

# St. Patrick's Day at the Old Brogue

NEWS, PAGE 5

From left, Deborah Hall, Kelly Laurienti, Dana Bowman and Amy Papanu celebrate St. Patrick's Day at The Old Brogue on March 17, 2012.

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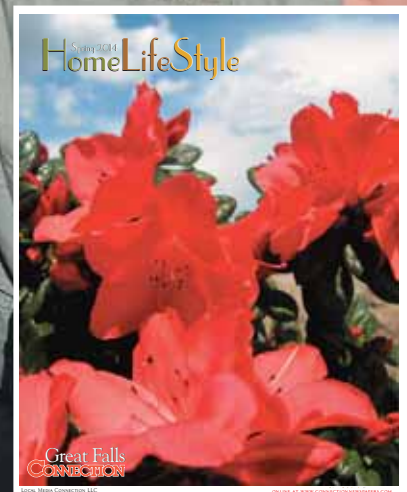


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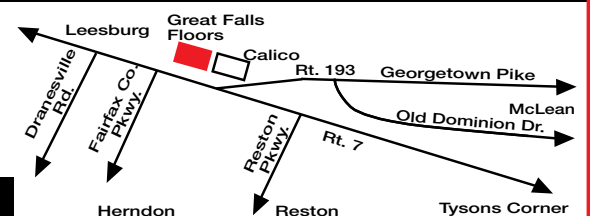
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**Marion Dobbins focused her masters thesis research on the local African-American Community.**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

# Search for Community

**Uncovering the building blocks of African-American community in Fairfax County in the Post-Civil War Era.**

BY ARCHIE BROWN  
GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**T**he Great Falls Historical Society (GFHS) February program featured “micro historian and ethnographer” Marion Dobbins as guest speaker. As a “micro historian” Dobbins focuses on a narrow spectrum of history concentrating on community and contributions of African Americans in Fairfax County. Dobbins presented original research on the Great Falls African American community and surrounding areas. Her research challenges conventional paradigms about the formation of community and reveals new contributions from “connected” African American communities within Fairfax County.

Dobbins stated, “History is never ending. So many of these communities are gone... It’s important to collect and preserve community history.” She presented a “skeleton review” of what she hopes to include in her doctoral dissertation work beginning this fall at George Mason University.

Virginia had the highest population of slaves in the U.S. and profited immensely in the production of slaves for export to southern states. Emancipation instantly freed four million slaves - a freedom which rapidly eroded with the failure of reconstruction in the late 1870s. Changes in constitutional law and “societal fear” directly impacted the rise and fall of community life throughout the entire struggle for freedom which spanned across the late 1700’s to the late 1900’s. Early signs of community formation were found in the Contraband Camp Wadsworth near Langley. Freed slaves with no citizenship rights were considered to be confiscated property or contraband.

**POST-CIVIL WAR** Freedman’s Bureau noted that Fairfax County African-Americans, having blacksmith, carpenter, shoe making, farming, masonry, cooking skills, etc., were enterprising and self-sustaining. Having the skillset they only needed laws for civil protection, access and accommodation, and needed land for survival.

Dobbins identified the building blocks which enabled the formation of community and then cited contributions which resulted from the shared goals of the larger “inter-connected community” across Fairfax County. She stated several times that survival of African American communities was a function of communication, church, education, land and commerce.

Communication traveled fast, largely by word of mouth. By 1831, after Nat Turner’s Rebellion, the

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 7



**Louise Archer educated her students at Louise Archer Elementary School in Vienna, formerly local colored school named after her.**



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

**From left, Joshua O’Cain, Surya Ambardar, Mike Dudzik, Brandon Boose, Justin Meeker, Paul Reinke, Nick Hodge, Jack Bush**

## Boy Scouts Earn Science Merit Badge

**Boy Scouts from Troop 55 build an electroscope at the Great Falls Elementary STEM Fair.**

**O**n Feb. 3, Boy Scouts from Troop 55 assisted Great Falls Elementary by setting up a booth at their STEM Fair. The booth demonstrated how to build and use a homemade electroscope. Using copper wire, a glass jar and aluminum foil, Troop 55 Boy Scouts constructed the electroscope, and then helped participants generate static electricity using balloons rubbed on hair, scarves and vinyl notebooks.

The electroscope is an early scientific instrument that is used to detect the presence and magnitude of electric charge. It was invented by British physi-

cian William Gilbert around the year 1600.

Students attending the STEM Fair were impressed at how effectively the homemade electroscope measured the electrical charge generated by the balloons.

The process of building and demonstrating the electroscope fulfilled one requirement for the Nuclear Science Merit Badge for the Boy Scouts who attended.

As Nick Hodge stated, “This was a really good experience for us. We could contribute to the community and also get a requirement for our merit badge!”



**Troop 55 Boy Scouts Nick Hodge, Surya Ambardar, Brandon Boose and Joshua O’Cain explain and demonstrate the electroscope to Great Falls Elementary Principal, Ryan Lonnott**

locality	education debt	transportation debt	other general government debt	enterprise activities debt	total debt	per capita debt
Fairfax County	\$1,549,052,341	\$396,425,978	\$1,489,446,960	\$554,411,229	\$3,989,336,508	\$3,564.93
Arlington County	\$415,885,635	\$112,840,854	\$455,326,656	\$428,655,606	\$1,412,708,751	\$6,589.96
Loudoun County	\$890,389,301	\$0	\$360,213,903	\$2,060,377	\$1,252,663,581	\$3,803.35
Prince William	\$597,558,000	\$201,316,000	\$260,383,000	\$0	\$1,059,257,000	\$2,552.72
Alexandria City	\$152,270,716	\$17,340,064	\$365,761,922	\$27,144,311	\$535,372,702	\$3,731.76
Fairfax City	\$88,893,350	\$0	\$78,185,450	\$29,998,814	\$197,077,614	\$8,618.81
Manassas Park	\$58,228,329	\$0	\$59,670,144	\$14,776,604	\$132,675,077	\$8,930.79
Manassas	\$39,298,653	\$7,690,477	\$15,529,780	\$30,376,597	\$92,995,507	\$2,380.84
Falls Church	\$4,869,733	\$0	\$39,573,050	\$33,821,309	\$78,264,092	\$6,227.75

# A Debt to Society

Local governments use debt as a tool to build for the future.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

Back in the 1920s, Harry Byrd became governor of Virginia on what he called a “pay-as-you-go” platform. Byrd had an almost pathological hatred of debt, fueled in part by mounting debt problems of his family’s business. Now, almost a century later, leaders across Northern Virginia have a very different view about the role debt should play in balancing the books. Local governments across Virginia have taken on more than \$8 billion in debt.

“Some jurisdictions are having to be more careful with their debt load as they are small and have a weak real estate base,” said Stephen Fuller, director of the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University. “Others see that having high quality infrastructure is the best way to support a growing economy that will enable them to pay off the debt.”

Fairfax County has the largest debt by far, almost \$4 billion. But Fairfax also has more people than any of the other jurisdictions. So the county’s per capita debt burden is actually lower than Arlington or Alexandria. Financial reports show that local governments across Northern Virginia have been taking on increasing debt in recent years, and some believe that trend might accelerate in the near future. Because Congress is considering eliminating some ex-

emptions for income tax on municipal bonds, local governments might consider taking on larger amounts of debt in the near future to take advantage of lower interest rates.

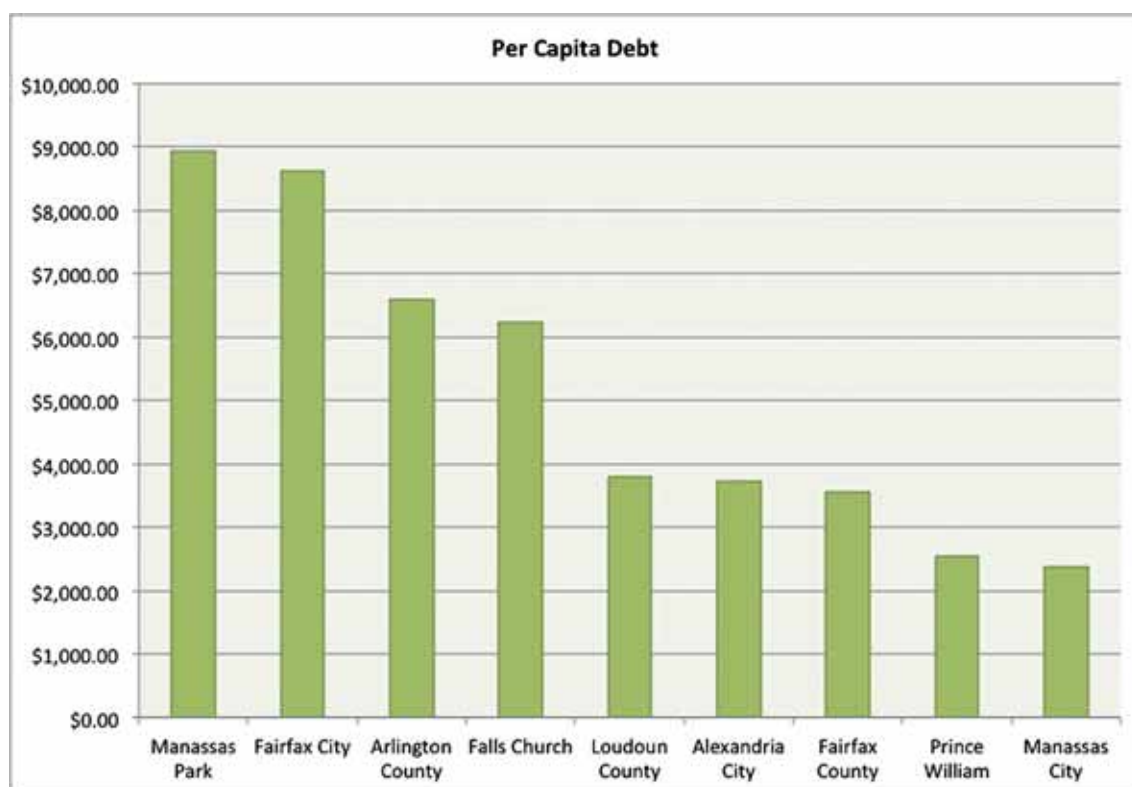
“There are some clouds gathering on the horizon that will impose significantly greater increases in costs for borrowing to issue bonds to finance long-term improvements,” said Frank Shafroth, director of the Center for State and Local Leadership. “Local governments are asking themselves if they want to risk deferring borrowing knowing it might carry a much higher interest rate.”

**GOVERNMENT LEADERS** say the old Byrd philosophy of “pay-as-you-go” is a relic of the past in much the same way as the policy of racial segregation associated with the Byrd machine. Although government officials acknowledge that local governments are taken on increasing amounts of debt, they argue that it’s all relative to the amount of money the jurisdiction raises each year and how much value is tied to land in the jurisdiction.

“All the Northern Virginia jurisdictions are looking at the same metrics — they can’t exceed a three percent limit of outstanding debt as a percent of assessed value, and annual debt payments can’t exceed 10 percent of their total budget,” said Joe LaHait, debt coordinator for Fairfax County. “Those two metrics are strongly abided by, and they are constantly monitored by the bond rating agencies who ultimately provide the ratings to every single jurisdiction in the state.”

Arlington County has one of the highest per capita debt loads in Northern Virginia, an indication that county leaders are willing to use its bonding author-

SEE DEMANDS, PAGE 9



Per capita debt.

## Preventing Teen Suicides

Recent deaths shine light on FCPS suicide prevention programs.

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Every 15 seconds, a teen in the United States tries to commit suicide.

Every 90 minutes, one succeeds.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also reports that the number of attempted suicides among teenagers increased from 6.3 percent in 2009 to 7.8 percent in 2011.

In Fairfax County, between four and seven students take their own lives every year, according to the authors of a 60-page report compiled last September by a team of community mental health agencies and Fairfax County Public School specialists.

“The youth rate, despite also being below state and national rates, remains unacceptable. The impact of suicide on families, friends, and communities is immeasurable,” the report states.

In a span of 30 days, Fairfax County residents have felt the impact and pain of teen suicide on four separate occasions. In early February, two Langley High School students committed suicide a day apart. Last week, two more students from Woodson High School took their own lives.

“It’s very clear there’s an increased frequency of suicidal behavior and thinking in Fairfax County this winter,” said Dr. Peter Robbins, M.D., medical director of The Child & Family Counseling Group in Fairfax. “If you compare this number to last winter, there’s been a higher frequency of this behavior.”

While Robbins acknowledges there are “no great answers” to the rash of teen suicides, he has been working with Fairfax County Public Schools to conduct seminars that clue parents in to the warning signs of depression and suicide.

“Numerous studies have shown that identifying at-risk students early is the best chance of prevention,” Robbins said.

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS** is doing that, through an array of programs and services aimed at spotting students at-risk for depression and suicide. Programs range

from 24/7 crisis response services to police training to mental health screenings to primary prevention programs.

Being a teenager has never been easy.

But today’s teens are feeling new pressures from many different fronts. According to a new poll, conducted by NPR along with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health, nearly 40 percent of parents said their high school students are experiencing added stress from school.

The curriculum is more demanding, homework sessions are longer and gaining admission to college is more competitive, which means the stakes are high for testing.

Add social media to the mix, where students can compare their existence to other teens 24 hours a day on Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and other social networks, and the resulting stress can lead to depression and suicidal thoughts.

How can parents, students, friends, teachers help a student through the roller-coaster years of adolescence?

“It is easy to misread depres-

SEE SUICIDE, PAGE 9

## Additional Resources

### THE PREVENTION TOOLKIT:

a collection of data and resources regarding youth behaviors and risk factors, including depression and suicide, in Fairfax County. The toolkit supports organizations, communities, and individuals in developing data-informed strategies to address identified needs. It includes links to and resources about developing programs, implementing policies, and accessing services. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention/toolkit.htm>

### THE FAIRFAX COUNTY YOUTH SURVEY:

A joint initiative of Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), the annual survey provides data on student behaviors and risk and protective factors. The 2011-12 school year survey taken by eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders included questions about mental health and suicide. Full results can be found at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey).

### FAIRFAX COUNTY’S PREVENTION SYSTEM:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention)

# News



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Patrons of The Old Brogue in Great Falls fill the front porch during their annual St. Patrick's Day celebration Saturday.

## St. Patrick's Day at the Old Brogue

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at your local Irish pub, The Old Brogue. Come out to listen to Sunday Night Snuggery Concerts with Pennywhistle on March 16 at 4 and 6 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person. Or join in on the fun on Monday, March

17, for The Snuggery's Irish Concerts, featuring Pennywhistle (Barry, Donal & Leonard Nelson) straight from County Donegal, Ireland. Includes lunch or dinner. For reservations call 703-759-3309

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## Happy St. Catrick's Day!

You've heard about St. Patrick who drove the snakes out of Ireland, but did you know about St. Catrick, who saved the kittens out of shelters? Now's your chance to find out! Join Lost Dog & Cat Rescue Foundation for a St. Catrick's Day celebration, and learn how you can help save lives.

- ♣ Foster Crew Members will answer questions about the most important thing you can do to help.
- ♣ Adoption Center Coordinators will provide information about volunteering at PetSmart centers.
- ♣ Our Transport Coordinator will explain how you can help with little more than some time and a car.



Charlie, delivered by St. Catrick, is available for adoption

**Join us at Lost Dog Café-McLean**  
Saturday, March 15, 3-7 p.m. Enjoy snacks & soft drinks while learning how you can help.  
1690 Anderson Road, McLean (near Safeway)  
[www.lostdogandcatrescue.org](http://www.lostdogandcatrescue.org)



# OPINION

## Voting Against Virginia?

Local proponents of expanding health coverage for poor people have a point about those in the General Assembly voting against it.

When Delegates Scott Surovell, Charniele Herring and Rob Krupicka, along with Sen. Adam Ebbin got together to make the case for expanding Medicaid in Virginia, they brought slide presentations, charts, spreadsheets, poll results and more.

It is a compelling argument that expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act is not only good for the health of working poor Virginians, it's good for the health of Virginia's economy. What's more, polls show that Virginians support expanding Medicaid, even Virginians who didn't vote for Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

### EDITORIAL

Expanding health care for poor individuals and families who so far have been cut out of health care reform by the General Assembly's refusal would create more than 30,000 new jobs, hundreds of jobs in every district in the state. It would bring in \$5 million in Federal dollars every day, \$1.8 billion a year. It would save the General Fund \$285 million over the biannual budget, money that could be spent on education, mental health and other critical priorities.

"Real people are suffering because of this,"

said Ebbin. "Real people would be helped." That includes working families and more than 12,000 veterans. Ebbin related the story of a taxi driver from his district who had a stroke in his 40s. With no insurance, Mount Vernon Inova Hospital covered his acute treatment and recovery. But without insurance, his access to rehabilitation was limited and as a result, his lifetime expectations are likely limited.

Saying no to \$5 million a day is, in fact, voting against Virginia.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A Manufactured Crisis

To the Editor

Visit your local sports equipment store to purchase a \$100 fishing pole. You may not know that Medicaid will collect an additional \$2.83 in what used to be known as a Federal Excise Tax – reserved for luxury goods and services- now an ObamaCare Medical Devices tax. Buy a new set of tires for \$500 and you pay an additional \$14.15 on the Medical Devices tax. This is just another, in a long string of hidden provisions of a bad law. Go figure how a new set of tires or a fishing pole is a medical device. The Department of Health and Human Services has asked retailers to not show the tax on your sales receipt! Why an open, transparent Federal Government would ask that is beyond this writer.

Our General Assembly has ended the 2014 Session without passing a balanced budget – a requirement in our Constitution. A special session (passing a clean budget and extending the session) was proposed by the Republican-dominated House. Not good

enough for the socialist Governor and Senate – in an irresponsible, cynical move, the socialists demanded No Medicaid – No Budget. Welcome to government by manufactured crisis. The ramifications of this action will have a serious impact on state agencies and our local governments who depend on the state for additional funds. Each of these organizations cannot complete their budgeting process. Sheriff's deputies, mental health reform, schools, roads, state universities - all in line for modest pay increases are being held hostage. Our teachers have not seen a pay raise in three years. On July 1, 2014, the government effectively stops. We are quite familiar with government shutdowns. In this case, the blame can be laid squarely at the doorstep of the Governor and Senate: ruling on the barest of winning margins in the recent elections. With a 20-20 split in the Senate (the Lieutenant Governor, until recently did not have a tie-breaking vote on budget matters), we will have to suffer through to see who blinks first on this well-documented train wreck. Some prefer to dress up this shameful, morally repulsive tactic

describing it as an impasse.

The Medicare expansion proposal (Obamacare in disguise) provides for the Federal Government to subsidize Virginia with a substantial portion of the additional cost for the first three (5?) years. Ask yourself: where are the Federal dollars coming from? Answer: they are borrowed! (The Federal Government just got Congressional concurrence to increase the debt ceiling limit.) You can be sure we taxpayers will wind up paying for it eventually – wondering why the Virginia bubble has burst.

It's no secret that the current Medicare system in Virginia suffers from as much as 30 percent fraud, waste, and abuse. It badly needs fixing. Do we expect the current Attorney General's Consumer Affairs Department to fix it? Dream on. Let's fix what is broken first – then take stock on what we really need for the substantially less number than the WAG 400,000 health-care denied people. In the meantime – No ObamaCare, No WarnerCare, No HowellCare, and No PlumCare!

**Jack Kenny**  
Reston Republican

## Race to Watch - II

To the Editor:

There were a few errors in my letter published in the

Connection of March 5<sup>th</sup> ["Race to Watch"]. I stated that Barbara Comstock spent \$1.4 on her race and won by less than 52 percent of the vote. She actually spent \$1.4 million and received 50.6 percent of the vote, a margin of only 422 votes.

I also understated Bob Marshall's margin of victory. He won by 495 votes, not close to 400 votes.

**Sue Rosenberg**  
Vienna

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 12

##### Great Falls Citizens

##### Association Town Hall

**Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. This meeting will focus on deer management and trails. Come give your opinions on these issues, and on what GFCA should be working on to better the community.

#### THURSDAY/MARCH 13

##### Vienna Arts Society Meeting.

**10 a.m.** Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Nationally known expressionist artist, Chica Brunsvoold, NWS, AWS, will give a demonstration on painting in watercolor on Yupo, she will pull images out of her non-objective beginnings in a process she calls "play, observe, study and discover." [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org) 703-319-3971.

#### TUESDAY/MARCH 18

##### Providence District

**Supervisor** Linda Smyth, School Board Member Patty Reed, and the county and schools budget staffs will discuss the FY 2015 Advertised Budget. The meeting will be held in Room 110 of the Dunn Loring Administrative Center, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring starting at 7 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 19

##### Vienna Photographic Society

**Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Oakton Elementary School, 3000 Chain Bridge Rd., Oakton. Karen Messick will judge the March 19 competition of the Vienna Photographic Society ("VPS"), which focuses on close-ups. The competition is open to anyone who is a paid member of VPS on the evening of the judging. [www.vpsva.org](http://www.vpsva.org)

Great Falls  
**CONNECTION**

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**Call: 703-778-9410**  
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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)

**Editor in Chief**  
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)

**CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426**  
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The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.  
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By e-mail: [north@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:north@connectionnewspapers.com)

# Community History Preserved

FROM PAGE 3

laws in Virginia forbid both the enslaved and freed persons of color the ability to read or write. Alternative methods of communication emerged as a result. Late night gatherings, bush harbor prayer services and secret pathways, to and from various plantations allowed slaves to congregate and create community. Music, singing and dancing were other forms of non-verbal communication.

Church offered spiritual relief, hope for a better life and organization. Connected by Northern Virginia Baptist Association, 52 churches were created after Reconstruction. Dobbins emphasized the role of larger church networking and recalled her family's attendance of several of these churches as a child. Smaller churches such as The Salem Baptist Church of Great Falls played an equally significant role in uniting family to causes in the local community.

Education is the mark of progress and progress was impossible without education. As an ethnographer Dobbins interviewed the children of Thomas and Geneve Johnson - Rebecca, Carol and Doris, ex-residents at 1000 Leigh Mill Road, who indicated that there was "good racial harmony" in Great Falls. The Johnsons looked forward to seeing a black horse wrangler named "Goldie" at Reinhart's Rodeo which was a Great Falls desegregated event every year.

Education, however, was segregated and the Johnson children attended all black schools beginning in Odrick's Corner, then Louise Archer Elementary and Luther Jackson High School which was later desegregated in 1964. Contributions of Louise Archer, principal of the segregated Vienna Elementary

School, were highlighted in a video presentation.

Land was key to independence and ownership was always strongly emphasized within the community. When the opportunity to own land arrived they bought all they could. A large portion of land obtained by Fairfax County African Americans from 1863-1890 was enabled by General John S. Crocker (Retired), who openly sold land to non-whites. Cyrus Carter purchased 21 acres from Crocker. Another ex-slave, Frederick Foote, Sr. purchased 50 acres from his slave-owner, which eventually became Seven Corners.

Commerce resulted when black farmers sold produce back to General John S. Crocker who was the Director of the D.C. Jail system. Cyrus Carter of Lincolntonville had agreements with Crocker and also sold produce outside Liberty Street Market creating finance for community developments. Black farmers sold at smaller community stores but the cost of selling inside Liberty Street Market was extremely expensive. It can be assumed that most sold outside of the market.

Notable contributions were identified in George Washington's attempts to transform the Dismal Swamp with slave labor, and later the use of slave labor in the building of the Patowmack Canal 75 year project.

Another African-American of interest was Alfred Odrick who created a public school on his 30 acre Mclean property "Odrick's Corner."

GFHS extends a special thanks to Dobbins for a very insightful program and wishes her success as she pursues her Ph.D. at George Mason University.

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# Citizens Air Opposing Opinions on Molsters' Stable

**Great Falls Land Use and Zoning Committee Hearing draws a large crowd.**

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

**I**t was standing room only at the Great Falls Grange assembly hall on Monday night, March 10 and occasionally emotions ran a bit high as residents and other interested parties turned out in force for the Great Falls Citizens Association Land Use and Zoning Committee's (GFCALUZ) hearing on a Special Permit application by the Molster family to operate a riding stable on their property at 815 Blacks Hill Road.

It's not a new topic around Great Falls. Sharon and Charles "Chip" Molster have been deeply engaged in efforts to re-launch Blacks Hill Stables, LLC riding lessons on their own home ground. The Molsters began teaching riding at the property in 2009, but had to suspend their home-based operation after a complaint by neighbors was filed against the business in 2012, at which time they relocated their training to the Turner Farm at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Springvale Road. "It's a temporary fix," said Chip Molster. "We now have to trailer our horses up and down the road, sometimes twice a day, creating more traffic and dust. And the facilities at Turner Park are just not for the youngest riders. We've had to stop those classes. And that's a shame. Those ages, 6, 7, 8, that's when the kids should be getting started."

Eventually, Fairfax County ruled against the use of the residentially-zoned property for paid riding lessons, although by law, the Molsters can keep numerous horses on the property and can even accept remuneration for boarding horses, something both Chip and Sharon say they do not want to do. "We want our own horses and we want to teach, especially the youngest students," they both agree. "We are not interested in boarding. That would mean more traffic and other possible negative impacts on the neighborhood."

**THE MOLSTERS** appealed the County's decision and are still awaiting the final determination. While the appeals process takes its course, the Molsters work their way through the Special Permit Application process. There have already been numerous meetings with neighbors, homeowners associations, GFCALUZ staff, Fairfax County authorities, other public hearings and the retained services of a land attorney, an engineer and other professional consultants. "The application alone cost over \$16K, so if anyone thinks we're in this to get rich, they should think again," laughed Chip Molster. "Although the Special Application fee has since been decreased and the County kindly gave us a refund," he added.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

**Charles "Chip" Molster and Sharon Molster have one last opportunity to answer questions and respond to concerns before the close of the Great Falls Citizens Association Land Use and Zoning Committee public hearing on their application for a Special Permit to operate a small riding stable on their 5.5 acre property on Blacks Hill Road in Great Falls.**



**Supporter Karen Washburn gave a brief history of equestrian land use in Great Falls. Washburn, a long-time area resident, real estate agent, writer and local historian commented that the Great Falls area was sending out the horse riding business to other places like Loudoun County, dimming its reputation as a piece of Virginia horse country.**



**The public hearing on Special Permit application SP 2013-DR-052 to operate the Blacks Hill Riding Stables at 815 Blacks Hill Road in Great Falls by Charles and Sharon Molster drew a large crowd on Monday night, March 10. Although only seven presentations were registered officially in the agenda, there were plenty in the audience who wanted a turn to speak on both sides of the issue.**

The March 10 public hearing was just the next round. GFCALUZ Co-Chair, and the evening's Hearing Officer, William Harvey II, made the "call to order." After defining

the Committee's purpose and function, Harvey explained that no decision would be immediately forthcoming. "The LUZ reports to the Great Falls Citizens Association

Executive Board. Once we have gathered all of the facts and opinions and reviewed the possible solutions, we will present our report to the Board," Harvey stated. "The Board makes an interim decision, then there may have to be a general membership meeting and vote."

First up on the agenda were the applicants. Chip Molster was the designated speaker for Blacks Hills Stables. Using a power point presentation with maps, graphics and photographs of the property and some of their students, Molster gave the details. "We have made numerous changes to our original program to address the concerns of our neighbors," said Molster. "Our request actually calls for less usage than what can be allowed 'By Right' versus Special Permit under the law. We would restrict the days of operation to no more than 5 days per week, and the number of students to a maximum of twelve, no more than four at any one time. Students would have to be transported to the property by carpools. With instructors, we are talking about no more than 4 - 6 cars per day travelling to and from the property on Blacks Hill Road," he said. "And no lights or PA systems would be used," he added.

Molster also spoke of the facility's charitable efforts within the community, supporting various organizations and persons in need, fundraising and providing horses for special community related events. He also noted that since 1992 his family was among those that worked to improve the condition of Blacks Hill Road and that they continue to play a major role in its maintenance. "We operated for three years without complaints," said Molster. "And we have tried to be totally transparent and willing to discuss any issues with our neighbors and work through their concerns."

**AFTER A BRIEF HISTORY** of equestrian land use in Great Falls by long-time resident, equestrienne, real estate agent and local historian Karen Washburn, who supports the application, Bob Buenzle, the primary opponent to the proposal took the floor. "The Blacks Hill Riding Stables just doesn't fit deep in a residential neighborhood," Buenzle began. According to Buenzle, the Molsters began operating the riding stables without prior notice, even though the Buenzle property is immediately adjacent to the Molsters'. We saw things happening, old growth trees being cut down, buildings going up, but we never heard from anyone. The zoning laws don't permit this type of business in this area. They didn't ask. I resent this."

Buenzle insists that his efforts to communicate his concerns to his neighbors went unanswered, so he ultimately filed the complaint with the Fairfax County Planning and Zoning Commission. "This is not about being anti-horse. We had horses for 25 years. The Molsters have no right to do this. The only way to make it right is to move it out of our neighborhood."

Other Blacks Hill Road residents and rep-

SEE STABLE, PAGE 10

# Demands Dictate the Debt

FROM PAGE 4

ity to borrow money to construct everything from schools to a new aquatics center at Long Bridge Park. Supporters of the county's efforts say the bond rating agencies approve because Arlington has an Aaa/AAA/AAA credit rating. Arlington is one of the few jurisdictions in America to have a triple-triple A credit rating, a distinction it's held for 13 consecutive years.

"You could make a reasonable argument, I think, that we have got a number of different programs doing the same things sometimes and you could probably streamline some things in Arlington. There's no doubt about that," said Robert Hynes, a member of the Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission. "But I also do not think there's a lot of great waste in the money they spend. They spend it well I think."

**ONE POTENTIAL** drawback for local governments deciding to take on more debt is the risk of violating self-imposed debt limits. In Alexandria, for example, city leaders are trying to find a way to finance a new Metro station at Potomac Yard. Last year, members of the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee sounded the alarm that the city was actually on track to violate its debt ceiling even without calculating the massive borrowing that would be needed to finance the Metro station, which could

be anywhere from \$200 million to \$400 million. That means borrowing money to build the station would violate the city's debt policy at least temporarily.

"The idea was, I think, to make an exception that would be paid down and then go back to the guidelines — in other words break the guidelines," said James Bulter, former chairman of the Alexandria Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee. "But I believe that they should carefully examine their options because the debt policy has a real meaning, and it should be followed if at all possible."

Local governments are not alone in trying to borrow money to balance the books. Last year, the commonwealth of Virginia's total debt increased to \$37.3 billion, an increase of \$1.1 billion, or 3.2 percent. According to a study by the nonpartisan State Budget Solutions, that means each private sector worker in Virginia has a state debt burden of more than \$21,000. And the federal government problems with debt are well known.

"My own personal debt concerns me, so certainly the debt of my county does as well," said Ed Batten, a member of the Lee District Budget Advisory Group. "But when I look at what the demands are in this county, the human demands as well as what's going on in the economy, I think that what we are doing is the best we can do given the circumstances."

# Suicide Prevention

FROM PAGE 4

sion as normal adolescent turmoil," said Mike Parker, director of Student Services at Thoreau Middle School in Vienna, noting that depression appears to be occurring at a much earlier age, and is a leading risk factor for suicide. "In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem."

In an effort to "proactively address these issues," Thoreau sent a letter to parents in January informing them that the school would offer depression screening to all eighth grade students in February.

The screenings were free, voluntary and confidential, a way to assess whether students have symptoms consistent with depression.

The effort to address student stress and prevent teen suicides is a priority for Fairfax County school, according to Ryan McElveen, one of three at-large members of the FCPS school board. In an interview Tuesday, McElveen said that Superintendent Karen Garza is currently working with staff to craft an action plan to address student stress and suicide prevention.

"This plan will involve collaboration with county agencies and include various new strategies, training sessions, and reporting systems.

I believe that the Board will fully support these efforts once a finalized plan has been crafted," McElveen said.

One educational tool FCPS currently uses is Youth ACT- Signs of Suicide (SOS), a depression awareness and suicide prevention program. Its primary objectives are to educate teens that depression is a treatable illness and to equip them with techniques to respond to a potential suicide in a friend or family member. The program includes a depression and suicide screening component and is available for middle and high school aged youth.

FCPS is also in the process of forming a Youth Suicide Review Team to review incidences of suicide in the county, analyze trends, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors programmatic and policy solutions to prevent future suicides.

**SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS**, such as the one hosted by Thoreau's PTA and facilitated by Robbins, are also offered at a number of schools throughout the county.

McElveen added that students should always feel free to come to school staff or parents with concerns about their classmates.

"Students need to know that we're all in this together as a community, and the school system has the resources to support them. If they are feeling stressed, they should talk with their teachers and counselors and find better ways to strike the important balance between school, extracurriculars, social life and family life," he said.



## Traumatic brain injury. Not the opponent Connor was expecting.

Two years ago a simple game of catch ended with a trip to the emergency room. A baseball had struck Connor above the eyebrow and blood was pooling dangerously between his brain and skull. Watch how our experts responded at [JustRightForChildren.com/Connor](http://JustRightForChildren.com/Connor).

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Connor McCormick  
Future tennis phenom



## NEWS

### Stable Debate Continues

FROM PAGE 8

representatives from Falls Manor and Timberlake Estates North HOAs expressed opposition. The recurring concerns included increased dust on the unpaved gravel road, increased traffic and potential safety hazards to children and residents, noise, security concerns with the addition of non-residents passing through the area, dangers to local wildlife, the potential negative impact on property values and the possibility of residents bearing the burden of monitoring compliance with the special permit conditions.

**SUPPORTERS** of the Molsters' application were equally vocal, and included Howard Clark, an area resident for 45 years. In addition to supporting the proposed riding stable, Clark added, "you should be thanking the Molsters for all they do to keep up the road and the area." Shirley Johnson has lived on the road for 32 years, keeping a variety of livestock on her property without "any safety-related issues in all that time."

Parents of Blacks Hill Stables students like Eamon McCrann who grew up and learned to ride in the area also spoke in support. "We need to use common sense here," he said. "This is not the Home Depot we are talking about." Kim Karanik is fighting a similar battle, and worries that the equestrian way of life in Great Falls will eventually give way to "nothing but a lot of housing developments." Karanik also asked why it was acceptable for home businesses to get permits to teach art, piano and other lessons for as many as eight students for only a \$50 licensing fee. "Horse riding lessons seem to be the only activity being singled out," she said.

The number of "walk-on" speakers ultimately far outnumbered those who had registered to speak on the agenda. GFCALUZ Co-Chair Harvey eventually had to bring the proceedings to a close, but assured the attendees that the Committee was willing to hold additional meetings and that anyone still wishing to add their opinion, ask questions or raise concerns was more than welcome to do so. The Great Falls Citizens Association website at [www.gfca.org](http://www.gfca.org) includes phone numbers and email addresses for further information and for submissions. Later in the month, the Fairfax County government website should have available the report to be used for the Appeals Hearing scheduled in April.

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## Celebrating our 33rd St. Patrick's Day



### Sunday, March 16th

Join us for our family friendly Sunday Concerts  
Featuring from County Donegal  
"Pennywhistle" (Barry, Donal and Leonard Nelson)  
Two shows 4 pm and 6 pm Adults \$15 Children under 12, \$12  
Call for reservations!

### Monday, March 17th The Snuggery's Irish Concerts Great for your office Party!

Includes lunch or dinner, reservations required  
Featuring Pennywhistle (Barry, Donal & Leonard Nelson)  
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**Lunch 11:15 - 1:00pm:**  
\$35 pp / 1:30 - 3:15pm: \$35pp  
**Dinner 3:45 - 5:30pm:**  
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& 8:00 - 9:45pm or later: \$45 pp  
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## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY 2016 Programs

Wednesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m.

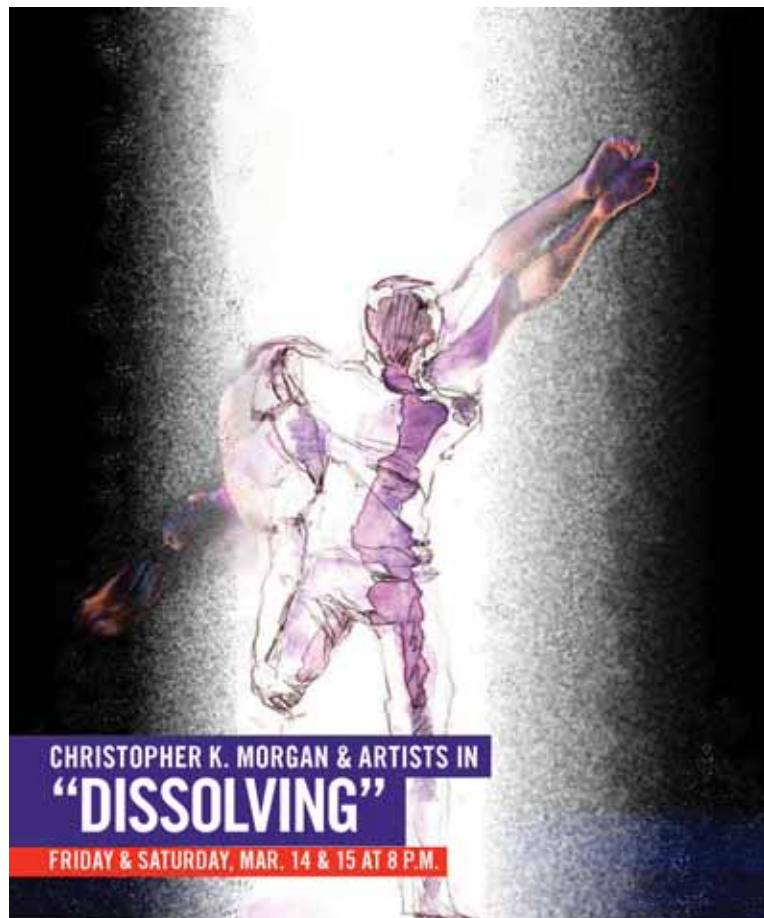
The Governing Board of the McLean Community Center is **seeking input from residents** of Dranesville Small District 1A at its Public Hearing on Programs for FY 2016, which runs July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

**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**  
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## ENTERTAINMENT

# Superman Comes to McLean

Theater Unspeakable presents 'Superman 2050' at Alden Theatre.

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

**T**hat iconic comic-book super-hero Superman is coming to the McLean Community Center. He is ready to save the day from his foe Lex Luther. Superman and the gang will be live and in person as performed by Theatre Unspeakable in the new "Superman 2050."

"The moment I saw 'Superman 2050' at a conference in Philadelphia last year I knew I had to book them for the Alden. The show is just so unique," said Kathleen Herr, director of Youth Programs, Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center.

Staging the Superman adventure as live theater seems rather unlikely. Now picture seven actors performing a Superman adventure on a stage that is just 3-by-7 feet of space and about two feet in the air. This is the inspired theatrical imagination behind the production that Chicago's inventive Theatre Unspeakable is bringing to the Alden.

According to Marc Frost, Artistic Director, "Theater Unspeakable is dedicated to telling stories using the entire body, mind, heart and soul...combining elements of movement, dance, mime, circus and clown."

"We want to awaken our audiences' imagination as Superman battles the likes of Lex Luther and flies about the tiny stage. We want to provoke them into coming along with us in our story set in a fictional 2050 Metropolis," said Frost. All of this while the actors challenge themselves to bring a comic book adventure to life.

The hour-long show "will bring a fresh, choreographed fun way to tell the Superman story. There



PHOTO COURTESY OF THEATER UNSPEAKABLE.

**The Theater Unspeakable cast in 'Superman 2050.'**

## Where and When

"Superman 2050" at the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Road, McLean. Performance Saturday, March 22 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20/\$15 MCC district residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit: [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

will be plenty of movement on the tiny space including Superman flying," said Frost. It is meant for all ages.

"Superman 2050" tells the story of the battle for the future of Metropolis and a high-speed rail network. It will be live action anime; a comic book come alive into three-dimensions as the cast uses their bodies, lots of movement and their voices to create props, scenes, and sound effects.

So get ready. The show will bring the Superman you remember from your childhood, with some new twists for you and children of all ages. He will always be "faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound."

"Come prepared to laugh and be amazed!" added Herr. Always remember, don't mess with Superman or his cape. Just join the fun and bring your childhood along with you.

## CALENDAR

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

### FRIDAY/ MARCH 14

**Casino Night & Silent Auction.** 7 p.m., The Grand Atrium, 2236 Gallows Road, Vienna. James Madison HS (JMHS) Athletic Booster Club hosts its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Casino Night & Silent Auction. Advance: \$55, At the door: \$65. [www.warhawksports.org](http://www.warhawksports.org) or [jmhsathleticbooster@gmail.com](mailto:jmhsathleticbooster@gmail.com).

### SATURDAY/MARCH 15

**Ballroom Dance.** 8-11:30 p.m., Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. \$15. 703-759-2685 or [www.colvinrun.org](http://www.colvinrun.org).

**Model Trains.** 231 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. 1-5 p.m. See and hear model trolleys and steam and diesel trains plus Thomas and some of his friends in the Historic Vienna Train Station along the W&OD trail just past the Caboose. The layout reflects the mountainous terrain and towns of Western North Carolina with award winning structures. Hosted by the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders. [www.nvmr.org](http://www.nvmr.org).

**Special Lenten Program.** 9-11:30

a.m. Great Falls United Methodist Church 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Details and questions 703-759-3705.

**"Lullabies From Around the World."** 4:30 p.m. Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road SW, Vienna. Vienna Choral Society sings "Lullabies From Around The World." Special guests will include the Mosby Woods Mustang Chorus, a story teller, and a student accompanist on violin. Kids 14 and under attend free. Tickets at [www.viennachoralsociety.org](http://www.viennachoralsociety.org) and at the door.

### THURSDAY/MARCH 20

**William Bird at the Great Falls Library.** Noon to 1:30 p.m., Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Great Falls Writer's Group will host William Bird, curator of the Division of Political History at the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian, for a light luncheon and forum. 703-757-8560.

**Tom Principato Band.** 8 p.m., The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. The Tom Principato Band features everything from harmonica-heavy rock to reggae and funk infused tracks, as well as a locally inspired instrumental song, "22042 Falls Church, Virginia." \$25. 1.877.WOLFTRAP or [wolftrap.org](http://wolftrap.org).

### SATURDAY/MARCH 22

**Celebrate the Cherry Blossom Festival.** 1-3 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Taste the many styles beyond what is used in the Japanese tea ceremony in this fascinating tasting. Shade grown, roasted, twig style, are just a few examples. Experience Japanese teas and tea treats beyond the traditional and take home tea samples including a Cherry Blossom Blend. Advance reservations and payment (\$30 each) required through the Mill at 703-759-2771.

### SUNDAY/MARCH 23

**Jump for Joy!** 2-4 p.m. Providence Baptist Church, 8980 Brook Road, McLean. A community event for elementary age children. Pre-school children accompanied by parents are also welcome. The event will involve giant inflatables, the Providence House of Bounce, inside their gym.

**Music from Oberlin at Oakton.** 7:30 p.m. 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Music from Oberlin at Oakton hosts current Oberlin Conservatory students three times a year to provide top-notch music to the local community. In its 14th season, this program will feature two pianists, a violinist, clarinetist, and a bassoonist. Free admission. 703-281-4230.



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## Here's What's Happening at MCC

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

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



### Christopher K. Morgan & Artists Contemporary Dance Co. "Dissolving"

Fri & Sat, March 14-15, 8 p.m.  
\$27/\$18 MCC district residents

### Lifetime Learning Coffee & Conversation

Friday, March 21, 10:30 a.m.-noon  
Free admission

### 5th & 6th Grader Party Island Sensations

Friday, March 21, 7-9 p.m.  
\$30/\$20 MCC district residents

### UnRuly TheatRe

Friday, March 21, 7-9 p.m.  
Old Firehouse Teen Center  
Free Admission

### Theatre Unspeakable presents "Superman 2050"

Saturday, March 22, 8 p.m.  
\$20/\$15 MCC district residents

### MCC Governing Board Public Hearing on Programs

Wednesday, March 26, 7:30 p.m.

### An Alden Theatre Production "Miss Nelson is Missing"

Sat. & Sun, March 29-30 &  
April 5-6, 3 p.m.  
\$10/\$8 MCC district residents

The McLean Community Center  
[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)  
Home of the Alden Theatre  
[www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)

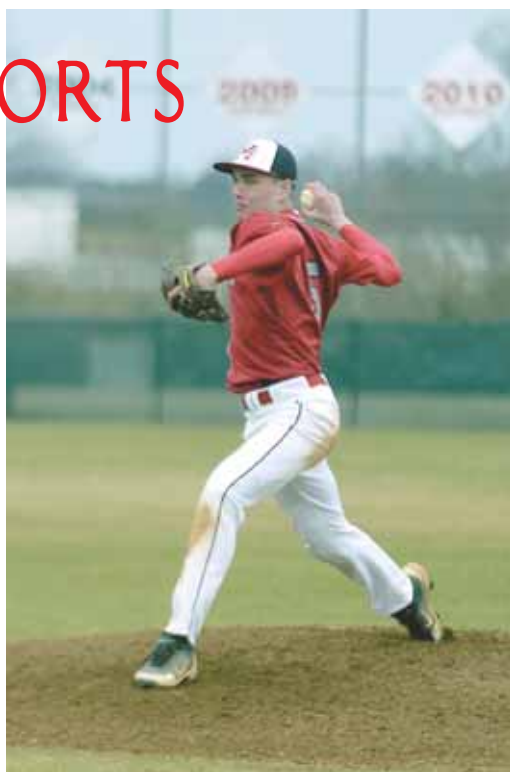


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# SPORTS

Joey Sullivan, seen last season, enters his senior year as McLean's top pitcher.



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO



PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN

John Dowling enters his first season as head coach of the McLean baseball program.

## Dowling Enters First Season as McLean Head Baseball Coach

### Virginia Tech-Bound Sullivan is Highlanders' Top Pitcher.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

Members of the McLean baseball team are still getting used to John Dowling's coaching methods, which included an exercise referred to as "burpees" at the end of a recent practice. But if what Dowling did at his previous job is any indication of his abilities, it won't be long before his methods translate to success for the Highlanders.

Dowling, 30, enters his first season as McLean head baseball coach. He spent the previous two seasons at Lee High School in Springfield, where he took a struggling program within one win of a regional tournament appearance in 2013 after defeating perennial power West Springfield in the Patriot District tournament.

"He's really organized in everything he does," McLean senior pitcher Joey Sullivan said. "A lot of us are trying to get used to it. Some of the new drills that we've learned ... are new drills that I've never seen in my life and I've been playing the game for 12 years. They seem to work and I hope they work for us in the spring."

After coaching a Lee program with limited depth, Dowling takes over a McLean program with greater numbers. Sullivan, a three-year varsity player who signed with Virginia Tech, is the Highlanders' staff ace. The right-hander's fastball touches the low 90s.

"Joey's a really competitive kid," Dowling said. "He, on the mound, will dictate the pace of the game. He's not scared of the moment — he wants the moment to be his. I learned a lot by going to basketball games and just watching him play basketball. He won the [Conference 6] Defensive Player of the Year [award]. I think that right there speaks a lot to a kid's effort on the floor."

Sullivan teams with junior catcher Caleb Beatty to form what Sullivan called "the best battery out there."

Beatty is in his third year on the varsity and second as starting catcher. He was the team's starting designated hitter as a freshman.

"He doesn't let much get by him, ever," Sullivan said. "He stops pretty much anything I'll throw — high, low, in the dirt, inside, outside. And he can also stroke the [heck] out of the ball, too."

Dowling said Beatty and Sullivan lift the team's energy level.

"We're extremely fortunate to have Caleb," Dowling said. "[He is] a very, very energetic player and to have him at such a critical position is a huge boost to our team as a whole. He and Joey really do set the energy for the team."

Dowling said he's waiting for another pitcher to establish himself as the team's No. 2 starter. Senior right-handers Colin Morse and Jesse Jones, junior lefty Frank Minamino, sophomore left-hander Jon Clines, and Beatty are candidates.

Offensively, sophomore outfielder Matt Collins, who started as a freshman, is one of the team's top hitters.

"I'm very excited to watch Matt Collins play baseball for the next three years," Dowling said. "... Offensively, the sky is the limit for Matt. He could light the world on fire this year."

McLean is scheduled to open the season on the road against rival Langley at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, March 21. The Highlanders' home opener is March 28 against Marshall.

While Dowling is still learning about his players' abilities, he has high hopes for his first season with the Highlanders.

"It's been a little difficult gauging [expectations], not knowing the players, the personnel extremely well," Dowling said. "... But with that said, what are you playing for if you're not looking to play [in the state tournament] at Robinson in June?"

Sullivan also has high expectations.

"We should definitely be in the district championship, in my opinion," he said. "We definitely have the talent to be there. When you get to the district championship, anything happens, but we want to be in the game for sure and put ourselves in a spot to get a good seed in regionals and hopefully go far in regionals."



## Winning Championship, Honors

The McLean fifth grade girls' basketball team won the Division 2 championship with a 36-25 victory over Gainesville on Saturday at Liberty Middle School in Centreville.

From left, bottom row, Eric Reed, assistant coach, of McLean; Zoraida Icabalceca of Falls Church, Chloe Reed of McLean, Heather Hughes of McLean, Evelina Swigart of McLean, Sela Scheinman of McLean.

From left, top row: Tournament MVP Kendall Jones of McLean, Season MVP Sophie Smith of McLean, Avery Richardson of McLean, Miranda Rennert of McLean and Coach Brian McNicoll of Alexandria.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Tim Higgins

## Great Falls Resident Wins Conference Championship with MIT

Tim Higgins of Great Falls is a member of the 2013 – 2014 New England Men's and Women's Conference (NEWMAC) championship basketball team. Higgins, a freshman, plays for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) men's basketball team. After winning four games and losing four games during February, MIT went on a roll and swept the

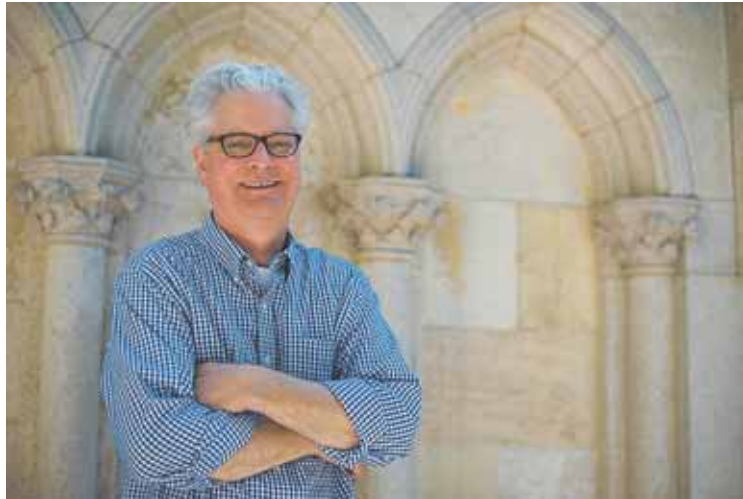
conference playoffs beating last year's champion WPI in a semifinal game, and outlasting Springfield College in the championship game. With the NEWMAC conference win, the MIT Engineers received an automatic bid to the NCAA basketball tournament. Tim attended and played basketball for Paul VI high school in Fairfax and was part of their 2012 undefeated team.

## Great Falls Writer's Group to Host Smithsonian Curator Dr. William L. Bird

On Thursday, March 20, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, the Great Falls Writer's Group (GFWG) will host Dr. William L. Bird, Smithsonian Curator of the National Museum of American History and Director of the Division of Political History.

Dr. Bird will discuss his newest book, "Souvenir Nation: Relics, Keepsakes and Curios from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History." He will also explore and discuss the joys and challenges he encountered while writing this and other of his earlier books. "Souvenir Nation" is also a highly-popular exhibit currently on display at the Smithsonian. Both the book and the exhibit examine fifty of the museum's most eccentric objects in political history — from a chunk broken off Plymouth Rock to the magnifying glass used to examine the infamous hanging chads of the 2000 presidential election.

Kristin Clark Taylor, founder and facilitator of the Great Falls Writer's Group, invites outside speakers and authors to the group's open, bi-monthly meetings on a regular basis. Says Taylor, "Dr. Bird's visit to the Great Falls Writer's Group will hopefully inspire our local Great Falls writers to delve more deeply into the process of recording their own per-



**Dr. William L. Bird**

PHOTO BY BILLY BIRD

sonal history. His comments and insights will not only educate and enlighten our writers, but will hopefully act as a creative catalyst for others. That he is making himself available for Q&A with the audience after his remarks will help make this event feel inclusive and participatory. We're all very excited to have him join us."

The event, a luncheon, will take place at the Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, in the large conference room. The event is free and open to the public. No registration is required, but visitors may wish to arrive a few minutes early, because there is no reserved seating.

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## The Artists' Atelier to Host Book Signing Event

The Artists' Atelier will host a reception and book signing for local author, Debra Sue Latiolais. Her recently published children's book "Polly and her Pigtales" has received the highest honor awarded by the Mom's Choice Awards. "Polly and her Pigtales" is the first book in a series of generational storytelling. The reception is open to the public and will be held on Sunday, March 16, 2-4 p.m. at The Artists' Atelier Gallery, 1144 Walker Road, Suite G, Great Falls. Books will be available for purchase. To learn more about Debra and her book visit [www.ageofstorytelling.com](http://www.ageofstorytelling.com).

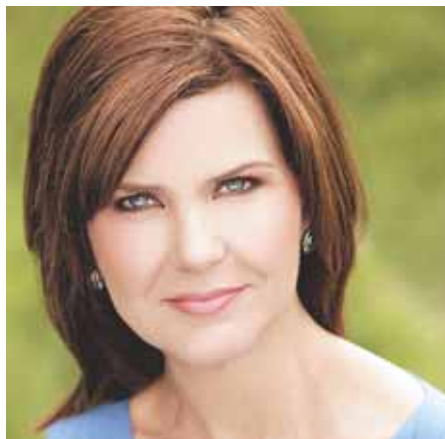


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Debra Sue Latiolais**

## Great Falls Historical Society Seeks Nominations for Jean Tibbetts History Award

The Great Falls Historical Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the history of the area, invites community members to submit nominations for the Jean Tibbetts History Award, an annual award that honors outstanding contributors to the research, articulation, dissemination and preservation of the history of life along the Potomac River corridor from McLean to west of Dranesville and south through Herndon.

Candidates for the Jean Tibbetts History Award are selected from annual nominations to Great Falls Historical Society and the award includes a stipend of \$200.

The awardee's name is placed on the Great Falls Historians plaque, displayed in the Great Falls Library.

Nominations should include a brief resume of the nominee; a listing of significant achievements, such

as leading publications and noteworthy accomplishments; and a summary of the significance of the nominee's overall record of contributions.

Deadline for submission for the 2014 Award is April 21, 2014. Please mail nominations, with complete documentation, to GFHS History Award Committee, PO Box 56, Great Falls, VA 22066, or by email to [award@ghfs.org](mailto:award@ghfs.org).

Jean Tibbetts was a writer of Great Falls history who recognized and displayed excellence in historical research. The Great Falls Historical Society is proud to commemorate her memory with this award, and we appreciate your support. Donations may be made to: Great Falls Historical Society, Attention: Treasurer, PO Box 56, Great Falls, Va., 22066.

For an online archive of the area's history, please visit the Great Falls Historical Society website at [www.gfhs.org](http://www.gfhs.org).

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# Whew!



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Originally, this column was to be a discussion about the communication process between my doctor and this patient. Specifically, the time lag between when tests are performed/completed and when those results are communicated to the doctor who in turn – per this patient's request, e-mails them to me. In the olden days, results were most likely offered up in person; in the post-olden days, more likely a phone call was made; presently, at least in my experience, results most likely will be e-mailed. I imagine an enduring problem for the patient – during all three “days,” has been the time waiting for test results and hearing about them from your doctor. Excruciating is one of the most accurate characterizations of that delay, combined with an unhealthy dose of helplessness. Eventually, if you live long enough, you sort of become accustomed to the process and learn to roll with the punches, both figuratively and literally. Nevertheless, the patience and experience you learn can't totally stop the rampant speculation that keeps you up at night and sleepy during the day.

All of this being said and mostly internalized and assimilated into my terminal-patient brain, unfortunately doesn't prevent the process from negatively impacting your waiting-for-test-results-from-your-doctor compartment where you've (at least where I have) attempted to compartmentalize this process so that it doesn't adversely impact every other psychological compartment I've previously constructed. But I may have learned my lesson this time. The reason being that even though I received an e-mail from my oncologist two days after my CT Scan was completed, it turned out to be sort of an incomplete/inaccurate assessment: “Some better, some worse. I'll explain more on Friday,” (the date of my next infusion and coincidentally, the date of our next face-to-face appointment, a week later). It seems the Radiologist had compared this recent scan to one I had taken nine months ago and consequently, made some incorrect assumptions – but of course, we didn't know any of this until we saw my doctor; as such, we stressed about the content of the e-mail.

Friday arrived and we went to The Infusion Center where I was hooked up as usual. Within a few minutes, my oncologist walked over to my Barcalounger. Dina immediately whispers: “He's not smiling.” (Reading the facial expressions and body language of your doctor has no doubt become the bane of every patient's existence, especially when dealing with oncologists.) Soon enough though, after my doctor began talking (and explaining the radiologist's mistake), it became clear that my results were quite the opposite of what the original e-mail had indicated. It was not “some better, some worse,” it was Tony-the-Tiger GREAT! news with which I could most definitely live – and for many years, too, he said. To say were pleasantly surprised might be the understatement of the universe. To say we were over the moon might be a bit more realistic, hyperbole notwithstanding.

So what did I learn? What did my oncologist advise me going forward? To not interpret the delay in the communication process as indicating anything other than the nature of the process; nothing to be taken personally or interpreted in any meaningful way. And even though the news we received was extremely encouraging this time, the process, such as it is, likely continues, and anticipating that news – good, bad or indifferent – is to be delivered in any other way is unrealistic. As difficult as it is for this patient to be patient, in some cases, as I learned this past week, your patience can sometimes be rewarded.

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

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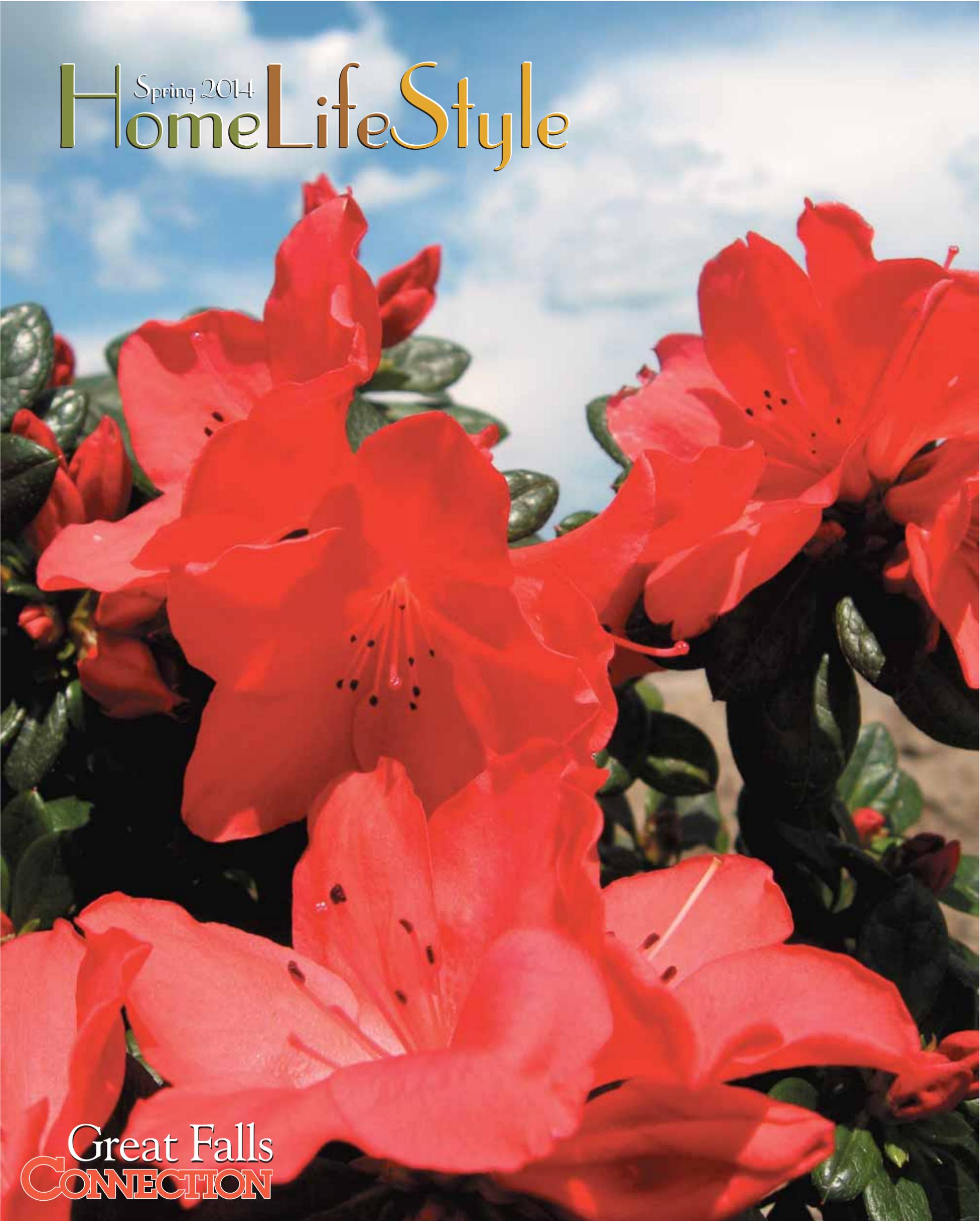
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# Empty-Nesters Re-invent the Family Home

Built-ins, cleverly articulated interior increase usable space without need to add-on.

BY JOHN BYRD

Sometimes life's second act requires a bold set change. How else are others to know that the featured players have moved on, embracing new beginnings?

Reinvention is after all the quintessential triumph of creativity, and can be a very personal process when the thing reinvented is your home itself.

"Of course, large-scale life changes don't necessarily demand a whole house makeover," recently retired teacher Cindy Borer said. But in the past year, her only son moved out to start a new career and her husband is now traveling less, so the timing was right for discoveries.

**BUT TO START AT THE TOP:** last spring the Borer family had celebrated 20 years residency in their two-story, four-bedroom Colonial-style house in Burke, and were taking stock of what they wanted from the years ahead.

At just over 800 square feet, the home's primary living area had been serviceable enough; even so, the formal dining room and adjacent den on opposite sides of the front facing foyer were hardly ever used and the rear family room was dark and cramped.



By borrowing a mere nine square feet from the dining room, the designers found space for a small mudroom with bench immediately to the right of a side kitchen door.

Evaluating options, Borer considered enlarging a few rear rooms. She also wondered if some of the home's interior walls could be modified in way that would allow for more natural light. What to do?

It was at this juncture that Craig Durosko, founder of Sun Design Remodeling, was called-in to discuss possible space improvement scenarios.

Durosko pointed out that the couple

didn't so much lack square footage as a sensible space plan tailored to how they actually use their home. The existing "center-

SEE EMPTY-NESTERS, PAGE 8

## Kitchen Confidential

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

When Allie Mann of Arlington, a designer and senior interior specialist at Case Design/Remodeling, Inc. was tasked with giving the first floor of a McLean home a face lift, she had

From light-filled to dramatic, local designers create dream kitchens.

to think free-flowing and airy.

"[The] client wanted to focus on making the kitchen feel open and connected to rest of home," said Mann. "[They] needed to have plenty of space to cook and entertain plus lots of storage."

Mann said the homeowner was making a cross-country move and settling in Virginia, so adhering to a strict timeline and budget were critical.

However, near the end of the project, the homeowner wanted to make a change.

"At nearly 85 percent job completion, client decided they wanted to completely remove the wall between the kitchen and family room. In the original design, we partially removed the wall," said Mann. "This meant a shift and redirection of scope, additional engineering [because] the remaining por-



PHOTO COURTESY NICELY DONE KITCHENS

A vertical, glass subway tile backsplash adds a dramatic flair to this kitchen by Nicely Done Kitchens.

tion of the wall housed a three-story fireplace, relocation of cabinets had already been installed and modifications to countertops. And still deliver a project close to on time."

The finished kitchen is a light-filled space with cabinets by Crystal Cabinetry, honed Vermont Marble countertops and appliances by Sub-Zero, Wolf, KitchenAid and Miele.

SEE KITCHEN, PAGE 10

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# Getting Your Garden Ready for Spring

Local experts tell you what you should do now, in spite of the cold weather.

PHOTOS COPYRIGHT CAROLINE WILLIAMS

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

It doesn't feel like spring. Last week's snow made it seem like warm weather might never arrive, so planting a garden might be the last thing on your mind. However, local gardening experts say this is the ideal time to start preparing your landscape to yield colorful spring foliage.

Bill Mann, of Behnke Nurseries in Potomac, Md., said spring garden preparation plans differ from year to year. "It depends on the landscape beds you have and whether or not you're planning to put in a vegetable garden," he said. "This is the time to inspect shrubs for damage that might have been broken during the snow load," said David Watkins of Merrifield Garden Center, which has locations in Fair Oaks, Merrifield and Gainesville, Va., Don't go overboard, however: "You don't want to prune plants before they bloom. A good rule of



David Watkins of Merrifield Garden Center says cold season annuals like these yellow pansies can add bright color to a garden now.



English daisies add bright bursts of color to spring gardens.

thumb is to prune a flowering plant right after it blooms."

Instead, spend some time tidying up.

"Right now is the time to fertilize your shrubs, remove old mulch, put down new mulch and just clean up," said Watkins. "Everybody is sick of winter, especially this winter. This is the time to clean up old leaves. Because the winter has been so cold, there are

going to be some plants that won't have made it."

"In March, a lot has to do with inspecting the yard for winter damage," said Mann. "This is a great time of the year to look for insect damage and deer damage."

Mann expects extensive deer damage this year. "Deer didn't have much to eat except for plants like azaleas and rhododendrons."

Insect damage is less obvious

and more difficult to identify. "This is the time to do damage-control by using safe or organic-based products like neem oil," said Mann. "When sprayed on plants, it smothers insect eggs or some insects in the larva stage. It also kills stinkbugs. If you can see them, you can control them. You can use a higher concentration this time of year and it is a lot safer and easier on the environment. It reduces bad bug populations and

is safe over all."

**WHILE EAGER GARDENERS** may be excited to start planting spring flowers in their newly cleaned plots, Watkins offers a caveat: "It is a little early for most annual flowers in pots on patios, but you can plant annuals like pansies, which are cold season annuals," he said. "They don't like heat, so in June they start to wither. Then you can put other flowers in like petunias and geraniums."

Watkins recommends planting hearty, ornamental shrubs in patio flowerpots and surrounding them with flowering plants to ensure year-round foliage. "A nice thing to do in pots is plant a woody ornamental," he said. "It is nice to have plants in the pots that stay year round. I put a Japanese maple in a pot on my deck. In another pot I put *ilex verticillata* [winterberry] and I had red berries all winter long. In the spring, I'll put petunias in the soil around it, and around the edge I'll plant a flowering plant that will trail down over the pot from April to October. Then the rest of the year I'll get red berries."

Sowing grass seeds is also an ideal project to begin now. "The seeds won't germinate until it gets to be 52 degrees," Watkins continued. "So even if we get another snow storm, it helps work the seeds into the soil."

Randee Wilson of Nature By Design in Alexandria encourages the use of indigenous plants. "Look for sources for native plants — they help sustain our local wildlife. If we didn't have local plants, butterflies would be gone."

If a new patio is in your plans this spring, Watkins says to get started now. "We've been putting down putting patios all year long," he said. "A good garden center is going to get backed up when the weather is warmer."

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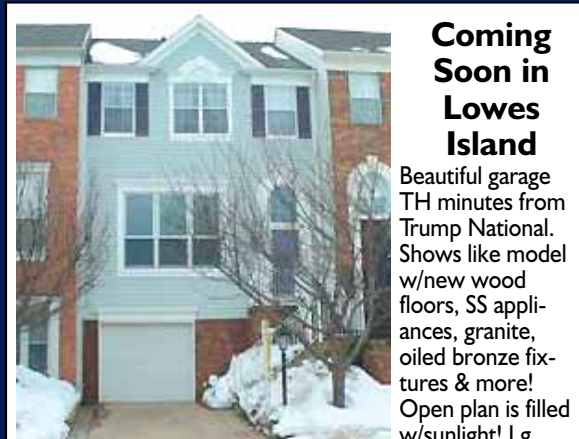
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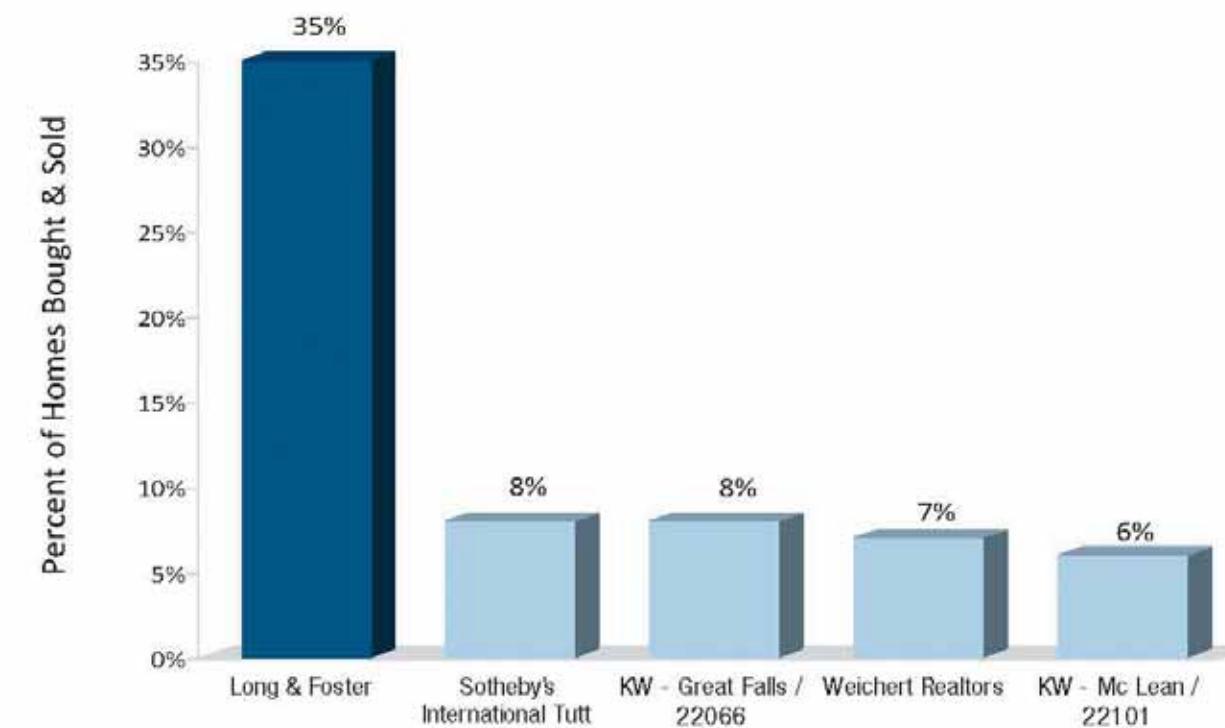
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# Empty-Nesters Re-invent the Family Home

FROM PAGE 3

hall" configuration defined rooms were consistent with tradition, yet were functionally underutilized most of the time. This accounted for daily traffic patterns that didn't work as well as they might, and a nagging sense that the entire first floor was space-restricted.

On a second subject: the mid-house floor-to-ceiling bearing wall dividing the front and rear sections of the house could be completely deleted by installing concealed vertical supports at strategic intervals, Durokso said. Such a move would dramatically increase natural light, creating the floor space needed for an alternative layout more appropriate for both daily use and entertainment.

"On the first visit Craig pretty much solved our space plan problem," Borer said. "From this point on, I was mainly to think about the interior design details."

So Borer's meeting with Jon Benson, the



PHOTOS BY BRYAN BURRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

**To differentiate the front-facing library from the family room visually, Sun Design converted existing overhead beams into an elegant tray ceiling supported by Craftsman-style piers.**

makeover's lead designer, proved a revelation from the start. A veteran home remodeling specialist as well as a nationally recognized furniture designer, Benson's input shaped a floor plan focused on personal requirements in which custom built-ins eliminate unneeded walls while sharply improving both room function and interior design integrity.

To create a more functional relationship between the kitchen and the dining room, for instance, the designer replaced an interior pantry with a 27.5-square-foot food preparation surface and dining counter that serves both rooms equally.

By borrowing a mere nine square feet from the dining room, Benson also found space for a small mudroom with bench immediately to the right of the side entrance to the kitchen.

Re-situating the front hall closet to the right of the front door not only widened the front foyer but also created dramatic front-to-back sight lines that make the entire house seem much larger.

Measured in square feet, the changes are

small. Yet such revisions liberate the first level circulation plan, re-organizing the home's primary living area into rooms that are both interactive and articulated.

To visually differentiate the front-facing library from the family room, the designer converted existing overhead beams into an elegant tray ceiling supported by Craftsman-style piers.

A floor-to-ceiling bookcase—also a Benson original—provides an elegant yet useful wall for the new reading room. The new family room fireplace hearth was custom-designed to accommodate the plasma TV screen that now hangs above it.

Additional interior design decisions emerged from Borer's collaboration with Sun Design's Jessica Page.

"Jessica helped me discover the design style I'd been looking for," Borer said. "She opened up a lot of resources. Ideas that I liked were added to a project scrapbook which we both referenced regularly to keep the decision process on track."

As space plan modifications proceeded, Borer's research revealed a strong personal

attraction to transitional-style interior design, a contemporary concept that seeks to reconcile traditional architecture with the spatial freedom of an open floor plan.

On this score, Benson's original floorplan sketch anticipated the use of loveseats as space dividers between the family room and the den. Meanwhile, Borer's preference for soft white and grey duotones inspired an interior paint scheme that combines sharp white and khaki.

In the kitchen, Giallo Soriato granite surfaces are set off by a vividly original glass tile and stone backsplash which lends an invigorating streak of color to the broader visual panorama.

"Its very comfortable balance of traditional and open really works well for us," Borer said. "I found the whole process really enlightening."



**Transitional interior design style seeks to reconcile traditional architecture with the spatial freedom of an open floor plan. Cindy Borer says her discovery of this emerging idiom made the entire makeover process personally inspiring.**



**The new transitional-style interior employs decorative elements to create distinctive use-zones in an open floor plan.**

# Tips to Get Ready for Spring

Experts suggest a yearly spring maintenance check-up.

**W**ith warmer weather just around the corner, it's time to focus on your home.

"Routine home maintenance ensures a healthy home and avoids costly repairs down the road," said Tom Dodd, a consultant at Fred, a home repair division of Case Design/Remodeling, Inc. "Small issues now can become huge headaches later if left untreated." To avoid this, experts recommend that homeowners give their homes a yearly spring maintenance check-up.

"Some items you can check on your own," said Dan Halpern, another Fred consultant. "Others require an expert to do a complete review."

Have your air conditioning system serviced. "Remember that dirty filters make your air conditioner work harder, increasing energy costs and possibly damaging your equipment," said Dodd. "Check the filters monthly and replace as needed, or at least every

three months."

Install a programmable thermostat. "According to Energy Star, a programmable thermostat ... will quickly pay for itself in savings on heating and cooling bills," said Dodd.

Add caulking around windows and doors. "If the gap around a door or window is wider than a nickel, caulk should be reapplied," said Halpern. "Check window-glazing putty, too, which seals glass into the window frame. Also consider adding weather stripping around doors."

Dodd said, "Perform a visual inspection of your roof from the ground. Repairs can be as small as a few shingles to a more extensive damaged area. This is a great place to call in an expert if you think repairs may be needed."

Look for loose or leaky gutters. "Improper drainage can lead to water in the basement or crawl space. Make sure downspouts drain away from the foundation and are clear and free of debris," said Halpern.

Inspect outside hose faucets for freeze damage. "Turn the water on and place your thumb or finger over the opening," said Dodd. "If you can stop the flow of water, it is likely the pipe inside the home is damaged and will need to be replaced."

— MARILYN CAMPBELL

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# Near Zero Temperatures Call for Back-to-Basics

What mid-winter maintenance can reveal about your home's needs.

BY JOHN BYRD

While common sense suggests that home improvements should be put off to warmer weather, a sustained period of colder temperatures often reveals systemic problems that will need correction sooner or later.

As temperatures dropped precipitously several weeks ago, all Reston homeowner Craig Mattice knew was that his original mansard roof was plagued with ice dams and his 10-year-old, 600-square-foot addition was so cold the pipes were freezing. Moreover, no amount of thermostat adjustment improved the situation much.

"After living in the house for over 25 years the chill was a surprise," Mattice said. "It wasn't just that the winter has been colder than usual ... it was beginning to look like a larger problem, particularly in the new wing, which was five degrees colder than other rooms."

To determine the cause of ice-clogged gutters, Mattice decided to seek a comprehensive assessment and turned to remodeler David Foster who had completed a number of home improvements for his son.

"The damming was literally the tip of the iceberg," said Foster, principal of Foster Remodeling Solutions. "When I inspected the attic it was clear that the envelope was not adequately sealed, insulated or ventilated, which is why the upstairs had been too hot last summer."

Add to this the fact that prior to 1980 local building code required less thermally-resistant insulation (R-19) than the current R-38 standard and the outlines of a common problem with older production homes begins to emerge.

"It's not unusual to find that the existing insulation just isn't the best application for some of our coldest days," Foster said. "Different parts of a house can call for different insulation strategies."

Since the goal for the Mattice attic was to dramatically increase R-value, Foster rearranged the old insulation, adding soffit baffles to improve ventilation. The larger technical solution, however, was to blow-in R-25 fiberglass, which raised the attic's thermal resistance to R-44.

"One of the benefits of fiberglass is that it wraps everything...creating an air-tight insular envelope," Foster says. "This makes all aspects of the home's heating and cooling more efficient."

The more recently completed family wing was another matter. Turns out the Mattice's artfully-designed addition was built over an unheated crawl space, and the HVAC duct wasn't even connected in the kitchen.

"An appropriate insulation strategy starts with a kind of forensics," Foster said. "Where is a wall, ceiling or roof exposed to outside conditions? Is it difficult to regulate temperatures in different parts of the house? These are some basic questions we start with."

Given challenges inherent in insulating rooms built over an unheated crawl space — which also must support air circulation, Foster re-engineered the entire thermal equation: existing fiberglass batt was removed; sprayed-in closed cell foam was then applied to the underside of the floor system. This elevated the thermal value to R-20 while providing a draft-free air-tight seal to the kitchen floor. To accommodate for summer conditions, Foster added ventilation to both the crawl space and the attic.

So how do the upgrades perform?

"Beautifully," Craig Mattice says. "The



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOSTER REMODELING SOLUTIONS

**A sustained period of cold weather can reveal problems with your home's basic systems that will need to be addressed in any season if further deterioration is to be prevented.**

house is noticeably tighter and the new wing is much more comfortable."

**A PROFESSIONAL REMODELER** for 35 years, Foster said he's somewhat surprised by the calls he gets when temperatures drop, usually from homeowners who've found that previous attempts at keeping the house comfortable and well-functioning haven't worked very well.

A few months ago, for example, he executed a re-roofing and gutter protection assignment for Alexandria homeowner Steve Piper, who had previously hired him to design and build an extensive interior makeover.

"We knew we had a leaking problem before we met David," Piper said. "But the situation had gotten worse — and I wasn't sure what to expect from roofers. Finally, it occurred to me to ask David for his assessment."

Foster traced the problem to inappropriate and poorly installed flashing which was allowing water to seep into siding and under roof shingles.

His prescription: a re-shingled roof, a new gutter protection system and attic ventilation equipped with an electronic thermostat.

"It's important to address the whole problem when the system has failed," Foster said. "This is a plan that not only eliminates the leaking, but functions much better in all seasons."

A few miles away, Alexandrian Jeff Hage came to Foster when he noticed one of the posts to a front porch was sagging.

Foster, who had finished an interior for Hage a few months before, quickly recognized that the whole roof had settled, making it impossible to stop worsening deterioration by simply replacing the corner column.

"When the problem becomes structural you have to remake the basic supports," he says. "In this case that meant raising the porch roof and re-aligning posts and beams."

Foster has encountered similarly short-sighted solutions associated with window replacement. Homeowners with drafty homes procure state-of-the-art insulated windows only to have them installed with inadequately sealed window jambs.

"Winter is not particularly forgiving of partial solutions," Foster said. "When a problem is recurring, it's time to look at the larger system. After all, this is how a house works."

COURTESY OF CASE DESIGN/REMODELING INC



**Arlington designer Allie Mann of Case Design/Remodeling, Inc. created a free-flowing and elegant feel in this McLean kitchen.**

## Kitchen Confidential

FROM PAGE 3

**NICELY DONE KITCHENS** in Springfield, created a kitchen with drama for a Centreville, Va., family. "White semi-custom cabinetry and a contrasting dark island creates a dramatic look," said Stephanie Brick, designer. Brick cited the focus on the vertical, subway tile back splash.

The rest of the back splash in the kitchen is horizontal, which is the standard for subway tile, said Brick.

The kitchen also includes ample, easily accessible storage space.

"The paneled refrigerator helps conceal the appliances and helps them to blend in with the cabinetry to give the aesthetic more continuity," said Brick. The kitchen includes

easily accessible storage space and ogee-edged granite counter tops.

**OPENING UP** and adding light were priorities when Guy Hopkins Semmes, partner and founder of Potomac-based design-build firm Hopkins and Porter and Lea Allen, one of the firm's senior architects, remodeled the kitchen of a Bethesda, Md., home.

"The kitchen was small, but we were able to add a lot more space, by making few minor changes," said Semmes. "Before there was an enclosed porch next to the kitchen. We opened the wall between the kitchen and the adjacent enclosed porch."

Semmes and Allen made another major

elimination: appliances. "We got rid of the refrigerator and moved it downstairs," said Semmes. "All of the other appliances are located under the counter and open up like drawers."

Semmes also found a creative way to make the space more light-filled. "We took

out a stairway wall to the second floor and replaced it with a triangular opening so light from stairwell came down into the kitchen."

The kitchen now has maple cabinetry and white Silestone countertops. "It was done on a budget. It's amazing what you can do when you work with what you've got."

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