

McLean  
**CONNECTION**

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PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE CONNECTION

## Langley Comes Together in Wake of Tragedy

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## Mental Health Crisis

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Elizabeth McCune, a McLean High student of botany, welcomes Scouts to the Apothecary Shop and begins a discussion on how coffee in the 18th century became America's most popular drink after the Boston Tea Party.



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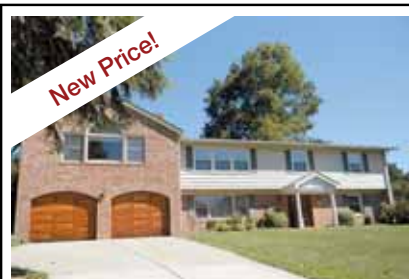
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## Langley High Community Comes Together in Wake of Tragedy

Residents, teachers and students join together in the days following the deaths of two Langley seniors.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County came together to support Langley High students and their families following the deaths of two 17-year old Langley seniors on Feb. 3 and 4.

Compassionate messages arrived from Fairfax County school administrators, churches, and fellow students at other schools in the days following the discoveries of both students' bodies. Both deaths were suspected to be suicides.

Langley High School Principal Matt Ragone issued a statement in a letter to Langley families. "Thank you to everyone who has expressed their genuine concern and for your support of Langley High School," said Ragone in a letter. "I realize that at times like this, answers are in short supply. However, it is important that we continue to be there for one another during this difficult time."

Peers placed items commemorating the lives of both students on a memorial in front of the school. The memorial grew day by day, and fellow Saxons gathered there to pay their respects.

The community assembled at Langley High School on the evening of Friday, Feb. 7, in a candlelight vigil. "I really hope that their parents show up so we can pay our respects to them," said one Langley junior. Another student estimated that about 600 people attended the evening ceremony.

Area churches and other Fairfax County schools such as Oakton, Chantilly, and James Madison high schools showed their support via social media, sharing the #SaxonStrong hashtag and telling class-



PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

**A memorial filled with items commemorating both students' lives grew each day in front of the high school.**



PHOTO BY HARRIS LATTEEF/JUNIOR, LANGLEY HIGH

**Hundreds filled the stands to pay tribute to both students.**

mates to wear black that Friday. McLean Bible Church and Saint Luke Catholic Church both offered services dedicated to the students on Wednesday, Feb. 5.

School Board Representative Janie Strauss (Dranesville) said that tragic events like this remind students and their families to show compassion and understanding toward one another. "Those little civilities with strangers and people you know may be that one piece of sunshine that person needed that day," said Strauss. "We have an emphasis with children in our schools to support and help each other always, whether it's character education or positive behavior support programs."

**"These times are all about remembering that all people need help, love and support."**

— Janie Strauss,  
Dranesville District  
School Board Representative

Fairfax County Public Schools crisis intervention teams arrived at Langley High School shortly after. Dr. Kim Dockery, assistant superintendent for FCPS Special Services, said that the team consists of social workers, psychologists, and counselors from schools all over the county who are there to talk with any students and staff who seek their help. Dockery said that the teams remain there "for as long as the school needs them."

Strauss said that in the coming weeks, the county will continue to encircle students with support from counselors and social services resources. "These times are all about remembering that all people need help, love and support. It's hard to know sometimes when people are in crisis," said Strauss.

### Warning Signs of Suicide

- ❖ Talking about wanting to die
- ❖ Looking for a way to kill oneself
- ❖ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- ❖ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- ❖ Talking about being a burden to others
- ❖ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- ❖ Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
- ❖ Sleeping too little or too much
- ❖ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- ❖ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- ❖ Displaying extreme mood swings

— COURTESY OF  
REPORTINGONSUICIDE.ORG.

### What To Do?

If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- ❖ Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- ❖ Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- ❖ Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- ❖ Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.

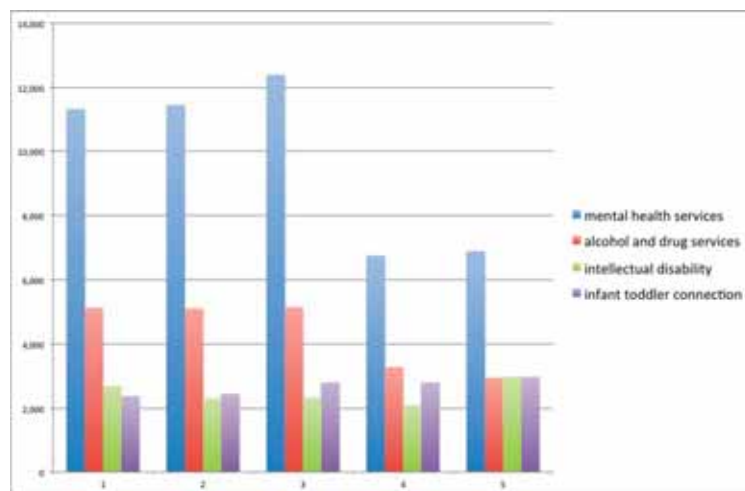
- ❖ Don't dare him or her to do it.
- ❖ Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- ❖ Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- ❖ Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- ❖ Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- ❖ Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

TIPS COURTESY OF NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION  
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## THE COUNTY LINE

**“We’ve had to become a very lean machine.”**

— Jane Woods,  
vice chairwoman,  
Fairfax County Community Services Boards



SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

# Mental Health Crisis

**Fewer people are receiving community services across Northern Virginia.**

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

Virginia is in the midst of a mental health crisis.

Even as lawmakers in Richmond debate the best way to deal with a crumbling system of public services for some of its most vulnerable residents, community services boards across Northern Virginia are offering services to fewer and fewer residents. Since the global economic crisis began gripping local governments in 2009, the number of people receiving services from community services boards has dropped. Nowhere is the decline more jarring than Fairfax County, the largest jurisdiction in Virginia.

The statistics, outlined in the county’s most recent comprehensive annual financial report, are dramatic. Since 2009, the number of people receiving mental health services in Fairfax County has declined by 39 percent. Alcohol and drug service have dropped 43 percent. Services for those with intellectual disability have declined 39 percent. Arlington and Alexandria have managed to keep their numbers steady, which makes Fairfax an outlier in the region.

“We’ve had to become a very lean machine,” said Jane Woods, vice chairwoman of the Fairfax County Community Services Boards. “Things had to be done more creatively, and services have been somewhat cut for those who have another funding source even though it might not be quite as robust as what the county would have done in prior years when money was much more available.”

The number of people who receive mental health services has also gone down in Arlington, although not nearly as dramatically. According to county statistics, the number of people who receive mental health services has declined by 6 percent. The number of people who receive substance abuse services has decreased by 13 percent, although the number of people who receive services for intellectual disabilities has increased 17 percent.

“People with severe mental illness are the least able to afford services, and they are in most need of them,” said Ann Wroth, a member of the Arlington Community Services Board. “But there isn’t as much money coming from any place for people to receive mental

health services.”

Alexandria is the only local government that has actually increased services offered through its community services board since the Great Recession. According to statistics provided by city officials, the number of people who receive mental health services actually increased 7 percent since 2009, and the number of people with intellectual disabilities has increased 6 percent in that time. And even though the number of people who receive drug and alcohol services has declined by 38 percent, city officials say the decline represents a change to how the numbers are reported. Since 2010, they say, the number no longer includes individuals who receive “limited” services, which are now considered outside the program area.

“The state of Virginia never funded very well to begin with, which is why we rank 47th,” said Mary Anne Weber, former chairwoman of the Alexandria Community Services Board. “And the local governments have to make up the difference.”

**FAIRFAX COUNTY** officials say a number of factors have contributed to the steep decline in recent years. One is methodological. Fairfax County leaders say people who receive emergency mental health services are no longer counted in the statistics, which may explain some of the decline in the count of those who receive mental health services.

“We have reorganized,” said Laura Yager, director of the partnerships and resources development. “We are trying to make our data more accurate.”

A more immediate explanation for the decline is financial. As state leaders struggled to balance the books during a time of declining revenues, funding for community services boards across Virginia were some of the first to take a hit. People who are the most vulnerable and least able to help themselves are facing the new economic reality with fewer services, especially in places like Fairfax County. Unlike Arlington and Alexandria, Fairfax land values are less recession proof.

“The impact of the recession was felt for a shorter period of time, particularly in the commercial sector, in those two jurisdictions than in Fairfax,” said Woods. “And that shows.”

Shortly after the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007, a commission recommended that more than \$40 million in additional spending be added to the mental-health budget every year. Legislators took a first step by adding about \$30 million to the annual budget the first year, but then the economic downturn tight-

SEE MENTAL HEALTH, PAGE 7

## Representing Students on School Board

**Harris LaTeef named student representative to Fairfax County School Board.**

Harris LaTeef, a junior at Langley High School, has been elected by the countywide Student Advisory Council (SAC) to serve a one-year term as student representative to the Fairfax County School Board, beginning July 1. LaTeef will participate in School Board meetings as a nonvoting member, filling the position currently held by Will Ashe, a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. LaTeef will be the 44th student representative to the School Board.

LaTeef said he sought the job as student representative because, as a young FCPS student, he saw “firsthand what one student can accomplish” when he takes the initiative. When he was a third grade student at Colvin Run Elementary School, he started a petition to nominate his bus driver, Nancy Gunderman, as Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Support Employee of the Year. Gunderman’s knack of making the rides to and from school “an exciting learning experience through her use of games, prizes, and even the occasional in-bus movie” made her the ideal candidate for the award. When she was named a finalist, then-principal Sandra Furick was asked to speak about Gunderman to the FCPS Leadership Team, but Furick asked LaTeef to speak instead. Gunderman was named the 2006 Support Employee of the Year, the first bus driver to receive the award. LaTeef accompanied her to a School Board meeting, where she received her award, and was able to meet Board members and then-Superintendent Jack D. Dale.

LaTeef cited three issues as being critical for FCPS students: reducing any negative effects of budget cuts on students; amending high school start



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Langley High School Junior and 2014-2015 Student Representative Elect Harris LaTeef (right) with FCPS School Board Member Ryan McElveen.**

times; and ensuring that any changes to the district’s disciplinary policy is “just, yet firm when addressing serious infractions.”

At Langley, LaTeef is co-chairman of the Relay for Life fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, which has a personal connection for him. He manages and organizes meetings for the 40-member committee, helps publicize events, and incorporates student suggestions into the program. LaTeef also serves as director of public relations for The Saxon Scope, Langley High’s newsmagazine and website; is on the student advisory team of the Newseum; and volunteers at the Reston Hospital Center maternity and surgical waiting wing. He has taken honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses and is currently enrolled in AP Microeconomics and AP Macroeconomics, AP U.S. History, A.P. English Language and Composition, physics, probability and statistics, Latin, and journalism. As a senior, he plans to take AP U.S. and Comparative Government, AP English Literature and Composition, human anatomy, pre-calculus, Latin, journalism, and ceramics.



## **John Foust Underfunded Fairfax Schools... Now he wants a promotion to Congress?**

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## NEWS

# McLean Chamber Inducts New Board at Winter Gala

Chamber members met Feb. 6 at the Gannett Building in Tysons Corner for the annual Winter Gala.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD  
THE CONNECTION

**H**undreds of McLean business leaders attended the 2014 Winter Gala on Feb. 8 for the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce to celebrate a successful year and install the chamber's 2014-15 board of directors. Nearly all of the 14-member board returned from serving the previous year.

"Being part of the Chamber board really helps to improve visibility for business, and it's a great way to give back to the community," said second-year board member Gita Bhandari of M&T Bank before the installation ceremony.

Chamber members also gathered at the Gannett Building in Tysons Corner to celebrate a successful year. Chairman of the Board John Brough, representing Chain Bridge Bank, congratulated the chamber for bringing in seven new member businesses,



**John Brough, CEO of Chain Bridge Bank (left), with keynote speaker Gordon Reid and GMCC President Marcia Twomey.**

expanding professional development education programs, and partnering with the Small Business Alliance and Vienna Busi-

SEE CHAMBER, PAGE 9

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PHOTO BY LAURA SHERIDAN/WOMAN'S CLUB

**Bill DuBose and Robin Walker, representatives of the McLean Project for the Arts.**

## McLean Woman's Club Donates \$1,500 to McLean Project for the Arts

At its monthly meeting on Feb. 4, The Woman's Club of McLean presented its annual donation of \$1,500 to the McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) through the project's representatives Bill DuBose and Robin Walker, who expressed their gratitude for the

contribution. The club also sponsors and supports MPA's exhibits of children's art at the McLean Community Center. The donation is one of many that the club plans to make this year with funds obtained from its annual Holiday Homes Tour.

## Mental Health Services Decline in Fairfax County

FROM PAGE 4

ened spending. Funding levels fell down to where they were before the massacre. In the last two years, some funding has been added back. But the commission's financial recommendation remains unfulfilled.

"What we have to do is to make sure that we are providing as comprehensive a set of services as we can to help people with mental illness stabilize themselves," said state Sen. George Barker (D-39). "We need to help them get on the road to recovery so they can manage their situation as best as they can and hopefully never get to that crisis."

Now the issue has taken a new sense of immediacy. Late last year, state Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25) was stabbed in the face by his son, who later committed suicide. Although the senator was able to get an emergency custody order for his son, it expired before a psychiatric bed could be located the rural western part of the state. That tragedy has prompted a new discussion about mental health in Virginia, one that will culminate at the end of the General Assembly session when lawmakers put the final touches on the budget.

"I certainly can't believe that the need is less," said Weber. "Not when we see the statistics about suicides in the military for example."



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# OPINION

## On Mental Health

### Why are localities providing so much less for people who need mental health services?

While the General Assembly is making progress in fixing some of the egregious shortcomings of the way Virginia provides emergency services to people in mental health crisis, many fewer people are receiving mental health services in Northern Virginia.

State Sen. Creigh Deeds' son died of suicide late last year after the limitations in both the law and local communication resulted in him being released while still in the midst of crisis.

Deeds reports the progress on the bill that has passed the State Senate: "The omnibus bill will require subjects be held up to 24 hours under an emergency custody order, create a database of available psychiatric beds, and ensure people in need of hospitalization cannot be 'streeted' by establishing state hospitals as providers of last resort."

These are important steps.

Services to people with mental illness are provided on the local level by community services boards, and in Fairfax County in particular, those services have been dramatically cut back.

Reporter Michael Pope reports this week that since 2009, the number of people receiving mental health services in Fairfax County has declined by 39 percent. Alcohol and drug service have dropped 43 percent. Services for those with intellectual disability have declined 39 percent.

Officials quoted cite the recession and declining property tax revenues in explaining the reductions, along with some changes in the way services are counted.

#### EDITORIAL

No matter how services are counted, there is no question that they have been reduced significantly during a recession, a time when research shows the need for mental health services and alcohol and drug services actually increases.

In Arlington, the number of people who receive mental health services has declined by 6 percent. The number of people who receive substance abuse services has decreased by 13 percent.

"Stresses associated with rising unemployment, poverty and social insecurity will lead to upward trends in many national suicide rates, as well as to less readily charted increases in the prevalence of psychiatric illness, alcohol-related disorders and illicit drug use," according to a 2011 overview study on economic recession and mental health cited by the National Institutes of Health. "At the same time, mental health services are being cut back as part of government austerity programs. Budget cuts will thus affect psychiatric services adversely just when economic stressors are raising the levels of need and demand in affected populations."

As for blaming the budget, it's hard to see from raw numbers why the most vulnerable should be suffering.

In 2009, before the effects of the recession, Fairfax County's budget expenditures were \$5.36 billion.

The adopted 2014 budget calls for expenditures of \$6.75 billion.

"Proactive fiscal and social policies could, however, help to mitigate the health consequences of recession," the overview study reports. "Economic mental health care could best be achieved, not by decimating services but by planning and deploying these to meet the needs of defined area populations."

Elected officials and others in county government who have signed off on a set of priorities that punishes the most vulnerable populations have some moral accounting to do.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Supporting Lifesaving Standards

To the Editor:

My neighborhood is a great place to go for a jog – it's close to the W&OD Trail and the pedestrian-friendly Mosaic District. It's also sandwiched between two major highways and crisscrossed by perpetually busy surface streets. I appreciate that it's accessible, of course, but I also know that running outside exposes me to dangerous pollution from vehicles.

Emissions from cars and trucks contribute to soot and smog, which can cause asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, COPD exacerbations, and even premature death.

I have asthma, so on days with unhealthy air quality, I stick to the treadmill. But even on days when the overall air pollution levels are acceptable, people near major roadways are still breathing in unhealthy emissions.

Thankfully, there are new measures in the pipeline that would cost-effectively cut down on vehicle pollution. EPA proposed standards to clean up our gasoline and vehicle emissions that could prevent 2,500 lives per year by 2030. They've garnered the support of public health groups, environmental organizations, and automakers. And now, Congressman Connolly, and 40 other members of the House of

Representatives, are calling on EPA to finalize these standards as soon as possible.

I'm glad my congressman is standing up for our health by supporting these lifesaving standards.

**Laura Kate Bender**  
Vienna

The writer is Coordinator for Virginia Healthy Air Coalition, American Lung Association.

### Cruel and Barbaric

To the Editor:

Social Action Linking Together (SALT) is in full support of Virginia Delegate Scott Surovell in his opposition to Virginia embracing the electric chair to execute condemned prisoners. The point that should be made is that it is inhumane; it is cruel and barbaric.

Consider this account reported in a study by Professor Michael L. Radelet of the (University of Colorado): On August 10, 1982, in Virginia, Frank J. Coppola was executed by electrocution. Although no media representatives witnessed the execution and no details were ever released by the Virginia Department of Corrections,

an attorney who was present later stated that it took two 55-second jolts of electricity to kill Coppola. The second jolt produced the odor and sizzling sound of burning flesh, and Coppola's head and leg caught on fire. Smoke filled the death chamber from floor to ceiling with a smoky haze (<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/some-examples-post-furman-botched-executions>).

This account by Radelet is #1 in 42 additional stories of botched executions that he recounts. We can certainly do better than this, unless we want to align ourselves with the cruel and barbaric.

A more critical issue for all of us

is this: Do the guilty forfeit their right to life? Is execution the means of administering justice for various crimes?

### Supporting Safe Hunting

To the Editor:

The bill before the State Senate to allow hunting on Sundays applies only to private property and will not impinge on anyone's enjoyment of public lands. Most of us only get the weekends off of work and it is silly to prevent landowners from hunting on their own property during half of their free time. Hunting brings numerous economic and environmental ben-

efits to all Virginians and I encourage the editors and readers to view the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries list at: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting/benefits/>

The safe practice of hunting should be supported rather than discouraged.

**Christopher Yurasko**  
Burke

McLean  
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**Kemal Kurspahic**  
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414  
[kemal@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kemal@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Amna Rehmatulla**  
Editorial Assistant  
703-778-9410 ext. 427  
[arehmatulla@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:arehmatulla@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Victoria Ross**  
County Reporter ♦ 301-502-6027  
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**Editor & Publisher**  
Mary Kimm  
703-778-9433  
[@MaryKimm](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Executive Vice President**  
Jerry Vernon  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

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Steven Mauren  
**Managing Editor**  
Kemal Kurspahic  
**Photography:**  
Deb Cobb, Craig Sterbutzel  
**Art/Design:**  
Laurence Foong, John Heinly  
**Production Manager:**  
Geovani Flores

**Special Assistant to the Publisher**  
Jeanne Theismann  
703-778-9436  
[@TheismannMedia](mailto:jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com)

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# Chamber's Board Installed

ness Alliance in 2013 events.

Former Redskins linebacker and four-time Pro Bowl selection Ken Harvey served as emcee for the gala, drawing laughs from the crowd while moving the evening along and introducing speakers. Gordon Reid, President of Giant's mid-Atlantic Landover division, delivered the keynote address for the theme "Leading Change Outside the Box."

Reid touched upon his experience working in Thailand, China and countries across Europe with colleagues who spoke different languages and did not share the same traditions, yet communicated well as business partners. “I recognized that there were others whose jobs and lives were very different, but shared the same passions and ambitions as myself, to feed their families and educate their kids,” said Reid. He encouraged McLean’s business community to cross cultural barriers with colleagues.

Chairman John Brough also discussed the year ahead. “McLean will be undergoing an unprecedented amount of change and growth over the next few years with the Metro coming and big developments projects. It’s our responsibility as business leaders to champion the interests of the business community and citizens of McLean.”

The chamber's next major event will be the Women's Leadership Forum on Tuesday, April 29, a networking and women's leadership education event at Capitol One Headquarters in Tysons Corner.

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# Local REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**4 913 Douglass Drive, McLean — \$2,775,000**



## November and December, 2013 Top Sales in Great Falls and McLean

**5 1744 Dumbarton Street, McLean — \$2,100,000**



**6 502 River Bend Road, Great Falls — \$2,075,000**

**11 1615 Fielding Lewis Way, McLean — \$1,550,000**



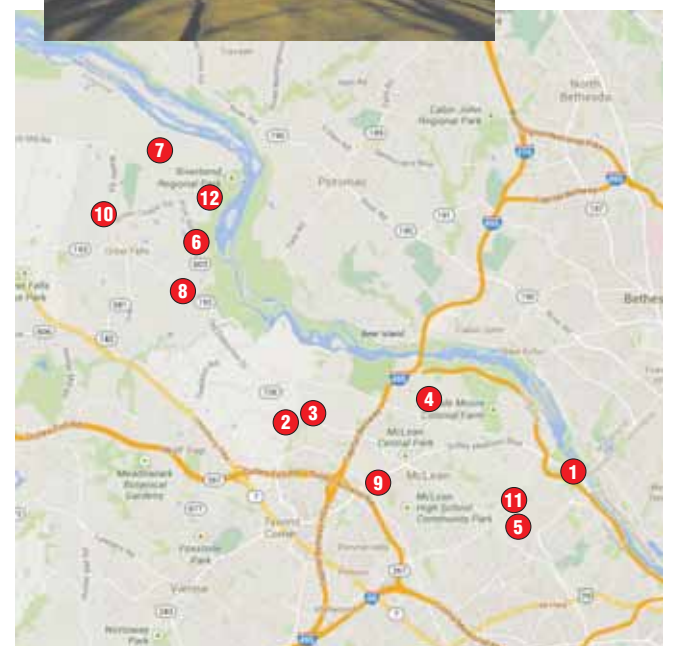
**10 10190 Akhyamar Drive, Great Falls — \$1,650,000**



**12 9054 Jeffery Road, Great Falls — \$1,400,000**

Address	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City	Sold Price	Type	Lot AC	PostalCode	Subdivision	Date Sold
1 624 CHAIN BRIDGE RD	6	6	4	.....	MCLEAN	\$12,000,000	Detached	3.22	.....	CHAIN BRIDGE	12/03/13
2 8120 SPRING HILL FARM DR	4	5	2	.....	MCLEAN	\$3,475,000	Detached	0.83	.....	SPRING HILL FARM	12/27/13
3 8107 SPRING HILL FARM DR	5	5	1	.....	MCLEAN	\$3,125,000	Detached	0.94	.....	SPRING HILL FARM	12/18/13
4 913 DOUGLASS DR	5	5	2	.....	MCLEAN	\$2,775,000	Detached	0.79	.....	LANGLEY FOREST	11/14/13
5 1744 DUMBARTON ST	5	5	2	.....	MCLEAN	\$2,100,000	Detached	0.34	.....	WRENNWOOD	11/20/13
6 502 RIVER BEND RD	5	5	3	.....	GREAT FALLS	\$2,075,000	Detached	4.00	.....	JOAN F G. PROPERTY	11/27/13
7 211 CARRWOOD RD	6	5	2	.....	GREAT FALLS	\$2,000,000	Detached	6.51	.....	CARRWOOD ESTATES	12/27/13
8 809 WINCREST PL	6	6	2	.....	GREAT FALLS	\$2,000,000	Detached	2.13	.....	THISTLE HILL	12/03/13
9 1421 HARVEST CROSSING DR	4	5	1	.....	MCLEAN	\$1,950,000	Townhouse	0.09	.....	EVANS FARM	11/25/13
10 10190 AKHTAMAR DR	4	4	1	.....	GREAT FALLS	\$1,650,000	Detached	3.17	.....	NONE	11/22/13
11 1615 FIELDING LEWIS WAY	5	5	1	.....	MCLEAN	\$1,550,000	Detached	0.31	.....	CHESTERBROOK FARM	11/04/13
12 9054 JEFFERY RD	5	5	2	.....	GREAT FALLS	\$1,400,000	Detached	0.57	.....	CRAMPTON	11/15/13

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© Google Map data



# Home LifeStyle

## Home Design: What the Pros Know

A look inside the homes of some of the area's top builders.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**R**emodeling industry professionals spend their days helping clients create dream homes, adding quartzite counter tops and outdoor, stacked stone fireplaces, turning ideas and photos into functional, chic living spaces.

But what about their homes? What materials do they choose for themselves? How do they make the most of their living spaces? Three local professionals from BOWA Builders, Inc. opened their doors and shared the secrets of their renovations.

When principal and owner George Hodges-Fulton and his wife, Alexandra, decided to remodel the galley kitchen in their Reston home, they decided to expand and change the flow of traffic, keeping the safety of their 6- and 10-year-old daughters in mind.

"We wanted to open the house up more," said George. "We took out a wall between kitchen and the dining room."

Alexandra, a serious cook, added, "The sink and the stove were across from each other. Now the sink and the stove are next to each other, so I don't have to walk across the kitchen carrying hot pasta."

Plus, the new farmhouse sink is custom-made from honed granite. "I originally wanted soapstone, but over time that can scratch," Alexandra said.

The new kitchen also includes additional counter space. "I have more prep space," she said. "And everything I need is within arm's reach."

When it came to choosing finishes, "everything came from wanting to work with the [existing maple] floor," said George. "We wanted to choose classic colors that weren't going to go out of style."

"I spent a huge amount of time looking at pictures of kitchens," said Alexandra. "We added white Carrara marble countertops. ... We added a marble backsplash in a black, white and grey circular mosaic. That's the thing that everybody comments on when they

come into the kitchen."

The project took a mere five weeks to complete. "Everything happened perfectly," added George. "Having on-site supervision and knowing the end goal helped."

George says that having undergone his own renovation project, he now has additional insight when advising clients. "It makes a significant difference," he said. "We can say 'In my house I did this.' or 'I did this wrong in my house, so you might consider this.'"

When principal and owner Steve Kirstein first moved into his Potomac, Md., home with his wife and three children, he spotted several missed design opportunities. "We needed some of the spaces to do different things," said Kirstein. "We wanted a family gathering

space and a display space upstairs."

The home had a two-story foyer, which Kirstein saw as the perfect location for a second floor family room. He added "flooring, sheetrock walls, built-in bookcases and display cases. Now it's a gathering space for the family upstairs and we still have a dramatic foyer downstairs."

Next, Kirstein turned what he called, "a big wasted space" adjacent to the garage into a mudroom. "We put a cubby and drawer for each child and a bench for taking off shoes. We added a half wall across from the cubbies so you can't see all of the cleats and lacrosse sticks all over the floor. We also added a powder room."

Kirstein also transformed his

SEE PROS, PAGE 19



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOWA BUILDERS, INC./GETTY IMAGES

**View from the interior of BOWA founder Josh Baker's Great Falls home. Casual entertaining spaces include the open first floor and pool.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOWA BUILDERS, INC.

**The recently remodeled kitchen of building professional George and Alexandra Hodges-Fulton. Their Reston home includes classic colors and a peninsula where the family eats breakfast.**

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## Great Falls Travel Soccer Tryouts

Great Falls Soccer Club, is looking to strengthen their Boys U13 ODSL Travel Team for the Spring 2013 Season. We are focused on maximizing player development with an emphasis on building players core technical skills and their decision making abilities.

**Scholarships are available for committed U13 players born after 08/01/00 who want to take their game to the next level!**

*Training sessions are normally held on three (3x) a week in the Great Falls/Reston area.*



If you are interested, have questions or would like to register for tryouts, please email the Team Manager at **GFSCTRYOUTS@LIVE.COM**



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## Be Part of The Pet Connection in February

Send Your Photos & Stories Now to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com)

or complete our online form at [mcleanconnection.com](http://mcleanconnection.com)

Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, and identify all people and pets in photos. Submission deadline is February 20.

## CALENDAR

Send announcements to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 12- FRIDAY/FEB. 28

**Fine Arts Photography Exhibition.** Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls artist Richard Suib depicts many scenes from Venice, Florence, Slovenia, and Russia.

### THURSDAY/FEB. 13

**Artist Demonstration.** 10:30 a.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Watch Shari MacFarlane demonstrate her semi-abstract method of developing acrylic paintings in response to music and her intuition. Free. [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org)

**Code 20: Proceed to Improv.** 7-9 p.m. Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. A free, coffeehouse-style night of improv and open mic performances hosted by Studio Rep. Audience members are encouraged to join in the improv or jam out during open mic.

**Buckwheat Zydeco.** 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Free.

### FRIDAY/FEB. 14- SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**La Cage aux Folles.** 8 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub in San Tropez, and Albin, the club's star, have lived in unwedded bliss for twenty years. Jean-Michel, the son they have raised together, throws the happy household into hilarious turmoil by announcing that he is going to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative politician. [www.McLeanPlayers.org](http://www.McLeanPlayers.org) or 866-811-4111.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**John Eaton: The Fabulous Forties.** 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. This renowned jazz pianist showcases a reverent and inventive take on the Great American Songbook. Tickets: \$25-\$27. [www.wolftrap.org/](http://www.wolftrap.org/)

### SUNDAY/FEB. 16

**La Cage aux Folles.** 2 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Book by Harvey Fierstein, music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, based on the novel by Jean Poirer. Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub in San Tropez, and Albin, the club's star, have lived in unwedded bliss for twenty years. Jean-Michel, the son they have raised together, throws the happy household into hilarious turmoil by announcing that he is going to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative politician. [www.McLeanPlayers.org](http://www.McLeanPlayers.org) or 866-811-4111.

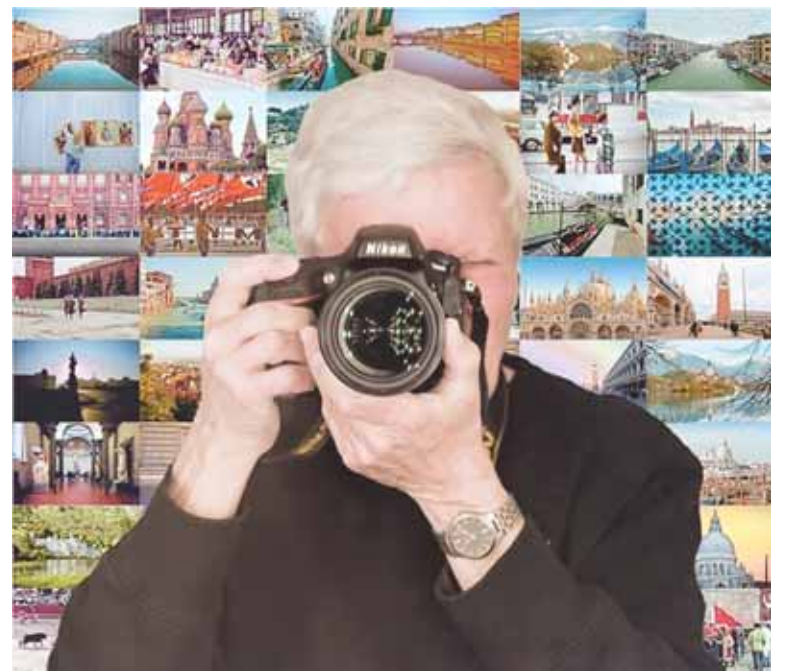
**Breakfast Buffet.** Vienna American Legion, 330 Center St, N, Vienna. Adults \$8, children \$3: omelets, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon, etc. Open to the public. Proceeds benefit Girls State. Call 703-938-1379.

### TUESDAY/FEB. 18

**23rd Annual Board of Supervisors Breakfast.** 7 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Hyatt Fair Lakes, Fairfax.

### THURSDAY/FEB. 20

**Dance and Dessert.** 7:30 p.m. Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Regional choreographers will showcase and



**Take a look at Great Falls artist, Richard Suib's photographs from all parts of the world at the Great Falls Library. Exhibit will be on display until Feb. 28**



**"Birch Forest," acrylic by Shari MacFarlane. Join MacFarlane on Thursday as she demonstrates her semi-abstract method of creating acrylic paintings at the Vienna Art Center.**

discuss their latest works-in-progress with lots of opportunities for audience members to ask questions.

### FRIDAY/FEB. 21

**Senior Tea.** 1 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Every month seniors are invited to visit the gallery to view the current exhibit and enjoy a cup of tea. Free and open to the public. [www.artspaceherndon.org](http://www.artspaceherndon.org)

**Artist Talk with Eric Celarier.** 7 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) will present a talk by exhibiting artist Eric Celarier. This presentation will cover artists who use trash to touch on subjects as far ranging as globalization, environmentalism, consumerism, classicism and colonialism. Free, but reservations are suggested. Please email [Info@mpaart.org](mailto:Info@mpaart.org) or call 703-790-1953.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 22

**Winter Wine Tasting.** 7 p.m. River Bend Country Club, 375 Walker Rd, Great Falls. Great wines, hors d'oeuvres, cheese and company. \$45 per person, tickets available online until Feb. 18. [www.celebrategreatfalls.org/Tickets.html](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/Tickets.html)

**MPA Workshop for ages 9 -14 with**

**artist Eric Celarier: Anatsui and Reuse Art.** 1-4 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. A special opportunity for young people to work with exhibiting artist, Eric Celarier. During this workshop, 9 - 14 year olds will create a woven piece from waste materials, similar to the work of well-known African artist El Anatsui. \$10 per person. Register for the workshop at [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

**Langley Fashion Show.** 7 p.m. Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. The students in Langley's Advanced Fashion Marketing are in charge of the planning and production of the show. Fashion students have been working on the event for months. Over 100 students participate as well as some of the Langley administration and faculty. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Email [tmpoythress@fcps.edu](mailto:tmpoythress@fcps.edu) for more information.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 23

**Young Soloists Recital.** 3 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. The recital will feature young violinists and pianists. It will include music by Haydn, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Hamelin, Bartok, Beethoven, Vieuxtemps, and Chopin. 703-620-9535.



# An Inspired Production

## 'Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins' at 1st Stage.

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

With a masterful performance by Lee Mikeska Gardner, an eccentric woman is made thoroughly sympathetic, even noble in an exceptional production of "Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins" at 1st Stage in Tysons.

What could have been a cruel, campy dig at a now long-gone, off-key, real life heiress becomes a lovely, off-center, treasure under the direction of Jay D. Brock. The two-actor play and incidental music were written by Stephen Temperley.

"Souvenir" is seen through the eyes of Cosme McMoon, the musical accompanist of Mrs. Jenkins. The story line is about Jenkins, who "fancied herself a coloratura soprano but was in fact incapable of producing two consecutive notes in tune" as 1st Stage described her. Her actual concerts with pianist McMoon in the 1930s and '40s included a legendary appearance at Carnegie Hall in 1944. Over the dozen years that two were together, they became the

talk of New York City. In their own way they became cult figures. They even cut records.

Gardner's performance as Florence Foster Jenkins has a golden sweetness to it. For some the fictional television character Edith Bunker may come to immediate memory. Gardner's work includes a manufactured, cringe worthy, screech of a singing voice. This is no easy feat. She acts totally unaware of her horrendous singing, no matter what the reaction of her on-stage partner or the real audience.

As played by Brian Keith MacDonald, McMoon is an understated chivalric, protector. He knows how badly Jenkins sings but comes to admire her drive to perform. He becomes smitten and loyal.

The jazz tune "Crazy Rhythm" is used often as a lovely framing device as McMoon tells the story of his musical partnership with Jenkins. "Souvenir" has a minimalist set design by Mark Krikstan, with a grand piano at center stage. Costumes by Yvette M. Ryan are a feast for the eyes. The sheer number and quality of Gardner's outfits are a joy.

What Jenkins heard inside her own head, we will never know. But "Souvenir" is a mellow production, even with its comical portrait of a tone-deaf singer with lived her mantra "what matters most is the music you hear in your head."

Playwright Temperley wrote, "the play explores the difference between the way we see ourselves and the way the rest of the world sees us." Yes, a diamond to see.

### Where and When

"Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins" at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean. Performances now through March 2, 2014. Friday 8 p.m., Saturday 2 p.m. & 8 p.m., and Sunday 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets: \$22-\$27; \$15 for students and military. Information call 703-854-1856 or visit: [www.1stStageTysons.org](http://www.1stStageTysons.org)



PHOTOS BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Brian Keith MacDonald as Cosme McMoon in "Souvenir: A Fantasia on the life of Florence Foster Jenkins" at 1st Stage.



Lee Mikeska Gardner as Florence Foster Jenkins in "Souvenir: A Fantasia on the life of Florence Foster Jenkins" at 1st Stage.

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A Casino Night to Benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax County Region

**Save the Date!**  
**Friday, March 7th, 2014**  
**6:30pm– 11:30pm**  
**The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner**

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# Make A Difference in Your Community!

## Run for a seat on the McLean Community Center Governing Board

### **PUBLIC NOTICE OF ELECTIONS**

#### **McLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER GOVERNING BOARD SMALL DISTRICT 1A OF THE DRANESVILLE DISTRICT FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

This **NOTICE** of elections to select members of the 2014-2015 Governing Board of the McLean Community Center (MCC) is officially given to residents of Small District 1A of the Dranesville District, Fairfax County, Virginia (referred to as "Small District 1A"). The McLean Community Center operates as a Special District Agency of the Fairfax County Government through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and MCC. On February 8, 1984, the Board of Supervisors approved the Memorandum of Understanding, which authorizes the elections. The MCC is funded by residents of Greater McLean for their use through a real estate tax surcharge, the result of a 1970 Small District 1A bond referendum.

Elections are held on **McLean Day** at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, Virginia. This year, McLean Day is on **Saturday, May 17, 2014**.

#### **Voting on McLean Day takes place from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Only Small District 1A residents are eligible to run for seats on the 11-member Governing Board and to vote in the election. Residents are not required to be property owners in Small District 1A in order to run for the Governing Board or to vote in the election.

**Candidate Qualifications:** Each resident who lives within Small District 1A is eligible to run for a seat on the Governing Board within the appropriate category. (If you need help determining whether you reside in Small District 1A, please contact the Center at 703-744-9348 or [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org).)

The Governing Board seats to be filled through the election are:

**Three (3) Adult Governing Board Seats:** Adult candidates must be residents of Small District 1A and must be at least eighteen (18) years of age on McLean Day. The candidates who receive the three (3) highest numbers of votes will serve three-year terms on the Governing Board.

#### **Two (2) Youth Governing Board Seats:**

One (1) Governing Board youth seat for teens living within the McLean High School boundary area

One (1) Governing Board youth seat for teens living within the Langley High School boundary area

Teen candidates must live in Small District 1A and must be between fifteen (15) and seventeen (17) years of age on McLean Day. One candidate from each high school boundary area receiving the highest number of votes will serve a one-year term on the Governing Board. High school boundaries are set by the Fairfax County Public Schools. You can find your high school boundary area by entering your home address in the Fairfax County Public Schools' boundary tool at <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary>.

**NOTICE TO TEENS:** You must live within Small District 1A. However, you *do not* have to attend either McLean or Langley high schools. You may attend another school, including one that is outside of Small District 1A, or you may be home schooled.

In some cases, you may live within the boundary of one of the two high schools, but attend school in the other high school boundary. For example, you could attend McLean High School, but live in the Langley High School boundary, or vice versa.

***You must run for the youth board seat for  
the high school boundary area where you live.***

**Remember:** No matter where you attend school, you must still live within Small District 1A and run for election in the correct high school boundary area. (If you need help, please contact the McLean Community Center at 703-744-9348 or [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org).)

**Candidate Petitions:** Nominating Petitions may be obtained at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, Virginia, 22101, beginning at 9 a.m. on **Tuesday, February 18, 2014**.

Adults seeking to become candidates for a seat on the Governing Board must get the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 18 years old or older (on McLean Day). Teens seeking to become candidates for a youth seat on the Governing

Board must get the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are between 15 to 17 years old (on McLean Day), **and** who live within the same high school boundary area as the candidate lives.

**DEADLINE:** Each resident seeking election to the Governing Board shall file a completed petition with the MCC at the address shown below by **5 p.m. on Friday, March 28, 2014:**

**McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, VA 22101**

All petitions will be certified by **Friday, March 28, 2014**; candidates will be notified whether their petitions have been certified by that date. The names of certified candidates will be published in newspapers having general circulation in the Dranesville District.

**Voter Qualifications:** Each resident who *lives* within Small District 1A is eligible to vote in the Governing Board elections (within the adult or youth categories, as appropriate).

When voting in the elections, the qualifications are:

**Adults:** Any Small District 1A resident who is eighteen (18) years of age or older on McLean Day is eligible to vote in the elections. Adults may vote for up to three (3) adult candidates.

**Teens:** Any resident who is fifteen (15) through seventeen (17) years of age on McLean Day is eligible to vote in the elections. Teens may vote for one youth candidate from each high school boundary area (but not for two candidates in the same high school boundary area).

High school students who turn 18 on or before McLean Day must vote as adults and may not vote for youth candidates.

Verification of age and residence shall be determined from a driver's license, student identification card, birth certificate, or other satisfactory evidence. A verification process also is required for residents choosing to apply for absentee voting.

**Absentee Voting:** Residents may vote by absentee ballot. Applications for Absentee Ballot packages will be available at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, Virginia, 22101 beginning on **Monday, April 14, 2014** at 9 a.m. Applications for Absentee Ballot packages may be requested in-person, by email at [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org), and by telephone at 703-744-9348. Please also refer to the Center's Website for updated information regarding the absentee voting process ([www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)). The **DEADLINE** for returning a **completed and signed Application for Absentee Ballot and the Absentee Ballot** to the MCC is **Wednesday, May 14, 2014, at 5 p.m.**

**Election Results:** Election results will be posted on the door of the McLean Community Center on the evening of the elections. The McLean Community Center's Elections & Nominations Committee will report the results of the elections to Dranesville Supervisor John W. Foust, who will present the successful candidates to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at its next regular meeting following the elections. At that meeting, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, after determining that it is in the public interest to do so, shall appoint to the McLean Community Center Governing Board:

The three (3) adult candidates who received the top three (3) highest number of votes

Two (2) youth candidates – the candidate who received the highest number of votes in each of the two (2) high school boundary areas

The appointment of new Board Members shall be effective upon action by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Newly appointed Board Members will take office when they attend their first meeting of the 2014-2015 Governing Board. The 2014-2015 Governing Board's term runs from May 2014 through May 2015.

For more information about the elections, please call 703-744-9348 or email the McLean Community Center at [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org).

Chair  
Elections & Nominations Committee  
McLean Community Center Governing Board



**McLean  
Community  
Center**  
*The Center of It All*





# VALENTINE'S WEEKEND

## Romantic Events Happening in the Fairfax County area

BY AMNA REHMATULLA  
THE CONNECTION

Enjoy your Valentine's Day by heading off to one of these events this weekend.

### THURSDAY/FEB. 13 – FRIDAY/FEB. 14

**Great Falls Nails & Spa Valentine's Day Chocolate Fountain.** Great Falls Nails & Spa, 731 Walker Road, #H1, Great Falls. Come by for Valentine's Day and enjoy refreshments and chocolate fountain with fresh fruit. 703-759-7808.

**Les Misérables.** 8 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Les Misérables is the perfect Valentine's Day musical. "Loves of all types are represented," Alana Dodds Sharp said. "Love of a child, love of comrades, romantic love, unrequited love, Les Misérables has it all." Purchase tickets: [www.restonplayers.org](http://www.restonplayers.org).

### THURSDAY/FEB. 13- SUNDAY/FEB. 16

**Wildfire's Special Valentine's Menu.** \$85 per couple. Wildfire Restaurant, Tysons Corner, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Guests can indulge in all of their Wildfire favorites, including Crab Stuffed Mushrooms, Spinach & Artichoke Fondue, Wildfire Chopped Salad, Roasted Prime Rib of Beef or Parmesan Crusted New York Strip. Call 703-442-9110 for reservations.

### FRIDAY/FEB. 14

**Valentine's Day Chocolate Buffet.** 6-10 p.m. The Ritz-Carlton, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Entyze, Wine Bar & Lounge will offer an impressive chocolate buffet with seven different dessert options crafted by their pastry kitchen. Satisfy your loved one's sweet tooth with their dessert creations. \$25 per person, seating on first come, first serve basis.

**Valentine's Day Latin Style.** La Sandia Mexican Kitchen, 7852L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Show some Latin Love this Valentine's Day with a 3-Course dinner and signature beverage or cocktail for \$29 per person. A taste of what's on the menu: Shrimp and Crab Empenadas, Chile Relleno, Pasilla Lava Cake, and more. Call for reservations 703-893-2222.

**Chaise Lounge.** 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Love and Kisses, Swings and Misses A Valentine's Day Celebration Smooth '60s-inspired big-band jazz featuring a sultry female vocalist and a sophisticated "sound that is musically tight and always swinging" (Fanfare Magazine). Tickets: \$25. <http://www.wolftrap.org>

**Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides.** 5:30-9:30 p.m. Reston Town Center, Market Street, Reston. Spend Valentine's Day the old-fashioned way this year by taking a stroll in a horse-drawn carriage through the streets of Reston Town Center. Pick up location by Talbots on Market Street. All proceeds benefit Volunteer Fairfax. Tickets: \$5/person. Children under 5 ride free.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**Les Misérables.** 2 & 8 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Les Misérables is the perfect Valentine's Day musical. "Loves of all types are represented," Alana Dodds Sharp said. "Love of a child, love of comrades, romantic love, unrequited love, Les Misérables has it all." Purchase tickets: [www.restonplayers.org](http://www.restonplayers.org).

**"Music of the Heart."** 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Take part in an evening of romantic music that blends popular and classical styles with pianist Peter Nero. Tickets are \$30-\$60. Tickets are half price for youth through grade 12. Visit the box office (open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) or charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu).

**Valentine's Day Chocolate Buffet.** 7-10 p.m. The Ritz-Carlton, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Entyze, Wine Bar & Lounge will offer an impressive chocolate buffet with seven different dessert options crafted by their pastry kitchen. Satisfy your loved one's sweet tooth with their dessert creations. \$25 per person, seating on first come, first serve basis.

**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](http://www.colvinrun.org).



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## Here's What's Happening at MCC

### Studio Rep "Code 20: Proceed to Improv"

Thursday, Feb. 13, 7-9 p.m.  
Old Firehouse Teen Center  
Free admission

### Dance and Dessert Thursday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. Free admission



### Grand Dérangement Saturday, Feb. 22, 8 p.m. \$20/\$15 MCC district residents

### Sunday Soirée Dance Sunday, Feb. 23, 3-5 p.m. Admission: \$5



### First U.S. Tour, Ireland's Own Caladh Nua

Saturday, March 1, 8 p.m.  
\$25/\$18 MCC district residents

### Leland Faulkner in "World of Wonder" Sunday, March 2, 2 p.m. \$15/\$10 MCC district residents

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[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)  
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[www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)



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# SPORTS

## Oakton Gymnastics Team Qualifies For Regional Meet

**Herndon freshman Bradley advances in all-around competition.**

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he Oakton gymnastics team entered the Conference 5 meet with the smallest roster of the six competing schools. The Cougars performed well in multiple events, but failed to have an individual advance to regionals in the all-around.

None of it stopped Oakton from reaching regionals.

The Cougars finished runner-up at the conference meet on Feb. 6 at Centreville High School, securing one of two team region berths. Oakton had the top score on bars and had the second-best score on beam.

"We feel that's where we differ from a lot of teams, especially being the smallest squad in our conference," Oakton coach Frankie Orbacz wrote in an email. "Everyone has a ton of talent and everyone contributed equally to our fantastic team score. Most other teams have a few standouts that lead the team and sweep the medals, but we really have so much talent in every girl. We are very well-rounded. Standings-wise, four of our eight girls medaled and placed, which means half of our team would have advanced to regions if we hadn't made it as a team. We were so impressed! That's a pretty fantastic showing."

**SOPHOMORE NATALIE WEAVER** was Oakton's top individual performer. She placed fifth in the all-around with a score of 34.475, including a second-place tie on beam (9), a fourth-place finish on bars (8.55) and an eight-place tie on floor (8.375).

"Natalie, as always, pulled off a near-flawless night," Orbacz wrote. "We felt she was underscored on floor but regardless of that, she was still successful. She was one rank



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**The Oakton gymnastics team finished runner-up at the Conference 5 meet on Feb. 6 at Centreville High School.**

away from placing in all-around. With the talent that was there, that is a huge accomplishment. Our conference is very close and has many great high-level gymnasts, and we feel that Natalie is right up in the mix with them, despite placing fifth."

Oakton sophomore Amanda Gore tied for fifth on vault (8.7) and freshman Stephanie Weir finished fifth on bars (8.5). Junior Nathalia Rojas tied for fifth on beam (8.8).

Robinson won the team championship with a score of 135.4. Oakton finished second with a score of 132.575, followed by Westfield (130.575), Chantilly (129.65), Herndon (122.45) and Centreville (105.375).

"They definitely performed very well today," Robinson head coach Charlotte Edwards said. "They were more consistent than they normally are. ... We're definitely peaking at the right time."

It was Robinson's second conference/district title in the last three years (2012).

**IN THE ALL-AROUND COMPETITION,** the final results surprised

Herndon's Alexa Bradley. She had a strong effort on bars and gave an adequate performance on floor, but from an all-around standpoint, the freshman gymnast knew she could have done better.

While she had reason to doubt, Bradley's performance proved strong enough to earn her an all-around berth in the regional meet.

Bradley tied for third in the all-around, totaling a score of 34.5. The top four all-around competitors advance to regionals, along with any other gymnast who produces a score of 35 or better.

Bradley placed second on vault (9.05) and bars (8.825), fifth on floor (8.575) and 15th on beam (8.05). The top eight in each event secure a regional berth, along with any other gymnast who scores a 9 or better.

"I was really surprised that I made it for



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**Natalie Weaver tied for second on beam and helped the Oakton gymnastics team qualify for regionals during the Conference 5 meet on Feb. 6 at Centreville High School.**

the all-around," Bradley said. ... "I knew I was going to make it to some events, but top four for all-around is really surprising because I didn't do my best."

Herndon sophomore Shannon Kelly will join Bradley at the 6A North region meet on Feb. 12 at Lake Braddock. Kelly qualified on floor with a fourth-place finish (8.725), and on vault, tying for fifth (8.7).

Westfield senior Katie Freix won the all-around with a score of 36.925. She placed first on floor (9.525), vault (9.5) and bars (9.1), and finished in a fifth-place tie on beam (8.8).

"I had probably close to my best performance," Freix said, "except for beam."

Robinson freshman Caroline Burda finished second in the all-around (34.9) and Rams senior Sarah Gross tied for third (34.5).

### SPORTS BRIEFS

#### **Langley's Alex Andrejev Named VHSCA Volleyball POY**

Langley setter/right side hitter Alex Andrejev was named the Virginia High School Coaches Association's volleyball Player of the Year. Andrejev helped the Saxons win the 2013 6A state championship.

Langley outside hitter Jessica Donaldson earned first-team all-state honors.

#### **Langley Wrestling Places Third, McLean Fourth at Conference Meet**

The Langley wrestling team placed third and McLean finished fourth at the Conference 6 meet on Feb. 8 at Hayfield Secondary School. Langley sent 10 grap-



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

**Langley's Alex Andrejev was named Virginia High School Coaches Association volleyball Player of the Year.**

plers to regionals and the Highlanders had seven qualify.

McLean's Conor Grammes and Brendan

Grammes each won conference championships.

#### **McLean Girls' Basketball Improves to 19-1**

The McLean girls' basketball team won its sixth consecutive game on Feb. 7, edging Fairfax 47-45 to improve to 19-1.

The Highlanders face Madison on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. McLean will conclude the regular season with a road game against South Lakes at 5:45 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 14.

#### **McLean Boys' Basketball Wins Back-to-Back Games**

The McLean boys' basketball team bounced back from a four-game losing streak with back-to-back wins against

Yorktown (44-41 on Feb. 4) and Fairfax (56-54 Feb. 7) to improve to 7-13.

The Highlanders faced Madison on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. McLean will conclude the regular season with a road game against South Lakes at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 14.

#### **Great Falls Soccer Spring Registration Open**

Great Falls Soccer spring registration is open to all ages. Go to [www.Greatfallsoccer.com](http://www.Greatfallsoccer.com) and look under programs for both recreation and travel soccer teams.

Contact Sue Rissing at 703-915-1839 or [administrator@greatfallsoccer.com](mailto:administrator@greatfallsoccer.com) for questions.





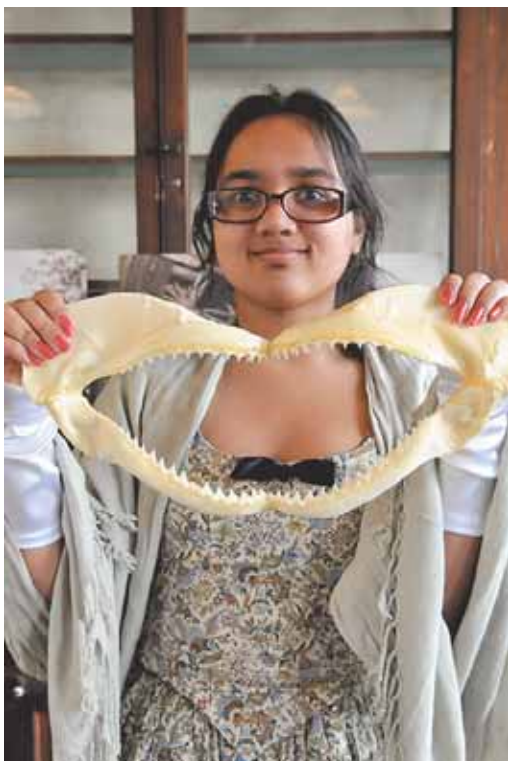
PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE CONNECTION

Members of the Alexandria Society for the Creation of Useful Knowledge discuss the wonders of 18th century science with Scout troops from Herndon on Saturday afternoon in the Apothecary Shop.

## Revealing Wonders of Science

**M**cLean High School student Shivani Gupta started off an afternoon session of Wonders of Science at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop in Alexandria on Saturday, Feb. 1, with examples of bones and fossils that she collected as an 18th century natural scientist.

Shivani is one of dozens of students participating in Dean Howarth's Project Enlightenment at McLean High School. The project engages each student in researching the lives of individuals or 18th century professions engaged in the creation of useful knowledge. Saturday's session introduced visitors to natural science, botany, physics and geology. Visitors were introduced to machines that produce electrical fluid, a camera obscura and a variety of fossils, bones and other artifacts that would have been collected and studied by 18th century scientists and thinkers.



Natural scientist Shivani Gupta displays a small shark's jaw.



Students line up and form of circle with the Scouts to receive a small dose of electrical fluid before departing.



Dean Howarth demonstrates how an 18th century electrical doctor might have extracted a tooth.

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## An Unexpected Present

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Not that I minded it in the least (in fact, I appreciated it in the most), but I received my first senior discount the other day. I was fast-forwarding at my local Roy Rogers restaurant when the unexpected kindness occurred. Considering that I'm not at the age yet when such discounts are typically available, I certainly did not (do not) presume that my appearance somehow reflects an age which I am not. In truth, I don't believe it does. So even though I didn't ask for the age-related discount, I was offered/given it nonetheless. As the cashier tallied my bill, she then spoke the price and adjusted it downward 10 percent for my surprise "senior" discount. On hearing the lower price and the reason for it, I immediately responded: "Oh, you're giving senior discounts to people over 40?" To which she replied, while looking me directly in the eye: "No. Over 30." Laughing at her quick-thinking quip, I thanked her again for the discount and commended her on her excellent answer/customer service.

Without making this too much a cancer column, a terminal diagnosis at age 54 and a half sort of means that certain realities, benefits and inevitabilities (if you live long enough, which after receiving my diagnosis/prognosis seemed unlikely) are off the table; heck they're likely on the floor waiting to be swept up and placed in the trash bin (been and gone, you might say). I refer generally to the kinds of things associated with turning 65: retirement, Social Security, Medicare, and of course, "senior discounts." After hearing what I heard, reaching age 55 seemed challenging enough.

To be honest though, and you regular readers know I'm honest, maybe painfully so; after receiving the incredibly discouraging and grim news concerning my diagnosis from my oncologist five years ago, I didn't really think about the parts of my life that I would be missing since my future was, at that point, seriously in doubt. If I recall, my mindset back then wasn't on the future I was losing because of my disease, it was more about the present that I was living and being as proactive as possible to try and live as long as I could. Moreover, given the rather morbid tone I was hearing from my oncologist, it sounded as if I'd be lucky to have a present, let alone a future. A "13-month to two-year prognosis" (out of the blue no less; I was asymptomatic and a life-long non-smoker) followed by an admission from my doctor that he can't "cure me, but he can treat me;" and a further reply to my wife Dina's query as to why there aren't any parades for lung cancer survivors, as there seem to be for breast cancer survivors: "Because there aren't any" (survivors that is) hardly reinforce a lung cancer patient's future prospects.

Yet here I write, nearly five years post-diagnosis, receiving the previously (given my life expectancy) unimaginable senior discount. And though there are likely fewer guarantees now and even less certainty for a stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer survivor five years out and still living, I don't discount the significance of any discounts. At this juncture, I deserve any I can get. Besides, I think I've earned them.

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

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-William Van Horne

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## Home LifeStyle



Hodges-Fulton



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Baker

# Pros Share Secrets of Their Homes' Design

FROM PAGE II

backyard into an oasis. "We added a pool and entertaining area," he said. "We redid every finish in the house. I liked those small touches because they were simple and easy and changed the way the house looked."

Founder, cochairman and owner Josh Baker grew up in Great Falls and when it came time to raise his family, he remained there. He even built a custom home where he plans to live long-term. "A lot of planning went into the future," said Baker. "The concept behind it was we would create a fun space for our children that their children could eventually enjoy."

He advises his clients to similarly plan ahead and think about how their needs might evolve. "To make it a long-term home is to not think about just what you need now, but what you might need in the future," he said. "We designed a guest suite on the first floor with the idea that my wife and I could live on one floor once we're empty nesters." There is enough space for friends and extended family.

Baker said each time he and his wife updated the house, they did so judiciously. "We made smart decisions about small things that make a big difference. For example, we changed tiles to make it up-to-date without a huge remodel," he said.

Baker's experience as a builder helped him decide on the room sizes and layout of the house. "In terms of design, a lot of our house has a focus on lines of sight, informality and lots of light. ... On our first floor, there are no partition walls in the common area."

The rooms in the house are generous and comfortable and space was used wisely, Baker explained. "We focused on the feeling and functionality of the room rather than the size of the room," he said. "None of the rooms are oversized, but they are functional."

Wise use of space is another lesson he shares with clients. "At one time, bedrooms with sitting rooms were very popular," said Baker. "But ... a lot of our clients don't use them so we're repurposing those spaces. In our master bedroom, for example, we focused on walk-in closets. Even our master bathroom is spacious, but it is not vast."

The Bakers designed their outdoor landscape to accommodate their penchant for relaxed entertaining. "We're informal folks," said Baker. "We like to entertain, so we developed our landscaping to include an expansive entertaining area and a swimming pool. We have a lot of outdoor parties. We can accommodate a large group in our yard as well."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOWA BUILDERS, INC.

Enclosing the top of a two-story foyer in his Potomac, Md., home eliminated an unused space and gave building professional Steve Kirstein, his wife and children a second-floor family room.



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