22033, 703-591-4968, cause-usa.org
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. www.capitalareafoodbank.org
 - ❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly (near Backyard Grill and Bar). For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153. 703-988-9656.
 - ❖ **The Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic**, 13525 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171, 571-235-3577. Last year, 139 community volunteers including nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians, gave more than 1,300 hours of their time to see patients. jsfreeclinic.org.
 - ❖ **Alternative House** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182, 703-506-9191. www.thealternativehouse.org.
 - ❖ **Reston Interfaith**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.restoninterfaith.org. Programs and services include the Embury Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program and holiday food drives.
 - ❖ **SHARE of McLean** is fully volunteer run, and seeks donations of grocery gift cards and more. Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101. 703-284-2179. www.SHAREofMcLean.org
 - ❖ **LINK**, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. More than 4,000 adults and children have signed up for help with holiday meals. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org
 - ❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area.

- FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. FACETS offers a monthly Youth Volunteer Night. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others (CHO)**, Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of concerned churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. 703-281-7614 <http://www.cho-va.com>
 - ❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help)**, working with the Office of Coordinated Services Planning, Fairfax County Department of Human Services, FISH helps local citizens who are in temporary need of food, clothing and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880 <http://fairfaxfish.org/>
 - ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help)**, 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
 - ❖ **Lamb Center**, www.thelambcenter.org, Day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178
 - ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**, 10455 White Granite Drive Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124 703-385-3267 <http://www.nvfs.org/>
 - ❖ **United Community Ministries**, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306 <http://www.ucmagency.org/>
 - ❖ **Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN)** of Northern Virginia, 703-820-9001, www.scanva.org, Parent Education, Public Education-re: child abuse and Court Advocacy for Abused and Neglected Children

Great Falls CONNECTION

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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NEWS



PHOTOS BY CHI PHAM

Guest Conductor Glenn Quader prepares to conduct the Langley HS Orchestra.

Langley Presents 'A Musical Journey to Germany'

The Langley High School Orchestra presented "A Musical Journey to Germany" on Dec. 11. The concert was made possible by grants from the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra's SCORE program and the Langley High School PTSA. Under the baton of guest conductor Glenn Quader, members of the Fairfax Symphony joined the student musicians to perform works by Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms. Each piece was introduced in German and English by students in the German Honors Society.

Playing side-by-side with professional musicians with Mr. Quader conducting was a tremendous opportunity for the Langley orchestra students. Violist Sara Ibrahim, a junior, said, "Having the Fairfax Symphony play with us was really great. We all truly appreciate the time they invested in us. I think the encouragement from the professionals motivated us to strive to a higher level."

Senior violinist Darcy Davidson explained why she enjoyed playing for guest Conductor Glenn Quader. She said, "I feel as though each orchestra really watched him and responded to his cues . . . with him conducting us I think we

played the best we ever have." Violinist Christopher Quion, a junior, summed up the experience: "Maestro Glenn Quader is an exemplary conductor, and his ensemble of winds and brass really brought a sense of grandeur."

Senior violinist Kevin Tan received a standing ovation for his performance of Pablo Sarasate's "Zigeunerweisen" with the Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Scott McCormick. The concert included the premiere of a work for string orchestra composed by senior Paul Li, "Orpheus: Reise in die Unterwelt." Ms. Bo-Min Son directed the Freshman Orchestra in the Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 by Bach.

Chigaya Sakai and George Prestoy played Brahms' Hungarian Dance No 1 on piano. Paul Li and Theron Masters performed Brahms' Waltzes and Dances on piano. Senior violist J.J. Stevens played the organ in Bach's Toccata in D Minor.

The Langley High School Orchestra is grateful to the generous donors, sponsors and volunteers who made the concert and Silent Auction successful.

— SUSAN MCQUADE



Violinist Kevin Tan received a standing ovation for his performance of "Zigeunerweisen" by Pablo Sarasate.

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ACKERMAN AND ASSOCIATES DENTAL PRACTICE

Dr. Donna Greco D.M.D. Family Dentistry



Dr. Donna Greco completed her undergraduate studies in fine art, and after a brief professional career as a graphic artist, she returned to dental school and earned her Doctorate of Medicinal Dentistry from the University of Kentucky in 2002.

As a dental student, she was selected as one of only three dental students to ever complete the year-long clinical research training program at NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, studying head and neck development. After graduation, she returned to the D.C. area

and eventually settled in Loudoun County, where she resides with her husband, Craig, and their daughter. Dr. Greco participates in extensive continuing education and training in all aspects of her profession, including her particular areas of interest which are esthetic and cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics, dentistry for children and TMJ disorders.

Professional Memberships

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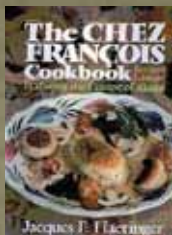
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Teaching Health and Holiday Culinary Traditions

Nutrition experts say moderation, not deprivation, is key.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The holidays start with a sauté of mushrooms—usually portabella, crimini or oyster—sautéing in olive oil. Next, sliced onions sizzle in a bath of bubbling butter and wine until they're caramelized.

This is how Bonita Lillie starts her yuletide feast. Under the guidance of her deft hands, such rank and file produce become mushroom soup. Fresh minced pork and cheddar cheese become a recreation of her mother's sausage rolls. She doesn't measure ingredients, count calories or add flavor-depleting substitutes. Only real food makes the cut in her Alexandria kitchen.

"I go with my gut and what feels right. I don't use recipes," said Lillie, a registered dietician and nutrition instructor at Marymount University in Arlington. "If you're cooking a family dish that you look forward to every holiday and you substitute a fat-free version of something, it won't taste right and you won't satisfy your memory of that dish."

During a time of year when it is not uncommon to wash down *Bûche de Noël* with eggnog or to pile one's plate with slices of crown roast beef drizzled with merlot cream sauce, Lillie and other local nutritionists, food enthusiasts and health gurus say don't engage in self-deprivation. They emphasize that moderation, minor modifications and keeping it real are the keys to maintaining family traditions in ways that are healthy.

"Fat, per se, is not evil," said Nichole Ferrigno, culinary director for Tiny Chefs in Great Falls, Alexandria, McLean, Oakton, Springfield, Arlington and Potomac. "It really becomes about the type of fat one is consuming. When we think of . . . eggnog, peppermint cake and gingerbread, I would tell folks to have just a little bit of the real thing. I do not ever, ever recommend substituting real foods with processed look-a-likes."

READ LABELS and examine the contents, say experts, or better yet, buy foods that don't require labels. "[I]t is definitely better to eat real food," said Joel Martin, Ph.D., a professor of kinesiology at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Our bodies have been used to eating real food for thousands of years and only recently have artificial ingredients been introduced into our diets. In the long run, regularly eating these substitutes may cause numerous undesirable effects."

Ferrigno, a former restaurant chef, suggests swapping imitation for moderation. "Even when it comes to holiday indulgences, one can partake and still do so within the parameters of a healthy diet," she said. "The key . . . is to stick with whole, unprocessed foods. By consuming the real thing, your body is satiated with just a small amount. When we consume artifi-



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE CONNECTION

When faced with a wide array of yuletide treats, dietician Jennifer Kay Nelson advises against "mindlessly grabbing cookies [and] candy . . . here-there-everywhere."

cial ingredients, it takes much, much longer and many, many more calories to reach the same level of satiety."

Replacing one natural ingredient with another is a flavor-preserving option. "You could substitute . . . an alternative sweetener like honey or agave nectar" for sugar, said Lenora Lawson, a chef instructor at The Art Institute of Washington's International Culinary Schools in Arlington.

In fact, minor ingredient tweaks can pack powerful taste bud punches. "When you're baking a cake, sometimes you can replace oil with applesauce in some cakes, and often it tastes better," said Lillie. She cautions, however, that "when you take out the fat in any dish, you have to replace it with herbs or other seasonings so that you don't lose the taste."

ESCHEWING LARGE cookie cutters for their bite-sized counterparts and baking pies with graham cracker crusts instead of traditional fat-laden shells are tactics that Vienna-based culinary instructor Christine Wisniewski employs during the holiday season. "There are lots of ways to go about healthy-ing up the holidays," she said. "If the filling is the star of the dessert, fill and bake individual ramekins for a crust-free dessert and significant calorie and fat savings."

Most importantly, when faced with a dizzying array of yuletide treats on a tray or table, think before making a choice. "Be mindful, be appreciative and aware of what you are eating," said Jennifer Kay Nelson, director of clinical dietetics and an associate professor of nutrition at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. "Mindlessly grabbing cookies, candy, nuts here-there-everywhere often end up in unexpected pounds."



Great Falls Studios President Laura Nichols enjoying the first exhibition of "Student Art at Starbucks."



"Self Cut Paper Action Figure," by Carolyn A., fourth grade, Great Falls Elementary School.

Students Art on Exhibit at Great Falls Starbucks

Great Falls Studios (GFS) and Starbucks in Great Falls Center have teamed up with three local elementary schools to showcase student artwork.

The show is sponsored by Great Falls Studios, a network of artists based in Great Falls.

GFS is working with art teachers at Great Falls, Forestville, and Colvin Run Elementary schools on the rotating exhibition. Starbucks has made its conference room wall space available for the rotating display, and GFS has donated the framing and is coordinating the display of the artwork. Each school's art will be on display for four months at a time.

Great Falls Elementary is first up with a collection of self portraits of artists from Kindergarten through 6th grade. GFS President Laura Nichols says, "GFS can't think

of a better way to promote art in our community than providing a venue for these very talented young artists to display their work."

The Great Falls Elementary School art will be on display continuously through February. Next up is Colvin Run Elementary from March through June of 2013, followed by Forestville Elementary from July through October.

The community is invited to attend the artist's reception for the Great Falls Elementary Self Portraits show on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013 from 6-8 p.m. at Starbucks in Great Falls Center at 9863 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. For more information contact Dean Souleles by e-mail at dean@dsoulphoto.com.

For more information about GFS, www.GreatFallsStudios.com



"Bust-Self Portrait," pencil and colored pencil on paper, by Raya D., third grade, Great Falls Elementary School.



"Bust Family Portrait," Tempera Paint on Paper, by Ava F., first grade, Great Falls Elementary School.

SPORTS

GREAT FALLS CONNECTION SPORTS EDITOR JON ROETMAN
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Madison's Huge Second Half Leads to Win Against McLean

Warhawks overcome 15-point halftime deficit.

BY ALEX VAN REES
FOR THE CONNECTION

The Madison Warhawks trailed by 15 points heading into the second half, but overcame their poor start by delivering an overwhelming 43 points in the final two periods to defeat the McLean Highlanders, 56-49, on Friday night in a Liberty District showdown.

"No one should be comfortable with any lead when facing us," said Madison senior wing Patrick Murphy. "We can come back at any time and we proved that tonight. We never give up and that's an important aspect of our game."

Heading into the half, the Highlanders seemed to be on a roll and on the way to a second consecutive win, after starting the season 0-3, as they were leading comfortably, 28-13.

However, the Warhawks busted out of the gate in the third period and did not leave anything on the court. Madison scored more than three times as many points in the second half by outscoring McLean 43-21.

"We played really well together in the second half," said Murphy. "We started to go inside more and work inside-out. Once we started working together, we started playing better defensively. Our strong defense led to better execution toward the end of the game."

Murphy led the onslaught in the second half with 21 points. He led the team with 27 overall, making seven of nine from the floor over the final two periods. Senior guard Tommy House and senior post Phillip Davine both added 13 points of their own to the mix.

THIS GAME was the first time the Warhawks were out-rebounded in a contest up to this point in the young season. One of the major talking points in the locker room after the first half was that they needed to work on their rebound game.

Although they finished the game with fewer rebounds, they did a much better job in the second half, which was readily apparent.

"I was disappointed with our inability to run offense and the amount of turnovers and lack of rebounds in the first half," said Madison Head Coach Chris Kuhblank. "We turned it around in the second half and were able to get the shots off that we needed. That's the type of team we need to be and can be."

On the other side of the court, the Highlanders came roaring onto the court and dominated the first half of the game, but fell off quickly after the first half.

"We have had major problems with turnovers this season, and that was apparent in the second half," said McLean head coach Kevin Roller. "Little things add up, and we made too many mistakes in the sec-



The Madison boys' basketball team defeated McLean on Dec. 14 at McLean High School.

PHOTO BY ALEX VAN REES

ond half and that really cost us."

In the first half, the Warhawks struggled with turnovers, totaling 11, compared to just six by the Highlanders. However, the second half was a different story. McLean had 10 turnovers and missed a number of layups in the final minutes of the game.

"It was all just execution," said McLean senior center John Pascoe. "We knew what to expect from them, but we got lazy in the second half and they played great. That was the major difference in the game."

McLean senior guard Samer Abdelmoty led the Highlanders with 19 points, including eight free throws, all of which came in the final period. Pascoe tallied 14 points and both senior guard Milos Lesevic and junior guard Joey Sullivan finished the contest with six points apiece.

"We're still learning and that will take some time," Roller said. "It was about what I expected from these two teams. Both teams are learning what they can do well and what they need to work on. We had a very strong first half and they obviously had a very impressive second half."

The road win was Madison's second of the season. "If you don't give up, there's always a chance you can come back and win," said Kuhblank. "We were down more points after the first half than we had scored the entire first two periods."

Pascoe said the Highlanders should bounce back. "I'm confident we'll rebound," said Pascoe. "We'll practice hard this weekend and then get a good scouting report for our game on Tuesday. Hopefully, we'll play much better in the second half than we did out there tonight."

THESE TWO TEAMS will do battle again in January.

With the win on Friday night, the Warhawks (3-2 overall) are now tied with both Langley and Marshall atop the Liberty District, each sporting a 2-0 record. The Highlanders (1-4) drop to 1-1 in the district after they defeated South Lakes last week for their first win of the season.

Both teams will be on the road for their next contests on Tuesday evening; McLean heads to Chantilly, while Madison will square off against Oakton in Vienna.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL

Langley senior Garrett Collier scored a career-high 23 points during the Saxons' 49-33 victory against South Lakes on Dec. 14.

Saxons Undefeated Collier's 23 points lead Langley past South Lakes.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The opening scene of Garrett Collier's career-best performance featured the senior guard knocking down a pair of 3-pointers as the Langley boys' basketball team built a 15-point first-half lead against the South Lakes Seahawks.

After South Lakes trimmed the lead to five late in the third quarter, Collier's finale included a buzzer-beating jumper that spelled the beginning of the end for the Seahawks.

Collier's jump shot beat the third-quarter buzzer and sparked a 14-2 Langley run as the Saxons pulled away for a 49-33 victory on Dec. 14 at Langley High School. Collier scored a career-high 23 points and grabbed five rebounds as the Saxons improved to 6-0, including 2-0 in the Liberty District.

"I started to make some threes early," he said, "and I thought I got my confidence up."

Langley opened the game on a 12-2 run and held South Lakes without a field goal for the first 5 minutes, 39 seconds. The Seahawks hit a pair of three-pointers toward the end of first quarter, but each time Collier answered with a three of his own.

After a 13-point first half and pair of field goals in the third quarter, Collier buried his third three-pointer of the evening midway through the fourth quarter, giving Langley a 45-30 lead.

"He's such a scrappy kid," Langley Head Coach Travis Hess said. "He doesn't even know who [former NBA player] Stacey Augmon is. We call him the 'Plastic Man' (Augmon's nickname) sometimes because he gets his hands on loose balls, he baits kids into throwing that wing pass . . . and picks it off and takes it the other way."

" . . . He shot the ball well. He was a football player, so he's just kind of getting his basketball legs back. If he can shoot like that every single night, we'll be all right."

Xavier Ryan scored seven points for Langley. Justin Galiani scored six points and grabbed eight rebounds, Brad Dotson finished with six points and five rebounds and Philip Novacki had three points and seven boards.

South Lakes struggled to score against Langley's zone defense. The Seahawks finished the contest with 12 field goals and 28 turnovers. The Seahawks made only six of 21 free-throw attempts.

"It's a different game if we make free throws," South Lakes Head Coach Andrew Duggan said. "Free throws, unforced errors—we're just throwing the ball away. It's the right idea with some of the passes we're trying to make, especially against that zone, [but] we just threw the ball away too many times without much pressure on us."

The 33 points allowed by Langley were a season-best for the Saxons and a season-low for South Lakes. Sophomore point guard Brandon Kamga led the Seahawks with 11 points.

"Defensively, I couldn't be happier with holding them to 33 points," Hess said. "Offensively, I thought we could have taken care of the ball a little better, I thought we could have executed a little better, I thought we could have finished in transition a little better, but to hold a team to 33 points in a high school basketball game; you're going to win a lot of games if you can do that."

Through six games, Langley is limiting opponents to 39.7 points per contest.

The Saxons will host Westfield at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 18.

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

How the Powerless Access

Immigrants make significant gains in influencing political system.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Final part of the series.

On Election Night Nov. 6, Keisy Chavez's nerves were frayed.

The Fairfax single mom had been campaigning hard for Democrats since the official launch of Latinos for Obama last April.

She filmed a commercial for Senate candidate Tim Kaine in September, worked phone banks, door-knocked during 104-degree heat, stuffed envelopes, delivered yard signs, and seized every opportunity to talk to friends, neighbors and strangers about the importance of the 2012 election.

Her daughter, Cinthya Qureshi, 24, likes to tease her mom about her willingness to talk to anyone when it comes to politics.

"If my mom is pumping gas, and sees someone next to her, she will start a conversation about politics," she said.

"I've been organizing for President Obama and Governor Kaine since the launch of their campaigns, and everyone I talk to in the Latino community gets fired up to help spread the message of everything they have done for us," said Chavez.

Chavez was ecstatic over of Kaine's and Obama's victories in Virginia. "It was such a powerful feeling. I can't really describe how happy and relieved I felt," she said. "It shows that you can make a difference. It's a big motivation to realize that you can have an impact on something bigger than you, something that touches so many people."

Like many Latinos this election cycle, Chavez made certain her voice was heard. According to exit polls, recent immigrants, not just Latinos, voted overwhelmingly, 73 percent, for Obama in Northern Virginia.

Data from the Pew Research Center also shows that Asian Americans have shifted more to Democrats since 2008 than any other minority group. Representing just 3 percent of the national voting population, they are the fastest growing demographic in the United States, and their influ-



Keisy Chavez, a Latino activist with Latinos for Obama, and daughter Cinthya Qureshi at their business in Herndon.

ence is being felt beyond traditionally blue states, like California, Hawaii, New York and New Jersey, into swing states like Virginia and North Carolina.

"This area, particularly Fairfax County, is teeming with immigrants, from South America, India, Vietnam, South Korea and elsewhere," said Frederic Bemak, director of the Diversity Research and Action Center at George Mason University. "I can't imagine many of them swooned at Romney's incessant China bashing, or talk of self-deportation for the undocumented."

"The tectonic plates are shifting on immigration," said Frank Sharry, a McLean resident and executive director of America's Voice, an advocacy group for immigrants. "The fact that leading conservative voices are joining Republican leaders in calling for immigration reform that includes relief for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in America is a major development that will open up space

for the GOP to do the right thing and help pass sensible reform legislation."

Sharry said political leaders should consider the response from 2012 voters to this question asked in the network exit polls: "Should most illegal immigrants working in the United States be offered a chance to apply for legal status or deported to country they came from?"

"By a whopping 65-percent-to-28-percent margin, Americans support the 'apply for legal status' option," Sharry said.

Chavez said the 2012 election was a "reality wake-up call."

"I think it has finally hit some Republican politicians and policymakers that if you don't embrace immigration you will go nowhere. If you really want your party or your candidate or issues to be addressed, you need to embrace the mix of people in this country. Everyone has something to bring, regardless of whether you're Latino, Asian, or Irish."



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Brian Moran, former chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia with U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8) and Fred Shwaery of Vienna, a member of the Arab American Democrats of Virginia at the 24th annual Arab American Candidates' Night Dinner held at the Tysons Corner Marriott on Sept. 30.

Voting: How the powerless begin to access power?

Political affiliation aside, research shows that immigrants, especially when they organize and vote, are influencing the political discussion overall, not just electing Democrats.

According to immigration experts, the right to vote is a key motivating factor when immigrants choose to become citizens, instead of just holding on to their green card.

Andrew Eade, who grew up in England, has been working in the U.S. for 16 years. In May, Eade was one of 75 new citizens who took the Oath of Allegiance during a special naturalization ceremony at the Fairfax County Government Center.

A resident of Herndon for 16 years, Eade said he wanted to become a citizen so he could "fully participate in the system and vote."

"I've been paying taxes for all these years, and I thought it was time to vote. You want to feel like you are getting your voice heard," he said.

Tam-Anh Lam, 23, called Tammy by her clients at the Four Seasons Nail Salon in Oakton, pulls out a creased photo of her 4-year-old daughter, Leah-Anh, to show a client.

Lam came to the United States

with her parents when she was 2 years old. Lam lives with her parents in Reston, who help take care of her daughter.

She became a citizen when she turned 18, but did not vote until this year. Lam said she wants her daughter to grow up with self-confidence and the higher education she lacks.

"I never paid much attention, but this year there was so much in the news that concerned me." Lam said news about immigration, education and healthcare struck a chord with her, and she decided she would vote this year.

"I wanted to vote because it gives you power. It's the American way. ... I wanted my daughter to know that we're Americans too, and she can do anything. If I can't do it, maybe she can. Who knows, she could be a doctor someday," Lam said.

Community-based organizations, according to a 2009 Urban Institute study, play a key role in encouraging immigrants to enroll in citizenship programs so they can participate in the electoral process.

"A significant aspect of immigrant integration is civic participation," said Richard Eldridge, the Citizenship volunteer manager at Hogar Immigrant Services, a Fairfax County program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington. "We have a strong component of helping people become new citizens, of empowering immigrants through the benefits of

Power



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Andrew Eade, wife Stephanie and son Greyson, 21-months, of Herndon. Eade, from England, was one of 75 candidates who took the Oath of Allegiance during a special naturalization ceremony May 25 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

citizenship.”

“Our goal is for immigrants to achieve self-sufficiency and participate fully in the greater community,” said Brooke Hammond Perez, education services and group manager. Hogar, which was founded in 1981, offers a combination of legal consultation, English-language instruction and citizenship classes.

While the majority of Hogar’s immigrant clients live below the poverty level, their determination to become engaged, active citizens is inspiring, Hammond Perez said.

But few have touched Hammond Perez personally as much as client Alhaji Alpha Bah, an 82-year-old immigrant from Sierra Leone. In 1992, Bah was a shop-keeper in the West African nation when civil war broke out. During a decade of brutal civil war, when tens of thousands of people died, Bah was forced from his home, living as a refugee in Guinea for seven years before coming to the United States in 2003.

“He was accompanied to the U.S. by four of his nine children,” Hammond Perez said, adding that his other children had to stay behind in Guinea and Sierra Leone. “Even now, he doesn’t know the whereabouts of three of those five children.”

Bah came to Catholic Charities in 2010. He did not have any formal education, did not speak English and was not able to find consistent work. Despite these obstacles, Bah, accompanied by Hammond Perez, was officially sworn in as a U.S. citizen on Oct.

14, 2011. When asked what he wanted to do as a new American, he said he wanted to register to vote as soon as possible. “I feel proud. I feel big. You are a citizen. Welcome to America,” Bah said in video interview discussing his experiences. (To see the video, visit hogarimmigrantservices.org.)

Immigrants Gaining Political Influence

In Virginia and at the national level, immigrant voters are changing the political landscape in unprecedented ways, and hold increasing influence across the political spectrum.

“From a political perspective, the way the demographics are shifting, those who would demonize and attack new immigrants and Latinos do so at their peril,” said Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49), the first Latino Democrat elected to the Virginia General Assembly.

Latinos have a long history of political involvement through organizations which give them access to elected officials, according to the Urban Institute.

In contrast, the Urban Institute study says, Asian and African immigrant communities are newer and lack long-serving, established leaders to spearhead and encourage participation and advocacy. While Asians comprise 17.4 percent of Fairfax County’s population, compared to 15.6 percent

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PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION



Del. Mark Keam (D-35)

Immigrant Success Story

Delegate Mark L. Keam. Bio

Del. Mark Keam (D-35) is the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly. In November 2009, Keam was elected to an open seat in the House of Delegates and re-elected in November 2011. Keam, 46, currently serves on the House Education and Finance Committees, and is Co-Chair of the Legislative Tourism Caucus. Keam sat for a series of interviews with Connection reporter Victoria Ross in his Vienna office in December. Here is Keam’s story, mostly in his own words.

For new Americans, life is hard, but once they overcome those barriers, they are stronger, and they contribute so much because they fought so hard to get here. I’m proud of my background. The policies I advocate for are from the perspective of an immigrant, something which is sorely missing in Richmond. As an immigrant who came here with nothing, I’m able to have everything I ever wanted, to give my children incredible opportunities.

Let me put it this way, unlike most people whose immigration stories are fairly simple, (for example, they move from one country to another country), I lived in four different countries and several different cities. I guess you could say I was the result of global circumstances beyond my control.

My parents met in the late 1950s. They had lost their parents during the war, so I didn’t know any of my grandparents. My mother had an older sister, who was a devout Christian. She didn’t like my father.

My parents were like street kids after the Korean war. My mother didn’t finish school and my father was sort of a rogue. The only way my aunt would let him approach my mother was to prove he was upstanding citizen, so he became a minister.”

In 1961, there was mandatory conscription in the military, so Keam’s father was sent to Vietnam as a chaplain.

My father would come back at least once every two years. My brother was born in 1962, my sister was born in 1964 and I was born in 1966. In 1969, he came back to Seoul, and he wanted to set up a church. But Korea was still very run-down post war. Imagine Afghanistan, imagine that scenario. Korea was like Afghanistan times two. No running water, all the buildings were bombed, everything was devastated, being run by dictators. It’s only 50 miles from DMZ. That was the world I was born into.

Del. Mark Keam (D-35) is the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the General Assembly. Keam received a political science degree from the University of California at Irvine. After receiving a law degree from Hastings College of the Law, he returned to Virginia where he met and married Alex Seong Keam, also an attorney. The Keams have two children, Tyler, a Cub Scout, and Brenna, a Brownie.

Born in Seoul, Korea in 1966, Keam was the youngest child of a Presbyterian minister. At age four, he and his family moved to South Vietnam where his father established a church.

THE WAR IN VIETNAM was at a standstill, a lot of countries started establishing ties in South Vietnam, so they asked my father, who had studied Vietnamese language and culture, to establish a Korean church and community center. We lived in the church, and I remember the building well.

This goes directly into how I got into politics. From the time I was four-years-old, I can’t remember one meal we had with just the five of us. Our meals were with whoever was at the church. For the 5,000 Koreans who lived in Vietnam in the 70s, every one of them came to our church because it was also the only community center. It was the hub of all Korean activities. From the time I woke up until I went to bed, there were always people around us.

When I was a small kid, I freaked out because we had caskets. I remember there’d be a wedding in the morning, a funeral in the middle of the day, and another wedding at night. You’d see the same people dressed up for a wedding and then back for a funeral, because they knew each other. I lived in that world with the idea that community helps each other. It was ingrained in me such a natural way that I think, to this day, that’s the core of my being. What made me who I am and what made me think the way I do and act the way I do every single day was molded in my childhood. More importantly, because of my father, I saw it was incumbent upon us to be leaders in our community. Family is important, but community is just as important. So that has led me to do what I’m doing today.

When Keam was nine-years-old, in April of 1975, he recalls his family fleeing the church compound during what historians call the Fall of Saigon. The capture of Saigon by the People’s Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front, marked the end of the Vietnam War and the start of a transition period leading to the formal reunification

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FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Immigrants Gain Influence in Virginia

FROM PAGE 15

who are Latino, Asians speak many different languages and come from a wide variety of cultures, making it more difficult to politically mobilize the population as a whole.

Regardless, political leaders are increasingly tuned in to the concerns of immigrants, and the number of immigrant community-based organizations is increasing. In 2000, according to the Urban Institute, there were 90 such organizations in Fairfax County; in 2009, the number was up to 149.

"The number of organizations devoted to the interest of members of the immigrant community has been increasing just as the number of immigrants has been increasing," said Del. Ken Plum (D-36). "I try to attend as many meetings of groups with immigrant members to demonstrate to them that they can have a say in government and that there are those in elective office who value the contributions."

At the 24th annual Candidates' Night Dinner, hosted by the Arab American Republicans and the Arab American Democratic Caucus of Virginia on Sept. 30, nearly every Fairfax County Democrat running for office was there, courting voters, including Kaine, U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8) and U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11). Former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, (R), who served eight terms in Congress, was Mitt Romney's surrogate.

Launched in 1987 by the Arab American Institute (AAI), the event is a forum for campaigning politicians, and a place where the Arab-American community can engage in the political process.

"Candidates' Night, by admission of most politicians attending the forum, has been praised as one of the best ethnic political forums," said event co-chair Saba L. Shami. "It's become an institution, bringing candidates together with the Arab American community as an integral part of the American political process."

Del. Mark Keam (D-35), the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, said Asian immigrants are beginning to see unprecedented growth in both population and political clout.

"In 2000, I was the convention chair of the National Asian American Bar Association. It was held in D.C., and we broke all records. We had 500 lawyers getting together in the same town, and we had a budget of over \$300,000. We thought that was big time," Keam said.

"In 2012, same town, same convention, but this year the event drew 1,700 lawyers and had a budget of \$1.6 million," Keam said. "What that tells you is something about both the physical growth and the economic clout of Asians, because of the money spon-



Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49) at the Democratic Committee Headquarters in Annandale.

PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

sors were willing to spend targeting our community."

Lopez pointed out that since 2000 Latino voter participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia has gone up between 1 and 3 percent every election cycle. Currently, there are 683,000 Latinos in Virginia, and approximately 183,000 of those are eligible voters, according to the State Board of Elections.

According to the 2010 decennial census, between 2000 and 2010, Latino voter registration increased by 75 percent in Virginia, one of highest increases in country.

"This is something that really blew me away," Lopez said. "The average age of the Latino citizen is 15 years old. Think about what that means in two years and four years and eight years. You're going to see a huge increase in Latino registered voters."

Lopez said the increasing percentage of Virginia's Latinos and immigrant voters make him hopeful that the political polarization regarding immigration reform will diminish.

"There's something huge about what's happening in the Commonwealth," Lopez said. "The demographic shifts coming to Virginia will wipe out the effects of the short-sighted anti-immigrant politicking we see now."

Chavez said it's just smart — politically and economically — to create a pathway to citizenship for young immigrants. "We're relying on their talent and skills. It's not just a Latino concern. ... It helps the economy and makes America stronger for everyone."

"Like the program says 'it's the new normal.' Get used to it. Embrace it," Chavez said.

Overcoming Barriers

FROM PAGE 15

of Vietnam into a communist state. The fall of the city was preceded by the evacuation of almost all the American civilian and military personnel in Saigon, along with tens of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians associated with the southern regime. The evacuation culminated in Operation Frequent Wind, which was the largest helicopter evacuation in history.

That's the most traumatic thing that's ever happened to me. We were playing in the room, and I just remember my mother coming in saying we have to pack up and go.

We had seen a lot of things. Whenever I see war-torn scenes of Libya or Syria, it brings back flashes of memory. I never saw actual tanks roll in, but we heard bombs going off. There were times when we would go through the markets of Vietnam, and we had seen Buddhist monks self-immolating in political protests — just awful.

After seeing things like that, it wasn't real to us until that day my mom said 'pack up.'

The families at the compound got in the cars, and drove to this little airport. As we're leaving in the helicopter, we look back and I see my dad standing behind the chicken-wire fence.

Keam said he eventually reconstructed what happened to his father through relative's stories and his father's testimony.

My father was stranded on the rooftop, and he was arrested by the Viet Cong. He had two marks against him. One was that he was a religious leader in a communist country. Another mark was that he served in the South Korean military, even though he was a chaplain.

We were taken back to Seoul, and there were so many rumors. We heard that my father was killed, or that he was in prison, or that he made it but he's not coming back. We had absolutely no way to understand this. ...

When we arrived back in Korea, we had zero, nothing. No one was doing well. My mother found a one-bedroom apartment in Seoul. My mom had never finished high school let alone college. As a woman, she had no way of having meaningful employment, being a single mother with three kids. ... So my mother went to churches and to ex-military friends and it was those people who supported us, not the government. I never asked her, and she never talks about it, but I believe the only way she fed us every single day, is that she begged and went to charities and welfare groups. That was the year I became an adult and lost my childhood innocence."

KEAM SPOKE ENGLISH AND FRENCH, but not much Korean. Back at school in Seoul, he was bullied and treated as a special-needs student. He said that terrible year transformed him in ways that make him the person he is today.

I preach this all the time, discrimination is discrimination no matter who is doing it to whom. My life's mission is to fight against discrimination. I am also passionate about literacy. I serve on the board of Virginia Literacy Foundation, a nonprofit founded by former Virginia First Lady Jeannie Baliles to ensure that everyone has essential reading and writing skills they need to succeed.

After what Keam considers the worst year of his life, assuming his father was never coming home, feeling out of place in his native country, his family got another surprise. His father returned home, showing up on their doorstep out of the blue.

"That's a story for another time, how we eventually got here," Keam said.

THE REST OF THE STORY, ABRIDGED: After reuniting with his father, Keam's family then moved to Australia, where his father established another church before eventually moving to California.

Keam received a political science degree from the University of California at Irvine, and had a chance to live in Falls Church while working as a college intern. After receiving a law degree from Hastings College of the Law, Keam returned to Virginia where he met and married Alex Seong Keam, also an attorney. The Keams have two children, Tyler, a Cub Scout, and Brenna, a Brownie. Both children attend Mosby Woods Elementary School in Fairfax.

As a part-time citizen-legislator, Keam, who is known as the most prolific member of the General Assembly on Twitter

FAITH

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Christ Church Vienna, meeting at Louise Archer Elementary School, 324 Nutley St. NW, Vienna, holds a **Lessons & Carols Service** on Sunday, Dec. 23 at 10 a.m. and a **Christmas Eve service** on Monday, Dec. 24 at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. 703-865-7929 or www.ChristChurchVienna.com.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean, holds a **Christmas Eve Service** at 5 p.m., where children are invited to participate and services at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. which include communion and candlelight. On Wednesday, Dec. 19, a **Service of Hope and Healing** at noon and 7:30 p.m. provides a worship service to keep the feelings of what can be a difficult time of year in perspective.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, will hold four services on **Christmas Eve**, Monday, Dec. 24 along with a 4 p.m. **Children's Pageant** and 6, 8 and 10 p.m. **Candlelight Services**. A **Christmas Day service** will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 25 at 10 a.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 30, the church will hold a **Lessons and Carols service** at 10:30 a.m. The church also welcomes all to attend their Monday, Dec. 31 **Affirmation of Baptism Service** at 5 p.m. Call 703-356-3346.

St. Mark's English as a Second Language Program for adults at the St. Mark Christian Formation Center,

9972 Vale Road, Vienna, opens registration for the winter term on Tuesday, Jan. 8 and Thursday, Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. for seven proficiency levels from Beginner 1 to Advanced 2. Students will be registered and tested for classes beginning on Tuesday, Jan. 15 to meet on Tuesdays and Thursday from 8-9:30 p.m. for 10 weeks. \$25. 703-626-3585, 703-622-4153 (English or Spanish); 703-505-0123 (Korean); or email st.mark.esl@gmail.com.

Great Falls United Methodist Church is providing an Advent sermon series called **"A Different Kind of Christmas: Living and Giving Like Jesus"**, based on the book by Rev. Mike Slaughter. They will look at the celebration of Christmas and find ways to bring the focus of the season back to the reason we celebrate. Attendees will be encouraged to examine Christmas celebrations and to develop new Christmas traditions that focus on relationships and service. The series are being held on Sundays, Dec. 9, 16 and 23 at 10 a.m. at 910100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. 703-759-3705 or office@greatfallsumc.org.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, at the intersection with Westmoreland Street has Sunday worship with Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m., traditional style worship; 9:45 a.m., contemporary style worship; and 11 a.m., traditional style worship. Sunday School and Adult Forum is at 9:45 a.m.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, offers a rich and unique Religious Exploration (RE) program for all children, from pre-K toddlers

through high school seniors, emphasizing exploration of all religious traditions while developing a personal spiritual path. Registration for the RE program, which offers classes on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings, is now open by calling 703-281-4230.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers three Sunday services and a host of musical, educational, outreach, and fellowship ministries to enrich spiritual growth. 7:45 a.m. Worship Service without music; 9 a.m. Worship Service, Children's Chapel and Children's Choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Forum; and 11 a.m. Worship Service with Adult Choir. 703-759-2082.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, offers a 9 a.m. traditional service and a 10:30 a.m. contemporary service on Sundays. Also offers two services during the summer - both of which will include children's sermons. 703-356-3346.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean, Sunday worship services are at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for adults is at 9:30 a.m. and for children during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Youth Group for grades 7-12 meets Sundays at 6 p.m. A 20-minute service of Holy Communion is held each Wednesday at 12 p.m. 703-356-3312 or umtrinity.org.

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

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Vienna Assembly of God ... 703-938-7736
Washington Christian Church...703-938-7720
Cristo Es Mi Refugio...703-938-7727

Baha'i

Baha'i Faith for Northern Virginia ... 703-821-3345

Baptist

Global Mission Church ... 703-757-0877
Peace Baptist Church ... 703-560-8462
Bethel Primitive Baptist Church ... 703-757-8134
Cartersville Baptist Church ... 703-255-7075
Fellowship Baptist Church ... 703-385-8516
First Baptist Church ... 703-938-8525
The Light Mission Church ... 703-757-0877
Vienna Baptist Church ... 703-281-4400
New Union Baptist Church... 703-281-2556

Buddhist

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center... 202-331-2122

Church of the Brethren

Oakton Church of the Brethren ... 703-281-4411

Catholic

Our Lady of Good Counsel ... 703-938-2828
St. Athanasius Catholic Church ... 703-759-4555
St. Mark's Catholic Church ... 703-281-9100

Charismatic

Christian Assembly ... 703-698-9777

Church of Christ

Berea Church of Christ ... 703-893-7040

Disciples of Christ

Antioch Christian Church ... 703-938-6753

Episcopal

Church of the Holy Comforter ... 703-938-6521

Church of the Holy Cross ... 703-698-6991
St. Francis Episcopal ... 703-759-2082

Jehovah's Witness

Jehovah's Witnesses ... 703-759-1579

Lutheran

Emmanuel Lutheran Church...703-938-2119
Christ The King Lutheran Church...703-759-6068
St. Athanasius Lutheran Church... 703-455-4003

Methodist

Andrew Chapel United Methodist ... 703-759-3509
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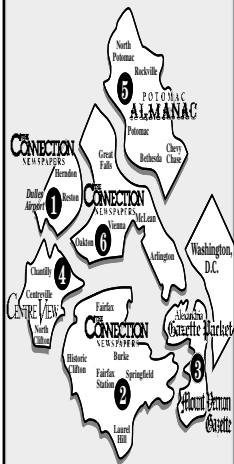
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Touching For Sure, But Not Always



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Usually, but not always, when I show for my scheduled post-chemotherapy/post-scan appointment with my oncologist, I am physically examined (touching, feeling). Recently, due to some enhanced computer and facility upgrades, I was shown the actual scans, digitized. However, on more than one occasion over the last 18 months or so, after we discussed the results of my most recent CT Scan – and lab work, no physical exam was performed. Apparently, as I later learned, the good results from my scan sort of trumps any need to feel for physical manifestations. Meaning, that if the scan shows no tumor growth or movement, it stands to reason – medically speaking, that corollary-type symptoms/indications/abnormalities would not occur/be present. To simplify even more, there's no need for a "pre-operative grope," to quote Dr. Hawkeye Pierce from an episode of M*A*S*H, if the diagnostic test shows there's nothing to "grobe."

On balance then, the doctor's not examining me is good news, generally, presumably; at least that's how he explained it to me. It's a professional version of "Why bother?" There's nothing to see so he doesn't have to take a look. I can live with that. Still, I remember the first appointment I had with my oncologist when he didn't examine me (he always asks questions though); before I sort of realized that I hadn't been examined, I was already in my car driving home. I said aloud to my wife, Dina: "He didn't even examine me!" I felt cheated somehow, as if I didn't get my co-pay's worth. I called my nurse the next day to complain and express my curiosity/anxiety about why it was that my oncologist had not touched/ tested me for any physical reactions/signs as he had on all previous appointments.

My doctor did not call back if I recall, but I believe my nurse did, with some tepid reassurance. However, on my next appointment with my oncologist, we discussed the reason why I hadn't been examined during the previous appointment. He said there is a debate within the medical profession about this very subject. If the scans are encouraging and show no appreciable tumor growth and/or movement, the patient's body will likely not exhibit any signs to the contrary. Ergo, physically examining the patient is sort of redundant. However, my concern that something wasn't done to me (physically examined by my doctor) is not uncommon, my doctor said, and causes patients to have a not-unexpected reaction: skepticism. The perception by us patients is that the doctors are not in fact doing everything they're supposed to be doing, "Hippocratically" speaking. The doctors might know better, and know the facts, but when dealing with us patients, there are feelings to consider. And if the patient's feelings are not considered during this fairly intimate doctor-patient relationship, then the facts, clear as they may be, may fall on deaf ears. This is the quandary – as it was explained to me; examine a patient who you know (from their most recent diagnostic scan) is not experiencing any negative reactions (to their disease) or, don't examine the patient and cause a negative emotional reaction by not physically examining them. And as any of us terminal patients will attest, there's a fine line to be straddled between positive and negative thoughts and interpretations and how they affect the patient. Maybe, reassuring the patient might be more important than following protocol?

As much as I want to be a patient patient, the longer I survive, the more impatient and paranoid I'm becoming. I want to enjoy the good news, really I do, but sometimes I can't. Damn cancer.

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

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