

Bianca playing with toys at her new home: She went home with her new mom on Feb. 19, and she is doing great.

# Giving Bianca a Second Chance

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Inside

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A view of the bending tracks above Route 123 near McLean Station in Tysons Corner.

PHOTO COURTESY OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

## Additional Delays Slow Handover of Silver Line to Metro

Performance issues and unmet safety testing requirements cited as reasons for the continued delay.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD  
THE CONNECTION

Phase I of the Silver Line is still not quite ready for final testing by Metro authorities, according to a Monday statement issued by Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). With the handover of the Silver Line project to Metro authorities looming, Northern Virginia residents will have to be patient despite their readiness to hop on the train at new Tysons Corner and Reston Metro stations.

The Monday afternoon release stated that seven of 12 key criteria had not been met by Dulles Transit Partners (DTP), who submitted their notice of “substantial completion” to MWAA on Feb. 7. Unmet categories included missing certificates of occupancy for stations and tunnel facilities, elevator and escalator problems, water leaks, and incomplete documentation for testing and security verifications. Most notably, the release reported performance issues with the Automatic Train Control System for the train, which — until resolved — will prevent Metro from beginning full operational testing.

There are no current penalties being assessed toward DTP as of Feb. 24, according to MWAA spokesperson Marcia McAllister. MWAA is still putting together a timeframe for how long it will take before Phase I testing can be handed over to Metro.

“The Airports Authority has instructed DTP to provide a plan and date of conclusion for addressing the outstanding items as quickly as possible. We will work closely with DTP, WMATA and our other partners to monitor progress and assure that all contractual obligations are satisfied,” said the statement issued by MWAA.

Del. Ken Plum (D-36) said that he hoped the delays would not last longer than a few weeks and remained optimistic about the Silver Line’s progress. “I share the same anticipation as everyone else for the opening, but as projects of this size go, it’s pretty

### TIFIA Loan Could Help Freeze Toll Increases

The U.S. Department of Transportation has formally invited MWAA to apply for a federal low-interest loan of up to \$1.9 billion through the Transportation Infrastructure and Innovation Act (TIFIA). The loan, which still awaits federal approval according to Feb. 21 statement, would benefit the Silver Line project by providing funding at a lower interest rate than through private capital.

“It’s very significant because what it does is significantly reduce the cost of the second phase of the project,” said Del. Ken Plum (D-36). “By 2018 the other project costs will be met and spread across a number of years. That adds up to no more toll increases.”

MWAA has worked closely with Loudoun and Fairfax counties to apply for the loan over the past several years. Receiving an invitation to apply for the loan essentially means the project will receive it, according to Plum.

Commuters first saw Dulles Toll Road rates increase in 2005, and MWAA has continued to increase tolls over the years in order to pay for the project. After last year’s state budget allotted an additional \$300 million in funding, it became more likely that MWAA would receive the formal invitation to apply.

close to schedule,” said Plum.

Mark Ingrao, President and CEO of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, expressed similar views about the delay. “When you have a project this large there are going to be unanticipated delays. As long as when they open it it’s open for good, we will be happy,” said Ingrao.

On Tuesday, Feb. 18, MWAA Project Director Charles S. Carnaggio, P.E., presented the latest progress of Phase I at a luncheon in Herndon. In addition to showing the various stages of completion of each station from 2009 up to Feb. 2014, Carnaggio pointed out signs of budding economic development and provided a closer look at planning for Phase II construction.

“This is a tremendous success not only for this area but for the nation. Everyone is looking in at this

SEE MWAA, PAGE 15

## Secrets of 911

Police agencies refuse to release audio from 911 calls, prompting questions about transparency.

BY MICHAEL LEE  
POPE  
THE CONNECTION

When city officials in Alexandria released the audio of a 911 call in a high-profile murder case, many people interpreted the move as a step forward for transparency in a commonwealth known



MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Across Northern Virginia, police agencies routinely deny access to basic information such as audio from 911 calls.

for opaque government. But then reality set in. The release was a mistake. The city attorney’s office failed to consult with the police department, which carefully guards its privilege to withhold information from the public.

“It was a clerical error that the 911 call was released,” said Crystal Nosal, spokeswoman for the Alexandria Police Department. “We didn’t waive the privileges under FOIA, so they are not going to release it again.”

Across Virginia, police agencies routinely deny access to basic information and documents available in other states. One key example of the lack of transparency is audio from 911 calls, which are regularly released in most states across America. But not in Virginia, which is one of the reasons why the commonwealth got a failing grade for transparency from the State Integrity Investigation in 2012. Advocates for open government say audio from 911 calls should be available to the public so people know how their government is — or isn’t — working on their behalf.

“If anything, it seems the more public input that can be sought on this the better, and the more information the public has the better,” said Emily Grannis, a legal fellow at Arlington-based Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. “This is a scary kind of case, and it’s a scary kind of case to have open and the more the public can know about it the better the public will be equipped to be able to help police investigate.”

**POLICE AGENCIES** in Virginia don’t see it that way. The Virginia Freedom of Information Act gives them sweeping

power to withhold documents and information, a power that is unprecedented in any state in America. And even though part of the law talks about public records being presumed open, Virginia police officials tend to view them as presumed closed because they have the power to prevent the public from having access.

“A lot of the time, what you get with 911 tapes is someone calling in is someone who is afraid of being identified,” said Dana Schrad, executive director of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. “They want some kind of understanding that they are not going to have their name released.”

Advocates for open government disagree with that perspective. They say 911 calls should be available to the public so people know how their government is working on their behalf. Instead of denying access to public records altogether, which is how Alexandria is now handling subsequent requests for the 911 audio in the Ruthanne Lodato murder, those who support public access to government documents say the information could be partially redacted to protect sensitive information. But that’s not how the Alexandria city government is handling the situation. In response to a Freedom of Information Act request from Connection Newspapers, the city attorney’s office said the record was being “entirely withheld” even though it was already released to the Washington Post.

“They can’t discriminate from one media source to the next,” said Ginger Stanley, executive director of the Virginia Press Association. “And they can re-

SEE 911, PAGE 5



Langley High School students and teachers participate in the school annual fashion show entitled, 'Enchanted: Revealing the Secret of Style,' at the school on Saturday evening. The show was planned and organized by advanced fashion students at the school.

# Fashion Secrets Revealed at Langley High

Sahar Ghamary and Chloe Lorenze were co-hosts of the Langley High School 'Enchanted: Revealing the Secret of Style' fashion show.

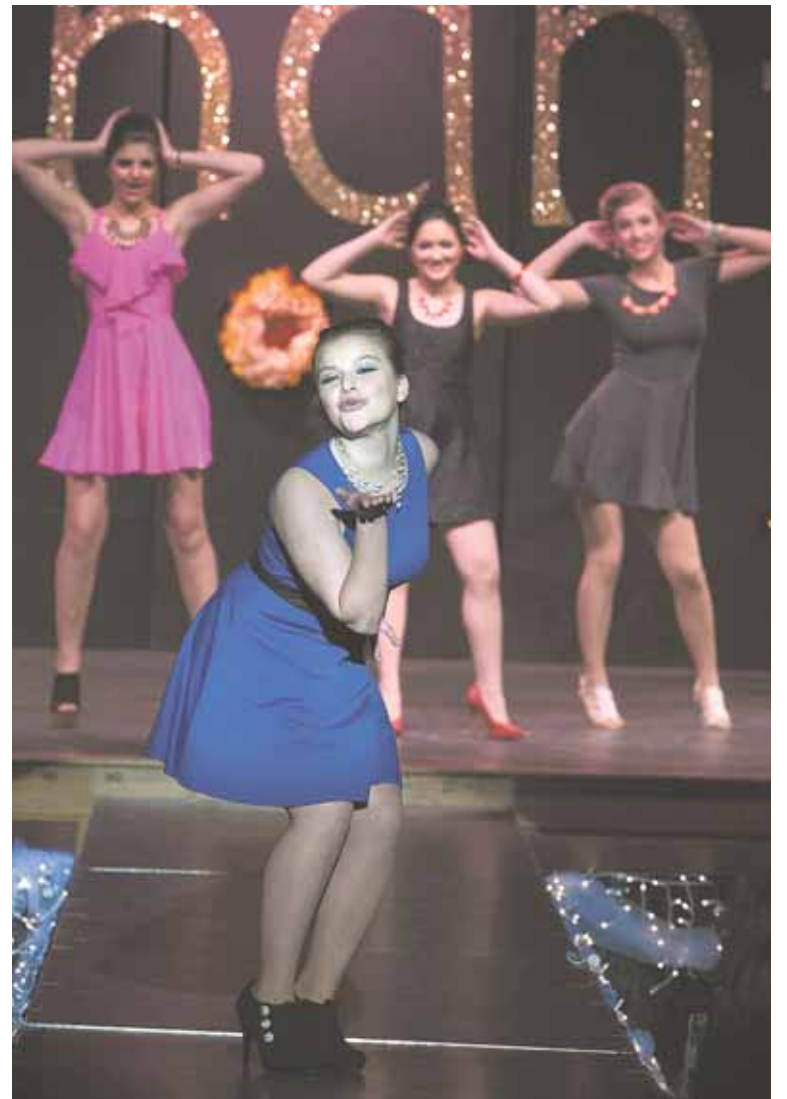


PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION



Langley High School students and teachers participate in the school annual fashion show entitled, 'Enchanted: Revealing the Secret of Style,' at the school on Saturday evening. The show was planned and organized by advanced fashion students at the school.

Meryl Simon, a special education teacher at Langley High School, and her daughter Liliana, walk the runway during the school's fashion show Saturday night.



Alisa Bondar shows her style while walking the runway during the 'Enchanted: Revealing the Secret of Style' fashion show at Langley High School on Saturday evening.



Katarina Georgelas shows her style while walking the runway during the 'Enchanted: Revealing the Secret of Style' fashion show at Langley High School on Saturday evening. The fashion show was organized and planned by students of the Advanced Fashion Marketing class.

## Historic Cornwell Farm Open to the Public March 8

HBC Realty Group, Keller Williams Realty has announced that Historic Cornwell Farm will be open to the public on Saturday, March 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. People wanting to see the home can come on this day and take in the history and architecture all while supporting a worthy local charity. Proceeds from the day go to support LiftMeUp! Therapeutic Riding Program. For more information and questions contact Laura Smith at 571-331-7709, Info@LiftMeUp.org or Karen Briscoe at 703-734-0192, Karen@HBCRealtyGroup.com.

The Cornwell Farm residence in Great Falls has survived as a well-preserved example of Northern Virginia antebellum plantation architecture. The property was accepted into the National Register of Historic Places on April 13, 1977. It is one of the area's most significant residential properties with a Nineteenth Century Manor House, circa 1831. It is scenically important in that it is the major architectural element to be seen along the historic Georgetown Pike, the first road in the state to be designated a Virginia By-Way. The entry features a cedar tree-lined private drive arriving at a pea gravel motor court. The gently rolling land and country vistas are some of the most gorgeous this close to Washington, D.C. The property features a 4-stall barn, fenced and cross-fenced pasture land and run-in shed for horses.

Proceeds from the day support the LiftMeUp! Therapeutic Riding Program. LiftMeUp! is a therapeutic horseback riding program that is dedicated to providing safe and effective instruction to children and adults with a variety of disabilities. The money raised will help maintain and improve the



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Cornwell Farm, a historic property in Great Falls, will be open to the public on Saturday, March 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

facilities and grounds to ensure a comfortable and safe place for the riders and horses.

"Good fences make good neighbors, we need good neighbors to help us build good fences to keep our horses safe and out of our neighbors' yards. A section of fence—or even an entire field, can be purchased in honor of a loved one, human or equine and your donations are tax deductible. I am so grateful to Karen Briscoe for organizing this wonderful community event for Lift Me Up!"—said Laura Smith.

For more information about how you can support Lift Me Up! contact Laura Smith 571-331-7709, info@liftmeup.org, or visit www.liftmeup.org.

## 911 Controversy

FROM PAGE 3

dact parts of the call they think might jeopardize the investigation, but they aren't supposed to redact the whole thing."

**IN VIRGINIA** police agencies have the ability to withhold a variety of information from the public, including "documents and information, including complaints, court orders, memoranda, notes, diagrams, maps, photographs, correspondence, reports, witness statements, and evidence." Police agencies regularly use this part of the Freedom of Information Act to prevent the public from having free access to information.

"I think they are exercising their discretion too broadly," said Grannis. "This sort of information should be made public by default, particularly in this situation where they have already released the tape and it has already been made public, there really cannot be a justification for withholding it from future requesters."

Alexandria police officials say the justification is that the transparency was a mistake — that they never intended on sharing the audio with the public. Perhaps most importantly, police leaders underscored, they did not ever waive their privileges to withhold information from the public. Across Northern Virginia, government officials say the public's right to know is tempered by the government's desire for secrecy. That means that the presumption is that 911 calls associated with criminal complaints should be secret.

"If there are any kinds of criminal charges tied into a case or if it's an ongoing investigation or if it's ever been part of an investigation, then it's exempt from release under FOIA and can only be released under a court order," said Erikk Daniel, custodian of records for Fairfax County Department of Public Safety. "Once there's a criminal incident associated with a record, then it's exempt from FOIA."

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# OPINION

## Budget Process: Get Involved

### Chairman gives blueprint for community engagement in Fairfax County budget process.

BY SHARON BULOVA

In Fairfax County, when we adopt the budget, we are investing in the priorities and needs of the community. At the center of this open and transparent process is community engagement. It is critical that we have the community at the table with us when we are considering changes to the budget that the County Executive released for advertisement at our Board Meeting on Feb. 25. Below are some opportunities to learn about the budget, ask questions and make suggestions during the months of March and April. I look forward to hearing from you.

❖ **Ask Fairfax Chat:** The Ask Fairfax Chat is a great opportunity for residents to submit questions about the County's proposed Fiscal 2015 budget directly to County Executive Ed Long. The chat takes place online from 2-3 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 28. To submit questions and join the chat visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/askfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/askfairfax).

❖ **Track BOS Budget Questions:** You can view the answers to budget questions asked by the Board of Supervisors throughout the budget process at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/qa\\_search.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/qa_search.htm).



❖ **Sign up to speak:** All public hearings take place in the Board Auditorium at the Fairfax County Government Center (12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035) and are open to the public. To sign up to speak at a hearing, please visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker\\_bos.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker_bos.htm) or call 703-324-3151.

❖ **Important public hearing dates:**  
Effective Tax Rate Hearing - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 3 p.m., April 8, 2014  
Public Hearing - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 6 p.m., April 8, 2014  
Public Hearing - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 3 p.m., April 9, 2014  
Public Hearing - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 3 p.m., April 10, 2014

**BUDGET FORUMS AND TOWN MEETINGS** will be hosted by Supervisors and community organizations throughout the county. Below is a list of currently scheduled meetings. Information on additional forums, as well as a current full budget calendar, will be listed in the coming weeks at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb).

❖ **Hunter Mill District Meeting,** Frying Pan Park, 2709 W. Ox Road, Herndon — Sat-

urday, March 1, 9 a.m.

❖ **Dranesville District Budget Meeting,** Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls — Wednesday, March 5, 7 p.m.

❖ **Braddock District Budget Meeting,** Kings Park Library, Braddock Hall, 9000 Burke Lake Rd, Burke — Wednesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.

❖ **Herndon Town Council,** Herndon Town Council Chambers, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon — Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m.

❖ **Mason District Budget Meeting,** TBD — Tuesday, March 18 - 7 p.m.

❖ **Providence District Budget Meeting,** Dunn Loring Admin Center, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring — Tuesday, March 18, 7 p.m.

❖ **Dranesville District Budget Meeting,** McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean — Thursday, March 20, 7 p.m.

❖ **Lee District Budget Meeting,** Franconia Government Center, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria — Wednesday, March 26, 7:30 p.m.

❖ **Braddock Town Hall,** Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax — Tuesday, April 1, 7:30 p.m.

I hope you will take the time to learn about and participate in this year's budget process. You can contact my office directly by calling 703-324-2321 or emailing [chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Oakcrest Community Hopes for Approval

To the Editor:

Disappointment was the general sentiment of the Oakcrest community when we heard that no action was to be taken by the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 11 concerning our SEA.

However, we appreciate the responsibility displayed by Supervisor Hudgins in her motion to defer, because we understand the importance of a thorough, fair review of our application.

There has been an intense level of community involvement in this SEA process, coordinated by Supervisor Hudgins. Oakcrest met with the surrounding community in a series of well attended meetings with the Hunter Mill Land Use Committee from January through March of 2013. We met directly with representatives of the Hunter Mill Defense League and had discussions with their traffic consultant in order engage in healthy dia-

logue about our amendment proposal. From

September 2013 through January 2014, Oakcrest participated in a special community outreach committee formed by Supervisor Hudgins to continue reviewing and analyzing options. County DOT and/or VDOT were present at each of those meetings. During this process, at least 22 alternatives were studied. None of the alternatives mitigates traffic and improves existing conditions as well as the proposed traffic signal outlined in our SEA.

We want to publicly address our opponents' latest proposal. A full movement school entrance onto Hunter Mill Road has been extensively evaluated and rejected by both VDOT and FCDOT.

Conversely, the Crowell Road entrance shown in our SEA application has been deemed to be safe and meets all applicable standards. County staff has also concluded that the installation of the traffic signal mitigates any traffic generated by our School and substantially improves a currently failing intersection. Finally, despite voices to the contrary, our SEA proposes no change to the Com-

prehensive Plan or the existing zoning.

The persistent focus on alternatives that do not fix the critical intersection reflect a view held by some that an improved intersection somehow leads to future redevelopment on nearby land. This speculation hijacks the earnest discussion of substantive issues and unnecessarily obscures the uncontroverted facts.

An approval of our SEA will enhance the Hunter Mill district, both by alleviating traffic congestion and by giving it a beautiful school, with a design that complements the surrounding area and a mission of service to young people, families and its surrounding community.

As we approach the fourth anniversary of our SE (March 23, 2010), we find ourselves waiting rather anxiously to see if we can continue serving the families of Fairfax County. Oakcrest is a small school, with deep and profound ties to its current families and a commitment to service.

We remain confident that the process is fair and objective and that the Board of Supervisors will make a correct, informed decision.

We eagerly hope that this process will end on Feb. 25 with a resolution that objectively recognizes the hard work, good faith, and prayers we have invested in these years.

**Mary T. Ortiz, Ph.D.**  
Head of School

#### Life-saving Bill Defeated

To the Editor:

Thanks to Senator Barbara Favola, the Virginia General

Assembly had the opportunity to keep guns out of the hands of those convicted of sexual battery and the assault of family members, not permanently, but for five years following the conviction. Research shows that, in domestic conflicts, victims are five times more likely to be murdered when the abusive person has a gun. Those who advocate for gun rights oppose many reforms, like background checks, claiming they would not stop "the bad guy with the gun." This bill, however, was designed to do precisely that — keep guns from con-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

McLean  
**CONNECTION**

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# PEOPLE

## William Thomas, 15, of McLean Recognized as Top Volunteer

William Thomas, 15, of McLean, a ninth grader at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. was named one of the Virginia's top two youth volunteers of 2014 by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a national program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. William has raised more than \$100,000 for charities supporting U.S. Special Operations Forces by shooting basketballs, while rallying thousands of individuals and organizations to join his cause. William was playing basketball at his home in August 2011 when he heard the news that a helicopter carrying 30 American servicemen had been shot down in Afghanistan. To honor the fallen heroes, he proposed shooting thousands of baskets over the Labor Day weekend, and his father pledged to donate a penny for each shot he made. As word spread, pledges came in from other family members, friends and strangers. Will-



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL THOMAS

**Will Thomas on the court.**

iam collected \$50,000 by sinking 20,317 baskets in 50 hours.

Since then, William has held several more "shooting challenges" and developed his "Operation Hawkeye" into a wide-ranging effort to support Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their families, and to focus attention on their sacrifices. He has assembled a network of basketball players and

coaches, companies, nonprofits and others who are committed to his mission; built a website and leveraged social media to encourage support for SOF community; and attracted donations of money, products and services totaling more than \$100,000 for the benefits of SOF charities.

"We are helping those serving in SOF, and those that have lost a

loved one," said William. "They know we care, that they have our support and gratitude, and that we will remember these SOF heroes."

As state honoree, William will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. in early

May where two Virginia honorees will be joined by the top two honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for four days of national recognition events. During the trip, 10 students will be named America's top youth volunteers of 2014.



PHOTO BY MONTIE MARTIN/THE CONNECTION

**Will Thomas and his driveway basketball hoop.**

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# PET CONNECTION

## Giving Bianca a Second Chance

**A Fairfax County Animal Shelter happy ending.**

**B**ianca, a nine-year-old, female, German shepherd mix dog, had been living her life on the end of a chain in a rural part of Virginia. In late January, an unknown stray dog approached Bianca and attacked her. Bianca's owner came outside and in an attempt to stop the attack he hit both dogs with a shovel, striking Bianca over the head and injuring her. Rather than pursue vet care, the owner drove Bianca to the local pound and surrendered her. For the next 36 hours, Bianca sat with no medical care, until a sympathetic staff person called the shelter's rescue partner at the Highland County Humane Society in

rural Virginia. Highland County Humane Society rescued Bianca from the pound and got her emergency medical treatment. She was taken to a foster home to recover and receive further treatment and was transported to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter on Valentine's Day. She was made available for adoption and her story was shared on the shelter's Facebook page, where it caught the attention of a long-time shelter supporter and adopter. The woman's beloved dog Princess (adopted from the shelter in 1999), died on Valentine's Day at the age of 18, on the same day that Bianca's story was posted. She knew that she was meant to help give poor Bianca a second chance. She immediately contacted the shelter and made plans to come and meet Bianca. Bianca went home with her new mom on Feb. 19, and she is doing great.



Bianca sleeping at her new home.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Rani Hart, a volunteer at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, "wrangles" a rabbit during a photo workshop on Feb. 23.

PHOTO BY BARBARA AUTREY

## Hollywood Comes to Fairfax

**How to use Hollywood-style portrait techniques to photograph adoptable animals.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

BY DEB COBB  
THE CONNECTION

**A**nimals at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter were given the celebrity treatment on Feb. 23 when a team from the nonprofit Shelter Art Foundation taught shelter staff and volunteers how to use Hollywood-style portrait techniques to photograph their adoptable animals. "We believe that every animal is a celebrity. We want to give them the same exposure that we would give a budding star in Hollywood. We do this because it works. Great portraits get actors and actresses noticed and leading roles. We want these animals to get leading roles in new homes," said Shelter Art Foundation founder Steve Sloop after the Sunday workshop.

"We have conducted photo team workshops at 19 shelters in eight states, enabling these shelters to build the skills necessary to show off their stars. All of the shelters we have worked with have said that the better images make a difference," said Sloop.

"When I was a kid if you wanted an animal, you went to the shelter. And now, if you want an animal you go online. If the online image isn't beautiful and inviting and something you would want to have at your house, you'll keep clicking until you find it. But when you have that animal that looks at you and grabs your heart, you'll go into the shelter. That may not be the one that you come home with, but we've got you into the shelter so you can find the one you connect with," said Sloop of the concept that drove him to create the Shelter Art Foundation.

**IN THE PAST YEAR**, under the leadership of Tawny Hammond, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter has implemented a multi-faceted social media campaign to engage with the community in new ways and to increase adoptions. "A strong photography program coupled with a strategic social media program is paramount to success. With training and attention, we all can do it."

When the Shelter Art Foundation contacted Hammond about hosting a workshop, she said,

"How soon can we do it?" Not only did volunteers from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter participate, but representatives from humane societies in the District of Columbia and Montgomery County, Maryland were also present.

The non-profit Shelter Art Foundation was founded in 2010 when Sloop realized that he and his volunteer photo team at the Monterey SPCA had figured out an easy to learn, low cost technique that combined advanced animal wrangling strategies with a basic studio photography setup. He founded the non-profit and started traveling to shelters around the country.

"At first, I'd visit a shelter whenever I was traveling to see family or friends," says Sloop. In late 2013 he was contacted by Purina to see if support from them would enable the Foundation to expand their program. Once they conduct the workshop, they are able to provide the shelters they visit with the equipment needed to set up the shelter studio at no cost.

**THERE ARE CURRENTLY** 25 shelters in California, two in Nevada, one in Alabama, one in Louisiana, one in Missouri and one in Virginia scheduled for this spring.

"Our goal is to empower as many shelters and rescue organizations as possible with the training and equipment they need to improve their images," says Sloop. For more information about the organization, go to their website at [www.ShelterArtFoundation.org](http://www.ShelterArtFoundation.org).



### Corky's Story

**My name is Corky, I'm a 14 1/2-year-old Rag Doll. To know me is to love me. I love people and I'm friendly with other pets, including dogs when they come to visit. When I was a kitten my mom, dad and grandmother walked me on a leash and I went "pottie" outside like my dog friends. A couple years ago we moved to a house that has a fenced in yard so now I can go out on my own without a leash and I just love it. When I'm ready to go inside all I have to do is go to one of the doors and someone will let me in, usually by then I'm ready for a nap. I hope everyone will like my story as much as my grandmother enjoyed sharing it. My grandmom is Monica Parks, she lives in McLean.**



### Sandy Comes Home

**Krista Gatt of Great Falls sent us this photo of Sandy, the family's treasured Cocker Spaniel, 6, and Joey, 9. Sandy came from a broken home in 2008 and has become an important member of the family. She enjoys taking long walks, chasing squirrels and eating (almost) anything.**

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PHOTOS BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

## Young Musicians Dazzle at the Alden Theater

The “Young Soloists Recital” at the Alden Theater featured four talented pianists and one violinist.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD  
THE CONNECTION

Five young musicians spanning an age range of seven years were given the chance to shine in front of a large crowd at the Alden Theater on Sunday, Feb. 23. While the audience heard lovely renditions of Chopin and Beethoven’s works, the performers were able to relax a bit performing in a non-competition setting.

“Usually in competitions you perform for judges, but it’s very rare that you actually get to play for people who have just come here to listen to your music,” said 13-year old Kevin Wang, a student at Rachel Carson Middle School. Wang was joined by fellow pianists Victor Pan, 10, Evan Hu, 11, and Adam Heins, 17, as well as violinist Shankar Balasubramanian, 16.

The “Young Soloists Recital” on Sunday, Feb. 23 was one of several youth performances that take place at the Alden Theatre each year. Anita Lamkin, a former Fairfax County music librarian, has been organizing the Concerts at the Alden series since 1973. The Young Soloists program began after her first year, when she realized that there are a large number of younger musicians who had to compete with more experienced adults from around the area.

“It’s the only concert series that we know of that offers an opportunity like this,” said Lamkin, now retired. “It gives them a chance to do a little recital like a concert artist, with a first-class piano in a concert hall setting. It’s a great opportunity for them, plus it’s free for the public.”

Though each young performer has won numerous state and national awards, they were able to take a break from competing to play in front of the Sunday afternoon crowd. Parents and teachers alike agreed



Anita Lamkin, a sponsor for Concerts at the Alden, and Robert Ames Alden, the man for whom the theater was named, stand in front of Alden’s hanging picture in the lobby before the concert.

that the concerts are hugely beneficial due to the low-stress setting.

“It’s great that Alden is providing these kids the exposure in a formal theater setting where they can perform their hard work,” said, June Zheng, Evan Hu’s mother. Like Zheng, Marjory Lee, Hu’s teacher, couldn’t have been prouder following Sunday’s performance. Lee has worked with Hu for over five years and has watched his talents develop.

“They come and are inspired as children by these concerts. Here they can really express themselves instead of worrying about their scores,” said Lee.

The Concerts at the Alden series is provided thanks to the generous support of the Music Friends of the Fairfax County Public Library. The next performance on March 9 at 3 p.m. will feature violinist James Stern and pianist Audrey Andrist, better known as the Stern/Andrist Duo.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center’s FY 2016 Programs**  
Wednesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m.

The Governing Board of the McLean Community Center is **seeking input from residents** of Dranesville Small District 1A at its Public Hearing on Programs for FY 2016, which runs July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

**The Board is interested in hearing residents’ ideas for classes, community events, theatre programs, exhibits, tours and youth and teen activities.**

If you would like to speak at the hearing, call the Center to have your name placed on the speakers’ list. You also may submit comments in writing to:  
[george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**The McLean Community Center**  
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101  
703-790-0123/TTY: 711  
[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

# 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. 26- FRIDAY/FEB. 28

**"Here and There: Paintings of the Brogue and Beyond."** Paintings on exhibit by artist Jill Banks. Katie's Coffee at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760C Walker Road, Great Falls. [www.JillBanks.com](http://www.JillBanks.com).

**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.

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

**Concerts at the Alden.** 3 p.m. The McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. A classical music concert cosponsored by the Music Friends of the Fairfax County Public Library and The Alden.

## SUNDAY/MARCH 2

**Jazz Sunday.** Special music will be offered at both the 9:00 and 11:15 morning services including Come Sunday by Duke Ellington and the spiritual, Ain-a that Good News. All are welcome for jazz and worship. St. John's Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, one mile east of the beltway at Exit 44. For more information, please call 703-356-4902, or visit [www.stjohnsmclean.org](http://www.stjohnsmclean.org).

**Free Band Concert.** 7 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna. Admission is free and seating is available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Space is limited. Selections include music from famous Broadway musicals including George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, Andrew Lloyd Webber's Phantom of the Opera, John Kander's Chicago and Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg's Wizard of Oz. For more information, call 703-255-6360 or visit [www.viennacommunityband.org](http://www.viennacommunityband.org).

## TUESDAY/MARCH 4

**Great Falls United Methodist Church Annual Shrove Pancake & Sausage Dinner.** 5:30-7:30 p.m. 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Free- no reservations necessary. Donations accepted for Society of St. Andrew's food gleaning programs.

**Northern Virginia Bead Society Program Monthly Meeting.** 7 p.m. Their purpose is to encourage members of the community to appreciate and participate in the visual arts through beads. They endeavor to provide a network for education opportunities and the exchange of ideas about beads and techniques in beading. [www.nvbs.org](http://www.nvbs.org).

**Great Falls Senior Center Presents Distinguished Scholar Mark W. Cannon.** 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church, 1020 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Cannon has lectured at more than 70 institutions in 18 countries. He has held high positions in each of the three branches of government.

**Hunger Relief Pancake Dinner.** 5-7 p.m. The Hunger Church, Charles Wesley United Methodist Church, 6817 Dean Drive, McLean. Annual free pancake dinner with monetary donations to directly benefit the Society of St. Andrew (Sosa), a national nonprofit hunger-relief ministry that rescues 30-35 million



PHOTO BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

**From left: Brian Keith MacDonald as Cosme McMoon and Lee Mikeska Gardner as Florence Foster Jenkins in 'Souvenir: A Fantasia on the life of Florence Foster Jenkins' at 1st Stage Now playing Friday, Saturday, Sunday through March 2.**

## FRIDAY/MARCH 7

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington's (BGCGW) Fairfax County Region Inaugural Casino Night Fundraiser.** 6:30-11:30 p.m. The Ritz-Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd, McLean.

The Fairfax Regional Board will bring a bit of friendly Vegas-like fun to support the programming for the region's two Clubs. Unlike the money and chips found in real casinos, Casino Night guests will receive funny money and a bidder number. They will use their winnings from casino-favorites such as Black Jack, Texas Hold 'Em, and Craps to bid on fabulous raffle prizes. The more chips players accumulate at the gaming tables the better their chances to win great raffle prizes at end of evening.

The Fairfax Region of BGCGW provides a safe haven for more than 580 young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years old at two sites: Culmore Character Club and Murrigate Village Club. The clubs serve poor children, providing support for homework and academic success, life skills training, character building and fun. Ninety-Two percent of the Clubs' members qualify for free lunch.

Casino Night will not only be a night of fun and excitement, it will be a thrilling opportunity to support youth in the Fairfax community who need us most. The evening includes Ritz-Carlton dinner buffet, open bar, casino games, raffle, dancing, DJ and more, for \$95 a person or \$175 per couple. Special overnight room rate of \$119 available.

Register now. To purchase tickets for Casio Night & and more information about Fairfax Region of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington visit: [www.bgcgw.org/fairfax/casino-night/](http://www.bgcgw.org/fairfax/casino-night/)

pounds of fresh, nutritious, excess produce each year that would otherwise go to waste. Kids will enjoy crafts and decorating their pancakes. Sponsored by the United Methodist Men of The Hunger Church. <http://www.TheHungerChurch.org>

American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St, N, Vienna. Tickets \$25 before February 23, \$25 after. Contact 703-938-9535 or [www.Legion180.net](http://www.Legion180.net).

## SUNDAY/MARCH 9

**The Stern/Andrist Duo Concert.** 3 p.m. Alden Theatre of McLean, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. This free concert will feature violinist James Stern of the University of Maryland and multi-talented pianist Audrey Andrist in a program that includes a sonata by Janacek, Four Pieces by Suk, Theme and Variations by Messiaen, and the Sonata in C minor by Beethoven.

## WEDNESDAY/MARCH 5

**Ash Wednesday Services at St. John's Episcopal Church.** 7-11 a.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 8

**Mardi Gras Party.** 8 p.m. Vienna's

## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

victed bad guys – yet it was opposed, too. This likely life-saving legislation (SB 510) had bipartisan support in the Virginia Senate but was defeated by the Republicans in charge of the House Courts of Justice Committee. Shame on them. They

do not deserve the honor of serving the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is time we had leaders who choose to protect victims and the vulnerable rather than criminals.

**Ame Burgoyne**  
McLean



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## Here's What's Happening at MCC



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Sunday, March 2, 2 p.m.  
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

### Midday Movie Musicals "West Side Story"

Wednesday, March 5, 1 p.m.  
Free admission

### "The Intersection of Climate Change & Art"

Thursday, March 6, 7:30 p.m.  
Free Admission

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

Thursday, March 13, 7-9 p.m.  
Old Firehouse Teen Center  
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### Christopher K. Morgan & Artists

Fri & Sat, March 14-15, 8 p.m.  
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### Theatre Unspeakable presents "Superman 2050"

Saturday, March 22  
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### An Alden Theatre Production "Miss Nelson is Missing"

Sat. & Sun, March 29-30 and April 5-6  
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The McLean Community Center  
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Home of the Alden Theatre  
[www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)



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# SPORTS

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Jacqueline Green and the McLean gymnastics team finished runner-up at the 6A North region meet on Feb. 18 at Lake Braddock Secondary School.



## McLean Gymnastics Finishes Region, State Runner-Up

After some early struggles, the McLean gymnastics team managed to finish in the top two at the 6A North region meet on Feb. 18 at Lake Braddock Secondary School and earn a trip to states.

The Highlanders were in a three-team race with Washington-Lee and T.C. Williams for the top two spots. McLean finished runner-up for the third straight year, finishing less than a half-point behind three-time champion W-L.

"I had no idea what the scores were going to be," McLean head

coach Courtney Lesson said after the meet. "I was a little nervous that we weren't quite there, but I wasn't sure."

McLean overcame a rough start to finish with a score of 140.077. W-L totaled 140.449. T.C. Williams finished third with a score of 138.459.

"They moved on from one event to the next," Lesson said of the Highlanders, "moving forward with all their routines."

What were Lesson's expectations for states?

"I just want the girls to have fun," she said, "and go in and hit

all their routines."

The Highlanders did more than have fun during the state meet Feb. 21-22 at Salem High School in Virginia Beach. McLean finished 6A state runner-up, posting a score of 143.725. Cox won the state championship with a score of 144.95. Washington-Lee (143.125) took third, and Stafford (142.875) finished fourth.

McLean's Nathalie Thomas tied with Marshall's Morgan Stahl for fifth on beam with a score of 9.6. Thomas also tied with Westfield's Katie Freix for sixth on floor.

Hayfield's Molly Overstreet won



McLean's Lizzy Brown-Kaiser performs on beam during the 6A North region meet on Feb. 18 at Lake Braddock Secondary School.

a state title on bars with a score of 9.925. Stuart's Eleanor Freed won the vault title with a score of 9.9.

At regionals, Thomas placed third on beam (9.317) and floor (9.35). Lizzy Brown-Kaiser finished sixth on vault (9.525) and

eighth on beam (8.817). Jacqueline Green finished seventh on beam (8.9).

The top five individuals in each event qualified for states.

— JON ROETMAN

### SPORTS ROUNDUPS

#### South Lakes Indoor Track Qualifies 20 for States

Victories in the boys' 500 meters, long jump and 4x400 meter relay highlighted the South Lakes indoor track team's performance at the 6A North Regional Championship, Wednesday, Feb. 19 at the Prince George's Sportsplex in Landover, Md.

SLHS will be represented by 20 athletes at the 6A State Indoor Championships Feb. 27-March 1 in Hampton.

Senior Daniel Johnsen won the 500 meters in 1:06.08. He also anchored the winning 4x400 relay team (3:28.16) of seniors Michael Kerr, Luis Rivas and junior Sam Arpee. Johnsen also finished fourth in the 300 meters with a 36.87.

The top six finishers in each of the regional events advance to the state track meet.



PHOTO BY GABRIELLE LOZAMA

South Lakes' Khayri Denny, left, and Daniel Johnsen compete at the 6A North regional indoor track meet.

Khayri Denny jumped 22-5 1/4 to win the regional title in the long jump. The senior also finished fifth in the 55 meters (6.65), sixth in the 300 meters (37.22) and 15th in the triple jump (39-3 1/2). Denny teamed

with seniors Ben O'Connor, Marcus Harrell and Anthony Mayo for a fourth place finish in the 4x200 (1:34.72). Junior Delaney Wickman was second in the 500 meters (1:16.67) while sophomore Golden Kumi-Darfour finished fifth (1:17.56). Freshman Devyn Jones ran a 8.90 in the 55-meter hurdles for fifth place and a trip to states and junior Comfort Reed placed fourth in the triple jump with a leap of 36-2. Reed was also 12th in the long jump (16-2).

Other top-six performances at the regional meet include: girls' 4x400 relay team of juniors Ozioma Chinaka, Maya Rodriguez, Kumi-Darfour and Jones ran a 4:10.20 for sixth place, and senior Abby Reinhold, juniors Erin Bidwell

and Gabrielle Acosta and sophomore Monica Lannen placing sixth in the girls 4x800 (10:03.14).

#### McLean Boys', Girls' Basketball Teams Lose at Regionals

The McLean boys' basketball team lost to Lake Braddock 73-44 on Monday night during the opening round of the 6A North region tournament.

McLean, the No. 4 seed from Conference 6, finished the season with an 8-17 record, including a 64-57 victory over Lake Braddock on Dec. 26.

The McLean girls' basketball team lost to T.C. Williams 45-44 on Monday. The Highlanders, the No. 3 seed from Conference 6, finished the season with a 20-5 record. McLean started the season by winning its first 13 games and 19 of its first 20.



PHOTO BY ELMIRA TOGLIATTI

## An Igloo in McLean

Envisioned by Mastermind Peter Classen and executed by Johnny, 6, and Lilly, 4.

# Casino for a Cause

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# High Five



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I made it. It's five years after receiving a terminal diagnosis on February 27, 2009 from my oncologist: stage IV non-small cell lung cancer, accompanied by a "13-month to two-year" prognosis. Let's be honest, medical professionals don't toss around the word "terminal" because you're going to be treated at an airport. Presumably, they know their facts and figures as well as the patient's present condition, confirmed by a variety of diagnostic results from X-Rays, CT Scans, P.E.T. Scans, lab work and of course the ever-popular biopsy, so their diagnosis/prognosis is a bit more than an educated guess. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to every rule and until proven otherwise, I was not about to succumb to their statistics. Still, based on the best medical knowledge available at the time, this patient (yours truly) was given a limited life expectancy and encouraged to take the vacation I had always dreamed of – for obvious you're-life-is-now-shorter-than-you-ever-imagined-type reasons, and yet, five years hence, here I am.

I have to admit, surviving, at least from my perspective, is indeed all it's cracked up to be. Aside from beating the alternatives, it has been, for me, empowering in a way. Not that I think I wrote the book on what one need do to fend off the ravages of this insidious disease – though I have made my share of changes and accommodations, but I have persevered. And for those closest to me who knew me when (pre-diagnosis), I have switched and fought – I have occasionally looked back. And even though I never was a smoker and rarely exposed to second-hand smoke, I may very well have been a victim of some of my own circumstances. Although I didn't/don't drink much or consume drugs to any extreme degree, my eating habits may have contributed to a weakened immune system which in some way kick-started the cancer cells in my body (which we all have, by the way); and if you believe any of the like-minded literature coming out of Johns Hopkins and other respected medical institutions: we all may very well be what we eat – or don't eat. And apparently, there may be consequences – both good and unfortunately, bad.

For the past nearly five years (beginning in June, 2009), I have chronicled my life as a cancer patient. Every week, save for a few non-cancer columns as we call them, I have written about cancer and the range of emotions I've experienced. I don't think I've not shared one emotion with you that I've felt. Not that it was ever important that it was me doing the talking, because it wasn't/isn't, it's simply that I had a forum/space and the support of my publisher and editor to unburden myself in this very public way. And since writing with such honesty came easy to me (I had been writing non-cancer columns in the Connection since December 1999), having such a juicy and compelling subject on which to write was not particularly challenging to me. Moreover, given the incredibly appreciative and super-positive feedback I have received from readers over the years, I have felt encouraged to continue.

Some weeks however, especially after chemotherapy, the words don't exactly flow, but for now, life is going on. I have another CT Scan on the day this column publishes, 2/26/2014. Within a day or two, my oncologist will e-mail the results to me. Within a day or two after that, I will likely write my next column. I hope the news is good. It might not be though. When you've so far outlived your original prognosis as I have, it's hard not to think you're borrowing time – and as most of us will readily admit, pay-backs are hell.

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

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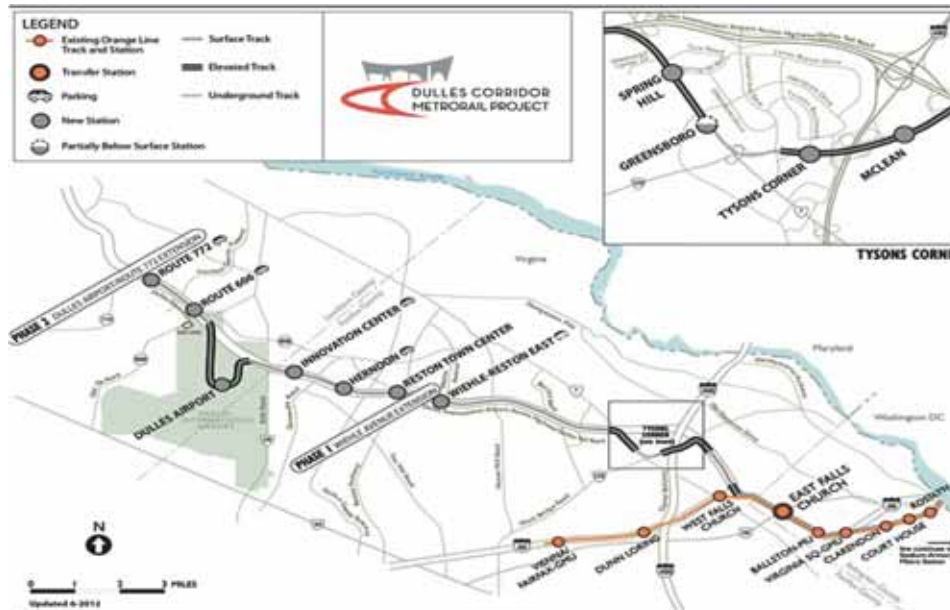


PHOTO COURTESY OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

A map of the entire planned 23-mile extension from West Falls Church Metro to Route 772 in Loudoun County.

# MWAA Prepares To Break Ground on Phase II

FROM PAGE 3

project,” said Carnaggio to a room of development and contracting industry employees. Carnaggio, an engineer who has worked on the project for over ten years, pointed out that the planned 23-mile extension edging out to Loudoun County will increase the size of the Metro system by 25 percent, a nearly unparalleled increase in size in American transit systems.

In addition to five new Metro stations in Tysons Corner and Reston, Phase I contractor Dulles Transit Partners also built a redesigned West Falls Church station with a new inspections facility and sound box, as well as a parking garage at Wiehle-Reston Station.

Speaking on potential risks in handing the system over for final testing, Carnaggio expressed the importance of creating a “safe and reliable system.”

“During Phase I our job was to do our due diligence and make sure that the contractor built a safe and reliable system,” said Carnaggio. “In Phase II, it’s just as important to get off to a good start. We’ve got some good partners, and that’s our expectation.”

Just as DTP, a partnership between developers Bechtel and URS, was put in charge of Phase I construction, Capital Rail Constructors, composed of Clark Construction Group and Kiewit Infrastructure South, will be responsible for the next 12 miles of rail in Phase II.

Capital Rail’s assigned task list includes six more stations, beginning at Reston Town Center and ending at Route 772 in Loudoun County. Along with those new stops, the contractor is also tasked with procuring five new parking garages and a railyard and maintenance facility built from the ground up at Dulles Airport.

In Dec. 2013, MWAA began geotechnical work near Dulles Airport that involves us-



PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

**MWAA Project Director Sam Carnaggio presented Silver Line Phase I progress and Phase II plans on Tuesday, Feb. 18.**

ing soil boring equipment to test the ground as deep as 30 feet below the earth, according to Carnaggio. More than 1,300 boring tests will be completed in western Fairfax and Loudoun counties before Phase II construction begins.

Though Herndon and Reston residents are clearly anxious for their brand new Metro stations, it’s easy to forget that all parts of Northern Virginia will be affected by the arrival of the Silver Line.

“I’m very excited about the Metro coming out West,” said Katie Rundquist, a Purcellville resident who works for contractor Hensel Phelps, prior to Carnaggio’s presentation Tuesday. “Living in Purcellville we don’t have many transportation options other than the Loudoun County Connector, so this will make getting into D.C. a little bit easier.”

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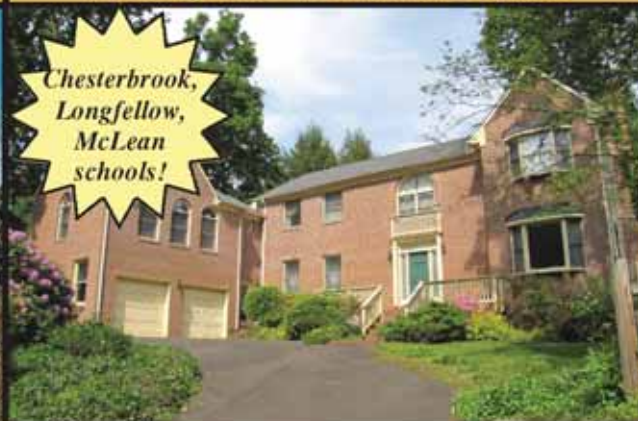


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