

Tony Meadows helped led the Virginia 49th Infantry's caroling event at Colvin Run Mill on Saturday.

Christmas Celebrated At Colvin Run Mill

NEWS, PAGE 8

OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 11

An Evening of Russian Culture at Langley High

A+, PAGE 12

Great Falls Families Meet At 'the Nutcracker Club'

NEWS, PAGE 4

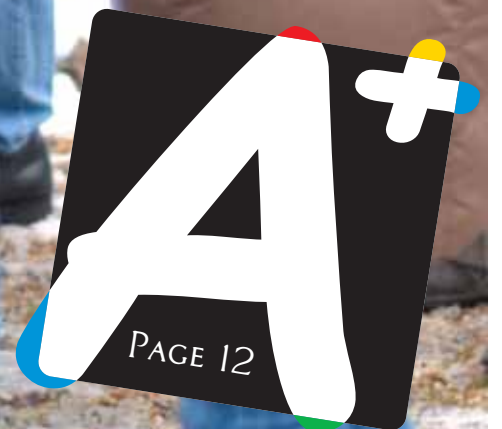
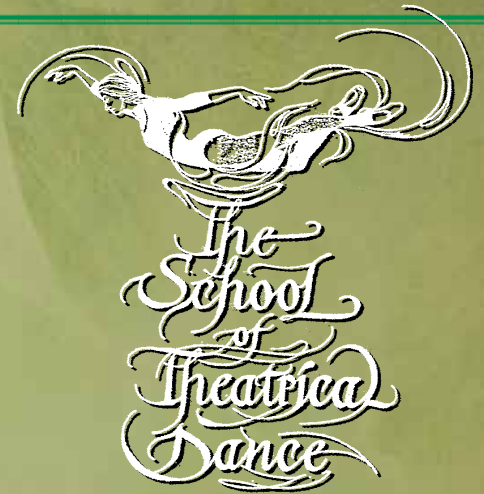


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Director, Theresa D'Alessandro

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Tysons Plan Debated

Follow-up dialogue with County staff on Phase I, Land Use.

BY RUSS UGONE
THE CONNECTION

As part of the Tysons Plan Amendment Process, a follow-up meeting on Dec. 4 was held by the Fairfax County Planning Staff with the public at Freedom Hill Elementary School. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed changes to Phase 1 of the Tysons Plan. Implementation of the Tysons Development Plan began in 2010, after a 5 year planning process. Areas such as Ballston and Rosslyn were used as models when the plan was being developed. Construction at Tysons is expected to be completed in the year 2050 when Tysons will be home to 100,000 residents and 200,000 jobs.

Matthew Ladd, Senior Planner, Planning Division, Fairfax County, said that “this was the first of three meetings on recommendations from the public to the 2010 Tysons Development Plan.” He added that “the recommendations would be grouped into three phases, Land Use, Transportation and Parks, and Public Facilities.” Fairfax County planners will hold separate meetings with the public to discuss the results of examining each phase’s recommendations in order to seek comments on proposed changes. Final decisions on amendment to the Plan will be made by the Board of Supervisors in 2015.

AT THIS MEETING, three recommendations and outcomes pertaining to Land Use were covered. The first recommendation pertained to increasing the density level over what was planned for office space development. Based on comments received from the public sector, the Board of Supervisors asked for a study. As a result, the Board approved new language that was added to the Tysons Plan which would strengthen the monitoring on infrastructure and funding progress during the construction phase. This progress reporting process would allow for future changes that would be needed to complement the Tysons plan; for example,



Suzianne Zottl, Revitalization Program Manager, and Matthew Ladd, Senior Planner, Planning Division, Fairfax County.

PHOTOS BY RUSS UGONE/THE CONNECTION



Vienna residents David Roberts and Laura Abbot.

a funding plan that tracks with growth. David Roberts, a Vienna resident, said that “the Tysons Development was happening in an artificial manner,” explaining that “cities normally grow because of need, but here at Tysons, businesses got together and decided to build the city first.” Rob Whitfield, a Reston resident, added that “the occupied office space at Tysons is at the same level it was 13 years ago.” He also expressed concern that all available county resources are going to the Tysons area, especially when there are needs for parking at the other Silver Line Metro stations. The second recommendation pertained to adding density at the Circulator Route stops. Ladd said that “while the goal is to have as much growth as possible at the metro stations, this recommendation was not adopted at this time.” The plan calls for a high-quality bus service to connect the Tysons Metro Stations. Currently, 95 percent of the traffic at Tysons is vehicle traffic and the Plan seeks to increase public transportation. Laura Abbot, a Vienna resident, commented that there will be a need for public transportation since there will be no parking at the Tysons stations. She was also concerned with the cost of

such a Circulator Route, and said that “the prior Circulator bus had very low ridership and was funded by taxpayers.” Some of the residents in attendance said that transportation and funding were key issues and that it comes down to who will pay for these services, taxpayers or developers.

The third recommendation was to separate calculations for Affordable Workforce Housing by distinguishing between calculations for condominiums (for sale units) versus rental units.

THE TYSONS PLAN calls for reserving 20 percent of the residences for “affordable and workforce housing.” This language to separate calculations was not added to the plan.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Whitfield reiterated an overall recommendation for a fiscal plan that showed total costs and sources of such funds. The audience was in agreement, and the County planners stated that they would take this recommendation back to the Board of Supervisors. Dates for the remaining two meetings were not available at this time. To learn more about the plan for Tysons and the proposed amendments, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/tysons.

New Approach to Mental Health

Reforms in wake of tragedy involving state senator’s son.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Advocates for mental health services have been calling for improved services and increased funding for years, although the issue has been pushed aside year after year. But now that the son of state Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25) committed suicide after stabbing his father, a new sense of urgency is emerging in advance of the upcoming General Assembly session. This week, Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell proposed adding \$38 million over two years to the existing \$250 million budget for community service boards across the commonwealth.

“It makes you wonder why a crisis was needed to initiate the type of funding that we need,” said Pamela Barrett, a member of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. “We are so far behind other states in mental health crisis response funding as it is, and it’s something that the CSBs have been lobbying for and begging for for years.”

McDonnell also issued an executive order 68 to convene a task force on improving mental health services and crisis response. The governor described his task force as a group of leaders in the mental health and law enforcement as well as the judicial system and private hospitals. Within minutes of McDonnell’s announcement, Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe issued a statement commending the governor, an indication he intends to follow through when he assumes the reins of power next year. But advocates for mental health remain skeptical.

FOR NOW, the issue seems to have newfound momentum — the result of a series of events that unfolded last month, when an emergency custody order was issued for the senator’s son but a psychiatric bed could not be located before the order expired. That’s why one of the reforms proposed by the governor is allowing magistrates to extend the orders by two hours. Another proposal would extend

temporary detention orders to 72 hours, a proposal that would cost about \$1.6 million a year. Funding is also proposed for the Western State Hospital, where Northern Virginia jurisdictions send patients, which would be about \$680,000 a year.

“These proposals will make a dent, but this is certainly not going to solve the problem,” said Judith Deane of the Arlington Community Services Board. “Northern Virginia jurisdictions put a lot of their own money into this, so in that sense we are better off than many other counties in Virginia. But we still have a lot of need.”

Alexandria Community Services Board director Michael Gilmore said when he was director of the community services board that serves rural Bath County and Rockbridge County, the local funding for community services was about \$5 per capita when he left a decade ago. In Alexandria, by contrast, the local funding for community services is \$125 per capita. That’s why a psychiatric bed might be much more difficult to find in the rural stretches of Virginia, where services are few and far between.

“Much of the state is dependent on billing Medicaid to cover the cost of the services they provide,” said Gilmore. “But all five of the community services boards up here have much more local funding.”

THE PROPOSALS INCLUDE expanding programs for child psychiatry and children’s crisis response services as well as crisis intervention team programs, crisis stabilization services and discharge assistance programs. Other proposals include expanding mental health first aid programs, secure assessment centers and suicide prevention efforts. One initiative would spend \$1.8 million to create six secure crisis intervention team assessment centers where people can be held safely for evaluation and finding a bed without tying up law enforcement personnel.

“That’s only \$300,000 a center,” said Gilmore. “I think it’s going to cost a lot more than that.”



PHOTOS BY TUAN PHAM

In the closing tribute to the military, GI (Brain Andrews) is “Standing With Angels,” (music written by Anders Osborne). Left to right: Page Tofil, Gabrielle White, Kate Fitzgerald, Taylor Smith, Lauren Megrue, Karsyn Lawler, Sophia Nickles, and Lisa Medici. Constantly innovating, Director Theresa D’Alessandro has chosen another modern dance, “The Spirit of Giving” for the finale of this season’s production.

Join Generations of Great Falls Families for ‘Christmas Eve at the Nutcracker Club’

Performances Saturday, Dec. 21, and Sunday, Dec. 22, at the Waddell Theater on the Loudoun Campus of Northern Virginia Community College.

BY JEAN T. JIANOS
THE CONNECTION

The first cast of the “Gingerbread Cookie” dance were the youngest dancers in the company when The School of Theatrical Dance [SOTD] in Great Falls first staged “Christmas Eve at the Nutcracker Club” in 2006. Now those dancers are in the Level 8 Ballet class that SOTD Director Theresa D’Alessandro says she created, “in response to their talent and technical accomplishment.” When one of those dancers, Dylan Murphy of Great Falls, was a member of the Level 7 Ballet class a couple of years ago, she said, “The Winter Show is a great tradition. The



A dramatic interpretation of the Mannheim Steamroller version of the song “Carol of the Bells” is part of Act II of Christmas Eve at the Nutcracker Club. From left: Alex Grieco, Lauren Megrue, Karsyn Lawler, Mary Hagen Grow, Dylan Murphy, Lisa Medici, Page Tofil

show is a lot of fun. For the girls who have been dancing at The School of Theatrical Dance for a while, it is so much fun to watch the dances we did as younger dancers.”

Murphy’s mom was one of D’Alessandro’s original students when The School of Theatrical Dance was established in 1980, so generations of families in Great Falls have realized that same enjoyment. Tina Cobb of Great Falls was an adult student at The School of Theatrical Dance 20 years ago. Her granddaughter, Isabella Clapp, is in the Level 8 Ballet class and will be dancing in the holiday

production again this year. As of 2011, Cobb said, “[Theresa] has taught three generations in our family and we have three more toddler girls getting ready! Seven of us have been through The School of Theatrical Dance and four more coming along.”

Another member of the Level 8 Ballet class who has grown up dancing with The School of Theatrical Dance is Great Falls resident Holly Lundeen. She described “Christmas Eve at The Nutcracker Club” as “a twist on the classic tale of The Nutcracker. It is a tradition at our studio and I love it.” Sara Warrington, also of Great Falls,



The cover of the January 2014 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine, features a Jorge Adeler one-of-a-kind ‘Rock Candy’ ring.

Oprah Winfrey Wears Jorge Adeler ‘Rock Candy’ Ring

The cover of the January 2014 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine, features a Jorge Adeler one-of-a-kind “Rock Candy” ring.

Winfrey wears a 14kt “Rock Candy” ring with cleaved citrine and diamonds from Jorge Adeler’s Spring 2014 collection “Become Timeless.”

Adeler is renowned for his bold statement pieces that have graced numerous celebrities on the red carpet. His custom jewelry designs are characterized by his use of spectacular gemstones showcased in one-of-a-kind creations that elevate the unconventional gem into an inspiring piece of jewelry fit for a black tie affair.

Winfrey illustrates this point by wearing this “Rock Candy” ring on the January cover of O, The Oprah Magazine, while dressed in a gold brocade inspired gown designed by Brian Rennie for BASLER.

Adeler’s 2014 spring collection features three categories coming from and inspired by Earth, Sea and Sky.

The collection presents the innovative artistic vision of Jorge Adeler. “I am overwhelmed that Ms. Winfrey is wearing one of my pieces on such an iconic cover where she proclaims that this year, her 60th birthday, is ‘Her Year to

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You can visit Adeler Jewelers in the Great Falls area at 772 Walker Road, Great Falls.

was in Level 7 Ballet in middle school and thought it was exciting to finally be in dances that she had looked forward to for years. Warrington is now dancing in the Level 8 Ballet class and says that, “This year, instead of [the “Snow” dance], Ballet 8 is performing a more contemporary winter suite. I enjoy the piece because it’s a nice change after being in Snow for two years.” It is that combination of tradition and innovation that has kept generations of families and audiences coming back to The

School of Theatrical Dance and “Christmas Eve at the Nutcracker Club.”

The Waddell Theater is located on the Loudoun Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, Rt. 7, Sterling. Performances Sat. and Sun., Dec. 21 and 22 at 1 p.m. and Sat., Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. Reduced ticket prices for groups of 10, active military and veterans and family, children under 12 years of age and seniors. Complimentary admission for Special Olympics families and chaperones.

OBITUARY

Dr. James Edward 'Jay' Manning, III, 78, Dies

BY HELEN MANNING,
DAUGHTER

Northern Virginia has lost a towering presence in the community – an athlete, distinguished educator, and champion of every student.

Dr. James Edward "Jay" Manning, III, 78 died on Dec. 4. Jay was born into the prominent Irish, Manning family, of builders, architects, and scholars from Boston, on Dec. 27, 1934, in Hudson, Mass. After the Great Depression, Jay and his seven siblings were faced with challenging times. The solution their indomitable mother, Helen Schofield Manning chose was, to relocate the family to Washington, D.C., after writing to President Harry S. Truman and, J. Edgar Hoover, garnering national attention for the family and, securing positions for her daughters at the FBI.

Jay and his brother Peter, both strong athletes, were encouraged by the leadership of their mother to focus on sports, with the goal of college scholarships. Jay attended both St. Paul's Academy and Gonzaga High School. Jay was awarded a basketball scholarship to, and graduated with honors from, The George Washington University. While at GWU, he was regularly featured in the Sports section of the Washington Post, and his team won the 1954 NCAA Southern Conference Tournament Championship.

He served in the United States Army, from 1957 to 1959. After leaving the military, Jay Manning returned to Massachusetts and, was invited to training camp, as a basketball player for the world champion, Boston Celtics, with Bill Russell under coach, Red

Auerbach. Teammates remember Coach Auerbach saying of Jay, "Can somebody keep this guy back? He's relentless."

Jay then found his vocation as an educator. He relocated back to Washington, D.C., and began teaching and coaching at Our Lady of Good Counsel. He married Joanne Hyre Manning of Bethesda, Md., in 1963. Jay was also an early and purposeful advocate for desegregation. He helped accomplish the desegregation of the public basketball courts in Washington, D.C.

Jay led as the Assistant Principal of Fairfax High School and continued his leadership at Lake Braddock Secondary School, implementing the experimental "schools without walls" theory of secondary education. During this tenure, Jay earned his Doctorate in Education at GWU. He distinguished himself as a high school administrator at Fort Hunt High School and Langley High School. Throughout his career, Jay held adjunct professorships at The George Washington University, the University of Marymount, and The University of Virginia, mentoring future secondary education administrators.

As Principal of Langley High School, Dr. Manning received national recognition, for modernizing and initiating many services and procedures within the school, including the college preparatory library, publicly posting sports recognition for the school student's achievements, and pursuing purposeful engagement with the entire student body, on school spirit and ethics codes, all of which are currently maintained by the school and, are included in the general Fairfax Country Public Schools system wide.

Dr. Manning was committed to his local neighborhood through sports coaching, fund raising, promoting local parks, providing leadership to the Indian Guides organization, and teaching Catholic Church doctrine. He never lost his love of playing basketball.

He was honored with the Citizen of the Year award in McLean for his community leadership, serving as the President of the McLean Chamber of Commerce; Member of the Board for the McLean Orchestra; Member of the Rotary Club, McLean Chapter, founding the Interact program for the Langley student body, and initiating a Rotary Club Cup for Girls Field Hockey which still continues. Dr. Manning was a founding member of both the Tower Club in McLean, and the Sporting Club of McLean (now "Sport and Health of Tysons").

Jay was known for his towering physical stature, strong moral values, and gentle nature. He had a talent to connect and draw out individual strength, potential, and a smile from everyone he met. He is credited with uplifting students, futures and careers. Former teacher and friend Anne Morton states: "Dr. Manning was loved and respected by many, and he has left a legacy in his former schools as a principal who cared for every student."

He was a loving husband and father of four children. He was also a caring and involved uncle to almost 40 nieces and nephews and a proud grandfather of 9 grandchildren.

Jay's life was celebrated with visitation on Dec. 13 at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home, followed by a graveside service at Fairfax Memorial Park, 9902 Braddock Road, Fairfax.

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

Who's Hibernating? 10:30-11:15 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge, McLean. It's cold out and the sun is scarce. How do animals survive the cold winter? Join us as we discover what different animals do in order to survive the winter months. Meet an animal and discuss its adaptations to the seasons. Age 2-5 with adult. 703-356-0770.

ESL Conversation Group. 2-3 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls.

English conversation for non-native speakers. Adult. 703-757-8560.

Pokemon Club. 4:30-6 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. English conversation for non-native speakers. Join your friends for a Pokemon Trading Card Club! Age 5-15. 703-757-8560.

THURSDAY/DEC. 19

Reading Buddies. 4:30-6:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Grab a book, grab a buddy! Teen volunteers available as reading buddies. Ages 5-10. Sign up sheet at Information Desk or phone 703-757-8560.

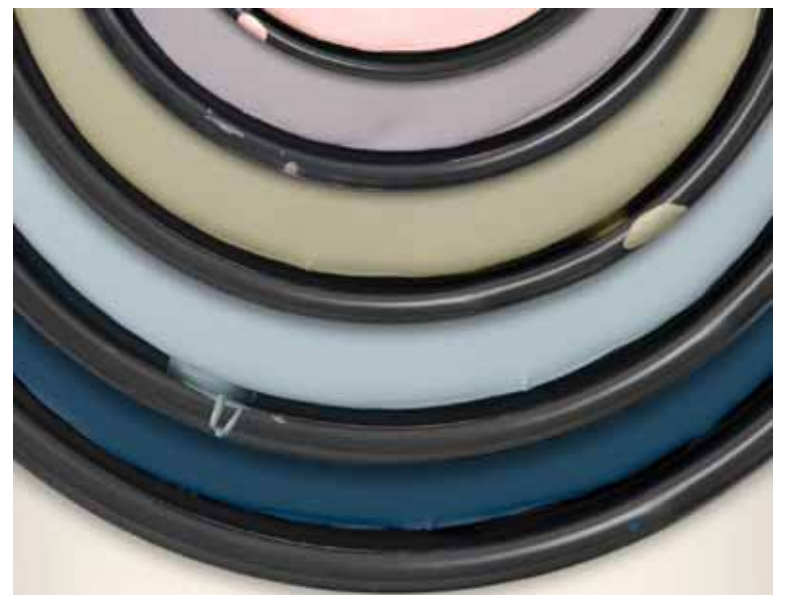
Book Discussion Group. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Call branch for title. Adults. 703-757-

8560. Friday/Dec. 20(Drop-in Chess Club. 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Players of all ages and all skill levels welcome. 703-757-8560.

FRIDAY/DEC. 27

Holiday Tea for Kids. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Bring your favorite stuffed animal or doll, and join us for some holiday goodies! Registration required by Dec. 13. Ages 4 and up. 703-757-8560.

Drop-in Chess Club. 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Players of all ages and all skill levels welcome. 703-757-8560.



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BY MICHELLE KROCKER
AND JIM EDMONDSON

In the latest edition of The Herry Report, Springfield Supervisor Pat Herry proposed “redirecting developers’ \$3 per square foot contribution for buying rent-controlled housing units into a trust fund to pay for public school renovation and construction.”

The report proceeds to make several unsubstantiated claims regarding the number of people living in subsidized housing and the growth in both the number of subsidized units and number of households in Fairfax County. However as in the past, The Herry Report does not provide the full picture of the housing policy under discussion, and misrepresents the facts.

The Board of Supervisors adopted its housing policy in 2010 as a part of the larger plan

for the redevelopment of Tysons. It is now under consideration, at the request of the board, for application in other designated high density, transit and business centers in the rest of the county. Called the ‘3-2-1’ policy, the proposal by county staff would apply a contribution from commercial development to support the construction of workforce housing in the transit or business area, as it does in the Tysons plan. The contribution would be applied on a sliding scale based on a proposed development’s proximity to a transit station. This proposal will go before the Planning Commission and then the Board of Supervisors in the first quarter of 2014.

Why is this policy important?

❖ To accommodate projected job growth and remain competitive within the region, it is important to ensure housing opportunities for the workforce of the future at all income levels;

❖ Developing housing at transit stations and adjacent to employment centers encourages use of mass transit, walking and biking which can lead to fewer cars, and less congestion; it also enhances Metro revenue and reduces the pressure on local government to provide subsidies for the system;

❖ Linking commercial development (jobs) and housing via a linkage program is an acknowledged “best practice” in hundreds of communities across the country to ensure an

adequate supply of housing to support job growth.

❖ It recognizes the changing preferences of workers/taxpayers/voters, particularly young people, to live near where they work.

The proposed policy anticipates that the contributions will be made to a housing trust fund used by the county to leverage private sector financing to develop the needed housing.

The housing that is constructed will not be owned or purchased by the county. In fact, very little of the affordable housing in the county is owned by the government.

Securing decent housing that is affordable remains a challenge for Fairfax County households earning less than \$60,000.

Meeting the growing needs of our school system is also an important issue. Both education and safe, decent housing are fundamental to the well-being of our community, and residents want leadership that seeks to find workable solutions. Failing to recognize the importance of both and pitting one issue against the other are not the answers, and the citizens of Fairfax County deserve better from elected officials.

Michelle Krocker is executive director, Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance. Jim Edmondson is president of AHOME, which promotes affordable housing opportunities for families at all income levels.

GUEST
EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Parents Advocate for Class Size Caps

To the Editor:

On Saturday, Dec. 7, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Superintendent’s (Dr. Karen Garza) conducted a “Listening Tour” meeting at Cooper Middle School in McLean.

Many parents who spoke at the meeting were concerned about large class sizes in their children’s schools. This is not a problem in most FCPS schools - the average elementary school class in FCPS has only 21-22 students, and plenty of FCPS elementary schools average 20 or fewer students per class.

However, large class sizes have become the norm in Vienna, Oakton, McLean and Great Falls schools. Teachers unlucky enough to be assigned to the 30+ classes are often pushed to the limit in terms of what they can do to control classroom behavior and alleviate student stress. At Wolftrap Elementary, teachers have even created a “coping couch” for stressed kids to help them escape from the crowded, noisy and chaotic atmosphere that is so often inevitable with such excessively large classes.

The school system is looking at county-wide increases in average class sizes. Without some type of class size cap, this would create a situation where most of the county’s students had reasonable class sizes (e.g., 16 to 26 students), but even more students in the Vienna, Oakton, McLean and Great Falls would have more than 30 students in their rooms - which are no larger than the rooms being used to hold 17 or 22 students elsewhere in FCPS.



Karen Garza discusses class size at the Dec. 7 listening tour in McLean.

After seeing their children crammed into oversized classes for years, parents formed Class Size Counts last year. The group is working with State Delegate Barbara Comstock to address the class size issue at the state level, Supervisor Foust, several School Board members and Superintendent Garza at the county level. The Class Size Counts online petition, with over 1,000 signatures, asks that the Fairfax County school system not increase average class sizes without simultaneously implementing class size caps:

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stop-oversize-classes-in-fairfax-countyschool/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=system&utm_campaign=Send%2Bto%2BFriend.

At Cooper Middle School, Dr. Garza reassured parents and teachers in the room that she is working to fix this problem, by drafting an FCPS regulation that would impose class size caps.

Class Size Counts applauds Dr. Garza for taking a stand on implementing caps so that all children in FCPS can receive a decent and fair education.

Interestingly, the School Board member whose district includes many schools with the largest class sizes - Jane Strauss - also told parents at a Longfellow PTA meeting that she opposed a class size cap, and preferred to continue using the FCPS “staffing reserve.” Several years ago, parents submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for emails and other documents regarding the staffing reserve. The documents painted a picture of a slush fund with no apparent criteria or controls.

Kim Farrell

Mother of two FCPS students
Vienna

Write

Letters to the Editor
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NEWS

Supporting Special Operations Warriors

The girls from Great Falls visited Walter Reed last Wednesday. Girls in picture, from left, are: Saanvi Singireddy, Lizzie Holt, Oksana Vickers, and Maddie Holt. The four made wristbands and sold them at lunch and in the morning at their school, Forestville Elementary, last spring, where the Forestville children and teachers donated close to \$400 for the wounded soldiers. The girls are all now in middle school (Vickers and Holts at Kilmer, Singireddy at Cooper.) The girls hope to continue their fundraising in support of Special Operations warriors this year and encourage others to do the same.



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PUBLIC NOTICE
I-495 Northern Section
Shoulder Lane Use Project
Fairfax County

The proposed project would convert approximately 1.8 miles of the inside shoulder of I-495 northbound in Fairfax County into a travel lane during the morning and afternoon peak periods. Appropriate pavement markings, signing, and an overhead lane use management system will also be implemented to regulate the assigned shoulder use times. No additional right-of-way or easements are anticipated.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771, a Categorical Exclusion was prepared. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties is also included in the environmental document. The environmental document is now available for public review and comment on the project website, and at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office located at 4975 Alliance Drive Fairfax, Virginia, 22030. Please call ahead at 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623) or TTTY/TD 711 to ensure the availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions.

Submit your comments by January 6, 2014 to Mr. John C. Muse at the VDOT District Office address above or you may also e-mail comments to meeting_comments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "I-495 Shoulder Lane Use" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at the above phone number.

State Project: 0495-029-123, P101, C501
Federal Project: STP-495-5(094); UPC: 105130



Santa Claus made his annual visit to Colvin Run Mill this Saturday, Dec. 14. Nicole Vigna took the opportunity to tell Santa what she wanted for Christmas.

Christmas Celebrated At Colvin Run Mill

Santa and carolers visit historic park.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

At historic Colvin Run Mill Park Santa Claus made a visit to the miller's office from 3 to 6 p.m. Despite damp, overcast weather on Saturday, spirits stayed bright as visitors came by to see Santa and hear carolers from the Virginia 49th Infantry, participate in crafts, or join in a marshmallow roasting. Bill Vigna and his wife Debbi drove down to Colvin Run Mill Park with his three daughters from the city of Fairfax. "Coming over here to see Santa has become something of a tradition," said Vigna. Also on display at the mill was a Christmas tree trimmed with Victorian decorations.

"We have a great bunch of volunteers to help us with the crafts," said Pam Gennari, an employee of the Fairfax County Park Authority and resident of Ashburn. More than 40 volunteers and staff were on site to help with the day events, including Colvin Run Mill park's

manager. Park volunteer Jim Hogan, a resident of Centerville was also attending the event. "Myself and another volunteer often display simple mechanics of the park to visiting third graders on Fridays," said Hogan.

"We try to put on a wholesome show for the family," said Frank Henry, Manager of Colvin Run Mill Park. "We are quite pleased to be able to do this event again... It is nice to have kids see Santa at a place where you can imagine Santa working." Located near Virginia State Route 7, Colvin Run Mill in Great Falls is the sole surviving operational 19th-century water-powered mill in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and has a rustic charm.

"It is good wool weather," said re-enactor Tony Meadows with the Virginia 49th Infantry. "This event is designed to be fun, just a good time," said Meadows. The 49th Virginia Infantry is a family oriented Civil War living history and re-enactment organization based in Northern Virginia. The unit provides opportunities to present authentic impressions of soldier and civilian life during the American Civil War.

Throughout the year, Fairfax County Park Authority sponsors



Members of the Virginia 49th Infantry, a family-oriented Civil War living history and reenactment organization, returned to Colvin Run Mill to sing Christmas carols.

programs for all age groups at Colvin Run Mill, from maple syrup boil-downs to ice cream making and wood-carving.

On Saturdays, Dec. 21 and 28 and Sundays, Dec. 22 and 29 there

will be a holiday model train display at Colvin Run Mill barn.

No reservations required to see this free event, which will last from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Visitors can watch G-gauge trains

wend their way through a miniature western town in the Colvin Run Barn.

To learn more about Colvin Run Mill, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvinrunmill.



Volunteer Jim Hogan, Manager of Colvin Run Mill Park Frank Henry, and park volunteer Frank Boucher at Colvin Run Mill Park.

PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

FAITH NOTES

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

GriefShare, a weekly support group for adults grieving the death of a loved one, meets Sundays 6-7:30 p.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Part St., Vienna with a video/discussion format through Dec. 8. \$20 for workbook. GriefShare@viennapres.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.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org.

McLean Bible Church Fitness Class at Body & Soul Fitness. Gain balance, energy and strength at 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road in McLean, holds a third Sunday service every month at 10:15 a.m. which allows children to play active roles in the music and as greeters and ushers. Traditional services are every Sunday at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m.

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- Christmas music at 3:30 p.m.
- 7:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist
- Christmas music at 6:30 p.m.
- 10:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist
- Christmas music at 9:30 p.m.

December 25 – Christmas Day

- 10:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

Gingerbread House Decorating Class. 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Learn to make your own gingerbread house. \$70 per child, ages 2-12. Reservations required. 703-917-5498.

The Nutcracker Tea. 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Watch the ballet production of "The Nutcracker" while enjoying afternoon tea and treats. \$75 per person. Reservations required. 703-917-5498.

The Annual Rocknocoeros Holiday Singalong. 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. 227 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Admission: \$10. 703-255-1566

Winter Solstice Celebration. 4-5:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join us as we use music, meditation, and inspirational readings to individually connect to the energies of Mother Earth for peace and healing. As a group, we will also connect to sacred sites around the planet— where people are joining, every solstice and equinox, in Global Medicine Wheel Ceremonies, to bring love and harmony to our beautiful planet. After the ceremony, we will adjourn with drumming and flute playing for refreshments in our Atrium. www.UnityOfFairfax.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 21, 22, 28, & 29

Annual Train Display at Colvin Run Mill. Colvin Run Mill Barn, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Watch G-gauge trains wend their way

through a miniature western town in the Colvin Run Barn.

SUNDAY/DEC. 22

A Festival of Lessons & Carols. 9 a.m. & 11:15 a.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Lessons will be read by parishioners, seasonal anthems presented by the choirs, and carols sung by the congregation.

Gingerbread House Decorating Class. 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Learn to make your own gingerbread house. \$70 per child, ages 2-12. Reservations required. 703-917-5498.

The Princess Tea. 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Watch a theatrical production feature Disney princesses while enjoying afternoon tea and treats. \$75 per person. Children under 2 are free. Reservations required. 703-917-5498.

TUESDAY/DEC. 24

St. John's Episcopal Church Christmas Worship Services. 3:30 p.m. 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. 703-356-4902. This service is especially designed for families with young children.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 25

Christmas Day Brunch at Entyse Bistro. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean.

Celebrate the holiday with brunch. Enjoy live musical entertainment and special activities, including face painting and a balloon artist for the children. \$120 per adult; \$40 for children under 12. Reservations required. 703-917-5498.

TUESDAY/DEC. 31

New Year's Eve at Entyse Bistro. 5:30-10:30 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Ring in the New Year with a four-course tasting menu, champagne toast and live music. \$135 per person. Reservations required. 703-917-5498.

New Year's Eve Party. 7:30 p.m. Vienna's American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna. hris Polk Band: \$35 single, \$50 per couple, benefits Legion National Emergency Fund. Call 703-938-9535 for tickets.

First Night Vienna. 7 p.m. - 12 a.m. Church Street in Vienna. A family-friendly New Year's celebration. This celebration will feature local musicians, great food, exciting entertainment and hands-on activities for both children and adults.

7th Annual Rocknocoeros New Years Eve Party. 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Rocknocoeros (pronounced like rhinocoeros) is three guys: Coach Cotton, Williebob, and Boogie Woogie Bennie, who make wildly popular, award-winning music for the whole family. Admission: \$10. 703-255-1566

ENTERTAINMENT

Send announcements to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/sep/26/fairfax-county-calendar/>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m.; Viennese Waltz lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$15 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

FRIDAY/JAN. 31, 2014

THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/ JAN. 4

Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Waltz lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Mike Surratt & the ECB playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 1

Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Samba lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Mike Surratt & the ECB playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

Arts for Autism Gala. 6:30 p.m. Tower Club, 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, #1700, Vienna. An evening that brings together the arts, fashion and autism communities to benefit individuals and families affected by Autism. Festivities include a reception, dinner and silent auction. www.arts-for-autism.org

SATURDAY/ JAN. 18

Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Quick-Step lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$15 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 19

Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. 330 Center Street, N., Vienna. Adults \$8, children \$3. 703-938-1379.

FRIDAY/JAN. 24 & 25, 2014

THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and

SATURDAY/FEB. 1, 7, 8, 2014

THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 2 & 9, 2014

THIS. 2 p.m. Vienna Community Center,

120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Valentine's Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Tango lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$15 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 1

Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Merengue lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. . Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Helmut & Andre playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

ONGOING

Straight Ahead Jazz. 8 p.m., at the Maplewood Grill, 132 Branch Road, Vienna. Every Monday drummer Karl Anthony hosts a night of straight ahead jazz featuring guest musicians and open to sit-in musicians. www.maplewoodgrill.com.

Personalized ebook/e-Reader Instruction. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Learn about your e-reader and downloading eBooks; event continues through March 31st.

SPORTS

McLean Boys' Basketball Beats Langley in Overtime

Highlanders senior Sullivan leads all scorers with 17 points.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

McLean senior Joey Sullivan struggled to focus during a math quiz at school on Friday. Later that night, Sullivan, a captain on the school's boys' basketball team, suffered cramps in each of his calves after crashing into a wall behind the baseline.

At the end of the night, however, Sullivan and the Highlanders were able to celebrate a hard-fought victory on their rival's home court.

"It's all worth it," Sullivan said. "Definitely."

SULLIVAN SCORED a game-high 17 points, including a bucket that gave McLean a two-possession lead in overtime, and the Highlanders defeated Langley 45-36 at Langley High School.

The teams ended regulation tied at 32. After a Patrick Dolan free throw gave McLean a one-point lead with 2:30 left in overtime, Jack Ferguson extended the lead to three with a jumper before Sullivan's transition bucket increased the lead to five. Langley would get no closer the rest of the way.

"I don't think we should have school when we play Langley games," Sullivan said. "It was hard to focus today. I had to take a math quiz and it was hard to do that. Going into the game, all you do is just shake all day, at least for me."

Sullivan scored 10 of his 17 points in the second half and overtime.

"Joe's our leader from Day One," first-year McLean head coach Mike O'Brien said. "Joe's the heart of the team. He wears his heart on his sleeve, as you can see. He's a very emotional kid. Sometimes he can be a little too emotional, but I'll take that kind of kid 10 out of 10 times and I'll take a team full of them. He just plays with everything he has."

Ferguson finished with 13 points for the Highlanders.

McLean trailed 16-10 at halftime. A Sullivan bucket gave the Highlanders their first lead of the game with 30 seconds left in the third quarter, but Langley regained the lead when freshman guard Aaron Kim knocked down a 3-pointer in the closing seconds of the quarter.

Langley guard Christian Gaibler drilled his third 3-pointer of the game with 2:02 left in the fourth quarter, giving the Saxons a 32-28 lead. After a bucket by Sullivan and two McLean free throws tied the score at 32, Langley had a chance to win, but senior guard Ross Callaghan missed a jumper in the closing seconds of regulation.

"Ten points in the first half, that's hard to do in a varsity game," O'Brien said of McLean's offensive struggles. "Really, [with our performance in] the whole second half, I just thought we really carried that momentum from the second half into that overtime ..."

McLean improved to 2-2 under O'Brien, who coached the school's girls' basketball team last sea-



McLean senior Joey Sullivan scored a game-high 17 points against Langley on Friday night.

son.

"[This win] definitely is a momentum booster," O'Brien said. "This is a big game for the kids. No matter who wins this, whichever team, takes this with them. You can see that student body gets into it. It's a great atmosphere for high school kids to play in. It's kind of what you remember when you go off and you think back to your high school career. This is the kind of game they'll remember."

Langley fell to 0-4 under first-year head coach Scott Newman, who was an assistant with the program the previous four seasons.

"[McLean] made us uncomfortable. They played extremely hard," Newman said. "At the end of the day, we had the ball in our best player's hands, shooting a 15-foot pull-up, which is usually like a lay-up for him, with time expiring, so I'm disappointed with the outcome; but I'm happy with the way our guys played. They really competed, they were tough and now we owe [the Highlanders] one."

KIM LED THE SAXONS with 12 points, including seven in the first half.

"I thought he played great," Newman said. "He really didn't back away from the moment. It's hard to make shots and make plays in that environment. There are so many eyes on you, there's so much pressure, and especially for a freshman, to step up and take and make the shots that he made for us tonight was huge."

Callaghan and Gaibler each scored nine points for Langley.

McLean will compete in the Glory Days Tournament at Lake Braddock Dec. 26-28.

Langley will compete in the Mount Vernon holiday tournament Dec. 26-28.

"You've got to give them all the credit," Newman said. "Their kids competed extremely hard. Down the stretch when they needed a rebound or a loose ball, they had it and I think that was the difference in the game."



McLean senior Maia Lee finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds against Langley on Dec. 13.

McLean Girls Cruise to Victory

Highlanders pull away with 35-3 run against Langley.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

McLean senior Maia Lee stood outside the Langley High School gym on Friday night and discussed the experience of facing the rival Saxons.

"It's really fun," she said. "I live for these Langley games. When you beat them, it's like you made the whole week."

Playing in front of each school's loud and spirited student sections, a strong defensive effort by the Highlanders assured Lee's week was an enjoyable one.

The McLean girls' basketball team did not allow Langley to reach double digits on the scoreboard until more than two minutes had elapsed in the third quarter and the Highlanders cruised to a 46-27 victory on their rival's home floor. The win improved McLean's record to 4-0.

After falling behind 6-2 during the game's first two minutes, McLean embarked on a 35-3 run lasting into the third quarter. The Highlanders led by as many as 28 points, when a bucket by Lee gave McLean a 37-9 advantage.

EARLY IN THE SECOND HALF, McLean fans chanted "sin-gle dig-its," mocking the Saxons for their low point total. Langley junior Lauren Meyer's free throw with 5:35 left in the third quarter got the Saxons to 10 points.

McLean finished with 10 steals.

"Anytime you play in this environment, it's tough to manage

the emotion side of it and the basketball side of it," first-year McLean head coach Jen Sobota said. "Once we kind of had a few turnovers and then we settled down a little bit, we got into our flow and played the game we wanted to play."

Lee, a 6-foot-3 forward who signed with Old Dominion University, finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds. She scored all six of McLean's third-quarter points while showing her athleticism and rebounding skills.

"She has the ability to take over a game whenever she wants to and I think the girls look to her for that," Sobota said. "It's nice to have somebody that is able to do that."

Senior guard Cami Prock also scored 12 points for McLean, all of which came in the first half.

"From the tip to the last buzzer, she's just a fireball," Sobota said. "She never gives up, she's running around [and] leaves everything out on the court."

SOBOTA was an assistant for the Highlanders last season under head coach Mike O'Brien, who is now the head coach of the McLean boys' team. The Highlanders reached the district championship game, where they lost to Madison, 48-46. This year, the Highlanders have their sights set on a conference title.

McLean will compete in the Chantilly holiday tournament Dec. 26-28. Langley will compete in the KSA Events holiday tournament Dec. 27, 28 and 30 in Orlando.



Langley Orchestra Director Dr. Scott McCormick and Langley Russian Language teacher Dr. Valentin Cukierman welcome the audience to the Dec. 12 concert of Russian music.



Soprano violinist Maria McQuade performs a ballet solo to Tchaikovsky's "Overture to Swan Lake." From left: Maria McQuade, Alexandra Cramer, Grace Keffer

PHOTOS BY CHI PHAM

An Evening of Russian Culture at Langley High

Two of Langley High School's largest programs, Russian and Orchestra, collaborated to present a unique evening of Russian music on Dec. 12 in the Langley Auditorium. With a nod to Bing Crosby's best-selling holiday song, the concert "I'm

Dreaming ... of a Red Christmas" incorporated Russian language and poetry, Russian classical music, classical ballet, and Russian baked delicacies. The Philharmonic Orchestra opened the concert with a rousing rendition of Glinka's "Russlan and Ludmilla Overture." Violinist Maria McQuade per-

formed a ballet solo to the famous "Overture to Swan Lake," to great applause. The Philharmonic Orchestra's final selection was "Romeo and Juliet," by Prokofiev.

Performing with the Sophomore Orchestra, harpist Mary Duplantier mesmerized the audience with her solo in "Waltz of the

Flowers" by Tchaikovsky. "Russian Sailors' Dance" by Glier concluded the first half of the concert, which was under the baton of guest conductor Glenn Quader.

INTRODUCTIONS for all pieces were pre-
SEE CONCERT, PAGE 13

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Concert at Langley High

FROM PAGE 12

sented in Russian and English by students of Dr. Valentin Cukierman: Julia Pennington (Senior, Cello), Alex Blankinship (Senior, Principal Bass), Ben Parker (Senior, Clarinet), Tim Kostelancik (Senior, First Violin), Tiffani Najadifar (Junior, First Violin) and Aloysha Onufrak (Junior, Cello). Several of the aforementioned students recited traditional Russian poetry in its native language.

The Freshman Orchestra presented "Slava!" by Rimsky-Korsakov and "Five Ukrainians in a Bell Tower," a jazz chart that combined the well-known Dave Brubeck "Take Five" with a Christmas carol. The holiday spirit was further captured by the Symphonic Orchestra's performances of "Wenceslas Takes a Sleigh Ride" and "Mad Russian Christmas," an arrangement by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra of melodies from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker."

Thanks to the Onufrak family and friends, orchestra students and performers were treated to an authentic Russian banquet preceding the concert. As audience members entered the lobby, they were greeted with a hospitality table laden with an assortment of Russian baked goods, courtesy of Julie



Guest Conductor Glenn Quader leads the Symphonic Orchestra.

Hohl and Lien-Rung Kao.

Theron Masters, Lyric Yu, and Alex Lim performed Rachmaninoff's "Valse," a unique piece for piano, six hands. Pianist Bryan Huynh gave a beautiful performance of "June" from Tchaikovsky's "The Seasons." Later, Bryan said, "I thought it was awesome how we were able to connect with the Russian culture and see how we can incorporate Russian into our own." The final piano interlude showcased the talents of Lyric Yu and Emma Guo, who played Stravinsky's "Danse Russe."

The full house included many Russian language students, former orchestra students and families, relatives of performers, and members of the local community. Students had rave reviews about the concert.

"The Russian concert embodied several aspects of Russian culture - from the banquet to the ballet performance by Maria McQuade - that perfectly complemented the music selection," said junior Sara Zahir. A guest from the Embassy of the Russian Federation, Bilateral Section, commented that he was impressed with the ballerina, mu-



Musical selections were introduced in Russian and English. From left — Ben Parker, clarinetist and Tim Kostelancik, first violinist.

sic, language and poetry.

IN THE AUDIENCE was a 94-year-old retired Navy pilot who worked in Navy Intelligence at the Moscow Embassy in the 1950s. People sitting next to him were thrilled when he shared his 1952 program from the Bolshoi Ballet's performance of "Romeo and Juliet," and showed his photograph of one of the greatest ballerinas of the 20th century, Maya Plisetskaya.

As Russian language student junior Lizzy Forward explained to a friend after the concert, part of the Russian language program in-

cludes singing songs and reading poetry. She said, "the concert was truly unique and fun because it integrated music with traditional Russian poetry and amazing dancing, which made you appreciate the music more."

The Langley HS Orchestra wishes to thank their sponsors, local businesses, and families for contributing to the successful Silent Auction, which was held during the intermission. The next Langley HS Orchestra Concert will be held in the Langley Auditorium on Thursday, March 13, at 7 p.m.

— SUSAN SEVILLA

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Backwards Thinking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Considering that I've been cancer-centric now for nearly five years, one would have thought I might have learned and totally embraced an alternative concept: forward living – and less thinking about past causes and their possible current effects. Certainly cancer causes physical manifestations and symptoms that are diagnosable and indicative of trouble. But it's the unseen effects that in some cases cause as many difficulties. What I am referring to is the mental and emotional toll a terminal diagnosis and short term prognosis can have on the patient's perspective on life and living, and what's presumptively thought to be left of it.

And in my experience now as a comparatively long-term survivor – five years come February 27, of stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), backwards thinking, as in why me, as in woe is me, has generally not been characteristic of my daily grind. Sure, I've made changes to my pre-cancer Kenny regimen of poor diet and above-average stress, and have regularly compared and contrasted my past with my present/future. However, much of this has been ongoing. I've never felt as if I've dwelled on any of it. Focused maybe, but not so much as a negative, more as a positive, as in changes which needed to be made – or else. Moreover, to learn the error of my ways and try to parlay any new found knowledge into a future that initially, according to my oncologist's original prognosis: "13 months to two years", was hardly guaranteed.

In spite of it all, I have lived – and learned and accepted that my new reality is somewhat different than it once was: somewhere between tenuous and temporary. Still, thinking about the past can only do so much good when contemplating a future that has been snatched away somewhat (somewhat? quite, actually) unexpectedly at 54 and one half. If I want to have a future, thinking and living as if I have one is more agreeable and more rewarding – and much less stressful than thinking I don't. And constantly reviewing, assessing, and connecting with the horse on which I rode in, as informative as it may be in helping to understand and appreciate the medical predicament in which I find myself so immersed, might actually be causing more harm – emotionally, than I'm willing to admit. I can't change the past, so living with it on a daily basis when I have a present and a future to consider might be shackling me in some emotional way that is preventing me from maintaining the positive and optimistic attitude so crucial in defending myself against the insidious disease inside my lungs.

Not that I'm suggesting that I can talk/think these malignant tumors ("metastatic to the lung") to cease and desist, but spending mental time on what has already occurred, instead of what possibly could be, seems counterproductive, maybe even harmful. Trouble has already found me; I don't need to encourage it. And after all these years, I should know better. I do know better. Nevertheless, as the content of this column clearly indicates, I am still under siege. I am still trying to balance the challenges of living with a future while being mindful of a past and understanding that some emotions I can't control. Cancer is funny like that, but it's no laughing matter. Even so, I did think the subject was fodder for a column – or maybe I'm just indulging myself at your expense. If it's the latter more so than the former, I appreciate your patience. I probably need it.

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

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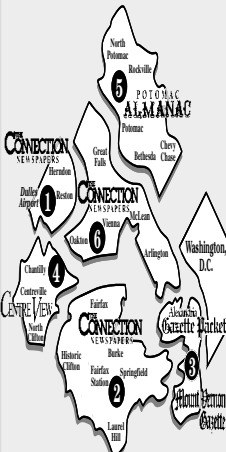
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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Left to right: Sanjana Meduri, Siona Prasad, Zach Wang, Aaraj Vij, Vishnu Murthy, and Alex Tisseront

Local Lego Team Wins Grand Champions Award

A local, Great Falls-based, FIRST LEGO League Team Positive Aftermath won the 1st Place Grand Champions Award at the VADC Championship Tournament held at James Madison University, Harrisonburg on Dec. 7-8, 2013. The team members Aaraj Vij, Alex Tisseront, Sanjana Meduri, Siona Prasad, Vishnu Murthy, and Zach Wang received the Grand Champions trophy and medallions to commemorate their achievement. They also earned the opportunity to participate in the FLL World Festival, to be held in conjunction with the FIRST Championship, April 23-26, 2014 at the America's Center and Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Mo.

In early fall every year, FLL releases a Challenge, which is based on a real-world scientific topic. This year's challenge, Nature's Fury focuses on devising innovative solutions to keep people and property safe before, during, and after a natural disaster. Each Challenge has three parts: the Robot Game, the Project and the FLL Core Values. Teams participate in the Challenge by programming an autonomous robot to score points on a themed playing field (Robot Game), developing a solution to a problem they have identified (Project), all guided by the FLL Core Values. Children work alongside adult mentors to design, build, and program autonomous robots using LEGO MINDSTORMS technologies and create an innovative solution to a problem as part of their research project. After eight intense weeks, the competition season cul-

minates at high-energy, sports-like tournaments. Like any other organized "sport," teams also fund raise, create a team identity, and go on field trips.

This season, Team Positive Aftermath studied hurricanes and focused on the problem of access to clean drinking water for families in the days following a hurricane. They were inspired by stories from family and friends who lived through hurricanes and set their goal on finding a feasible solution. For their innovative solution, they devised a portable and energy efficient water purifier to filter out contaminants commonly found in hurricane water. To accomplish their goal they interacted with many professionals in the related fields and incorporated feedback of scientists from USA and India. The team also organized a Typhoon Haiyan Emergency Fund fundraiser in which all FLL teams and the community members could participate in order to help victims of Typhoon Haiyan. Among other needs, families in the Philippines desperately need access to clean water. Team Positive Aftermath has raised over \$1000 so far, and anyone can still donate at the following website: www.gofundme.com/Positive-Aftermath

FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is an international program for 9 to 16 year-old children created in 1998 to get children excited about science and technology – and teach them valuable employment and life skills.

Official FIRST website: <http://www.usfirst.org>

Volunteer Opportunities

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in assisted living and nursing facilities throughout the area. Volunteers can work in facilities close to where they live. Training is provided in March 2014.

Call 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Find more information on becoming a long-term care ombudsman volunteer at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/vol_ombud_program.htm.

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