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Senior Living

'The Children's Hour' at Langley High

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From left, Madeleine Chalk playing Karen Wright and Lily Brock as Mary Tilford on set in Langley High School's spring production, 'The Children's Hour,' during dress rehearsal.

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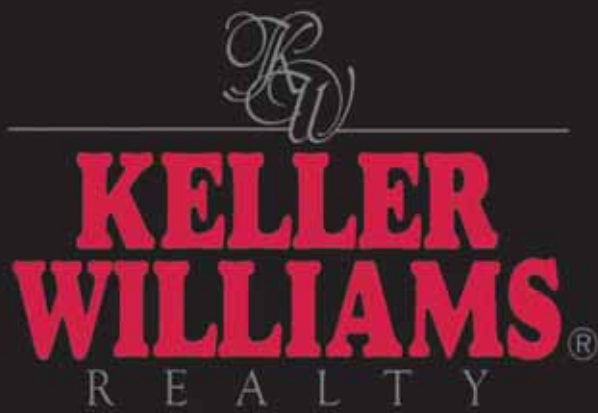


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Bob Nelson



Kelly Putz



Tim Heil



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Walker Road 'Diet' Nears Completion

\$1 million project features cross-walks and street side parking.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

To the average person, the Walker Road Project looks nearly complete.

With signage that needs to be moved and added, however, there is still a few days left until the affectionately dubbed "Walker Road Diet" is another check mark for the Great Falls Citizen's Association.

"We still need the speed limit sign moved and a crosswalk sign," said GFCA President Eric Knudsen. "Once they get that in here and get the speed limit reduced to 25 miles per hour, I'll be fine."

He was referring to a 35 mile per hour speed limit sign by the Wells Fargo crosswalk that needed to move down further - to be replaced with a 25 mile per hour sign. Additionally, the crosswalks lacked a sign informing drivers to yield to pedestrians. He said the changes already have gotten drivers to slow down, though. He has seen cars rocket down the road at 50 miles per hour in the past.

Construction crews finished asphaltting the Walker Road south of Georgetown Pike around March 24. Residents were using the crosswalk and street side parking just days later.

Knudsen said that, besides a few vocal naysayers, most people spoke positively about the change.

"We love the walk!" yelled an unidentified woman in her car.

Knudsen smile broke into a wide grin.

"See?" he said.

The idea of the project was born in 2006 when GFCA wanted to get a crosswalk to help pedestrians walk safely across the road from the tavern to Great Falls Library. However, the Virginia Department of Transportation informed the citizens association that a crosswalk could not be painted on a five lane road. Thus, the decision to put Walker Road on a "diet." The plan was to whittle the road to two lanes with one two-way turn lane in the center. Bumpouts created sidewalk space and street-side parking.

"We worked with [Fairfax Department of Trans-



Great Falls Citizens Association President Eric Knudsen stands on the nearly completed project site for the 'Walker Road Diet.'

portation]," said Knudsen. "One year later, they came up with three plans. We told them which of the designs we wanted, and they came back another year later with a design."

The project took a little longer than a year to construct. Because of some design changes, the cost went from about \$260,000 to nearly \$1 million.

"It would not have cost that much money if they didn't have to do all of the drainage," said Knudsen, pointing at white pop-ups in the grass along the road. "In today's world, the engineers, the rules we play by cause the expenses we have to live by."

Old Brogue Pub owner Michael Kearney - who owns a business near Walker Road - thinks the "diet" was a good improvement for Great Falls.

"I think Eric Knudsen and the GFCA Transportation committee did a great job," he said. "I love the feel of the new road when you drive up the hill from the Village Green Day School into our small town. We now have a crosswalk between the two shopping centers which will make the village more walking friendly and you no longer feel like you are racing to get to the Georgetown Pike light. I love it!"

PHOTO BY REENA SINGH / THE CONNECTION

Protecting Children Online

Great Falls-based Enough is Enough protects children from the harms of the Internet.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

Enough is Enough (EIE), a nonprofit based in Great Falls, was the first of its kind.

The organization that began as a hope to protect children from pornography and sexual predators from the emerging World Wide Web has moved Congress to pass laws and convinced parents to become the front-line of defense for their child's safety online.

"We were the first Internet safety organization in the country," said President and CEO Donna Rice Hughes. "When it started, the Internet was just starting to become commercialized."

The organization began in 1992. EIE focused on the Internet just two years later as the founders realized that the Internet was a way for sexual predators to hide themselves in plain site online. Pornographers were selling, trading and marketing both hardcore and child pornography.

When Hughes joined the organization in 1994, she said she quickly realized how quickly children could lose their innocence in the burgeoning Internet age.

According to the website, enoughisenough.org, EIE convinced Congress to pass the Communications Decency Act in 1996 and the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.

Due to the effective nature of the organization, it was hailed as "a strong and effective advocate for children's online safety" by former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft and "one of the leaders in the fight against pornography aimed at children on the internet" by Oprah Winfrey, according EIE's website.

However, Hughes said, the



PHOTO COURTESY OF ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Donna Rice Hughes is the President and CEO of Enough is Enough.

law only was effective if pornographers who marketed to children and sexual predators were persecuted. The organization found that this was not always the case, especially with the rise of social media and online gaming.

"At this point, the only way we can protect kids online is by having parents be the first line

of defense," she said.

That meant EIE needed to educate parents. The organization launched "Internet Safety 101," which teaches how to filter Internet

searches, monitor children's online activities and has accounts from victims and perpetrators. Hughes said the DVD, which was mostly filmed at McLean Bible Church, was turned into a three-part television show for the Public Broadcasting Service.

The television show won an Emmy last year - and parents can call their local PBS station to watch it.

To contact WEDA, call 703-998-2600.

EIE needs interns, volunteers and donations. To contact the organization, call 888-744-0004.

"At this point, the only way we can protect kids online is by having parents be the first line of defense."

— Donna Rice Hughes

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Town Hall Meeting On Deer Issues

Great Falls Citizens Association will hold a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the Great Falls Grange, as a Part II - GFCA Deer & Forest Health Program.

Part one of this program was held in March when Commonwealth and Fairfax County experts discussed the role of deer in forest degradation, Lyme disease and car collisions. The April 8 program will look at possible solutions ♦ Kristen Sinclair, Fairfax County Park Authority, who will outline deer control in county parks;

♦ Kevin Rose, certified wildlife biologist with the VA Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, who will discuss Commonwealth hunting requirements and non-lethal forms of deer control; and

♦ Jerry Peters, Great Falls resident and founder of Green Fire, who will describe his neighborhood's bow hunting program and the impact on local deer herds.

There will be ample time for questions and answers during this public program.

Talk on Sundials at Great Falls Library

On April 10 at 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library Fred Sawyer, President of the North American Sundial Society, will talk about Gnomonic Tales of Thomas Jefferson (and other Founding Fathers)." Reservations are required. The lecture will consider sundials in the lives of Thomas Jefferson and other prominent figures of early America such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. Rather than serving simply as timekeeping devices, sundials will be seen as academic exercises, inspirations for poetry, symbols of an industrious new country, invitations to relaxation, and opportunities for invention.

Sawyer is a cofounder and the current president of the North American Sundial Society (NASS), and a vice president of the British Sundial Society. He is also the editor of The Compendium, having been responsible for each of the 80 quarterly issues to date. He has authored over 100 articles on gnomonics, and is a regular speaker at both NASS and BSS conferences. His interests lie primarily in theory, historical techniques for drawing dials, and new dial forms (including his own wandering gnomon, equant, compressed gnomonic, Ptolemaic coordinate, Foster point, and other varieties). In 2000, Sawyer and his family instituted the Sawyer Dialing Prize awarded each year at the NASS conference to an individual for accomplishments in, or contributions to, dialing or the dialing community.

Great Falls Chiropractor To Host Blood Drive

Loebig Chiropractic & Rehab and The American Red Cross will be hosting a community blood drive in Great Falls, at the office of Dr. Glenn Loebig, 754 Walker Rd, Great Falls on Tuesday, April 15 from 1–6 p.m. The need for blood locally remains constant, and donations are needed to offset recent blood shortages. People can donate a pint of blood every 56 days and each donation can help save up to three lives. Blood donations help a variety of patients, including those going through cancer treatments, surgical patients and premature babies, among many others. Donors are encouraged to eat a meal prior to giving blood and drink plenty of water. Blood donation requirements include a photo ID, a minimum weight of 115 pounds and minimum age of 17. A 16-year old may donate blood with written parental consent and there is no upper age limit for donating blood. Many health conditions and medications do not prevent someone from donating blood. Call 703-757-5817 with any questions.

Serving the Great Falls area for over 16 years, Dr. Glenn Loebig and his staff specialize in difficult and challenging cases of spinal disc injury and trauma, whiplash, scoliosis, and degenerative diseases-and also focuses on treating complex sports and extremity injuries.

NEWS

Students in Langley High School's spring production, 'The Children's Hour,' during dress rehearsal.



PHOTOS BY REENA SINGH/ THE CONNECTION

'The Children's Hour' at Langley High

**Classic Lillian Hellman
play to run April 3-5.**

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

A dainty redhead who pops into a room with daffodils behind her back is yelled at by one teacher after another until she feigns a heart attack.

Two female teachers struggle with their friendship before one of theirs impending nuptials.

A vicious rumor causes turmoil within a farmhouse turned boarding school.

ACT BY ACT, "The Children's Hour," a Langley High School play running from April 3 through April 5, unfolds into a take that is relatable despite taking place in the 1950s.

"It follows two women who run the school," said senior Kathleen Welch, 17. "It navigates how words can hurt - the power of gossip."

Welch plays one of the lead roles as Martha Dobie, a school teacher who is jealous that her best friend is spending all her time with her fiance. Her best friend, Karen Wright, is played by senior Madeleine Chalk, 18.

"It's during a time period where the topic would have been more sensitive than it would be today," said Chalk. "A malicious person spreads a rumor that her two female teachers are having an affair. Especially in high school, you never know how far a rumor can go. A lot of people don't know how destructive their words can be."

Although it is set in the 1950s, the play was written by Lillian Hellman in 1934.

"She was way ahead of her time," said drama teacher and theater director Valerie Karasek.

The play was so far ahead of its time that it had a recent run in London's West End with the leads played by Keira Knightly and Mad Men star Elizabeth Moss.

She said the nature of the rumor would have "brought someone's school down in a heartbeat" in the early to mid-20th century, and it tears apart the two women who scrimped all of their savings to renovate an old farmhouse in New England into a boarding school.

Karasek said the play is a tragedy and does have a sad ending. However, audience members remember

what they saw for days to come.

"Lillian Hellman makes you think," she said. "You don't walk out being able to forget it."

The play touches on the anti-bullying message schools have been pushing for the last few years.

She had other reasons for choosing "The Children's Hour" as the 2014 spring play, however. She just started teaching at Langley High School this school year and knew the school enrolled a lot of girls. Just like the fall play, "Little Women," she wanted to have a performance that had female-heavy roles. The Children's Hour fit the bill - it only has two male characters, both of which are double casted to give more boys the opportunity to be in the play.

She said when she had her drama class read it, the play was an instant hit with all of the students.

"I think it's relatable to everyone," said junior Nick Regan, 17, who plays one-half of Karen's fiance Doctor Joseph Cardin. "Even though it takes place at a different time, the story is timeless."

Regan says his character knows how to stay calm during a crisis because he is trained as a medical doctor. However, that strength snaps during the third act because of how the rumor affects him.

"There is a very visible character arc in each of the characters through the three acts," he said.

THE PLAY begins at 7 p.m. on April 3 and 4, and at 2 p.m. on April 5. General admission is \$10. For patrons that want to pay in advance, tickets are sold at lhschildrenshour.brownpapertickets.com with a surcharge. More information about Langley High School's theater program can be found at <http://saxon.saxon-stage.com/>.



A dramatic scene, left to right, featuring Madeleine Chalk playing Karen Wright and Lily Brock as Mary Tilford.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

HBC Realty Group/Keller Williams Realty and specifically Karen and Andy Briscoe, Lizzie Conroy, Bill Detty and Molly Hockman supported the event. Pictured: Lizzie Conroy, Carolyn Miller, Karen Briscoe and Bill Detty.

Cornwell Farm Tours Generate \$3000 for Lift Me Up!

A beautiful warm spring day set the backdrop for a successful day of tours of Cornwell Farm on March 8. The tours of the historic home and grounds generated over \$3000 for Lift Me Up's "Good Fences" project. The Lift Me Up! door prize was won by Janice Thrush of Great Falls.

Ms. Thrush won a "Winner's Circle Package" from Lift Me Up! which includes a sec-

tion of fence, a copy of Secretariat's Meadow, a Lift Me Up! hat/t-shirt and a Lift Me Up! calendar, a \$200 value.

Visitors enjoyed meeting Carolyn Miller, a descendant of the Cornwell family, and Great Falls Historical Society volunteer who provided a display of photographs of the

SEE LIFT ME UP, PAGE 9

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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“ I hit a
ground ball
to right field, and
scored two
runs to
win. ”

Ian Duke
Baseball MVP



OPINION

Why I Support Medicaid Expansion

BY SHARON BULOVA
CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS



COMMENTARY

As the Virginia General Assembly continues to discuss the expansion of Medicaid, the benefits and consequences of doing so have received a great deal of attention. Debates rage in the media, among businesses and around the kitchen tables of ordinary Virginians throughout the state. At our board meeting of March 25 my colleagues and I reiterated, in a bi-partisan vote, our strong support for Medicaid expansion in Virginia, and here's why:

First and foremost, Virginians have already paid for most of Medicaid expansion through our federal tax dollars. Through the year 2022, Virginians will pay \$29.7 billion in Affordable Care Act related taxes and fees to the federal government. The federal government will cover almost all of the cost for Medicaid expansion with tax dollars collected from the states, including Virginia. If Medicaid is expanded in Virginia, the federal government will pay 100 percent of the cost through 2016, decreasing incrementally to 90 percent in 2020 and subsequent years. If Medicaid is not ex-

panded in Virginia, we will still pay those same taxes but will see no corresponding benefit to our uninsured population — rather, our tax dollars will be used to pay for uninsured individuals in other states.

Second, the economic benefits of expanding Medicaid, aside from the obvious return of taxpayer dollars to our state, far outweigh the costs. To put it plainly, not addressing affordable health care coverage in Virginia costs Virginia money. Employed Virginians with insurance already subsidize care provided for uninsured Virginians needing urgent treatment when they show up in emergency rooms. These visits result in higher premiums for employed Virginians as well as increased provider costs. Medicaid expansion would increase less expensive preventative care thus reducing more expensive emergency care. This would not only drive down costs but could also improve the overall health of Virginia residents.

A largely unseen cost of our current situation is the existing financial burden on county-funded safety net providers, including non-

profit organizations that assist lower income residents. The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board estimates that the percentage of clients receiving substance abuse treatment or mental health services who are covered by Medicaid will rise from 38 percent to 50 percent under the proposed expansion, freeing up County funding for other critical needs.

Lastly, Medicaid expansion provides a tremendous opportunity to do more to help our most vulnerable residents. In Fairfax County alone, up to 30,000 low-income residents would become eligible for Medicaid through expansion, including: individuals earning less than \$15,302 per year; families earning less than \$31,155 per year; low-income children who lose Medicaid when they turn 19; and, adults with disabilities not eligible for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance. Under Medicaid expansion, Virginia's health care delivery system will have the resources needed to provide quality services to those in need.

The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce and Fairfax County's local hospitals recognize these facts, and have strongly endorsed Medicaid expansion. Let's keep Virginia's tax dollars in Virginia and increase access for uninsured Virginians at the same time.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More on Great Falls Trails

To the Editor: Thank you for your article in the March 19-25, 2014 issue of the Great Falls Connection ("Great Falls Citizens Association Talks Ticks and Trails"). We did, however, want to clarify a few points. The presentation by Robert Mobley focused on trails, not roads, where the question of surface material has been a matter of much discussion.

As presented, hard surface "village" trails would be used in Great Falls village and along our most heavily traveled routes to the village (e.g. Georgetown Pike). Ideally, "village" trails would also connect to the new paths being constructed along Route 7, the Reston trail system, the Wiehle Avenue Metro Station, and to the Washington and Old Dominion Trail. Soft surface "county" trails would be used to connect neighborhoods to each other and to neighborhood parks.

While initially more expensive to

install, impervious asphalt would work best for "village" trails since it requires less maintenance and resurfacing than stone dust trails. It can also be partly made from recycled materials. Stone dust, mined from quarries outside Great Falls, needs to be redone at least twice a year (assuming that the stone dust trail is properly maintained as a true multi-purpose trail), thereby increasing overall costs in the long-run.

It should also be noted that much of the stone dust from soft trails eventually makes its way into our watershed, while the runoff from hard trails is rain water—not stone dust or asphalt.

Great Falls Citizens Association welcomes feedback on the proposed "village" and "county" trails concept and invites interested residents to attend our monthly town hall and committee meetings as well as visit our website: <http://gfca.org>.

Robert Mobley, AIA
Bill Canis, Pam Grosvenor,
and **Scott Knight** — Great Falls
Citizens Association

Maintaining a Viable, Diverse Community

While need for housing, childcare, healthcare and other human services have grown, these programs have faced significant cuts over past few years.

To the Board of Supervisors:

The following open letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors concerns housing and human services budget recommendations from the Fairfax County Budget Advocacy Coalition for Housing and Human Services.

As you consider the proposed FY 2015 county budget, we urge you to make additional and needed investments in housing, health and human services programs. These recommendations were developed through a collaborative process of nonprofit housing developers, human service providers, and advocacy organizations identifying community needs. Strategic public investments in housing and human services can leverage significant amounts of private capital to provide a return on the county's investment. These investments help us maintain a diverse,

caring community that provides access to opportunities for all.

The guiding principles that informed our decisions are as follows:

- ❖ No one recommendation takes priority over the others;

- ❖ Each recommendation funds a program that is an essential component of a system of housing and services that offer individuals and families in need the optimum chances for success;

- ❖ These recommendations support a wide spectrum of households along the housing continuum;

- ❖ No funding for new initiatives is requested. Instead, these recommendations fund coordinated efforts between housing and service providers to deliver critical safety net supports with maximum effi-

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BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Navigating the Complexities of Lyme Disease. 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St, Vienna. Topics include: diagnosis & treatment, emotional and spiritual effects, and navigating the medical maze. Cost \$15 preregistration/\$20 at door. To register, visit <http://bit.ly/lymecomplexities>.

MONDAY/APRIL 7

2014 "It Takes YOU!" Information Meeting. 7 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Each events require helping hands on the day of the event to set up, clean up, pop popcorn, check in golfers, staff an information table, hand out treats, set out hay bales, construct a manger. They also require leadership - someone to "own" that event and figure out what needs to be done and make it happen. Without both leadership and helping hands, we cannot continue these special traditions that make Great Falls special. RSVP - if you can, but "drop-ins" are welcome - to erinlobato@celebrategreatfalls.org

TUESDAY/APRIL 8

NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees) Vienna Oakton Chapter 1116 Meeting. 1:30 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. The program will be about the Vienna Town Council and mayor candidates. The meeting is open to all members and their guests. Refreshments will be served.

GFCA Town Hall Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Grange Park, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Part II - GFCA Deer & Forest Health Program. Part one of this program was held in March when Commonwealth and Fairfax County experts discussed the role of deer in forest degradation, Lyme disease and car collisions. The April 8 program will look at possible solutions to growing deer populations.

Summer and Fall Registration Open House. 9:30-11:30 a.m. McLean Children's Academy, 6900 Elem Street, McLean. Registration information is also available on www.childrensacademy.com.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 9

Pay Equity. Patrick Henry library, 101 Maple Ave East, Vienna. The Vienna branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will host a discussion about pay equity. Call 703-321-7499 for more information.

SATURDAY/ APRIL 12

McLean Child Safety Seat Inspection Event. 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Lewinsville Center, 1609 Great Falls Street, McLean. The McLean District Police Station holds child safety seat inspections once per month.

MONDAY/APRIL 14

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Our Lady of Good Counsel, DeSales Hall, 8601 Wolftrap Road, Vienna. Each year the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna celebrates all the work of its many volunteers in a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. RSVP by March 27 to 703-281-0538. office@scov.org

LETTERS

Improving Children's Education

To the Editor:

The CLIPUS Foundation is an organization that focuses on school supplies as a gateway to improving children's education. Our members and volunteers share this same passion for children's education and together we push forward, coming up with unique ways to raise money and ultimately providing supplies to children in need. With our main program designed to collect used toners from companies, schools, and individuals, we help spread environmental awareness while re-

ceiving the funds needed to buy the school supplies.

Since the founding of CLIPUS in 2013, we have purchased 100 backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils and pens, markers, glue sticks, pencil cases, and more, totaling to more than \$2000. Each backpack is designed to last one school year for an elementary school student. On March 25, this past Tuesday, five members (Grace Huang, Jessica Lee, Stephanie Michas, Mallika Subandh, Virginia Zhang) and I filled two cars with nine boxes of

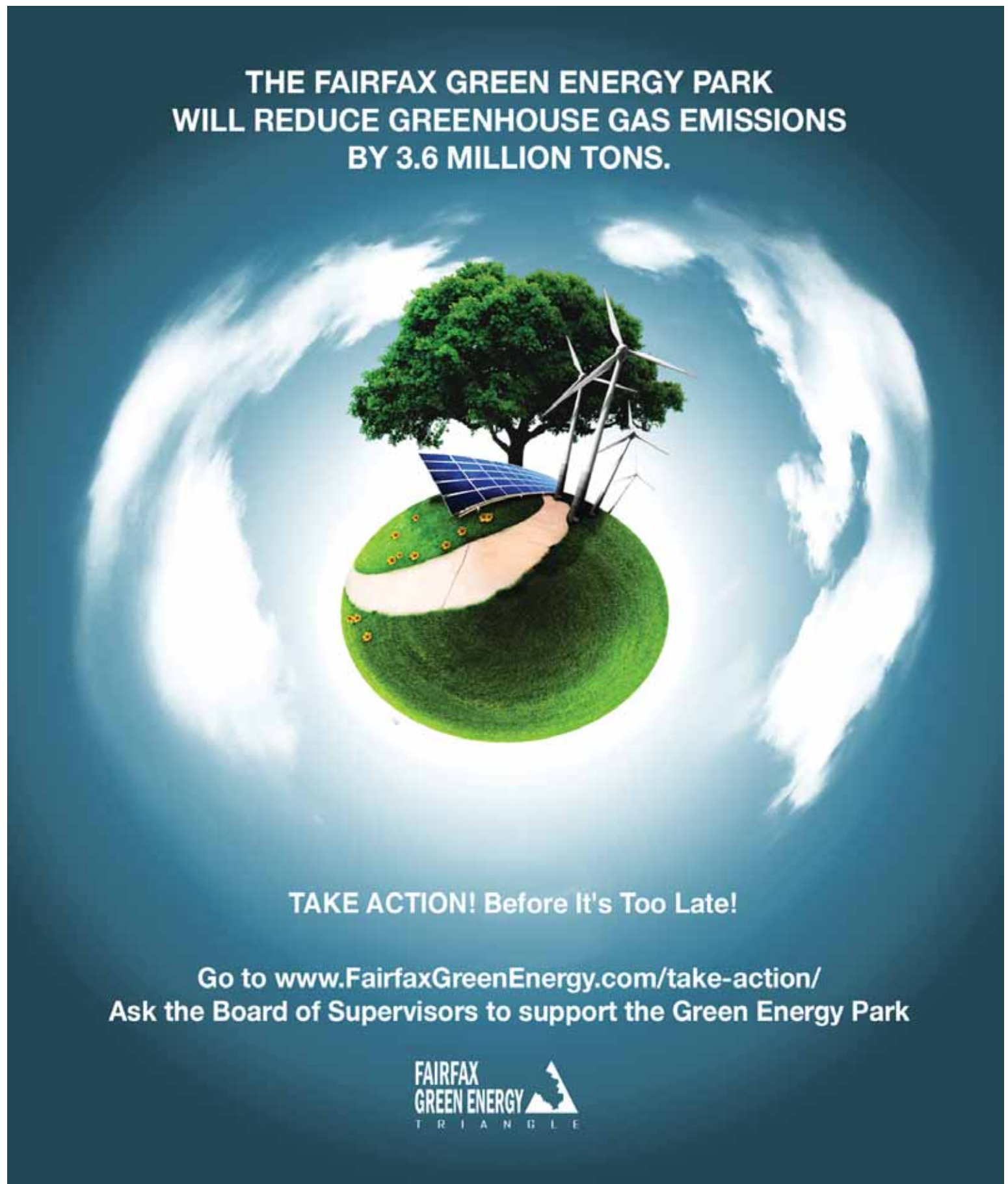
backpacks and headed to Cannon Road Elementary School, Silver Spring, Md., for our first school supplies distribution event. We braved the snow and rain and succeeded in giving around 80 backpacks to the students and families. Our members put so much effort into organizing this event, from contacting schools to packing the backpacks, and the smiles of the children were extremely rewarding. The distribution, lasting two hours, was a great success due to the joint efforts of the CLIPUS members, Cannon ES, and all of our wonderful supporters.

Looking into the future, we hope to distribute many more backpacks and supplies during a large-scale Back-to-School event this coming fall. We are also currently planning a summer Fun Run to garner more funds. In the meantime, we are continuing to collect toners from all places and strengthening our existing partnerships.

For more information, visit www.clipusfoundation.org

Or contact Katharine Jiang at katharine.jiang@clipusfoundation.org

Katharine Jiang
The Madeira School



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Human Services Face New Cuts

FROM PAGE 6

ciency and adoption of best practices.

Our coalition supports the limited housing and human services funding in the County Executive's Budget, and respectfully urges no further cuts to these budgets. This request is made in light of significant cuts to these programs over the past few years, even as the need for housing, childcare, healthcare and other human services have grown. In supporting the County's Executive proposals, we would like to highlight the following:

Contract Rate Increases for Human Service Providers: We support the County Executive's inclusion of \$2.17 million for a contract rate increase for human services providers in the County, especially nonprofits. These providers offer critical services to low and moderate income households that would fall to the county alone if the nonprofit partners did not exist. These community-based organizations have built corporate and private sector support for their efforts to leverage public resources. However, funding for these organizations that provide services must keep pace with inflation, our high cost of living, pay and benefits, to attract and retain their staff.

Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP): We support the increase of \$743,388 (7.5 percent over the FY 2014 Adopted Budget amount of \$9.9 million) for the first year of a two-year CCFP cycle that begins in FY 2015. FY 2015 Community Development Block Grant funding is projected to be \$1.8 million, an increase of \$250,791. The total FY 2015 CCFP funding is therefore anticipated to be \$12.4 million, an increase of \$944,179 over the FY 2014 amount of \$11.4 million. This additional funding strengthens the county's investment in community-based programs and is welcomed.

Mondloch Place \$275,000 (Office to End and Prevent Homelessness): We support funding needed for on-site supportive services to formerly homeless single adults. The funds will pay the contract costs to operate the program, including staffing the facility, and leverages the county's investment in the substantial renovation of the building.

Employment Services \$200,000 (Office to End and Prevent Homelessness): We support continued funding for a pilot program integrating employment services into the existing Bridging Affordability framework of the Housing Blueprint. Providing services that adequately address the special needs of many in the Bridging Affordability program — something that is lacking in existing employment services programs — is essential for these households to achieve greater financial security and self-sufficiency. This funding was originally included in the FY 2014 budget, but was held in reserve pending approval of the plan.

Katherine K. Hanley Townhomes \$235,220 (Office to End and Prevent Homelessness): We support funding to pro-

vide supportive housing and services to families with children. Two 3-unit buildings are scheduled to open in December 2014.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services \$139,973 (Department of Family Services): We support funding for one new program manager position to address both increasing caseloads and the complexity of work in the Office for Women and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services.

Investment in School Readiness \$714,000 (Office of Children): We support the County Executive's proposal in the FY2015 budget to expand community-based programs for children living in poverty to reach school benchmarks.

Affordable Housing (Housing and Community Development): Securing safe, decent affordable housing remains one of the greatest challenges for low and moderate income households in Fairfax County and is a considerable barrier to a family's ability to achieve stability and self-sufficiency.

Housing Blueprint: The FY 2015 advertised budget includes \$1.95 million to fund the Bridging Affordability rental program as a portion of the budget for the FY 2015 Housing Blueprint. The funding for this program was reallocated in the FY2014 budget, and the proposed FY2015 allocation is approximately \$2 million less than FY2013.

Bridging Affordability was adopted as the county's signature program within the Housing Blueprint to move families out of homelessness and onto a more sustainable future. This program provides rental subsidies and case management to extremely low-income households, and has successfully served over 281 families. Bridging Affordability works. Nearly 70 percent of households that have successfully transitioned out of Bridging Affordability into permanent housing have moved on to fair market housing.

With the current Bridging Affordability program funding, we are positioned to continue to serve approximately 150 new households through FY14 and FY15. Beginning in FY16, it is critical that Fairfax County continues to invest in this high-impact, high-demand program to ensure that hundreds of extremely low income families have access to stable housing options and don't cycle back into homelessness.

The FY2015 advertised budget also includes \$5 million for the New Private Partner Acquisition to increase the county's stock of committed affordable housing. This funding would be used to preserve or develop 120 units of affordable housing for low income working families, but this amount is inadequate to provide the gap financing for such a project, especially if the goal of serving formerly homeless persons, as stated in the Blueprint, is to be achieved.

In considering these requests, please note the following statistics:

❖ U.S. Census Bureau statistics show an estimated 73,916 households in Fairfax County earning less than \$50,000 annually, or about 47 percent of the area's median income for a family of four (\$107,300);

❖ Census data also shows an estimated 67,293 persons living below the poverty level in Fairfax County;

❖ According to the Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech, the total affordable housing gap in Fairfax County for low and moderate-income renters (earning no more than \$85,000 for a family of four) is 28,405 units;

❖ The Blueprint for Housing shows a shortfall of 1,818 units for FY2015 in meeting the goals of the 10 Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness;

❖ Nearly 1,650 CSB clients need affordable housing.

Communities who are successful in addressing their unmet housing needs have adopted a dedicated, reliable source of funding to preserve or develop housing that is affordable. The county's greatest strides in affordable housing were made during the years when one penny of the real estate tax was dedicated to housing preservation. Whether it's a dedicated revenue source or an annual, reliable commitment to a housing trust fund, we urge Fairfax County to once again consider this investment in housing that is affordable and needed for a significant and growing percentage of the County's population.

Community Health Care Network (CHCN): In FY 2014, funding for CHCN was cut by \$752,000. The \$250,000 reduction in specialty care contracts that resulted has worsened an already insufficient supply of local specialists. CHCN has therefore increased its utilization and reliance on University of Virginia Medical Center specialists, requiring CHCN's low income, uninsured clients to travel to Charlottesville, spending scarce money and missing days at work. It is our understanding that a working group of public and private providers and leaders has recently initiated efforts to build and sustain a local specialty network system. Therefore, rather than recommend restoration of the funding at this time, we suggest that the county continue to support this effort and play an appropriate role in developing solutions to this problem. By the time of Carryover, we should all have a better understanding about the needed resources, if any.

This coalition appreciates the significant budget challenges you face for FY2015, and thanks you for our partnership as we work together in support of the most vulnerable in our community. However, we are deeply concerned that the housing and human services system has reached a "tipping point" where it will not be possible to decrease funding without sacrificing services and failing to meet the human services needs of county residents. We believe that there is very little margin for error, and that any further cuts will result in program reductions, eliminations, or waiting lists for services. If Fairfax County is to remain a place of excellence, we must come together as a community to discuss a long term strategy for funding and maintaining adequate, annual investments in housing and human

services in future budgets.

Alternative House, Judith Dittman, Executive Director; Centreville Immigration Forum/Centreville Labor Resource Center, Alice Foltz, Board President; Cornerstones, Kerrie Wilson, CEO; Community Residences, Inc. Dennis J. Manning, LCSW, President and CEO FACETS, Inc., Amanda Andere, Executive Director; Fairfax Area Disability Services Board; Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services, Shannon Steene, Chair; Fairfax Education Association, Kimberley Adams, President; Governing Board of the Fairfax Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, Michael L. O'Reilly, Chairman; Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia, Rev. Jon Smoot, Executive Director; James Mott Community Assistance Program, Inc., Cheryl Mavritte, Executive Director and Rebecca Johnson, Acting Board Chair; Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, Patricia Donnelly, Executive Director; Lorton Community Action Center, Linda Patterson, Executive Director; New Hope Housing, Pam Michell, Executive Director; Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, Michelle Krockner, Executive Director; Northern Virginia Family Service, Mary Agee, President and CEO; Our Daily Bread, Lisa Whetzel, Executive Director and Richard Haynes, Board President; Pathway Homes, Inc., Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, President and CEO; PRS, Inc., Wendy Gradison, LCSW, President and CEO; Shelter House, Inc., Joe Meyer, Deputy Executive Director and Denise Miller, Board President; United Community Ministries, Shirley Marshall, Executive Director and Jim Seeley, Board member and Chair of the Advocacy Committee; Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Russell K. Snyder, President and CEO; Wesley Housing Development Corporation, Shelley Murphy, President and CEO; Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, Melissa Jansen, Executive Director; Individual citizen advocates Marlene Blum, 2417 Luckett Avenue, Vienna (Providence District); Alvin W. Smuzynski, 7522 Rambling Ridge Drive, Fairfax Station (Springfield District); Francis J. Pettit, 6668 Old Blacksmith Dr., Burke (Springfield District), and Ellen Hayes, 9431 Mauck Ct., Fairfax (Braddock District)

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Send to:

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1606 King St.
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Call: 703-917-6444.
By e-mail:
greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com

CALENDAR

Send announcements to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 2

Vienna Photographic Society Meeting. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Oakton Elementary School, 3000 Chain Bridge Rd., Oakton. Will Schermerhorn will discuss photography in the context of the Special Olympics. Special Olympics is a worldwide organization of more than 4.2 million people with intellectual disabilities who use the power of sports to reveal the champions within. From a photographer's perspective, the key is finding the right photos to express the essence of Special Olympics. www.vpsva.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 4-SUNDAY/APRIL 20

"The Cripple of Inishmaan" Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. 1st Stage in Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Excitement ripples through the sleepy Irish community of Inishmaan abuzz with the news that a Hollywood filmmaker plans to shoot a movie on a neighboring island. When young Cripple Billy lands a screen test, the oddball citizens of Inishmaan mount a heartbreakingly hilarious campaign bursting with dark humor and touching devotion. General admission: \$27. Seniors \$22. Students and Military \$15. Purchase online at www.1ststagetysons.org or 703-854-1856.

FRIDAY/APRIL 4-MONDAY/MAY 5

Six Artists Return. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The Frame Factory, 212 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. An exhibition and sale of paintings, drawings, sculpture and jewelry by local artists Jackie Elwell, Elaine Florimonte, Debbie Glakas, Lisa Neher, Sarah Swart and Barbara Wagner. www.theframefactory1.com

SATURDAY/APRIL 5-SUNDAY/APRIL 6

"Miss Nelson is Missing." 3 p.m. McLean Community Center's The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Based on the book, the play tells the story of Miss Nelson, who can't control her crazy classroom because she is just too nice. When Miss Nelson disappears, she is replaced by the hard-as-nails, substitute teacher, Viola Swamp. With the big test approaching, the kids suddenly realize how much they miss their old teacher and they will do anything—including hiring a private detective—to solve the mystery of her disappearance and bring her back. This show is appropriate for children age 6 and older. Tickets: \$8-\$10. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit: www.aldentheatre.org

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Great Falls Writers Group Evening with the Authors. 7-10 p.m. Great Falls Library. Meet some of the writers of the group, followed by a Q&A session.

Six Artists Return Opening Reception. 2-8 p.m. The Frame Factory, 212 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. An exhibition and sale of paintings, drawings, sculpture and jewelry by local artists Jackie Elwell, Elaine Florimonte, Debbie Glakas, Lisa Neher, Sarah Swart and Barbara Wagner. www.theframefactory1.com

Book Sale. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

SUNDAY/APRIL 6

The History of the Country Store. 4-6 p.m. Freeman Store, 131 Church Street, NE, Vienna. The exhibit utilizes artifacts, period apparel, tools, posters and other materials to tell the story of local general stores which often served as grocery, post office, voting precinct, pharmacy, feed and grain supplier, hardware store, as well as filling a role as community centers. The exhibit is free and open to the public and will be in place through 2014. For more information, www.historicviennainc.org.

Book Sale Clearance. 1 – 4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

Choral Music Concert. 4 p.m. St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Voice ensembles of St. Mary's College to perform. The concert is free and open to the public.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 9

Wildfire Toasts the Silver Line. 6:30 p.m. Wildfire, 3rd floor, Tysons Corner, McLean. Toast the coming of the Silver Line and the great future for Tysons at Wildfire with a four course custom menu designed by Executive Chef Eddie Ishaq, each course paired with a sparkling wine from around the world. Michael Caplin, executive director of the Tysons Partnership, will be the guest speaker. The Tysons Partnership is a dynamic association of citizens and area businesses working with local government to transform Tysons into the next great American city. Michael Caplin will talk about plans for Tysons and answer questions. \$80/per person. RSVP Amanda or Erika at 703-442-9110.

THURSDAY/APRIL 10

How to Improve Your Front/Backyard with Natural



Spend your weekend, April 5-6 at The Alden, watching Viola Swamp, the scary substitute teacher who replaces the nice and kind Miss Nelson in the play titled "Miss Nelson is Missing," based upon the famous children's book.

Landscaping! 7-9 p.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Natural Landscaping is a method of designing and installing landscapes that rests on an understanding of the relationship between plants and the rest of the environment. Using these native tree and shrub seedlings will result in having your property easy to care for and helps support bees and other insects and animals. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to gfrsvp@gmail.com for aiding registration and snacks.

"Gnomonic Tales of Thomas Jefferson (and other Founding Fathers). 7 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The lecture will consider sundials in the lives of Thomas Jefferson and other prominent figures of early America such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turnerfarm/>

Honoring Poetry Contest Winners. 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The Great Falls Friends and Neighbors will hold a luncheon to honor 4th - 6th grade winners in their 31st Annual Poetry contest. The cost of the luncheon is \$21. Please make checks payable to GFFN and send them to Lisa Spoden at: 10917 Lake Windermere Drive, Great Falls, VA 22066. The deadline to register is April 5. Paypal is also available on the GFFN website at www.gffnva.org, members area.

FRIDAY/APRIL 11

"Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind." 8 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. In this show, the eccentric New York Neo-Futurists race against the clock. Tickets are \$20/\$15 for MCC district residents. www.aldentheatre.org



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Lift Me Up!

FROM PAGE 5

farm and region over the years and a living history in the dining room of the home. The presence of the Great Falls Historical

Society, Kathleen Murphy and Carolyn Miller added to the event by providing answers to the questions of inquisitive visitors/area residents curious to know more about Great Falls and the property.

Lift Me Up! is reaching out to the community for support of their "Good fences make good neighbors" campaign to raise funds to replace old fencing. Secure fencing is essential to the safety of the horses and prevents them from visiting neighbors. A section of fence can be sponsored for \$100, \$150 with

About Lift Me Up!

Lift Me Up! has provided thousands of therapeutic horseback riding lessons to children and adults with disabilities at its Great Falls stable since 1975. Just recently Lift Me Up! launched a new program for injured veterans called BITS (Back in the Saddle). Each week over 100 riders develop new riding skills that enhance their core strength, balance, coordination and confidence. Lift Me Up! trains volunteers age 14 and older to assist with the therapeutic riding lessons as sidewalkers and leaders. See www.liftmeup.org for more information

a commemorative plaque, which is tax-deductible. Visit www.liftmeup.org for more information.

Future Lift Me Up! events include a "Good Neighbors" Horse Show at Turner Farm May 10 and a dinner fundraising event sponsored by HBC Realty Group, at Pucinella's in McLean on June 10.

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ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Small ensemble: (from left - front row) Megan Graves and Rebecca Lenehan, (back row) Robert Grimm, John Stange and Mark Lee Adams in "The Cripple of Inishmaan" at 1st Stage.

Comic Satire With a Big Heart

'The Cripple of Inishmaan' at the 1st Stage.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Tysons' 1st Stage is giving audiences a terrific evening's entertainment with a talented, engaging cast. The 1st Stage "The Cripple of Inishmaan" is a gem of a production. It is full of eccentric, ultimately poignant characters with sharp satire and charm; as well as their insensitive attitudes, using "cripple" to describe a person with a disability.

The play, written by Tony Award recipient Martin McDonagh, takes place in an unconventional setting; an isolated island off the west coast of Ireland in 1934.

Directed with allure by Steven Carpen-ter, the verbally energetic show is full of salty humor by quirky people with a host of troubles in a time without modern conveniences such television or telephones.

The islanders become overjoyed to learn a Hollywood film is being made about their hard life. A loner, the orphan Billy Claven, known as "Cripple" Billy, is eager to escape the ridicule he endures and the island's gossip-laden boredom. He is pegged by others as the least likely to succeed. To everyone's surprise, he successfully auditions and goes to America for a period of time. And then returns to make his mark.

Billy is played by the super Josh Adams. He is the sly underdog and "scapegoat" we root for. Ultimately, he bamboozles the others in his quest for a better life. Adams'

Where and When

"The Cripple of Inishmaan" at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road. Performances through April 20: Friday 8 p.m., Saturday 2 & 8 p.m. and Sunday 2 & 7 p.m. Tickets \$27 with senior, student and military discounts. Call 703-854-1856 or visit: www.1stStageTysons.org. Note: Free Parking.

major foil is the delightful Mark Lee Adams, as Johnny Pateen Mike, the town gossip and storyteller. He has an unexpected heart of gold.

Megan Graves is Helen the young, aggressively kooky girl. She is best described as a fierce hellion; a spitfire who fights to keep prying hands away from her. Susan Holiday and Carol Randolph well-play Billy's over-protective aunts who can talk to stones and eat too many sweets.

One cannot say enough about Rebecca Lenehan as Johnny's alcoholic 90 year-old mother. She is an adorable hoot with a cackle of mocking laughter. As Babbybobby, a man of decency who is duped and reacts with physical anger, John Strange is at war with his humiliation.

The set and props are meticulously detailed. That the set moves on a turntable is a wonder. Costumes are as rustic as the characters. The sound has plenty of fiddles and whistles to cast moods.

"The Cripple of Inishmaan" has a distinctive charm, a strong cast, a lampooning attitude and deep heart. Northern Virginia audiences are fortunate to have the Helen Hayes recipient 1st Stage in the area.

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SPORTS



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Junior catcher Mitch Blackstone is in his third season as a starter for the Marshall baseball team.

Marshall Baseball Shows Improvement in Defeat

Catcher Blackstone, pitcher Cummins lead Statesmen in 2014.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

With the Marshall baseball team's two-run seventh-inning lead having vanished, Statesmen catcher Mitch Blackstone tried to make a play.

Marshall and Robinson were tied at 5. The Rams had runners on the corners with one out in the bottom of the frame when Blackstone saw an opportunity to help pitcher Riley Cummins get out of a jam. During an at-bat by Robinson's Tyler Fitchett, Blackstone fired the ball toward third base in an attempt to pick off the potential winning run. Instead, Blackstone's throw sailed high and into left field, allowing the winning run to score.

BLACKSTONE WALKED toward the Marshall dugout with his hands on his head and later had tears in his eyes, disappointed that his error helped the Rams complete their comeback from an early 5-1 deficit.

"[The runner at third] seemed to me that he was a little farther off the base than most people were," Blackstone said. "I thought I could get [Cummins] a quick out. ... [The] ball just got away from me."

Robinson beat Marshall 6-5 on March 27, dropping the Statesmen's record to 1-2 early

in the 2014 season. Despite the sting of letting one slip away, Marshall's performance indicated how far the program has progressed in the last year.

Marshall lost its first seven games of the 2013 campaign and was 5-13 with one game remaining in the regular season. The Statesmen suffered several lopsided defeats during the rough start, including a 15-4 loss to Robinson. Marshall eventually turned things around, however, winning five of its final seven and reaching the Northern Region semifinals, falling one victory shy of qualifying for the state tournament.

While Marshall last week suffered an early-season loss to Robinson for the second straight year, the Statesmen have put themselves in a position to win games against quality opponents.

"Every season, we try to schedule really good teams at the beginning so that we can try to see where we're at," second-year

Marshall head coach Aaron Tarr said. "Last year when we did that, it was a little bit of a disaster — I mean, these guys beat us [15-4]. This year, [it was] 6-5, with us coming out feeling like we let the game get away from us at the end. That's a lot different. It speaks to the strength of the program as it grows [and] that I love their kids, but I love ours, too. That's not always the case, where you can look across the field at a big program and say our kids are just as good as theirs."

"I feel like our program has gotten significantly better and most of that is due to Coach Tarr."

— Marshall catcher Mitch Blackstone

Blackstone is one of the main reasons for Tarr's optimism. While the junior catcher's throwing error plated Robinson's winning run last week, Blackstone, in his third year as a varsity starter, figures to provide the Statesmen far more positive moments in the future than negative. Listed at 6 feet 3 and 195 pounds, Blackstone went 3-for-4 with a double against Robinson and threw out two would-be base-stealers. As a sophomore last season, he hit .444 with six home runs, 14 doubles and 22 RBIs on his way to first-team all-Liberty District honors.

"I'm not going to expect him to increase his offensive output because that would be really foolish of me to do and I don't want to apply that kind of pressure," Tarr said.

"He had about as good an offensive year as you can have last year. ... The defensive elements of his game have gotten a lot better. His arm is stronger, he reads the game better [and] he commands the defense better."

Cummins is the Statesmen's top pitcher. While he had a rough outing in relief against Robinson, the 6-foot-5 senior left-hander, who will pitch for the University of Virginia, figures to bounce back. Junior right-hander Will Brooke is the team's No. 2 starter. He started against the Rams and pitched 5 1/3 innings, allowing three runs and five hits while walking four and striking out two.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Billy Orme and the Langley boys' lacrosse team defeated McLean 5-4 on March 20.

Langley Boys' Lax Starts 1-2

The Langley boys' lacrosse team is off to a 1-2 start this season. The Saxons opened with a 5-4 come-from-behind win against McLean on March 20, but lost to Dominion, 12-9, on March 21 and Woodson, 7-5, on March 22.

Langley won four consecutive state championships from 2009-12, but lost in

the region semifinals last season.

"I know there are other schools where they think if you have a winning season it's a great year," Langley head coach Earl Brewer said after the McLean win, "but that doesn't go here."

Langley will travel to face Fairfax at 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 3.

"Unfortunately for [Cummins], he got sick with the flu for like 10 days about two weeks ago, so he's not at his midseason form yet, but we don't worry about that," Tarr said after the Robinson loss. "It gives guys like Will Brooke, who has pitched really well for us in both of his outings, it gives him an opening to demonstrate we've got a really, really good No. 2 guy, if you want to look at it that way. If you've got two guys that you can rely on and some bullpen guys that always get outs, [you will be in good shape]."

Junior right-hander Mark LeDuc is one of the Statesmen's top relief pitchers.

Senior shortstop Alec Dolton is a team captain (along with Blackstone and Cummins) who hit .342 and scored 18 runs last season. He will play for Catholic University.

Junior centerfielder John Bennett and senior first baseman/designated hitter Conor Boyle also figure to be key contributors for the Statesmen.

MARSHALL IS SCHEDULED to face Madison on the road at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2. The Statesmen return home to face Stone Bridge at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 4.

"We definitely have a lot more experience," Blackstone said. "Last year, we were more of a younger team. This year, we've got a lot of talented guys. ... Probably not the start we wanted, [but] 1-2 is much better than 0-7. ... I feel like our program has gotten significantly better and most of that is due to Coach Tarr. ... I think we've got some good potential to do some good things."

The Northern Virginia Problem

Top Virginia Universities are harder to get into: checking why and how to help.

BY LISA SPINELLI
THE CONNECTION

Many Northern Virginian students are biting their nails, waiting for their college admission letters this week. But in a sea of overachievers, NoVa students are coming across a pervasive issue with in-state colleges—what is being dubbed the “the Northern Virginia Problem.” Many residents of Fairfax, Alexandria City, Loudon, Fauquier, Prince William and Arlington counties are spreading the word that top Virginia universities—the University of Virginia, Washington and Lee and William and Mary—are becoming harder and harder to get into.

“I applied to a lot of Virginia schools. I didn’t get into UVa, but I’m not surprised because it’s gotten so hard—especially from Langley (High School) where everyone seemed to be applying to the same schools,” says Chris Susskind, a 3.8 (weighted) GPA senior at Langley High School with multiple AP courses, a near-perfect ACT score and a volunteer with disabled children. “It’s (UVa) become ivy league for schools in Virginia.”

Other high-achieving seniors, like Drew Treger of W.T. Woodson High School, don’t even bother applying.

“I knew I wasn’t going to get in, so I didn’t even try,” says Treger, captain of the men’s varsity lacrosse team and of the Fellowship for Christian Athletes at Woodson, who also holds a 3.5 GPA with four AP classes under his belt.

THESE TOP VIRGINIA UNIVERSITIES are not trying to totally dispel the rumors either—they are in fact accepting less of a percentage of NoVa students. But the reasons are not that they’ve become more stringent in their admission policies or more selective, they claim. The problem it seems is an issue of sheer volume. All hope is not lost, however, and we have a few tips for those students vying for entrance into these top-ranked schools.

Data from the University of Virginia’s communications office supports the rumors that they are indeed accepting less of a percentage of Northern Virginia applicants—39 percent this year compared to 42 percent for fall 2009. However, the number of students applying from our NoVa counties is also increasing—up 25 percent in just five years. Unless UVa and the other top-rated schools grow their facilities as fast as their applicant pool, there’s naturally going to be less of a percentage accepted.



PHOTO BY SANJAY SUCHAK, U.VA. OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

University of Virginia Rotunda.



PHOTO COURTESY THE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Students at Washington and Lee University.

“Generally, the academic quality of incoming classes here has increased over the years and the number of applications for limited spots continues to set records,” says Charles McGregor McCance, senior director of media relations at UVA. “This raises the competitive environment for all applicants from everywhere. For the current academic year, the University received more than 31,000 applications for about 3,500 spots.”

The same trend appears to be the case with the College of William and Mary. According to data pulled from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, applications into this top-rated Virginia college increased 12 percent in the last five years and their acceptance rate only went down from 44 percent to 42. The actual number of students being accepted is steadily increasing at UVa and William and Mary, just not the percentage.

Washington and Lee University does not

report or collect data by county, the communications department informed us.

“We have always taken 15 percent from Virginia,” says Brian Eckert, executive director of communications and public affairs for Washington and Lee. “We look at grades first and—once we know that someone can handle the work here—then we start looking at demonstrated strong leadership and students who have performed community service.”

Fairfax County alone grew from 969,000 in 2000 to over 1.1 million in 2013. With thousands more students flooding the application system, it may seem harder to stand out amongst classmates—many of whom are getting straight As. But stressing out over SATs and class rank isn’t the most effective way to beat out the competition.

Yes, it’s true the types and grades you get in those classes are the first and foremost aspects of a transcript these colleges are

“It’s (UVa) has become ivy league for schools in Virginia.”

—Langley High Senior Chris Susskind

looking at but leadership roles, caliber of essays and an overall interesting aspect about you—something to make you diverse, is what they all claim to set those who stand out against those who get weeded out.

“More and more students are adding an area of interest when applying to colleges,” says Judith Hingle, career connections specialist with the Fairfax County Public School System. “Adding a prospective major can help, because colleges need to balance all those things.”

With engineering degrees being the most popular, Eckert agreed there are undoubtedly more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) students applying now than ever before, but classics majors are at an all-time low across the nation.

JUST TWO YEARS AGO, Fairfax County schools adapted a more career-minded focus with the installation of the Naviance system, a Web-based system FCPS named the Family Connection. Naviance is a career and academic guidance software system that links students’ academic choices to the counseling offices and helps them determine their high school, college and subsequent career path. Hingle says this kind of focus can only help up students’ chances at receiving those coveted admission letters.

Another way around the system entirely—which can also cut down on your final tuition bill—is to attend a Virginia community college. Many top schools in Virginia and the D.C. area have a guaranteed admissions agreement with not just UVa, but William and Mary, certain colleges within George Washington University and Catholic University of America. Washington and Lee, however, does not participate.

And if all else fails, Hingle says not to despair, there are tons of other great schools in Virginia that were established after the 19th century—many of whom are taking a higher percentage of NoVa students than in years past.

“Pick a school that really interests you,” Hingle advises. “If you just focus on the high end, a lot of great kids become discouraged, but there are lots of chances to grow and learn here in Virginia.”

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Obituary

Gerry Edwards Shelton Tyner died at her home in Vienna, VA on March 25, 2014 after several months of declining health due to cancer. She was born in Gretna, VA on January 27, 1928, the fifth of six children born to Mollie and John Cabel Edwards. She was the first in her family to attend college, finishing her degree at Ferrum College in 1947. Upon graduation, she worked briefly for the Department of Social Services and a local bank in Danville, VA but said her greatest job was as a full time wife and mother. After the death of her first husband, Cy Shelton, in 1981, she re-entered the workforce, working in the administrative offices of the Sheraton Hotel in Arlington, at a local clothing store, and at Fairfax County Public Schools, where she worked until her marriage in 1996 to Claude Tyner.

She will be remembered for her passion for creating and appreciating all things beautiful, a strong work ethic, and a belief that any job worth doing was worth doing right. She enjoyed her work on various committees at First Baptist Church in Alexandria where she was a member since 1960 and on the Board of Lady Managers for Inova Alexandria Hospital where she was a Member Emeritus.

She was predeceased by her parents, 4 brothers and one sister. She is survived by her only child, Terri Shelton of Greensboro, NC, her husband Arthur Anastopoulos, and one grandson, Tyler Anastopoulos; as well as her husband of 17 years, Claude Tyner and his daughters, Claudia Offutt, Arlington, VA and Susie McSweeney, and her husband, Tim of Parthenon, Arkansas; his 6 grandchildren: Gwen Offutt; James Offutt and wife Hillary; Diana Stropko and her husband Landon; Jeffrey Offutt and his wife Valerie; Jennifer Davis; and Sean McSweeney; as well as two great grandchildren, AJ and Courtney Offutt.

Thank you to the staff of Capital Caring and a special thank you to Yaa Duah who made it possible for us to respect her wishes to remain at home during this illness.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations be made to First Baptist Church of Alexandria, VA.

Family will receive visitors at Everly Wheatley Funeral Home, 1500 West Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA on Thursday, March 27th from 6-8pm. A service commemorating her life will be at First Baptist Church, 2932 King Street, Alexandria, VA on Friday, March 28th at 1pm. Burial will be held at Highland Burial Park, Danville, VA on Saturday, March 29 at 2pm.

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Thanks, Coach...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

...my Certified Holistic Health Coach, Rebecca Nenner, that is. (Visit www.healthcoachdiva.com for information leading to a healthier lifestyle.) More than a coach, Rebecca is my friend – and has been for many years. A former co-worker at the Connection Newspapers, Rebecca is as passionate about health and fitness as I am about the Boston Red Sox. She has been my guiding hand now for over five years, most especially when I was first diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer back in February, 2009. Although there are no whistles involved in her coaching, there are phone calls, e-mails, YouTube videos, Webinars and miscellaneous other advisories regularly landing in my inbox. To say Rebecca has saved my life might be an overstatement, given that I am being treated by an oncologist; however, she has given me an alternate perspective on what I can do to help my body survive my treatment and live like I have a present and a future, a gift if ever there was one.

To say that I was a bad eater (think problem child) would be unfair to any child ever characterized as a "bad eater." My joke was: I eat about 10 things – all the time: meat and potatoes, bread and butter, bagels and cream cheese, pizza and more pizza; cake, cookies, candy and ice cream; bologna and hot dogs; sugary drinks for breakfast, lunch and dinner; salty snacks. I could go on, but I'm sure you get the picture, as Rebecca certainly did; and presumably you've noticed no mention of salad, fruits or vegetables included in my list. I wouldn't say – or even admit to, intentionally ignoring the produce section in the supermarket but one would be hard-pressed to notice me walking toward that outside-aisle-type area of the store unless it was on the way to the Entenmann's display. Typically, I shopped in the middle aisles where generally speaking, all the canned, pre-packaged, processed, non-organic, less expensive and shall we say, less healthier alternatives were/are readily available.

Though I had healthy parents who both lived well into their 80s, neither of whom ever exhibited any history of cancer, I was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer at age 54 and a half, a long-time non-smoker to boot. I was given a "13-month to two-year" prognosis at the time. Processing that kind of information doesn't happen overnight, I can tell you that. But eventually, you begin to sift through your options, traditional and otherwise, and proceed on a course of treatment/action that either stands you pat or changes you. I decided change was necessary and sought out Rebecca's help.

The goal was to make my body's blood chemistry (ph balance) as high and as inhospitable to cancer cells as possible by eliminating certain foods (basically everything I eat), and try to increase the oxygen in my blood stream and minimize the acid. The goal: to strengthen my immune system for the fight ahead. This meant – among other avenues – drinking alkaline water (using a machine that converts tap water to alkaline water, highly oxygenated), and following an alkaline diet: 75 percent alkaline and 25 percent acid. In addition to eating different foods than I ever used to (I give myself a "C;" friends who know my eating habits say I deserve an "A"), I take about 40 pills a day: Turmeric and Curcumin, Royal Jelly, Sea Kelp, Ubiquinol, Pancreatic Enzymes, Chinese Chlorella and Spirulina, Red Krill Oil, Juice-Plus multivitamins: Orchard, Vineyard and Garden blends; Resveratrol, probiotics, vitamin C, vitamin D; in addition, I mix/drink baking soda with 8 oz. alkaline water once a day; I mix/drink one tablespoon of Bragg's Organic Apple Cider, with the "mother," into my alkaline water once a day; spoon out 4 tablespoons of pureed asparagus twice a day; make fresh fruit/fresh vegetable smoothies once a day which also include flaxseed oil, almonds, hemp seeds, organic blackstrap molasses (unsulfured), and maybe even ginger if I can stand it (it's very strong). I've recently added wheat grass and almond milk to my regimen. Next up will be apricot kernels and whatever else Rebecca tells me – within reason, because I'm still very particular and this whole eating thing is practically impossible for me to maintain.

What does all this stuff do? I don't really know, but Rebecca does and I trust her. And five years later, I'm living proof. Even though I'm a survivor and a believer, I'm not a very good explainer. As I'm fond of saying, I know sports and chocolate. Rebecca does know more than that, a lot more, and for that, I am eternally grateful – and extremely fortunate to have her in my corner, because this cancer thing is definitely a fight.

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

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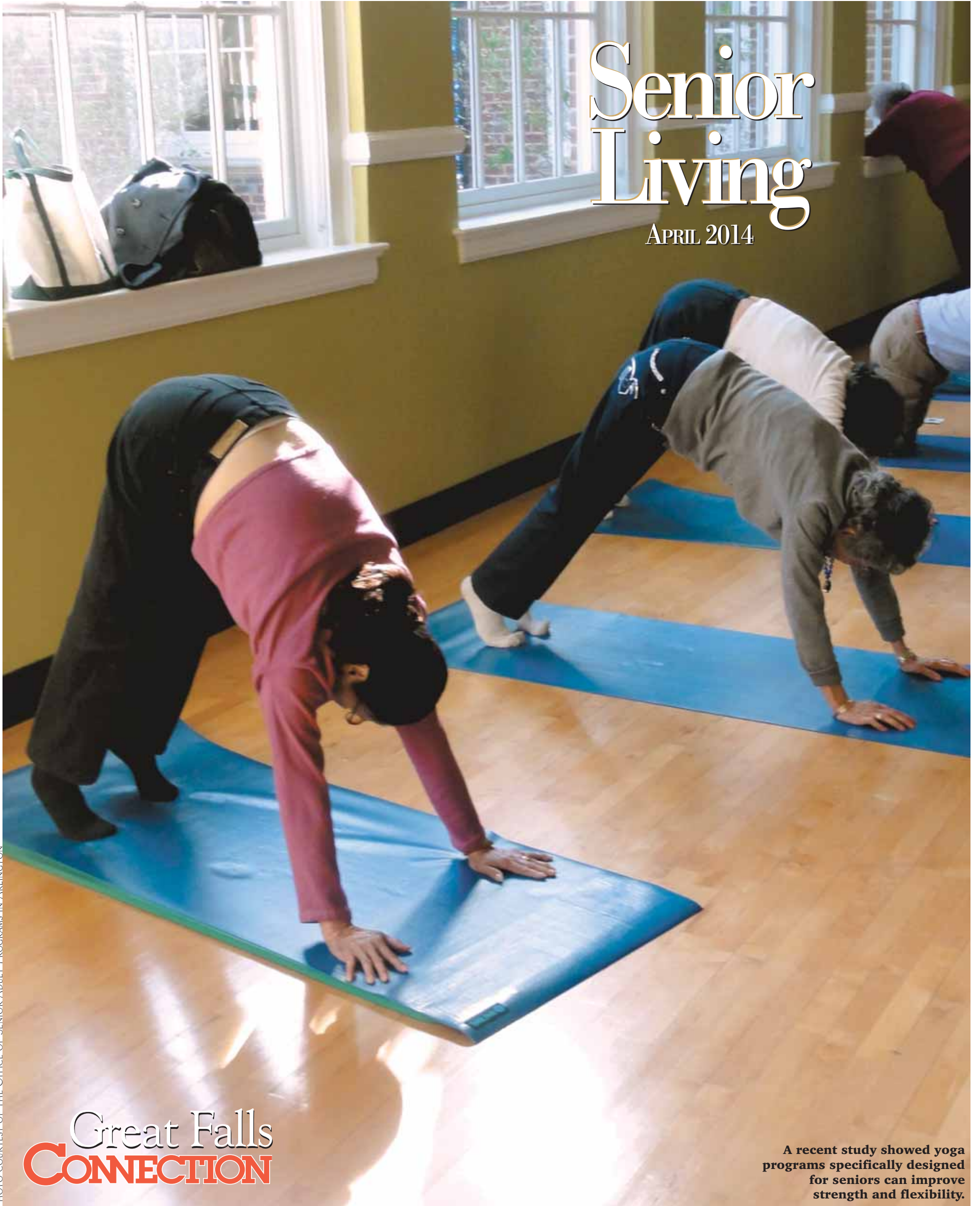


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WEDNESDAY/APRIL 2

Combat Financial Fraud. 9:30 a.m. at Ernst Cultural Center, NOVA Community College, Annandale Campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia Speaker's Forum presents Nora Dowd Eisenhower who will discuss the complicated financial decisions about retirement, home equity, long-term care, and financial care taking responsibilities for seniors. Free. Garage parking is \$2 per hour. Call 703-503-0600.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Navigating the Complexities of Lyme Disease. 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St, Vienna. Topics include: diagnosis & treatment, emotional and spiritual effects, and navigating the medical maze. Cost \$15 preregistration/\$20 at door. To register, visit <http://bit.ly/lyme complexities>.

Reston 50/100 Founder's Day Celebration. 12-3 p.m. Lake Anne Plaza, 11426 Washington Plaza W, Reston. Fifty years after Robert E. Simon, Jr. founded Reston, it continues to flourish and over 50,000 residents call Reston "home." Join the Reston Historic Trust and Museum for Founder's Day as they celebrate Reston's 50th anniversary and the 100th birthday of founder, Robert E. Simon, Jr.

TUESDAY/APRIL 8

Luncheon and Tour. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Westminster at Lake Ridge, 12191 Clipper Drive, Lake Ridge, Va. Explore retirement living at

Westminster at Lake Ridge, a continuing care retirement community near Occoquan Village. Complimentary lunch and tour. RSVP to Michelle 703-496-3440, or visit wlrva.org for more.

TUESDAY/APRIL 8

NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees) Vienna Oakton Chapter 1116 Meeting. 1:30 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. The program will be about the Vienna Town Council and mayor candidates. The meeting is open to all members and their guests. Refreshments will be served.

SUNDAY/APRIL 13

Book Look: Child of the Civil Rights Movement. 2 p.m. Artspace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Poignant, moving, and hopeful, Child of the Civil Rights Movement is an intimate look at the birth of the Civil Rights Movement. Each Book Look event features a reading and craft project related to the book. Books will be available for purchase and signing by the author. The readings are free and open to the public, but seating is limited so reservations are recommended. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org for more information and to register.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 16

125th Birthday Celebration for Charlie Chaplin. 7:30 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. The Alden in McLean will celebrate Charlie Chaplin's 125th

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8

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Senior Living

Seniors Rush to Yoga

Yoga teachers, research point to health benefits for seniors.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Shortly after 10 a.m. on any given Tuesday or Thursday morning, 84-year-old Lola Wulchin can be found slowly stretching into a downward facing dog pose or lunging into a warrior one posture. The Vienna resident has been a yoga devotee at East Meets West Yoga Center in Vienna for slightly more than two years. In fact, she credits twice-weekly, gentle yoga practice with boosting her health and improving her quality of life.

"I had been bothered by a lot of neck pain from arthritis," said Wulchin. "I had seen a pain management doctor who gave me shots, I had physical therapy, but I still had neck pain and very little range of motion."

A turning point came after she was struck by a passing comment from one of her doctors. "My neurologist mentioned that his wife had been doing yoga for back pain and it had helped. So I decided to try it."

Wulchin embarked on a twice-weekly ritual that she describes as life changing. "My gentle yoga classes have been a God-send," she said. "I have less pain now. I still



PHOTO COURTESY OF EAST MEETS WEST YOGA CENTER

Linda Liberatucci, 67, Colette Ashley, 70+, Ann Mandelbaum, 68, Lola Wulchin, 84 and Frankie Gibson, 74, do a downward facing dog pose during gentle yoga class at East Meets West Yoga Center in Vienna.

have some stiffness, but I have a better range of motion."

She isn't the only senior to reap the benefits of yoga. Researchers at the American

Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine and the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation conducted an eight-week study of 23 adults aged 62 to 83 years old.

They designed a yoga program for that age group with the goals of improving lower-body strength and flexibility. Participants

SEE YOGA, PAGE 6

More Seniors Plan To Age in Place

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The AARP reports that nearly 80 percent of adults age 65 and older want to remain in their current homes as long as possible. That population is growing. According to the Department of Health and Human Services' Administra-

Many local techniques and programs can help seniors stay in their homes longer.

tion on Aging, the population 65 years or older numbered 39.6 million in 2009. By 2030, that number will grow to about 72.1 million.

While people are living longer and healthier lives, there are still barriers to aging in place, including medication management, self-care, socialization and transportation. But there are innovative strategies and initiatives to help combat these roadblocks.

"We're showing people how to modify their home so that it is accessible," said said Robert C. Eiffert, the Long Term Care Program manager for the Fairfax County Health Department. Fairfax and other local counties are conducting workshops on how to make a home safe for a senior who wants to live alone. "We're talking about things like adding a ramp to your front door, changing your door knobs and cabinet handles for people who have arthritis in their hands."

"There are wonderful emerging technologies that allow adult children to monitor their parents who live alone," he said. "It is not intrusive. There are not cameras involved, but there are motion sensors. For example, if there is no movement in the morning, an adult child might think, 'Hmmm, I need to check.'"

Andrew J. Carle, director of the Senior Housing Administration at George Mason

University, recommends First Street for Boomers and Beyond (www.firststreetonline.com) which offers products for seniors and their caregivers. "Products like a nice walk in bathtub for seniors or an alarm that reminds you when to take your medicine are things you can do to change your home and make it safe."

A LACK OF SOCIAL interaction and mental stimulation can contribute to depression and mental deterioration, Carle said. Or-

SEE AGING IN PLACE, PAGE 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

Members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University take an educational field trip. Opportunities for socializing and learning are important as one ages.

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Senior Living

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Senior Living

Aging in Place Gracefully

FROM PAGE 3

ganizations like the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University, offer opportunities for intellectual stimulation and cultural experiences for retirees in Northern Virginia.

“OLLI, as we call it, is for people who don’t want to sit around and watch television all day,” said Carle. “Professors volunteer their time to give lectures on art, history, science and other topics. Listening to professors speak about stimulating topics helps keep their brains sharp.”

Jennifer Disano, OLLI’s executive director, says the group has 1,200 members, and is funded by an endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation. The group’s main campus is in Fairfax, but other campuses are in Reston and Sterling. It serves the needs of those who might not feel comfortable in traditional college classrooms and don’t want the pressure of writing papers and taking tests, but are still interested in learning.

“We have people here who were economists and worked with finance, but in their retired life they want to explore areas ... like art classes or history classes,” she said.

One of those members is 76-year-old John Woods. He has attended three to four OLLI events a week for 10 years. “We have a wide variety of professionals and a wide variety of groups that meet,” he said. “We have a group that meets to talk about financial investments. Another group meets every Monday morning at 9 a.m. and looks at the past week’s headlines from the Washington Post, New York Times and Wall Street Journal. They have insights that are important. The stimulating thing is sharing ideas among ourselves.”

VILLAGES ARE community-based organizations designed to help members help each other remain independent and in the communities of their choice. “Back in 2000, villages started with a group in Boston, and in 2007 there was a big boom,” said Barbara Sullivan, executive director of Mount Vernon at Home in Mount Vernon. “It is community-based. Every village is different, but they’re there for people who want to age in place.”

Eiffert, of George Mason, says village members define the type and scope of services. “A good starting point when creating a village is to survey the community members to determine their needs,” he said. “We provide technical assistance to community

groups that are interested in putting together a village and encouragement on what models work best for their community. Fairfax County is working with Montgomery County to rewrite the manual on how to start a village.”

There are a few different models, including the “Concierge Village,” which is a non-profit model that coordinates access to an array of services through vetted providers, including transportation, home repairs, care coordination and computer technicians. Most also include social and educational activities. Members arrange for services by calling a central phone number, and pay annual dues that can range from \$500 to \$800 for an individual and \$700 to \$1,200 for a couple.

The “All Volunteer” model organizes community volunteers to provide services and support to others. There are no paid staff. In some cases, hours donated by volunteers are “banked” and can be used in the future if the volunteer needs services or assistance. The “Neighborhood Network” is also informal. Groups meet on a regular basis to hear speakers on topics of interest selected by members.

ANOTHER BIG GAP is medication management, Eiffert said. “If someone can’t manage their own medication and can’t afford to pay someone to come in to do it for them, that is a service gap that forces people into assisted living facilities.”

Carle agrees that the decision to age in place is complicated. “The first knee-jerk reaction is that when asked, seniors want to stay in their own



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
Members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University play music for their peers. Below, other members listen to a lecture.

homes,” he said, adding that those surveys can be misleading: “The surveys are not always credible if you’re surveying people who are 50-plus. I’m 54 and of course I want to stay in my house, but ask me again in 20 years. I think they should be surveying people who are 75-plus.” In addition, “people don’t always understand the economic, social and safety aspects of it,” he added. “You can create all kinds of technology and universal designs to create a house for aging in place, but a senior might not be able to afford it. It could end up costing far more than the best assisted living facility in town.”

Granny Pods, small prefabricated homes that allow families to house their relatives in small backyard cottages, are another alternative. “These small living units allow you to put an elderly relative in your backyard and hook up to your electricity,” said Carle.



“Professors volunteer their time to give lectures on art, history, science and other topics.”

Fairfax County Senior Centers

Senior Centers for Active Adults offer opportunities to make friends, stay on the move, and learn new things. Fairfax County residents age 55 and older may join any of the 13 senior centers sponsored by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Senior centers offer classes, health and wellness programs, computer and internet access, trips and tours, and opportunities to socialize with others and stay connected with your community. There is an annual membership fee of \$48 for attending the senior centers. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/srctrs.htm for more.

Lunch is available to those 60 and older with a suggested donation of \$2-\$6, based on age and income. Participants younger than 60 may purchase lunch for \$8.50. Reservations must be made at least one day in advance.

Transportation, by Fastran bus, may be available at a nominal charge from your home to the center nearest you and back home. Check with the center to find out about transportation.

SENIOR+ is an innovative inclusion program for seniors with minor cognitive and physical disabilities. The program bridges the gap between programs for fully independent seniors and those who require some assistance. It allows seniors with disabilities to enjoy the wide range of programming found at the county’s full service senior centers. Senior+ enables participants to remain in the least restrictive environment and maintain as much independence as possible. Participation reduces lone-

liness and isolation by providing fun and enjoyment in addition to preserving dignity and enhancing the quality of life.

Senior+ offers supportive services so that seniors with mild impairments may maintain as much independence as possible in their home and community. Services include:

- ❖ Planned and adapted activities created by a recreation therapist
- ❖ Health consultations and assessment by a registered nurse
- ❖ Consultation and assessment by a mental health specialist
- ❖ Referrals to other county agencies and transitions to other programs as needed
- ❖ An Individualized Wellness Plan developed with staff and participant input

Senior+ programs also offer a sliding fee scale for monthly program fees or a nutritional lunch. Program hours are Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Transportation may be available from the participants home to the nearest center.

The Senior Plus program is offered through the cooperative efforts of several Fairfax County agencies: Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Department of Family Services, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Systems Management for Human Services, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, the Health Department and our non-profit partner, Easter Seals of the Greater Washington-Baltimore Region, Inc.

Centers offering Senior+ are indicated with (+). Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/

❖ Bailey’s Senior Center
5920 Summers Lane, Falls Church, VA 22041
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
703-820-2131, TTY 711

❖ South County Senior Center (+)
8350 Richmond Highway, Suite 325, Alexandria, VA 22309
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-704-6216, TTY 711
Fax: 703-704-6699

❖ Herndon Senior Center (+)
873 Grace Street, Herndon, VA 20170
Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
703-464-6200, TTY 711

❖ Hollin Hall Senior Center
1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria, VA 22308
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-765-4573, TTY 711

❖ James Lee Senior Center (+)
2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA 22041
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
703-534-3387, TTY 711

❖ Kingstowne Center for Active Adults
6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria, VA 22315
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
703-339-7676, TTY 711

❖ Lewinsville Senior Center (+)
1609 Great Falls Street, McLean, VA 22101
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-442-9075, TTY 711

❖ Lincolnia Senior Center (+)
4710 North Chambliss Street, Alexandria, VA 22312
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-914-0223, TTY 711

❖ Little River Glen Senior Center (+)
4001 Barker Court, Fairfax, VA 22032
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-503-8703, TTY 711

❖ Lorton Senior Center (+)
7722 Gunston Plaza, Lorton, VA 22079
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-550-7195, TTY 711
Fax: 703-541-2092

❖ Pimmit Hills Senior Center
7510 Lisle Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22043
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-734-3338, TTY 711

❖ Sully Senior Center (+)
5690 Sully Road, Centreville, VA 20120
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-322-4475, TTY 711

❖ Wakefield Senior Center
Audrey Moore RECenter
8100 Braddock Road, Annandale, VA 22003
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-321-3000, TTY 711
Fax: 703-764-2204

❖ City of Fairfax
4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, VA 22030
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Phone: 703-359-2487, TTY 711

❖ City of Falls Church
223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church, VA 22046
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703-248-5020, TTY 711

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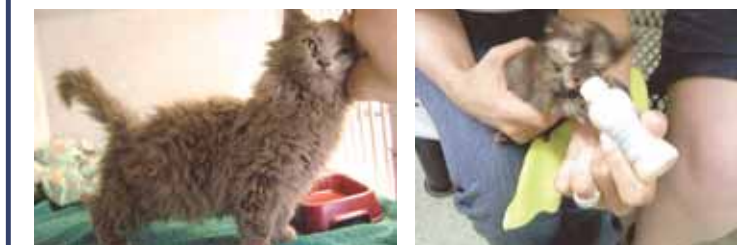
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Local Villages

Fairfax County Villages

For more information about current Villages in Fairfax County, call, email or visit the web page of one of the Villages listed below:

❖ **Braddock District Council Aging in Place Program** — Email: bwallbdc@gmail.com

❖ **Franklin Park Village** — email e.duggan@verizon.net or call 703-534-4964

❖ **Herndon Village Network (HVN)** — 703-582-9482

❖ **Lake Barcroft Village** — www.lakebarcroftvillage.org

❖ **McLean Community: A Village for All Ages (MCVA)** — email mcleancommunityvillage@gmail.com or visit www.mcva.weebly.com

❖ **Mosby Woods Village** — mosbywoodsivillage@gmail.com

❖ **Mount Vernon at Home Village** — www.mountvernonathome.org

❖ **Reston for a Lifetime** — www.restonforalifetime.org

❖ **Reston Useful Services Exchange** — www.restonuse.org

To learn more, visit the Village to Village Network at www.vtvnetwork.org.

Seniors Rush to Yoga

FROM PAGE 3

attended two 90-minute yoga classes per week, and were asked to complete at least 20 minutes of directed home practice on alternate days.

The study found yoga programs tailored to elderly adults can be a cost-effective way to prevent or reduce age-related changes, specifically an increased risk for falls, dependency and other ailments.

Local yoga teachers agree, saying that while yoga classes designed for the 55 and older crowd are increasing in popularity, myths about the practice keep some seniors out of yoga studios.

"The main thing that I hear is that you have to already be flexible to do yoga," said Sandy Pradas of Joyful Heart Yoga in Mount Vernon. "People look at pictures in magazines of people wrapping their legs around their necks or doing other advanced poses and they think, 'If I can't do that, then I can't do yoga.'"

Pradas, whose students are mostly between 50 and 75 years old, said, "Everybody can do yoga, but there are a lot of types of yoga and not every type is good for everybody."

Dawn Curtis, owner of East Meets West Yoga Center, recently completed a course at Duke Integrative Medicine and believes an increasing interest in yoga among seniors will be known as the Silver Tsunami.

"That is baby boomers going into yoga," she said. "Yoga for seniors is going to be



Arlington seniors take a hatha yoga classes. A recent study showed yoga programs specifically designed for seniors can improve strength and flexibility.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EAST MEETS WEST YOGA CENTER

Seniors Linda Liberatucci, 67, Colette Ashley, 70+, Ann Mandelbaum, 68, Lola Wulchin, 84 and Frankie Gibson, 74, do a downward facing dog pose during gentle yoga class at East Meets West Yoga Center in Vienna.

"Everybody can do yoga, but there are a lot of types of yoga and not every type is good for everybody."

— Sandy Pradas, Joyful Heart Yoga

the biggest target audience that yoga teachers are going to have because of the number of baby boomers who are looking for alternative ways of exercise because they are not going to be able to keep up with impact exercises like running."

In fact, she says gentle yoga classes are among the most popular at her studio. "I have students who are as old as 84. We deal with people who can't get on the floor," she said. "We use chairs. We work on balance because that is a main concern among seniors. We work on coordination because that is another thing that tends to diminish as we age."

Jennifer Collins, a countywide program specialist in the Office of Senior Adult Programs in Arlington, said that yoga classes that are specifically tailored for those 55 and

older are among her office's most popular.

"Some of our [yoga] classes fill up within minutes of opening," said Collins. "We have people sitting at computers at our senior centers ready to register as soon registration opens because they know the classes are going to fill."

Sean .FM (yes, that is his name) of OneAum in Potomac, works with seniors with a wide range of abilities. He said it's important to find a class that is a good fit.

"There are many kinds of seniors," he said. "There are seniors that are immobile and some who are really active. We have a student who is almost 70 and I just taught him how to do a handstand. We created Yoga Rx for those with mobility issues. We work them in the chairs. We also do a lot of private sessions."

George Lynch, fitness director at Vinson Hall Retirement Community in McLean, is planning to incorporate yoga classes into the community's fitness program. The instruction will be tailored to meet the needs of his clients. "We have residents who are in their 80s, 90s and some in their 100s. Everything we do is designed specifically for seniors."

Andrew J. Carle director of the Senior Housing Administration at George Mason University said an increasing number of retirement communities are offer yoga classes as part of their fitness programs. "The future of senior housing will include science-based wellness activities like yoga," he said. "Anything that gets us beyond senior activities such as birthdays, Bibles, bingo and bridge is a step up."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ONEAUM YOGA

A 70-year-old yoga student performs a handstand at OneAum Yoga in Potomac, Md.



Senior Living



The Lee Center Dancers, who came in third in a 2013 Senior Olympics line dancing event, are: Kathy Fanelli, Annandale; Neelima Gokhale, Arlington; Inga Ercolano, Arlington; May McWilliams, Arlington; Marcia Diamond, Arlington; Janey Brauninger, Arlington; Melissa Mendell, Arlington; and Bill Wong, Fairfax.

Northern Virginia Senior Olympics Mission: Living Healthy Longer

"Living healthy longer is the mission of the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics," said Dave Jerome, of Burke, chairman of the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. "It is our goal to promote healthy aging through both mental and physical activity, which is why NVSO offers such a wide range of events from sports to board games."

The 2014 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics will take place Sept. 13-24 at 18 venues throughout Northern Virginia. Adults 50 years of age and over who live in one of the sponsoring jurisdictions are eligible to participate.

Events include swimming, diving, track, field, tennis, table tennis, racquetball, pickleball, duplicate bridge, chess, scrabble, cribbage, men's basketball, handball, ERG rowing, Wii bowling, ten pin bowling, eight ball pool, horse-

shoes, softball hit and throw, yo-yo tricks, bocce, Frisbee throw, golf, miniature golf, bunco, men's and women's basketball free throw, team line dancing, volleyball, badminton, cycling and more. Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded after each event. All events are open to the public.

Online registration will be available at www.nvso.com after July 1. Registration forms will be available at senior residences, community centers, seniors centers or by calling 703-228-4721. Registration fee is \$12 which covers multiple events. There is no onsite registration. Registration deadlines are Aug. 29 (mail) and Sept. 5 (online). The Northern Virginia Senior Olympics is sponsored by the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church.

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Senior Calendar

FROM PAGE 2

birthday with an evening of silent films with live musical accompaniment. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123.

THURSDAY/APRIL 17

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter Meeting. Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar Lane Shopping Center, Vienna. Edward D. Connor, WW II Army Air Corps veteran, will discuss the Battle of the Bismarck Sea of March 2-4, 1943. Admission is free. For information, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or visit www.vva227.org.

TUESDAY/APRIL 18

Genealogical Society Meeting. 1 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, room 112, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Mount Vernon Genealogical Society meeting will feature a presentation entitled "Experiences of a Young Waist Gunner in WW II" by Ray Bailey. What was it like for an 18 year old high school graduate from a small Ohio town to go off to war, fight the Germans and survive his plane "going down?" Visit www.MVGenealogy.org. Questions about the program should be directed to Karen Jenkins at 703-866-2478 or publicity@mvgenealogy.org.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 23

Author Lecture: Cheat the Clock. 1 p.m. at Westminster at Lake Ridge, 12191 Clipper Drive, Lake Ridge, Va. Margaret Pressler will discuss her book, "Cheat the Clock: How New Science Can Help You Look and Feel Younger." First 20 registrants receive free copy of the book. Call 703-496-3440 to attend. Visit wlrva.org for more.

THURSDAY/APRIL 24

Condo Living Class. 7-9 p.m. at The Station at Potomac Yard, 650 Maskell St. The City and Arlington and Fairfax Counties will host a two-hour "Understanding Condominium Living" class. Free, seating is limited. Confirm attendance at 703-746-4990 or email shane.cochran@alexandriava.gov.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Community Cleanup. 9 a.m.-noon at five locations along Four Mile Run. Cleanup volunteers needed at Madison Manner, Glen Carlyn, Arlington Mill Community Center, Barcroft Park and Shirlington Park. An adult must accompany children under 16 years of age. Call 703-525-0168 or ParkRangers@arlingtonva.us.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 30

How to Protect Yourself From Identity Theft. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Westminster at Lake Ridge, 12191 Clipper Drive, Lake Ridge, Va. Courtney Sweeney of Wells Fargo Asset Management will share tips to prevent identity theft before. RSVP to Michelle 703-496-3440, or visit wlrva.org for more.

SATURDAY/MAY 3

Plant Sale. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Wakefield High School, 1325 S. Dinwiddie St., Arlington, on the Dinwiddie Street side of the building. Annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables and flowering baskets available. Place an order before April 12 in the school main office; drop it off or mail it in. Order forms are available on the Wakefield Website <http://apsva.us/Page/17411>.

TAX HELP

AARP Tax-Aide, the nation's largest free tax preparation and tax counseling volunteer program starts its free Tax Preparation Services Feb. 1. The program, sponsored by the IRS, is staffed with Certified IRS Tax Counselors and use IRS computers and software to prepare and eFile tax returns for low to middle income families and elderly citizens. Bring government-issued picture IDs, and social security cards for all persons that will be included in your tax return. Also bring a printed copy of last year's tax return, if you itemized. Located at Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St., Arlington,

Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Walk-ins welcome. Visit www.aarp.org/taxaide for additional information.

ONGOING

Senior Fall Prevention Classes. 1:30-2:30 p.m. and 2-3 p.m., The Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Classes are held in a heated indoor pool and are designed to work on balance and core muscles. \$10. 703-667-9800.

New Neighbors League Club of Northern Virginia. For women, the club includes Bridge, mah jong, gardening, quilting and many other activities. www.newneighborsvirginia.com.

Join Jewish War Veterans of the USA. The Burke Post E 100 at 5712 Walnut Wood, Burke, invites Jewish veterans and service members to join. 703-209-5925.

Singers Wanted for the Celebration Singers. The women's show choir is interested in new talent to perform at various Northern Virginia community sites. Practices are Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Burke. Contact Gayle Parsons, 703-644-4485 or email gparsons3@cox.net.

Senior Fall Prevention Classes. 1:30-2:30 p.m., at the Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Tuesday and/or Thursday classes in a heated pool designed to work on balance and core muscles for injury prevention. \$10. Call 703-667-9800.

American Red Cross CPR, First Aid and AED. Various times, at 2720 State Route 699, Suite 200, Fairfax. One-year certification, digital or print materials and continued education on Mondays through Thursday and Saturday. \$70-110. Visit www.redcrossna.org.

The Groveton High School class of 1964 is looking for contact information for as many classmates as possible. The planning for the 50th reunion is underway, however only a small number of people have been contacted. Groveton graduates of '64 interested in attending next September's reunion should email contact information to GHS64@verizon.net.

The Talking Book Service at Alexandria Library will now operate Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment. Patrons may also reach the service by calling 703-746-1760 or emailing talkingbooks@alexandria.lib.va.us.

VCE Master Gardener Help Desk. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Monday-Friday. Bring fresh samples of problem plants, weeds or insects to ensure accurate identification. VCE recommends carrying samples in plastic bags or other clear containers. No live insects. All clinics and Help Desk are free. 703-228-6414 or mgarlalex@gmail.com.

Band musicians are invited to join the **Mount Vernon Community Band.** Rehearsals are Tuesday 7:30-9:30 p.m. in the Mount Vernon High School band room, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road. There are no auditions. The Mount Vernon Community Band is a nonprofit community service organization that has performed in the Mount Vernon area since 1978. 703-768-4172 or www.mvbands.com.

Call For Articles. The Arlington Historical Society welcomes articles for publication in the annual Arlington Historical Magazine. Although the focus is on Arlington County history, subjects dealing with the history of Northern Virginia, or the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area, are also appropriate and welcomed. Articles should be 1,500 to 6,000 words in length. The deadline for receipt of copy is July 1, 2014. There is a prescribed format, especially for endnotes. A style sheet will be provided upon request, and the editor will assist authors and/or make corrections as needed. Pictures and maps are encouraged, but should be submitted separately, and credit information and suggested captions should also be included. Direct questions to Editor W. Karl VanNewkirk at 703-536-5916, karlvannewkirk@comcast.net; or 1116 North Rochester St., Arlington, VA 22205-1741.

Free **mall walking program** for seniors will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Ballston Common Mall, 4238 Wilson Blvd. Participants walk at their own pace. There will be a group stretch and cool down led by Virginia Hospital Center staff. 703-558-6859.

Choral Rehearsal. Encore Chorale's spring season will start Jan. 14 from 2-3:30 p.m. at Langston Brown Senior Center, 2121 Culpeper St. Anyone over the age of 55 can participate. Registration information is available at encorecreativity.org, or by calling 301-261-5747



*The Adeler Jewelers
Great Falls Optimist Club*

30th Annual
Children's Spring Festival

*Games
Rides
Food
Fun!*

*Sunday, April 13th
1:30 - 4:30 pm*



Welcome!! Great Falls “Egg Hunt” 2014

WOW...30 years ago we invited the children of the community to a small “EGG HUNT” to show our gratitude to Great Falls for making us feel so welcome when we decided to open our doors in the Village Centre. Look where we are now!!! 30 amazing years later and eventually with the wonderful partnership of the Optimist Club and the support of many many local businesses, friends and neighbors, this event has become a tradition of this community.

We feel honored and proud to be able to bring this to the families of Great Falls and we hope that through this festival we are able to show our tremendous gratitude and appreciation for your continued support of our family and our business. We would not be here were it not for your loyal patronage. Enjoy the day and Happy Hunting!

**Just as a reminder, 100% of the ticket sale proceeds are collected by, and benefit the Great Falls Optimist Club Youth Fund and stay in Great Falls too!

-JORGE ADELER



President Message

Great Falls Optimist Club

30th Year

Adeler Jewelers And Great Falls Optimistclub Have Partnered To Provide The Great Falls Annual Childrens Spring Festival

Our Thanks To The Great Falls Business And Residential Community For Volunteer And Financial Support The Festival Has Become A Great Day For Children, Usually Seven To Eight Hundred (Up To Age Ten) Plus Parents Or Grand Parents Neighbors And friends. It Is Not Unusual To See Parents That Previously Participated As Children Now Enjoying The Festival With Their Children. We Hope Some Day They May Bring Their Grand

Children.

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Your Support Has Helped Sponsor Programs Include Halloween Family Portraits At The Gazebo, Contests For Deaf And Hard Of Hearing, Helping Hands Program, Essay Contest, Oratorical contest, Respect For Law, Youth Appreciation Week, Bicycle Safety Rodeo, Child Identification, Children And Family Holiday And Week End Meals, Clothing And Scholarships.

The Optimist Childhood Cancer Program

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All Optimist And Friends Are Invited To contribute. We Have Also Purchased Equipment To Assist Local Cancer Students Maintain An Active School Class And Home Education.

We Invite You, Your Family And Friends To Become A Member Or Supporting Volunteer Or Investor In The Youth Today For A Better Tomorrow



The Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself:

- ♥ To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind;
- ♥ To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet;
- ♥ To make all your friends feel that there is something in them;
- ♥ To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true;
- ♥ To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best;
- ♥ To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own;
- ♥ To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future;
- ♥ To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile;
- ♥ To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others;
- ♥ To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

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Birthstones

January - Garnet

Garnet, the birthstone for January, signifies eternal friendship and trust and is the perfect gift for a friend. Garnet, derived from the word granatum, means seed, and is called so because of the gemstone's resemblance to a pomegranate seed. References to the gemstone dates back to 3100 B.C., when the Egyptians used garnets as inlays jewelry. Garnet is the name of a group of minerals that comes in a rainbow of colors, from the deep red of the pyrope garnet to the vibrant green of tsavorites.

February - Amethyst

Amethyst, the gemstone believed by ancient Greeks and Romans to ward off the intoxicating powers of Bacchus, also is said to keep the wearer clear-headed and quick-witted. Throughout history, the gemstone has been associated with many myths, legends, religions, and numerous cultures. English regalia were even decorated with amethysts during the Middle Ages to symbolize royalty. It has been associated with many myths, legends, religions, and numerous cultures. Amethyst is purple quartz, a beautiful blend of violet and red that can found in every corner of the earth. Historically, the finest amethyst were found in Russia and were featured in much royal European jewelry.

March - Aquamarine

The two birthstones for March are aquamarine and bloodstone. The name aquamarine is derived from the Latin word aqua, meaning water, and marina, meaning the sea. This gemstone was believed to protect sailors, as well as to guarantee a safe voyage. The serene color of aquamarine is said to cool the temper, allowing the wearer to remain calm and levelheaded. Its pale, cool color beautifully complements spring and summer wardrobes. Aquamarine is most often light in tone and ranges from greenish blue to blue-green; the color usually is more intense in larger stones. The second birthstone for March is bloodstone, a dark-green jasper flecked with vivid red spots of iron oxide. This ancient stone was used by the Babylonians to make seals and amulets and was believed to have healing powers - especially for blood disorders. It is sometimes called the martyr's stone as legend tells that it was created when drops of Christ's blood stained some jasper at the foot of the cross.

April - Diamond

As the April birthstone, diamonds are the ideal gift for a loved one. And now you have more choices than ever. Get creative and give the ultimate gift of beauty: a fancy-color diamond. Fancy-color diamonds are natural, rare and truly exotic gem of the earth. Diamonds in hues of yellow, red, pink, blue, and green range in intensity from faint to vivid

and generally the more saturated the color, the higher the value. In fact, diamonds sparkling with intense color are rare and may be priced higher than a colorless diamond of equal size. Because fancy-color diamonds are very desirable, color is sometimes introduced in a laboratory.

May - Emerald

As the birthstone for May, the emerald, a symbol of rebirth, is believed to grant the owner foresight, good fortune, and youth. Emerald, derived from the word smaragdus, meaning green in Greek, was mined in Egypt as early as 330 B.C. Today, most of the world's emeralds are mined in Colombia, Brazil, Afghanistan, and Zambia.

June - Pearl and Alexandrite

June counts three gems as birthstones, pearl, Alexandrite, and moonstone. Historically, pearls have been used as an adornment for centuries. They were one of the favorite gem materials of the Roman Empire; later in Tudor England, the 1500s were known as the pearl age. Pearls are unique as they are the only gems from living sea creatures and require no faceting or polishing to reveal their natural beauty.

Alexandrite

A relatively modern gem, Alexandrite, was first discovered in Russia in 1831 during the reign of its namesake, Czar Alexander II, and is an extremely rare chrysoberyl with chameleon-like qualities. Its color is a lovely green in both daylight and fluorescent light; it changes color to a purplish red in incandescent light.

Moonstone

The third birthstone for June is the Moonstone. It was given its name by the Roman natural historian Pliny, who wrote that moonstone's appearance altered with the phases of the moon - a belief that held until well after the sixteenth century. A phenomenal gemstone, moonstones show a floating play of light (called adularescence) and sometimes show either a multirayed star or a cat's eye. Considered a sacred stone in India, moonstones often are displayed on a background of yellow (a sacred color) and are believed to encapsulate within the stone a spirit whose purpose is to bring good fortune. Part of the family of minerals called feldspar, moonstone occurs in many igneous and metamorphic rocks and comes in a variety of colors such as green, blue, peach, and champagne.

July - Ruby

There's no better way to demonstrate your love than by giving a ruby in celebration of a July birthday. Rubies arouse the senses, stir the imagi-

SEE BIRTHSTONES, PAGE 8

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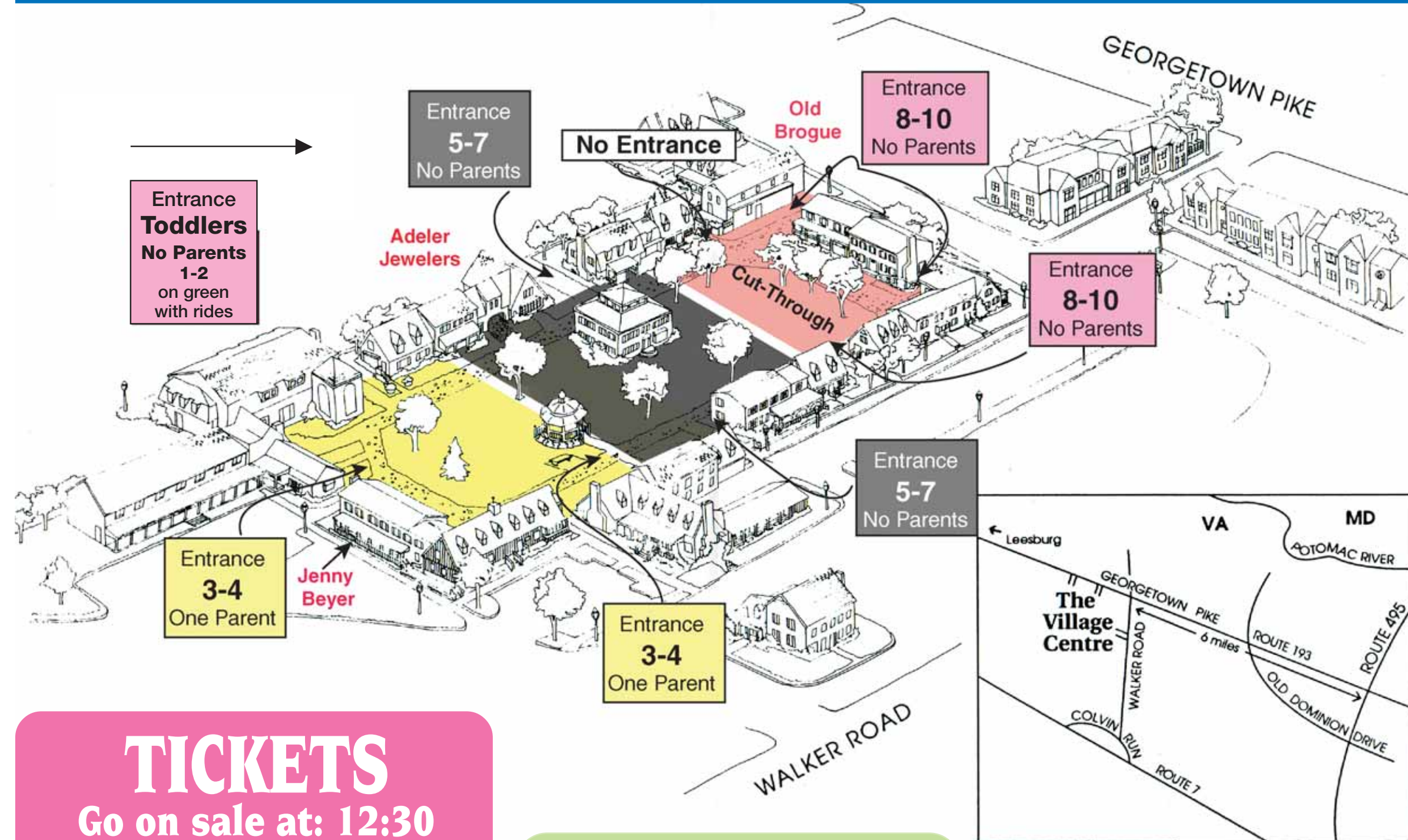
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30th Annual Egg Hunt brought to you by Adeler Jewelers and the Great Falls Optimist Club at the Village Centre



TICKETS
Go on sale at: 12:30
\$10 per child
Ages 1-10 and
Parents are free
Donations welcome...

Tickets go on sale at 12:30
Games and rides are from 1:30-4
The egg hunt from 4:00-4:30

The egg hunt includes over \$8000 worth of gemstones donated by Adeler Jewelers, mixed with candy and stuffed into 8,000 plastic eggs that will be scattered around the Village Centre for children ages 1-10 to find.
All Rides at own risk.

If you would like to know what your "gem" is, please go to www.AdelerJewelers.com and follow the link under *Learn More*.

Important Information

*** PLEASE NOTE: Candy in the Egg Hunt may contain nuts! We do our best to avoid this, but we cannot guarantee it because even nut-free candy MAY HAVE BEEN MADE on machines that previously processed candy that did contain nuts.

NO RAIN DATE: Due to the size of this ever-popular event, and to

scheduling requirements for the Village Centre and volunteer staff, we are unable to provide a rain date for the egg hunt. Please call 703-759-4076 after 9:00 am on April 13th to verify the status of the event if you are concerned about cancellation due to inclement weather.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We can always use more volunteers to help with a range of

jobs, including staffing an entrance, helping with set up and clean up the day of the hunt, and other activities. If you are interested in helping with this fun, family-friendly event, please contact us at 703-759-4076 or info@adelerjewelers.com. This is a terrific opportunity for Scout troops and students looking for community service opportunities!

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Birthstones

FROM PAGE 5

nation, and are said to guarantee health, wisdom, wealth and success in love. Ruby is a variety of the gems species corundum. It is harder than any natural gemstone except diamond, which means a ruby is durable enough for everyday wear. Fine-quality ruby is extremely rare, and the color of the gem is most important to its value.

August - Peridot

Two birthstones are available for August birthdays: Peridot and Sardonyx.

Peridot is said to host magical powers and healing properties to protect against nightmares and to bring the wearer power, influence, and a wonderful year. As peridot is a gemstone that forms deep inside the Earth and brought to the surface by volcanoes, in Hawaii, peridot symbolizes the tears of Pele, the goddess of fire and volcanoes. Today, most of the peridot supply comes from Arizona; other sources are China, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

Sardonyx

Sardonyx is a form of onyx and is recognized by its layers of reddish brown and white banding. It was popular with the ancient Greeks and Romans who carried into battle talismans of sardonyx engraved with images of heroes such as Mars or Hercules, believing that this would bring courage and victory. Because of its attractive banding, sardonyx has long been used to fashion cameos (carved raised figures) and intaglios (the reverse of cameos). This gemstone is found throughout the world.

September - Sapphire

Sapphire, the September birthstone, has been popular since the Middle Ages and, ac-

SEE BITHSTONES, PAGE 10

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a gemstone it
must contain
three important
characteristics:



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To look at




It must be
Durable
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Birthstones

FROM PAGES

According to folklore, will protect your loved ones from envy and harm. Medieval clergy wore sapphires to symbolize heaven, while commoners thought the gem attracted heavenly blessings. Blue sapphires range from very light to very dark greenish or violetish blue, as well as various shades of pure blue. The most prized colors are a medium to medium dark blue or slightly violetish blue.

October - Tourmaline and Opal

October is another month with two birthstone choices - Tourmaline and Opal.

Tourmaline has become a favorite gemstone among jewelry designer, and gem collectors the world over. Since it is available in a wide variety of colors, it is ideally suited to almost anyone's taste.

Tourmaline also is known for displaying several colors in the same gemstone. These bi-color or tri-color gems are formed in many combinations; gemstones with clear color distinctions are highly prized. One multi-color variety is known as watermelon tourmaline, and features green, pink, and white colors bands; to resemble its namesake, the gemstone is cut into thin slices having a pink center, white ring, and green edge.

The name opal derives from the Greek Opallos, meaning "to see a change (of color)." Opals range in color from milky white to black with flashes of yellow, orange, green, red, and blue. An opal's beauty is the product of contrast between its color play and its background. Opal is a formation of non-crystalline silica gel that seeped into crevices in the sedimentary strata. Through time and nature's heating and molding processes, the gel hardened into the form of opals.

November - Topaz and Citrine

Two gems are appropriate for November birthdays - Topaz and Citrine.

Topaz is a gemstone available in a rich rainbow of colors. Prized for several thousand years in antiquity, all yellow gems in antiquity were called topaz. Often confused with citrine quartz (yellow) and smoky quartz (brown), quartz and topaz are separate and unrelated mineral species. The most prized color of topaz is called Imperial topaz after the Russian Czars of the 1800s and features a magnificent orange body color with pinkish undertones.

Citrine, the other birthstone for November is known as the "healing quartz". This golden gemstone is said to support vitality and health while encouraging and guiding hope, energy and warmth within the wearer. Citrine can be found in a variety of shades ranging from pastel yellow to dark brownish orange. It is one of the most affordable of gemstones and plentiful in nature.

December - Tanzanite, Zircon, and Turquoise

The three birthstones associated with December are Tanzanite, Zircon, and Turquoise.

Discovered in the late 1960s in Tanzania, and found exclusively in this tiny area of the world, tanzanite exhibits a rich violet-blue color for which the gemstone is treasured; often it is heat-treated to achieve this color. Colors range from blue to purple, and tanzanites that are medium dark in tone, vivid in saturation, and slightly violet blue command premium prices.

Derived from the Arabic words zar and gun, meaning gold and color, zircon is found in a wide range of colors such as: blue, yellow, orange, brown, green, colorless, and red (the most prized color). For many years colorless zircon was used to imitate diamonds. Folk wisdom grants zircon the power to relieve pain, whet the appetite, protect travelers from disease and injury, to ensure a warm welcome, and to prevent nightmares guaranteeing a deep, tranquil sleep.

The name turquoise, from the French expression Pierre tourques or Turkish stone, originated in the thirteenth century and describes one of the oldest known gemstones. Turquoise varies in color from greenish blue, through robin's egg-blue, to sky blue shades and its transparency ranges from translucent to opaque.

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